ADDRESSEE

FATHER DOMENICO MARIA FEDERICI

Father Domenico Maria Federici was born in Verona in 1739\(^1\) “of a patrician family, which produced many illustrious men”.

“He entered the Dominican Order when still very young and devoted his time to the study of literature and the sciences in the cities of Bologna, Genova and Padua. He was raised to the degree of professor in his Order and therefore the convents of Udine, Padua and Treviso profitted by his teaching...He consulted codices and turned libraries upside down in order to collect data regarding the history of the Middle Ages.” (Cf. Biografi Tal. Sc.). He became Provincial of the Order of Preachers in Treviso. Since he had lived the greatest part of his life in that city, he chose it as his country of adoption. To illustrate the religious, civil and artistic history, he even consulted Magdalene of Canossa who at that time was living her first religious experience among the Discalced of Verona.

Federici died in Treviso in 1808 and was remembered by his nephew, Abbot Luigi Federici in a book printed in Verona in 1819, “Gli elogi storici dei più illustri ecclesiastici veronesi”.

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\(^1\) The date of his birth differs from what some scholars wrote. The exact date was arrived at through research done in the Library of the Commune of Treviso, where the following works were consulted: a) Bibliografia, ed. Venezia, Tip. Alvisopoli, 1841, Vol. VIII, pg. 476; b) Bibliografie Universelle ancienne et moderne (supp FAU-Fu); c) A. Serena, Un Poligrafo of the sec. XVIII ed i suoi corrispondenti. Notizie di un carteggio, in Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze Lettere ed Arti (1941/42).
TO FATHER DOMENICO MARIA FEDERICI

(Verona#1791.11.18)

The young Marchioness, seventeen years old, replying to the request of Fr. Federici who is looking into the origin of her vocation to the Discalced Carmelites, points out not a few of the difficulties that she had to undergo to convince her relatives and of the certainty she experiences at the moment of writing of having reached the goal, pointed out to her by the Lord. Instead, soon she will realize that the Lord does not call her there.¹

Most Reverend Father,

Here I am to fulfill my promise. I wish that instead of a few sonnets, it would be something more relevant and that it was possible for me to have the advantage of serving you. Accept the good will, very reverend Father, and... show me of being convinced... by commanding me in something of importance.

About my vocation to the Discalced Carmelites, this is not an affair of days but of years. Since I was five I had the vocation to be a nun but without reference to any Religion; always, however, I have had a liking for a strict Religious life. At fourteen to fifteen years of age, I thought to change my mind because the world attracted me, the education that was given to me was more suited to inspire in me other ideas than those of cultivating the thought of Religious life. But I fell sick of a malignant fever that people thought of burying me in seven days. As soon as I recovered from this sickness, the old sentiments renewed themselves and also the old resolutions.

I remained silent with everyone and after a year, I told all this to a Religious who is the teacher of my brother; and then, for another six months, I continued to keep silent; I wished to read some rules to fix for myself one form of Religious life and the first ones were those of St. Clare and notwithstanding my prevention to accommodate myself to them they could not quieten me. I, then, read on the Rules of the discalced Carmelites, but more to please the said Religious than to satisfy my liking. These satisfied me so much and I felt so much to embrace them that I thought only of facilitating the way. Meanwhile, I continued to be silent and only after a few months I told my confessor about it. I would have continued to keep silent with my relatives but a compliment paid to me by a cavalier at a theatre obliged me to declare myself.

Later, my sister promised, and I, in order to withdraw myself from gossip and other occasions, retired to where I am. Here my vocation to a discalced Carmelite was tried and

¹ The autograph is kept in the Library of the Commune of Treviso among the "Lettere autografe di vari a Father Domenico Maria Federici" (Ms. n.165).

² The Discalced Nuns, who, like the Monks, go back to an Order which originated in the XIII Century, when several Congregations of hermits, especially in Italy, were assembled into a single Order under the name of Hermits of St. Augustine and with the Rule of the Saint. In Verona the Monastery of St. Teresa was situated outside Porta Romana. Magdalene entered this monastery in October 1791 and remained there for about ten months.

³ St. Clare of Assisi – (1194-1253). She was convinced by the preaching and holiness of St. Francis and wanted to imitate him in the practice of the religious life (1212); She founded the Second Franciscan Order, which later came to be known named as that of the Poor Clares.

⁴ Father Ildefonso of the Conception (De Gasperi da Feltre), Prior of the convent of the Annunciation of the Discalced Carmelites. The Confessor of the Marchioness was Father Stefano of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (a Fortis Terracina from Padua), who, from June 1787, was Prior of her cloistered convent for three years. In the interim period of his absence from office, which lasted for a long time, Magdalene approached Father Ildefonso of the Conception who was more than 70 years old. Therefore it was Father Stefano who imposed on her to enter at Conegliano, but Father Ildefonso accompanied her there (Cf. Stofella, Biografia di Maddalena di Canossa, an unpublished work, pgs. 26 ss).
strengthened in a million ways. But, all in vain, because, the more I was tried, the more God held me.

Seeing that every attempt was useless, now they leave me in peace and I remain here because I believe it is the will of God. They said that the vocation cannot be denied but that I would not be able to bear it. But it seems to me impossible that God should call to a state without giving the necessary helps.

Sincerely this is how it all began. I hope to narrate to you one day, the continuation of my vocation, through the help of your holy prayers.

In the meanwhile I have to apologize for disturbing you so much and the trouble I am giving you with this long letter of mine. I do not want to abuse your goodness. So believe me, most Reverend Father, I am full of respect and esteem for you, as I declare to be,

Most Reverend Father,

Your most humble and much obliged servant
Magdalene of Canossa

St. Theresa’s Convent, 18 November 1791
Countess Carolina Durini
(1762 – 1833)

Prelature prelature prelacy

Carolina was born in 1762. Her parents were Ludovico Trotti Bentivoglio and Teresa Fontana Belinzaghi Beluschi. She came from one of the most complex families in the history of Lombardy which added to its original name, the one handed down by Giovanni II Bentivoglio, a Lord from Bologna.

She had two sisters, Paola and Teresa, and a brother, Lorenzo Galeazzo. Lorenzo was born in 1759, travelled a lot, was unpopular with the police force. He married an Austrian countess and returned to Milan in 1828 where he died in 1840.

In 1782, Carolina married Count Carlo Francesco Durini who belonged to the lineage of the first-born sons of the Counts of Monza, of the nobility of Milan from 1741. Carlo had four sisters and four brothers. Of these, Margherita married Marquis Stefano Pallavicini, Isabella married Marquis Cesare Sforza Brivio, Maria married Marquis Ettore Calcagnini of Ferrara and Beatrice married the Marquis Freganeschi.

Of the brothers, Ercole was part of the Court of the Viceroy. Antonio entered the prelacy. He was a lawyer in the Consistory in Rome, while in Milan he was Prefect both under the Napoleonic dominion as well as under the Austrian rule. He was a very enterprising man and succeeded in bringing Milan to a high degree of prosperity. In 1808 he married Giuseppina, daughter of Gaspare Casati. They had eight children, one of whom, Carlo, inherited the palace of his uncle Ercole when the latter died in 1814, and after which even today the road between St. Babila and Via Cavallotti is named.

Carlo Francesco was among the Twelve of the Provision in the years 1779 and 1782. He died on 22 February 1833.

Carolina was a Lady of the Cross and was very dedicated to the works of mercy, and her sister Teresa, whose biographical details will appear later, was even more so. Carolina first encountered Magdalene of Canossa in the Hospital of Mercy at Verona, during one of the frequent journeys she made together with her husband, and which was often for a charitable cause.

These two noble ladies lived in full “an interiority that was deeply human”. From then on they also shared a close friendship, which lead them for over thirty years, not only to foster “all the dynamism of human love”¹, but also that mutual confidence that enabled them to communicate everything. Each felt involved and responsible in the interests of the other. They always worked for others, for everybody, irrespective of age or social status.

In this way the works of Magdalene were always supported, defended or anticipated by Durini and her friends from Milan, who did not live segregated in their luxurious palaces, but protected even by their married state of life, lived their religious faith in a way that was a continuous source of self oblation and generosity in sharing their energies.

Because Magdalene had renounced marriage, her choice made her totally available, so that the activity of divine love found no obstacles in her soul.

She had overcome certain human structural dimensions. She was not at all affected by the discomfort of leaving the gilded and frescoed halls of the Canossa Palace in Verona or those of the Summer Villa at Grezzano.

¹ Cfr. Delfina Cipolla, La dinamica dell’amicizia e dell’interiorità in Maddalena di Canossa, Milan, 1974, op.inedita.
The very poor rooms of Via Regaste in the San Zeno area at Verona and those of St. Andrea in Venice were for her the fulfilment of the ‘most authentic and profound experience of the interior life’, which just levelled up any disproportion in these various ways of living.

Magdalene’s letters to this noble Lady from Milan are a convincing diagram of her maturing spirituality, even when the incorrect interpretation and faulty style of her secretaries leave us perplexed.

At the beginning Magdalene felt uncertain and wanted to work side by side with other founders because the mirage of her plans kept changing. Gradually but decisively, this uncertainty gives way to a programme that gets clearer and more consolidated.

At this juncture her letters have no more space for expressions of affection and of fashions. They take on a tone of a demanding personality, who is sure of the understanding and willing support of those she writes to, especially her dear friend from Milan.

These letters were written at a time of great political upheaval and danger. Hence they were often discrete, vague and impersonal. But the affection, faith and oblation of our two friends knew how to understand even what was not written, and they kept on fulfilling their plans.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

2
(Verona#1800.11.10)

It is Magdalene of Canossa's first exchange of letters with Countess Durini. A casual meeting had taken place in the hospital in Verona, where the lady from Lombardy was looking for ways to begin new initiatives to relieve the sick of Milan. Magdalene speaks of a previous letter but, with an expression that in today’s language sounds inaccurate « with the hope that you will not receive it», makes us doubt whether it was delivered. Even though a search was made in the Archives, no trace was found of it.

My dearest friend,

Since I have a safe chance of sending you my letter, I do not want to miss it, my beloved friend. I cannot tell you how much it cost me to leave you and how deep is my pain, because your health was so uncertain, when you left. I keep convincing myself in the hope of receiving news of you from time to time. This would at least reassure me about your health, and mitigate my sorrow for not having you near me any longer. Forgive me, for not having come, yesterday morning, as I had almost promised you. On one hand, it has been impossible for me to come, and on the other, on account of my little virtue, I cannot stand departures. I confess that, as I am writing, I cannot hold back my tears. Well, my dear Carolina, I will have one more motivation to consider: that it is better to leave the things of this world, even our dearest ones. I console myself with the idea that a day will come when, I hope, we shall be eternally united.

I have written another letter to you. But I think that you might not receive it, because my brother¹ has gone, this morning, to our holiday house, which is not very far from Mozzecane². Since yesterday your house master had told me that you were feverish when you left, being afraid that you would not be able to continue the journey, I wished I could, at least, be of service to you in some way. I do not know anything yet even about this letter. Perhaps, I will come to know something about it tomorrow. Meanwhile, let me inform you that today I have started carrying out your errands. I have gone to Nicolini at the Terese³. She has promised me to do even more than what you wanted. Tomorrow or the day after, I will go to the hospital. I will tell Merli⁴ what we have agreed upon and let you know the outcome about the lady⁵ from Piedmonte. Regarding my home, everything is at the same point as when we last spoke to each other. We will see the outcome of the

¹ BONIFACIO of Canossa
² The present Mozzecane, a little centre 21 km. from Verona. Durini must have been the guest of Count Bon Brenzoni, whose palace is still found on the street bearing the same name. There is also the palace of the Cavriani family of Mantua at Mozzecane, built by Cristofoli (1717-1788). One of its hamlets is Grezzano, in which is the villa of the Canossa family. This villa was partly destroyed by the bombardments of World War II.
³ SR. LUIGIA DELLA CROCE, a nun of the Teresie, a monastery outside Porta Romana in Verona. In October 1791 Magdalene entered this monastery, thinking that she was called to this form of religious life. She stayed there only for about ten months. She came to know and greatly esteem Sr. Luigia, the Directress of the boarders, and a sincere friendship developed between the two of them. There is an authenticated letter of hers (A.C.R.) addressed to Magdalene and dated 20 August 1792, after the latter’s second attempt at a cloistered life had negative results. That letter bears evidence to the moral stature of this Sister, her strong intuitive capacity and her “disinterested and deep affection”. (cfr. G. Stofella, op.cit.)
⁴ CATERINA MERLI, maid of Soncini Gonzaga and a patient of the Hospital. CARLOTTA SONCINI GONZAGA (1767-1823) was the daughter of Prince Giovanni Gonzaga, Marquis of Luzzara and Maria Teresa Anguissola of the Marquises of Grezzano. She married Marquis Massimiliano Giovanni Stampa of Soncini (cfr. Archivio Malvezzi, Genealogie, Fasc. III, cart, III. Arch. Storico Civico of Milan.
⁵ Another patient of the hospital.
situation. I reflected on what you have said, starting from the desire of the Viscontina, that the “Forty Hours” be also established here. Before making any attempt, I beg you to tell me, at your convenience, how they are carried out in Milan, that is, for how many days in a church, whether it is the Parish or any other association that sees to the expenses, and if the churches of the Nuns are also included. Another time I will tell you about the rest.

My whole family greets you. Kindly convey my greetings to the Count, to the Marchioness Arconati and Visconti. To lady Checca a thousand regards. My Stella, Luigi and everyone kiss your hands and pray for you. Be at peace, for it is my intention to ask them to pray for you. As for me, my dear Carolina, I do not have anything else to add after all our agreements. No matter where you will be, in Verona or at the North Pole, my affection and my friendship will never change. Speaking of our business, remember to mention me as little as possible, except with Marchioness Arconati. When the Glory of God does not require otherwise, speak of me as of a third person.

Goodbye, my dear friend. Love me and trust me.

I am, my dearest friend,

your very obedient, very grateful
very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa

Verona, 10 November 1800

PS. We have forgotten the prayer to the Holy Virgin, I enclose it here. Perhaps it may be useful to the Daughters of Fr. Carlo. Once again, my dear, goodbye.

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6 Countess Luisa Castelli Visconti, often simply referred to as Viscontina. A descendent of the noble family Castelli of Parabiago, in 1784 she married Count Carlo Giuseppe Visconti of Modrone. After her husband died of cholera in 1801, she dedicated herself totally to good works. She was 71 years old when she died in 1840. She was distinguished as a woman of great piety and charity. (Cfr. Destinatari pg. 598).

7 At one period there was a liturgical practice of preserving the consecrated host, hidden at a special altar in the form of a tomb, to honour Jesus Christ during the 40 hours that He lay dead in the sepulchre. The change to the present form of exposing the Blessed Sacrament for 40 consecutive hours for the adoration of the Faithful, in order to implore the mercy of God, especially in times of difficulty, began in 1527 in the church of the Holy Sepulchre of Milan, an initiative of the Augustinian priest Antonio Bellotto of Ravenna (†1528) [cfr. A. Chiappini, Enciclopedia Cattolica, pag. 376-377, Vol. X].

8 Count Carlo Francesco Durini, belonging to the family of the Counts of Monza. He married Carolina Durini in 1782. (Cfr. Destinatari, pag. 4).

9 TERESA TROTTI Marchioness ARCONATI, sister of Carolina Durini (1765-1805). Well versed in the Mathematical Sciences but more renowned for her Christian virtues and her intense and fruitful piety. During the French invasion of 1796, her husband, Marquis Carlo Arconati was taken hostage by the invaders together with some other young military officials. She followed him to Tortona, Cuneo and Nizza. Together with many other charitable ladies she started the Pious Union of Charity and was a benefactress of the main hospital of Milan. In 1784, she married Marquis Carlo Arconati. After his death she continued the good works he had started, together with some collaborators, among whom were Luisa Visconti and Carolina Durini. (cfr. “Famiglie notabili milanesi”, op.cit.). She died on 21 March 1805, in an odour of sanctity. The Barnabite Carlo Giuseppe Mantegazza wrote her biography.

10 Durini’s maid, FRANCESCA ORTI, to whom the house of Milan was greatly indebted, because of her continuous services.

11 STELLA CACCIATORI, who, after having faithfully served the Counts of Canossa, was accepted as a Sister at S. Giuseppe in Verona, and died there in 1822.

12 Coachmen of the Canossa household.

13 RIVA PALAZZI CARLO, priest, member of the “CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP” of Milan. He corresponded with Magdalene about a “Plan” that was sent to Milan, and which was also approved by him. In June 1804, Fr. Pietro Leonardi met Fr. Carlo at Milan to exchange ideas about the organization of the Oratory (Verona 28.06.1804). Through Durini, Magdalene asked him if the local State Property Office accepted payments made by Inscriptions, Prescriptions and Bonds for the purchase of a house where she could start her works.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

3 (Verona#1801.01.07)

Between the first and the second letter there is an interval of almost two months. The postal service was unable to function. It is 1801, and Napoleon is imposing his pacts upon Austria, which he had defeated at Marengo on 14 May 1800. Now he is pressing along the shores of the river Adige. Just on 7 January 1801, when Magdalene is trying to resume her correspondence with Durini, the French General Brune breaks through the river Adige and advances into the Venetian lowland. During the hostilities, the Canossa palace was in the midst of the contenders, but Magdalene’s letter reveals, by now, only a remote sense of fear.

The French are now masters of the city and the Marchioness’ letter could now be sent to the Milanese noble lady through one of their officers.

My beloved friend,

Although I am not yet certain, if the mailing service is now free to proceed smoothly, I want, however, to write to you, my dear Carolina, flattering myself in any case, that one of the officers of General Brune1 who is lodging in my house, will deliver this letter to you. First of all let me tell you that, thanks to the Lord, I am well, and so is my whole family, except my uncle Borgia2, who has been troubled by the ailments of old age for the last two months. You have done well to return to Milan, as I imagine that you are not very fond of the shots of the cannons3. For eight days out of ten we enjoyed the symphony, and one morning we even had a rain of bombs, grenades and similar things. I tell you with all sincerity, my dear friend, that I did not suffer at all. I cannot say that I was not afraid, but this has passed and, now, I am really well. All our acquaintances, too, have been preserved from every misfortune. Be at peace therefore about us, and recommend us to the Lord. We, too, do not fail to pray for you.

On the 3rd morning, the French entered Verona quietly. I tell you all these things because I know your heart, and that you will worry about me. In the next letter I will relate all the rest of our business.

Write to me as soon as possible. Accept the compliments of everybody and convey mine to the Count, your husband, and to the Marchionesses Arconati and Visconti. My cordial greetings to lady Checca, and be convinced that it is not possible for me to explain how much

1 BRUNE GUILLAUME Marie Anne, Marshal of France (1763-1815). He was a Law student and a journalist at Paris when the French Revolution broke out. He was one of its enthusiastic followers. Together with Danton he founded the club of the Cordillera. He was not young when he entered the revolutionary forces and rose quickly to the rank of General of a Brigade, then, because of his bravery he became Commander and finally General of a Division. Later he was ambassador to Constantinople. However he was suspected and accused, with little foundation, while he fought in the campaign against Prussia and was divested by the Emperor. Standing by the Emperor again during the 100 Days War, he was disliked by the reactionary crowd which killed him, in 1815, after the abdication of Napoleon. He was thus a victim of the hatred he had earned.

Even in Verona, where he was the guest of the Canossa family, he imposed heavy contributions especially on the nobility, among whom was also Marquis Bonfacio who had to pay two thousand ducats (cfr. Enciclopedia Italiana, Vol. VII, pag. 967, and Stofella, op.cit. pag. 105).

2 The brother of Marquis Carlo and Francesco Canossa. Born at Verona in 1722, like his brothers, he had responsibilities and honours at the Court of Vienna. A bachelor, he lived for many years at Verona at the ancestral palace, with his brothers and his nephews Ottavio and Girolamo. Towards the end of 1800 his health broke down due to the infirmities of old age which brought about his death in February 1804 (cfr. Sangalli, Storia di una contestazione, Tip. Francescana, Brescia, 1974).

3 After the battle of Marengo (14 May 1800) that restored to the First Consul, Napoleon Bonaparte, the dominion of Italy, the treaties with the allies dragged on for a long time until the agreement of 1 October, which failed, reviving hostilities on the 24th and 25th of December. In the battle of Mincio, on the 29th of the same month, “the French occupied the elevated areas of S. Massimo and S. Lucia, and the gates of Verona. On the 30th they bombarded the city. The bombs did not reach as far as Castelvecchio, but three of them fell on the Canossa Palace nearby (cfr. Stofella, op. cit. f.133). On 3 January the French entered Verona, but since the Austrians were encamped in the castles, their retreat was slow and the “symphony of war” continued for another two weeks until the surrender on the 19th revived hopes of a better future (cfr. Lett. Canossa).
I love you and how deep is my friendship for you. Goodbye, dear. I embrace you. I am, beloved friend,

Your very affectionate friend,
Magdalene

Verona, 7 January 1801
TO CAROLINA DURINI

4(Verona#1801.01.20)

During the war, the Canossa palace has been "in the midst of the battleground", nevertheless Durini should not fear. Her prayer has assisted all the members of the Canossa family, so that no one was hurt. Magdalene is drawing up one of her plans. As Fr. Pietro Leonardi had gathered poor boys, she has started with abandoned girls, beginning by helping two young girls.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 20 January 1801

I cannot explain to you, my dear friend, how pleased I was to hear, news about you at last, and to be able to know from an eye witness about the state of your health and the outcome of your journey. I would have been all too happy, had he not lost the letter you had written to me, but I hope that you will immediately make up for it as soon as the mail is back to normal. I wish it will be soon. I thank you immensely for the veil. Please, record my debt as we have agreed. After the arrival of the French in Verona, this is the third letter I am writing to you, but you did not receive any of them. I wrote the first letter three days after their entry. Perhaps, you will receive this letter only after it has had a long rest at the post-office. In my first letter I had written, as I now confirm, that all of us are well, that none of our acquaintances has suffered personally because of these events and that I, too, have been well, except for some hours of fear when they were fighting, especially in front of the windows overlooking the Adige. As for the second letter, I had prepared it. Having had no reply to the first one, I thought of sending it to you either through some French officer or on some other particular occasion, but I burnt it up later. I will make up for it with the present one. It is already something great, dear Carolina, that, though we cannot live together, at least we may write to each other when we wish to. During the bombardment, nothing consoled me more than that of our being able to correspond freely, and that, in this way, I could be with you for a little while. I must convey to you a thousand compliments from my whole family, my sister Orti, Fr. Carlo, Fr. Pietro Leonardi, well, from all those to whom, you can guess, I speak about you. Stella kisses your hands. Give my regards to the Count, your husband, and to the Marchionesses Arconati and Visconti. Greet lady Checca and recommend us all to the Lord. I assure you that we, too, recommend you to the Lord every day. Since I know your heart, you can imagine how many times, when we were in the midst of cannonades, and when the

1 The French entered Verona on 3 January (Ep. I, lett. 3, n.3, pg. 10).
2 ROSA, the fourth child of the Canossa family. Born at Verona in 1777, she married Count Giacomo Orti Manara in 1798. She was attached to Magdalene with an almost filial affection.
3 Fr. CARLO STEEB (1773-1856), a young German Lutheran, he was born at Tubinga. “In 1792 he was sent by his father to Verona to get practice in the trade of spinning” (cfr. Dalle vedove, Don Gaspare Bertoni, Stimatini, Rome, 1791, pag. 28). In Verona he converted to the Catholic Faith. He was ordained a priest and with Luisa Poloni (1802-1855) he founded in the same city of Verona, the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy, specially dedicated to the assistance of the hospitals. (cfr. G. Casetta, Il Servo di Dio, Don Carlo Steeb, Poliglotta vaticana, 1964). He was beatified in the Holy Year 1975, by Pope Paul VI.
4 Fr. PIETRO LEONARDI, born in Verona in 1769 of Francesco and Orsola Fusari. His father was a judge of the House of the Merchants and also chemist and pharmacist. Pietro, ordained priest in 1794, on his visits to the patients in the hospital of Mercy, immediately noticed their moral, hygienic and assistential needs. In 1796 he tried to remedy these by founding the “Brotherhood” for the free assistance to the sick. Its members were ecclesiastics and lay persons, men and women, nobility and the masses. To save the young, in 1799 he opened the Institute of the “Street boys” with a school for poor boys. In 1809 he founded the “Daughters of Jesus” to take care of the poor girls and those in danger (cfr. Crisostomo da Cittadella, l’amore operativo. Il Servo di Dio Don Pietro Leonardi, Verona 1952).
grenades and bombs poured onto the city, I thought of how my poor Durini must be greatly worried about us, how much she must be begging the Lord that no misfortunes may happen to us, as in fact they did not occur. It is time that I stop saying so many words, and that I tell you something about our affairs. Otherwise I will not end anymore, as I always think I am talking to you when I write. First of all, I will tell you of your lady from Piedmonte, who, immediately after your departure, entered the hospital. I cannot tell you more about this, for it is some time that I was unable to go there. Pellegrina has ended her pains with a holy death. Metilde was seriously sick, but now she is getting better. After Fr. Pietro returned, fully recovered from his illness, the Congregation of the Religious of the Hospital has come alive again, has been strengthened and increased. If you are of the same idea as you told me, I will ask for their Rules, copy them and send them to you. Send me an answer also about this. (Fr. Pietro) They started to gather two or three poor boys. He Fr. Pietro is willing to take the eight-year-old little boy, of whom we had spoken; the one who was learning how to steal in Piazza Navona. About this, give me some addresses so that I can find him out. I cannot use that of the Marquises Roma, because they have left the place. As for me, my dear Carolina, I am not as good as Fr. Pietro. I, too, have started with my girls, but my companion, up to now, has only two of them as it was not possible to move house. I will speak to you about this and something else another time. Goodbye, my dear friend, I am and will be always entirely yours.

I am, beloved Carolina

Your very obliged, very affectionate friend,

Magdalene of Canossa

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5 Like her, Pellegrina and Metilde were patients in the hospital of Mercy (Ep. I, lett. 2, n.5, pg. 7).

6 They belonged to the “EVANGELICAL BROTHERHOOD OF HOSPITALLER PRIESTS AND LAITY” founded by the Fr. Pietro Leonardi. It was first recognised by the civil authorities on 6.10.1797. The new Municipality of Verona gave a second recognition in 1801. The Government opposed it and tried to suppress it while Leonardi was in prison (1811-12). The “Brotherhood” was approved by Pope Pius VII, who also endowed it with an indulgence.

The general plan of the “Brotherhood” was printed for the first time in 1796. It was revised and retouched several times, until it took a final elaborated form agreed upon by all the associates in 1801.

On 16. 6. 1801, the plan was re-printed and sent to Durini, through Magdalene of Canossa. It could be a sample for the Pious Union, which Fr. De Vecchi was starting together with the Marchioness Arconati. The association aimed at very wide pastoral objectives, but facts showed that the means were inadequate. The members of the «Brotherhood» consisted in collaborators for the day and for the night. (Cfr. Carla Tronconi, Note sullo sviluppo dell’Istituto Canossiano in Milano ed aspetti storica, economici e sociali della sua evoluzione, Opera inedita).

7 It is a little square in Verona, now to the right of the Post Office. It was a vegetable market. Durini lived close to this square during her stay in Verona.

8 Belonging to the patrician family of the Marquises Roma Orsini of Milan.
My dearest friend,

Praise to heaven, I have finally received your two much longed-for letters, my beloved friend, one dated 14 November, written, I think, as soon as you reached Milan, and the other dated 21 January. I am happy that this last one confirms the good news about your health, I had heard about from your coachman. I, too, am sufficiently well, but not to lose, as you know, my very old custom of always having sick people, I have my uncle Borgia\(^1\) who is getting worse instead of improving. I fear his sickness may turn chronic and may lead to some fatal consequences. My dear Carolina, recommend him to the Lord.

In my last letter, I gave you some news about the Religious of the hospital\(^2\) and about the boys. In this one I will tell you about the situation of my girls. Because of various difficulties, it has not been possible for that companion of mine, whom you know, to move to the House that I had rented before your departure. Therefore, I have entrusted to her that girl of mine whom you know, and I have taken with me the one of Orti\(^3\). I have found her full of an inexpressible goodness. When the French dropped the bombs over the city, since three fell around our house, I sent her too, to my companion. Thus we have started with these two girls. The little one\(^4\) is still where she was. Now I am negotiating for a very convenient house, located almost in front of the Church of the Filippini.\(^5\) The contract is almost ready, and I would like to congratulate myself for having at last found a place suitable in every respect, but above all, for the spiritual assistance of these girls by that pious Congregation. I hope to link them to those good Religious.

I must also say that I am very happy with my companion\(^6\) and the way she cares for the two girls. I shall keep you informed of eventual happenings. This work must develop with the help of the Blessed Virgin.

I am paying attention to what you told me in your last letter. My dear Carolina, let us both take courage and hope for everything from the Divine Mercy. I have talked the other day to Fr. Pietro Leonardi, who is full of the most ardent zeal. I spoke to him about the Rules of

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1 Grand-uncle of Magdalene and brother of her grand-father Carlo (Ep. I, lett. 3 n. 2, pg. 9).
2 Religious, members of the “Brotherhood” (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 6, pg. 12).
4 One of the first boarders at the beginning of Magdalene’s works. “She brought with her the painful story of a family tragedy. She was a little aristocrat.” (cfr. Stofella, op.cit.)
5 THE FILIPPINI OR THE INSTITUTE OF THE ORATORY OF ST. PHILIP NERI are simple priests without vows. But they live in community, united by a bond of fraternal charity. They are voluntarily coordinated and subordinated to a superior and his assistants regarding the community. The first nucleus was formed near the Church of St. Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome. It was composed by some priests who were attracted by the zeal and the newness of the apostolate of St. Philip Neri. In 1612, the rules which the priests had been accustomed to follow were codified and approved by Pope Paul V. (cfr. C. Gasbarri, in Enciclopedia Cattolica, vol.V pag.358-359).
6 METILDE BUNIOLI. She entered Magdalene’s Institute only in 1820 for family reasons. But she had worked with her right from the time of foundation in 1808. She outlived Magdalene by another 16 years and died at the age of 82, in 1848.
the Religious of the Hospital. He told me that even your good Archbishop has asked Fr. Joseph Cristofoli for them, but that before giving them, they wanted to modify them, rearrange them and improve them through practice. He added that if it is urgent, he will give them to me as they are. I, therefore, depend on you. Dear friend, I think I have told you enough about my affairs for this time. All our friends ask me to convey to you their greetings. Do the same for me with the Count, with the Marchioness Arconati, whom you never mention, and with the Marchioness Viscontina. Metilde is already out of bed, so that my pioneer is out of danger even this time. If she should see me as I am writing to you, I would never finish anymore, my dear Durini. My Lord, were I a bird, how often I would make my way to Milan. But patience is necessary. Keep up your affection for me and your friendship, and be convinced that it is impossible for me to have a greater attachment to your person than I already have, and that, I am yours, with all my heart. Greet lady Checca for me. Goodbye.

I am, my beloved friend
Your most affectionate and most grateful friend
Magdalene of Canossa

Verona, 29 January 1801

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7 Rules of the Brotherhood (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 6, pg. 12).
8 Mons. FILIPPO VISCONTI, Archbishop of Milan, born at Massino in the diocese of Novara in 1721. He died at Lyons in 1801. He was nominated to the metropolitan seat of Milan in 1783 by the Emperor Giuseppe II. It was an arbitrary act of the Emperor who made the nomination which was the prerogative of the Pope. Pope Pius VI refused to recognise the Viscount as the Archbishop of Milan. The appointment was effected however on 25 June 1784, after the Pope transferred to the Emperor the right to nominate bishops for Milan and Mantua (cfr. S. Furlani in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. XII, pag. 1749, c.1). Obliged to participate in the Congress of Lyons as a Deputy of the Cisalpine Consultation, he died in that city in December 1801, as a result of the fatigue of the journey and his advanced age.
9 Fr. GIUSEPPE CRISTOFOLI belonged to the “Brotherhood”. He and his sister Marietta were descendents of a family which, in 1795, was part of the noble Council of Conegliano. Its nobility was reconfirmed by a sovereign decree in 1820 (cfr. Repertorio genealogico delle famiglie confermate nobili e dei titolati nobili esistenti nelle Provincie Venete”, compiled by F. Schröder, Venice, 1831).
10 Metilde Bunioli, helper of Magdalene; she entered the Convent only in 1820.
Magdalene is bed-ridden and writes to Durini. She says that her sickness is brief and usual. She worries about her friend, who is feeling the loss of her Spiritual Director, Fr. Fontana. He has been entrusted with an important task in Rome. Such a loss could have consequences also on her charitable plans. The young Marchioness, who has already gone through such an experience herself, assures her that God will provide for everything. Meanwhile, she enumerates her pre-occupations: peace between the warring factions, her total self-gift to God, and the settling down of her girls, which is, by now, her main concern.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 3 February 1801

From your last very dear letter I get the idea that a few of our letters were lost. Dear Carolina, you say that you wrote to me five letters. I have received three of them since the arrival here of the French, and I received one from Cremona after your departure. Only the one you gave to your coachman could have been lost. One of mine, which I am afraid might have been lost, is the one I handed to Marquis Durazzo, soon after your departure.

Let us speak of the present, now, dear friend, and take advantage of the fact that we can write freely, since we have the freedom. Do not be afraid if I tell you that this time I write to you from bed. Thank God, I can assure you, that, except for being weak, nothing remains of my illness, which has lasted three days. You already know that in this season I often get sick. I had a little fever, but with two blood-lettings, it has gone. I hope to get up the day after tomorrow. Therefore, I beg you not to worry about me. There is no reason to be alarmed.

You will not believe how deeply I feel for you on account of the pain you are experiencing, my dear Carolina. To tell you the truth, from your letter dated January 2, I guessed you were somehow afflicted; an affliction, however, different from your present one. Last year, I, too, experienced such a situation, since the Lord took to heaven, that Religious who had assisted me from the time I wanted to be a discalced nun to the moment I began to undertake so many new projects, as you know. I confess that it has been a great loss also for me, but be sure that we shall not suffer the least harm. God will help. Even though it will entail a bit of agitation you will see that He will send another one suitable for your needs.

Dear friend, I promise to make and have others make some special devotions to the Blessed Virgin, for this intention, since I wish you to be at peace. This is my desire for myself as well. Do the same. Never keep away from Mary, and be sure that everything will be set right.

Forgive me if, out of affection, I dwelt at length on this matter. Believe me, since I came into this world, I am not aware of having had for anyone the type of friendship I have for you. I wish I could in some way comfort you. My uncle Borgia is better. All of them convey their greetings to you as usual.

1 A descendent of a noble family of Albanese origin, from Genoa. Eight of its members were dukes.
2 LIBERA Don Luigi, born in Verona in 1737. He was ordained priest in 1760 and died of apoplexy on 22 January 1800. He was buried in the tomb of the Priests in St. Vitale (Death Register of the Parish). He was the ordinary confessor at the Convent of St. Teresa in the years 1790-1793. His encounters with Magdalene played a very important part in her formation. In fact he was her spiritual director from 1791 to the beginning of 1800. It was a very delicate period of discernment. He led her to seek the Lord through a deep spirit of asceticism and an intense life of prayer. In the 66 letters he wrote to Magdalene we note that all his spiritual direction hinged on an exclusive choice of God. The letters that are also signed are preserved in the Canossian Archives in Rome.
3 Magdalene’s grand-uncle (Ep. I, lett. 3, n.2, pg. 9.)
Receive, together with this letter, Fr. Giambattista’s answer for our Viscontina. Please convey my greetings to her, as well as to the Marchioness Arconati and to your husband. I am glad that your sister and Fr. Palazzi have seen the Plan I sent you, if it has to succeed for the Glory of God. Meanwhile, dear Durini, while peace is being published with certainty and is being restored, we shall pray the Lord evermore to let us know His most Holy Will. I am always of the same opinion: to go anywhere He wishes me to go.

Let us see how things will be settled. Another time I will speak of a certain Association, which the Lord seems to have prepared to provide for my girls and which could be useful also in Milan. I am reading the works of St. Francis of Sales and of the Saint from Chantall. We will speak also about this at another time. The contract for the House near the Filippini is not yet concluded, because, as you know, there are always difficulties. But I think it will be over next week. I started writing this letter on the 3rd and I am finishing it on the 5th. I can certainly assure you that I am healed, and today I am getting out of bed. Goodbye, dear, be happy. Here people think that peace is certain. Love me as I love you, I embrace you heartily. Goodbye, beloved friend.

Your very affectionate and grateful friend
Magdalene

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4 Fr. GIAMBATTISTA BERTOLINI. In 1770, at the age of 22, he entered the Congregation of St. Philip Neri in Verona – as we read in their chronicles. He lived there for 58 years and died in 1827. He was exemplary in the several posts of responsibility assigned to him - Prefect of the youth, Prefect of the Oratory. Charitable towards the many poor people who approached him, he was also spiritual director to many devout Veronese ladies. During the period of the suppression he was able to conserve his House and Oratory. Together with his brother FRANCESCO BERTOLINI, who entered the Congregation in 1766 at the age of 23, while still living in community, he administered his family property efficiently, using the proceeds to help the poor and his Congregation. (cfr. Chronicles of the Filippini Fathers, Verona)

5 Don Carlo Riva Palazzi, a Milanese (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 13).

6 It is the first Plan written by Magdalene. It is an autograph, without date and title, given to Carolina Durini in her first encounter; it is called B6.6. (Cf. Ep. II/2, pp. 1413-1419.)

7 On 25.2.1801 Magdalene wrote to Durini that with the Treaty of Luneville, the city of Verona would be divided between two masters. In fact at that time the condition of Verona was really desperate. While Napoleon was fighting in Egypt, the Austro-Russian army had the upper hand in Italy. When this news reached him, Napoleon did not delay on the banks of the Nile. He left his troops and, with great daring, eluded the vigilance of the British fleet in the Mediterranean Sea and landed in France. He gathered a new army and made a sudden attack on the fields of Marengo. He surprised his enemies and won the battle after just one hard day of fighting. It was 14 May 1800.

The French recovered Lombardy and the Treaty of Luneville (February 1801) defined the borders of the new Republic, the Cisalpines, up to the Adige. Since the Adige flows through the city of Verona, it was under two regimes. The Eastern side was Austrian while the western side was French. The Canossa Palace was on the French side.

8 St. FRANCIS DE SALES, bishop of Geneva. Born in Thorens, the ancient Dukedom of Savoia in 1567, he died at Lyons in 1622. He was proclaimed Doctor of the Church by Pius IX in 1877. His doctrinal works centred around the theology of love. His was a loving fear of God, not a terror of God which made it possible to accept suffering without anger and only out of love for Christ. This brought to the modern world, confused by a rigid Calvinist theology, the gentle and efficacious vision of feeling like children and not slaves of God. (cfr. M. Petrocchi, in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol.V, pag.1606, c.2).

9 JANE FRANCES FREMIOT de CHANTAL. Born at Dijon in 1572, she died at Moulins in 1641. Of noble birth, she married the Baron of Chantal in 1592. In 1601 she became a widow with four children. In 1610 she decided to leave the world and found the Visitation Order with Francis de Sales (at Annecy in June 1610). The Order followed the gentle and humble Salesian spirituality (St. Francis de Sales emphasized that “charity is an ascending humility, and humility is a descending charity”). It began as a contemplative Order, but at the same time it served the poor. This met with the opposition of the Archbishop of Lyons who wanted the Sisters to be always within the cloister and that they should not visit the poor. So the Order was forced to return to its contemplative structure. The constitutions were approved by the Holy See in 1626. It was only later that the Order dedicated itself to the education of girls (M.Petrocchi, in Enc. Citt., Vol.V., pag. 491, col.1)

10 The street of the Filippini in Verona, presently named Via Tito Speri. The house is dilapidated and abandoned.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene is searching for a way to collect money. Her economic means have been already put at the disposal of the poorest, the most abandoned, but the project for social uplift she is now planning, requires a certain consistent financial help. She tries to get it through the « Association of the three soldi ».

My beloved friend,

(No date)

Here I am, dear Carolina, sufficiently recovered from this last ailment, but rather weak, perhaps because of the blood-lettings. Well, my sufferings can make you laugh. Uncle Borgia is carrying on. Who knows, when the good season arrives, he might improve. I have a thousand things to tell you and I do not know where to start from. First of all I want to tell you that the patients’ assistant, who seemed so good to you, is ready to follow her vocation, provided the Lord opens the way for her. But she also says that since she knows that you love her a lot, she doubts whether your eyes have judged her more according to your heart, than according to her actual ability. However, whatever it may be, were she able to, she would like to dedicate everything to this cause. Let us see what God wills.

My dear friend, I see you very disturbed, very afflicted. How much I wish to be close to you. I would not be useful to you at all, but I think I would like to console you. You keep oppressing your poor heart that is so good. I confess, I feel compassion for you. Were I able, at least, to enclose in this letter, two ounces of the air of Montebaldo, which abounds so much over here, it would help to amuse you a little.

For love’s sake, take courage. You are torturing yourself for nothing. We have to deal with Him who is infinite goodness and who will not give us poison for bread. Cheer up as much as you can. I understand that you will answer that it does not depend on you. Do at least as much as you can. If you could send your anxieties to me as you sent that veil for a feast, please take the chance to send them. I would be happy to have them myself, if that could lift you up.

Let us come to our girls, now. We are still negotiating about the House of the Filippini, but, because of many circumstances, nothing has been concluded yet. The greatest obstacle, I think, are the usual difficulties, which are the essential companions of these works, although they are very small. I was very happy to learn from your last dear letter, that the girls, that is the school where the girls of Marchioness Arconati are, continue prosperously. The difficulty for subsistence is common to all, at this moment. I would say not to take it seriously, because the Lord will not fail us. Listen to an idea which we have had here, and that has been successful up to now. As much as the circumstances allow it, and as I told you in my last letter, this scheme may be feasible also in Milan, either for the girls, or for those Daughters of Charity, whom, as you told me about, your sister has an intention to found. To understand the matter, it is worthwhile, first of all, that I tell you that we have an ideal monetary unit, that is

1 MONTE BALDO - a range of mountains to the north of Verona, that is noted for its healthy and exhilarating atmosphere. This is part of the venetian Prealps, between the Lake Garda and the valley of the river Adige. Breathing in the air of Monte Baldo is a local way of saying that one is in a good mood.

2 A house Magdalene was trying to get for her girls (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 10, pg. 19.).
not yet implemented, which is called a Ducat\(^3\). This is equal to six of our Lire and four soldi. Here, when we simply speak of Ducats, without specifying Venetian Ducats, which is in circulation and is worth eight liras, we always refer to the first. Therefore, we have started an association\(^4\) of persons. Each of them gives in alms three soldi a week. By the end of the year it adds up to seven Lire and sixteen soldi of our money. We thought of holding back a Ducat which is equal to six lire and four soldi, every year. The remainder could be given to help those poor Religious who collect these alms. I notify you that this is a private Association. Since it is a very small offering, many persons have enrolled themselves in it. Metilde\(^5\) has found for me a Religious who is collecting alms for charity. You see, if I can find a thousand persons, I shall have a thousand Ducats. Then we shall write the names in alphabetical order, separating them according to Parishes, and I will find a Religious for each Parish, who will collect them. I will tell you the rest another time, because the mail is about to leave, and I fear that you will worry if you do not see any letter from me. Goodbye, dear. I am totally yours.

Your Magdalene

\(^3\) The ideal monetary unit referred to here was used throughout Europe, i.e. One DUCAT equals 6 lire and 4 soldi. It is a silver coin minted by Girolamo Priuli in 1561. 1 Lira was equal to 20 soldi, and 1 soldi equalled 12 denari. This is differentiated from the DUCATELLO or the GOLD DUCAT or the ZECCHINO which was also called the BIG DUCAT, i.e. the Venetian Ducat = 8 lire. (cfr. P.G. Molmenti, *la storia di Venezia nella vita privata*, Torino 1880, pag. 92, 96).


\(^5\) Metilde Bunioli, a helper who will join the Canossians only in 1820. (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 6, pg. 29).
Magdalene is afraid that she has not explained clearly how her "Association of the three soldi" works. Since it could also be a valid solution to the economic problems of the charitable work in Milan, she gives a detailed explanation once more. Magdalene is eager to find the Rules of Religious Institutions that could be a pattern for the social plan that they have in their mind. Durini is also doing the same in Milan.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 15 February 1801

I start writing to you today, my dear Carolina, as to have time to tell you many things, and since it is not possible for me to do so later. You did well to write to me by post, otherwise, last week I would have been deprived of the content of your letter which is so dear to me, not having yet received the other letter, which you tell me was sent by a special mail. I am very well and I have recovered from the various illnesses, that, as I told you before, only make one laugh. I thank you for the interest you take about my health, that truly, I do not deserve. I assure you my health is excellent.

In the last letter that I wrote to you, you will have found the description of the Association\footnote{«Association of the three soldi» to collect the money (Ep. I, lett. 7, n. 4, pg. 21).} for my girls. For lack of time I had not been able to add the observations that I state here. The offering is really very small. But given our actual critical circumstances, it seems to me easier and more suitable. I think, everybody can give these three coins weekly, without much inconvenience. I have also tried to arrange for the offering to be collected every week, so that the associates keep it in mind. Also I think, that if too much time passes, it may become burdensome to give the total sum all together. When compiling the register, we have been careful to leave some lines, as they do in Milan in the Catalogues of the Doctrine, because if there are some people who want to pay monthly, they can do that, and even yearly, if they wish. Perhaps you will tell me that such associations are prohibited in your area. Since these are private, no Government can prohibit them, much less ours which calls for "Liberty"\footnote{The Cisalpine Republic established by Napoleon in 1797. It included Lombardy, the Cispadana Republic, the area around the river Po and Valtellina. It fell in 1799, was restored in 1800 and in 1802 was called the Italian Republic (having Napoleon as president and Melzi D’Eril as Vice President). In 1805 it became the Kingdom of Italy (cfr. Modernissimo Diz. Illustrato, Ist. Geogr. De Agostini, pag.234, c.IV).}. I say all this my dear friend, only to tell you everything I know, being well aware that the customs vary from one place to another, and that sometimes what succeeds in one place, as perhaps in my small area, would not be possible in a bigger place. If I have not explained myself clearly, do write and let me know, so that I will try to explain better.

Today, 16 February, I received your other most dear letter, which contains the letter of our Viscontina. I add a few lines, if you have no objection, as a reply for her. As she is your friend, whom I love and esteem very much, since I have come to know her as being very virtuous, you can imagine how dear her letter was for me.

Do not betray me, my dear Carolina, in revealing our plan\footnote{It is the first Plan B.6.6} to her. It is true that I told you to speak of it freely when you see that this can be useful. Only I requested you, when it was not necessary or useful, to say that it is of a friend of yours, without mentioning my name. Of the rest, you know that I am more than certain about your prudence. Feel free to tell
Viscontina and those you wish, as you see fit. I trust you. I thank you for your good will in sending me those papers. I know that you are zealous for God's glory before anything else. Please send me the Rules of Christian Doctrine of St. Charles\textsuperscript{4}, since I have met some Parish priests and other Religious responsible for the School of Doctrine, who are willing to make use of them even here. As you know, thanks be to God, we are not badly off regarding religion in our place. So I hope that these Rules will bring about much good. Speaking of books, Fr.Carlo Steb\textsuperscript{5} sends his greetings to you as well as to Viscontina. He has asked me to tell you that he has promised to pray to the Lord for both of you, and he recommends that you both do the same for him too. He reminds you of the book you promised, when you have the possibility to send it.

My cousin Carlino\textsuperscript{6} is very well. Sometimes he asks me about ‘Dulini’. I asked him this morning what he wants me to tell you, and he asked me to say he wants you to come here so that he may greet you.

I read a part of the Constitutions of the Salesians, based on the Work of St. Francis of Sales\textsuperscript{7}. I think they could be useful for us, if our plan succeeds. But till now I have only found those drawn up for the Salesians when they were erected as a Religious Congregation. I am reading the works of the Saint of Chantale\textsuperscript{8}, which I had never seen. I have not got to the point which you indicated to me, but if I find that it is not sufficient, I will plead with the Bishop of Annecy\textsuperscript{9}, when he returns, to send me the primitive Rule of when the Salesians were a Congregation without enclosure.

My dear Carolina, for the time being we will make use of all the material at our disposal, leaving the Blessed Virgin to smooth out the way and bring to completion everything according to the Divine Will. I believe, as you say, that we need much prayer, and this we will do, and if the Lord wants us to do this holy Work, we will succeed with patience, courage and time. I do not know how to thank you as I should, for the attention you give me in everything, and in particular, especially with this work. Even if I am not able to explain myself sufficiently well, I know that you love me and understand me.

The Bishop of Annecy left at the same time as my letter. I do not know exactly where he was going, but I do hope he returns. I forgot to tell you about the well-known conference with Viscontina. You do well to find the right time to introduce the discussion. It is better to wait for the opportune moment.

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\textsuperscript{4} Cardinal, Archbishop of Milan. Born at Rocca Borromeo d’Arona on 2.10.1538. His parents were Gilberto and Margherita de’ Medici, sister of Pope Pius IV. The first seeds of rebellion, sown by Luther in Germany, had split the unity of the Catholic Church in Europe, dividing it into two religious and political camps. There followed religious wars, controversies and separations from the Church of Rome in various European States. Borromeo was among the first fervent persons who wanted to stop the movement that from the north was threatening the Latin countries. Therefore, together with his uncle, he worked with indomitable energy to immediately reopen the Council of Trent. He followed the work of this Council until its closure on 3.12.1563. The 24 years of pastoral activity in Milan were such that they are remembered as the most laborious and fruitful years that a pastor of souls has ever exercised. When Pius IV entrusted the resolutions of the Council to a Congregation of Cardinals, he elected Charles as a member. He was among the promoters of the Roman Catechism for the Parishes. The Council proposed that this catechism be compiled and fixed as the only text for the religious formation of the people. Charles often visited the Bishop of Verona. He usually lived in what is now the Bishop’s palace. He is especially venerated in Verona. (cfr. G. Galbiati, in Enc. Catt., Vol. III, pp. 854 – 859).

\textsuperscript{5} Don Carlo Steeb, converted from Lutheran, member of the Brotherhood. (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 3, pg. 11).

\textsuperscript{6} Marquis CARLO CANOSSA (CARLINO), (1793–1844), cousin of Magdalene. Son of Gerolamo and Maria Buri, who on her deathbed, entrusted her two-month-old son to her niece Magdalene. On account of this responsibility towards her foster son, she had to delay following her vocation. In 1822, Carlo married Contess Eleonora Muselli (1800 –1852). They had 6 children, all of whom died very young.

\textsuperscript{7} Institution of St. Francis of Sales (Ep.I, lett.6, n.8, pg. 18).

\textsuperscript{8} Institution of St. Giovanna Francesca Fremiot of Chantale (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 9, pg.18).

\textsuperscript{9} More precise information from L. Guzzetti, “Esperienza religiosa e dottrina spirituale nelle ‘Regole’ della Canossa”, Padova, 1971, who states that Annecy was made a diocese only in 1821. Perhaps the reference is to the bishop of the diocese on which Annecy depended.
The contract for the house for my girls near the Filippini has been finally concluded, and if there are no more mishaps, the girls should move there at the beginning of March. Fr. Pietro Leonardi is ill, but not serious. When he gets better, he will come to see me and we will conclude these Rules for the Brotherhood of the Priest Hospitallers. If you have any other commissions for me, do me the favour of repeating them because, as you know, I would do anything for you, to serve you and make you happy. You know I have the memory of a cat.

I am waiting for the reply from that Ecclesiastic, whom the Marchioness Arconati would like to meet in Vicenza, to assist that person that she has very much at heart. I thought of asking the Superior General of the Filippini to find me a wise and holy Religious, or I could even ask Fr. Giambattista. If I have an answer before the post leaves I will get in touch with you, otherwise I will write to you with the ordinary post of Sunday. You are probably very bored by now with a letter that never ends, but I must tell you, my dearest Carolina, that my greatest joy, not to say my only joy, is to be in contact with you.

My compliments to your husband and to Marchioness Arconati. Best regards to lady Checca. The Orti family and all those of my family send you their regards. Goodbye, my dear friend, I am yours.

Verona, 18 February 1801

Your very affectionate, very grateful friend
Magdalene of Canossa

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10 Fr. Luigi Medici (1771 – 1839)
11 Fr. Giambattista Bertolini (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4, pg. 17).
The political situation is rather critical, because the ratification of the Treaty of Lunéville, concluded on the 9th of the same month, leaves doubts about the fate of Verona, that has to be divided between the French and the Austrians, making the future more problematic. What has no flaws, instead, will be Magdalene’s affection for her friend.

My dearest friend,

I had the intention of writing to you, as I told you in my letter of last Monday. But I was able only yesterday to obtain the name of that Director of Vicenza, that your sister Arconati asked for. I have two names, both Filippinis in Vicenza. One is Fr. Camuzzoni, who would be suitable if the person that he has to direct is a woman. The other is Fr. Stroidi who would be more suitable for a man. If you do not wish to direct this person to either of these two Filippini priests, please be kind enough to write and let me know, so that I may search for someone else. Now I must come to terms with you. I am cross with you for the compliments you made to me in your highly esteemed letters of the 16th and 17th of this month.

It must not even come to your mind to recopy a letter written to me and then continue to add on compliments. You see that I do the same with you. I ask you for many favours. Then I make mistakes and change them. Then I write to you, again and again. Well, I really treat you with that liberty which the truest of friendships permits, and show you the truest affection. I know that I am completely repaid by my dear Carolina, but I want you to deal with me with the same liberty.

You can imagine with what pleasure I heard of the result of your meeting with our Viscontina. I am certain that you will cultivate those good dispositions that you have discovered. The Lord will do the rest, according to His Divine Will. I hope meanwhile in the next letter to be able to tell you the day on which my girls will pass on, together with Cristina, to live in the House next to the Filippini priests. I do not know anything about the boys, because Fr. Pietro is still ill, even though, they say he is a little better. As far as I know, he should be starting very shortly.

The Association of the Three Coins is at a complete standstill until the agreement of peace is finalised, whatever it may be. I will also tell you regarding this, that all of us in Verona have been greatly dismayed about the news that came from Milan. We are waiting for peace, but our city has to remain under two masters. It seems that they know our merits, or our demerits very well. Because either it seems that everyone wants us, or that no one wants our Cage of Crazy people, and so they want to divide the evil in half. I too spent a day in great affliction, because if this happens, it will be terrible for us since we have almost all our funds in

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1 A Priest from Vicenza, belonging to the Congregation of St. Philip Neri.
2 Another Priest from Vicenza, belonging to the Congregation of St. Philip Neri. Fr. Camuzzoni and Fr. Stroidi were highly sought after as spiritual directors, one for men, the other for women. (Archives of the Filippini Fathers – Verona)
3 Cristina and her mother helped Magdalene in her work with the abandoned girls. After a while both of them left.
4 House taken on loan, in front of the Filippini (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 10, pg. 19).
5 It was not operating while waiting for peace (Ep.I, lett. 7, n. 4, pg. 21).
6 What followed the Treaty of Luneville (9.2.1801). The river Adige was the dividing boundary. The bridges were guarded by sentinels and were the precarious link between the two sides of the same city. This division lasted until 1805 when the whole city was taken by the French, after the new victories of Napoleon… In 1805, Napoleon became King of the so-called Italian Kingdom with Eugenio di Beauharnais as his viceroy (cfr. C. Cipolla, la storia politica di Verona, Ed. Valdonega, Verona, 1954).
the Cisalpine\textsuperscript{7} area, even the house. I suppose that we will have to abandon the city and set ourselves up in the country. If I were free to decide in this case, I would come to establish myself in Milan. Now there are so many conflicting rumours. Not knowing which to believe, I am quite calm. But I tell you right now, that some of my family are really resolved to go to live where we have our funds. I imagine that out of necessity they will have to do it, since it seems to me that there will never be peace in our Country if the place is put under the command of two different factions. This fear of unrest is what is troubling me and will continue to do so if this situation becomes a reality.

Oh God, my dear Carolina, I believe I am scandalizing you by telling you all this. I should entrust myself completely to Divine Providence, but my little virtue is the cause of so many fears. To return to what I was saying about my girls and the general Plan. You say that you would want the Hospital for Incurables\textsuperscript{8}, and I tell you that I would be all too happy if we should live together. If you were one of the Incurables, I would immediately come as a nurse, to look after you.

I am obliged to your husband for remembering me. Please convey to him my regards, and also wish the Marchionesses Arconati and Visconti. All of my family wish you too. Stella and Luigi kiss your hand. My beloved friend, you find in this letter a true idea of the Tower of Babylon. I know that you will forgive me and you can be certain that even when my head does not work properly, my heart is always the same. I embrace you, therefore, and I am really all yours.

I am, my beloved friend

your most obliged friend

Magdalene of Canossa

Verona, 25 February 1801

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\textsuperscript{7} That is in the area that would remain under the French.

\textsuperscript{8} Hospital for Incurables, that was typical of the Renaissance period. Two important factors, though coming from opposite camps, brought about the foundation of this new type of hospital: the spread of syphilis, and the Oratory of Divine Love founded by Ettore Vernazza of Genoa. This, inspired by Catherine Fieschi Adorno (St. Catherine of Genoa), began in Genoa under the name of “Little place for the sick”. The idea was taken up and many such places were set up in various cities in Italy (cfr. G. Apolloni, in *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, Vol. IX, p.1792)
This letter deals with many topics: the family members of both these noblewomen, the political situation of the city and the vague hopes of a better settlement, finally a joy and an anxiety. Joy because on 3rd March 1801, Magdalene’s work has begun in the beautiful house near the Filippini Fathers; anxiety because she has been offered the appointment of Governess of the Hospital, the other work that she has so much at heart. But the numerous other duties that already demand her attention prevent her from understanding God’s Will with regard to this.

Verona, 1 March 1801

My dearest friend,

What did you think, my dear Carolina, when you read my last letter so full of sorrow for my poor Verona? You say in your last letter that the good air of Montebaldo would do you good, and that my letters amuse you. But I think that my last one will have brought you a bad feeling.

Having said this, I want to adapt myself to the division of the City¹, if this is what will be decreed. Thanks be to God, all my sisters are in this part, and all the people I know, including Cristina². Thus, we need a lot of patience. Let us talk about our affairs and let what has to happen happen. I do not want to think of it anymore. You have told me of your apoplectic laziness, but from what I can see, you are doing more in your confinement than what others do while in perfect health, beginning especially from me. You say that you are doing nothing, but certainly I would not know what more you could have done.

My dearest friend, I am sorry not to be able to send you the Rules of our Hospital Religious³, because Fr. Pietro, who came to see me today and whose health is improving, tells me that he does not want to give them to me before they are completed. Meanwhile, I thought that one of these days, when he comes here to discuss a plan, which, if I have time I will tell you about later, I will ask him to tell me the more essential things and I will begin to write these. I will send you the minor details when I have the time to sort them out in some order. The contemplation of your sister Arconati does not upset my dreams. It maybe that the Lord wants to give the merit of this new establishment to my dear Carolina. Even though I am no expert, I have read that a contemplative life is more perfect than an active one. Yet, I see that contemplation with action is the best choice. Therefore, I hope that Arconati, after trying them both, will decide for the perfection of the third, and will still help us. Meanwhile, I have heard with great joy that Viscontina will come with you to the Hospital. Take courage, my dear friend, I am waiting impatiently to hear about your the project⁴ and I am full of hope.

I thank you in advance for all the material you will send me. I must say that I have a bit of remorse because I feel I was indiscreet in giving you so many commissions to carry out for me.

Today, 3 March, Cristina finally moved to the House near the Filippini, with two of the older girls. Within this week I intend to put even the little girl there. Oh, God, how happy I am. Besides the advantage of being close to the Filippini, the house is beautiful, healthy, with a garden and I got it at a very moderate price. Next week, I hope we will begin to put into

¹ Verona is divided between the French and the Austrians (Ep.I, lett. 6.n. 6, pg. 18.).
² The lady taking care of the girls (Ep.I, lett.9. n.3, pg. 26).
³ The Rules of the Brotherhood are not yet ready (Ep.I, lett.5. n.7, pg. 15.).
⁴ She was preparing a project of the “PIOUS UNION OF HOSPITALLERS”, inspired by Fr. De Vecchi and in collaboration with many, among whom was also Marchioness Arconati.
practice that method that I wrote to you about when you were in Verona. The most Holy Virgin will do the rest, if the whole thing is for God’s glory. Metilde, who sends you her best wishes, is trying to find people to join the Association of the Three Soldi. For the time being I will let her do this, while we wait for the proclamation of the Treaty, as I mentioned in my last letter, to see if it is possible to extend this activity. We will be still Cisalpines, therefore we should not find any opposition, since we are dealing with organizations that help humanity.

To my surprise, my dear friend, I must tell you that I have discovered that I possess the gift of prophecy. Even when you do not tell me, I can guess when you are afflicted. There is a famous proverb in Verona which says that mad people are able to prophesy. I can do this partly because love is far-seeing and partly because you have always taken me into your confidence. Thus from your letters, I understand that you were worried and afflicted, just as you will have guessed that I was too, when I wrote my last letter. I am of the opinion that, between two friends, who treat each other with an open heart, it is impossible that one does not perceive the sufferings of the other, even without using words.

There is another thing I ought to confide to you, which will remain only between you and me. However, I ask you to recommend me and ask others to recommend me to the Holy Virgin, but without giving the reason. Know that the Governess of our Hospital is seriously ill. If she were not able to continue any longer, the Religious would like me to take up the charge, remaining in my house and putting another one, who will reside permanently in the Hospital, but who would depend entirely on me. I should supervise everything; in actual fact, be the Governess. You can see my dilemma from these few lines. You know on the one hand, the commitments I have with my family, my young cousin Carlino who needs care and attention, the house for the girls, which should work out well once the organization has been clearly set up. With what courage can I take on a new commitment when it would need the full time of one person just to take care of the material side of things, the economic organization and the vigilant supervision of the behaviour of the people working under me? On the other hand, I admit that another occasion like this will not easily present itself. It is in tune with our ideas, which obviously could be introduced, little by little, without arousing great attention from others. I fear at the thought of both refusing or accepting such an offer. The affair is in the balance. Perhaps the Governess will not die, but certainly she is very ill. In the meantime, dear Carolina, pray to the Lord a lot for me, and make other good souls that you know pray to Him so that His Will may be accomplished. I will tell you later how the situation turns out.

Everyone in my family sends their best wishes, especially the Ort family. Do give my wishes to your husband, to Arconati and my dear Viscontina. I cannot tell you anything about Nicolini, because here the French have bought up nearly all the horses of the city, and no one here goes about by carriage. I am afraid to go any distance on foot. My brother, who would like to accompany me, is very busy at the moment. So I only go to places which are close by, or I stay at home. Please give me some news of your aunt who is an enclosed nun.

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5 Metilde Bunioli, Magdalene’s helper (Ep.I, lett. 5.n.6, pg. 29.)
6 Under French dominion.
7 The Administration of all the hospitals of Verona was done from the Hospital of Mercy. A Governess was entrusted with the supervision of the various tasks of the infirmaries, the kitchen and the linen. In 1801 the Governess was seriously ill.
8 Her little cousin Carlo Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 8.n.6, pg.23.)
9 Magdalene’s youngest sister (Ep.I, lett. 4.n.2, pg.11.)
10 Sr. Luigia della Croce, a nun of the Terese (Ep. I, lett. 2.n.3, pg. 7.).
11 Nothing definite is known about her.
and the Canoness\textsuperscript{12}. I am afraid that even the latter is taken up in contemplation or she is ill. My dear friend, I must finish this long letter today, 4 March.

I embrace you with all my heart.

I am, my beloved friend
your very obliged, very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa

\textsuperscript{12} Nothing definite is known of her even from the family tree of the Durini, Trotti and Melzi families. The reference may be to Canoness Melzi mentioned by Stofello on page 227: “A lady who was a bosom friend of the saintly deceased (Arconati)”. She must have been a member of the Canonesses of St. Augustine, a Congregation that started in Lorena in the year 1597, by Pietro Fourier and Blessed Alessia Le Clerc (Marie Terese of Jesus).
10 March 1801

A time of continuous political changes for Verona and for «our unhappy country», as Magdalene calls it. The 9.2.1801 Lunéville peace treaty, that had restored the French dominion in Italy and had temporarily raised hopes for better times in Italy with the arrangements made by the Cisalpines in the Italian Republic, had ruined the country economically. All the same, the girls of her boarding house do well. Magdalene is able to return to the hospital for the usual visits. The will of God to accept or not to accept the direction of the same hospital seems evident to her.

My beloved friend,

I received from General Chasseloup¹ your loving letter as well as the two devotional booklets which you sent and I thank you for these. I will try, with the help of Fr. Carlo² or Fr. Giambattista³, to hand over the catechism to some of these French people. If I succeed I will ask you for some more copies.

Concerning the other book of the Litanies, you see what a beautiful chance I have. I have as many pictures as the invocations of the Litanies, and under every picture there is the same verse, that your book explains. So see how very useful that will be for my girls. At the same meeting as you know, I have also received the favours and letters of our Viscontina. Here is a further reason to follow your suggestion. I would have done so even without this, because I assure you, my dearest friend, that I find your idea very good. I feel great joy, when I can do even more than what you ask me to do. Would that I could do something also regarding the situation of our unhappy Country⁴, but I must confess that up to now I have not been able to get used to it. The situation of our house, which is near a castle and opposite to the Austrian battalion, the general desolation of the city, fears of being exposed on every part to a thousand dangers and my little virtue, all these torment me much. If, one day, I am calm, I feel doubly distressed the following day. May the Lord grant to us strength and resignation. In spite of everything, my health is excellent, better than the other years. I thank you for your care for me, but, for you to understand my ways, when I do not speak of it, it is a sign that I have forgotten about it, and that I am keeping well.

Let us now speak about our business, my dear Carolina. My three girls are staying together, and thanks to the Holy Virgin, everything is going on well. Regarding the Hospital, I think I will not take up such a commitment at present, though you know I would be pleased to do it, due to my liking and my inclination, I would say my vocation for it. I might expose myself to being involved in many commitments and not being able to fulfil any of them.

¹ CHASSELOUP LAUBAT FRANÇOIS, Marquis (1754-1833). General and Commander of the army under Napoleon, he directed important sieges (Danzica – Stralsunda); In Italy he improved the squares of Mantua, Peschiera etc. and planned the fortifications of Alexandria. He was one of the first to declare himself against Napoleon, so that after the Restoration, Louis XVIII nominated him Peer of France. He became the friend of the noble families that helped Magdalene and Durini (cfr. Enciclopedia Italiana, vol.3 pag.131).
² Don Steeb Carlo, member of the Brotherhood (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 3, pg.11).
³ Fr. Bertolini Giambattista, Filippino (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4, pg. 17).
⁴ Verona in particular, Veneto in general.
However, the matter is not yet finalised. From what happened, as I told you, I seem to realize that the Lord does not want me in this employment now, and to tell you the truth, this is my only reason for not accepting it. However, do continue, my dear, to pray to the Lord for me. You know already that, at times, He smoothens out in a moment the opposition of years. As for me, I am content to fulfil the Divine Will perfectly. Fr. Pietro is better but he has not yet fully recovered. He too has started with four boys. He conveys to you his greetings, and would like to know if you have received a certain printed catalogue or Method, that gives an idea of the institution of the Night Lay Hospitaller Brothers.\(^5\)

He promised me to join us with his companions, to fix and further clarify their rules. On Saturday, I think I will also resume my visits to the Hospital, which all of us interrupted, because of the circumstances of the past, and for me particularly, because of my fear in crossing Piazza Brà\(^6\) alone, when it is so filled with troops.

I have a lot of other things to tell you, my dearest Carolina, but time does not allow me to do so. Please convey my regards to your husband and your sister. Please convey my best regards to lady Checca. My pen ends here, but my heart will never finish to declare myself and to be, all yours. My family conveys to you their greetings.

I am, my dearest friend

Your very affectionate Magdalene

11 March 1801

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\(^5\) Cf. Regole della Fratellanza (Ep. 1, lett.5, n.7, pg. 15)

\(^6\) *BRA*, a vast and majestic square in Verona; irregolare nel suo tracciato, ma accogliente e bella e nella quale sorgono il Museo lapidario maffeiano, l'imponente Palazzo della Gran Guardia, il Municipio col suo colonnato neoclassico e l'ampia marmorea elisse dell'Anfiteatro o Arena. Brà deriva da "braida", spiazzo di campagna.
Magdalene of Canossa already foresees that she will not be selected as Governess of the hospital. Yet she does not surrender passively. She makes a plan that would allow her to carry out her assistance to the sick all the same.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 18 March 1801

Each time I write to you, my dearest Carolina, I am forced to start my letters with a thousand thanks, either for one thing, or another. This time I must thank you for your lovely letters, for the Instruction on the Doctrine of St. Charles\(^1\), for the other beautiful Prayers of the Holy Angels and for the pictures, which I have distributed to my girls. Accept them, therefore. They are sincere, and from my heart, and I would like to be able to fulfill the intentions for which you have so favored me. At least, I will do as much as possible, and next week, through special channels, I will write to you about what I am arranging with Fr. Pietro Leonardi, whose letter for the Christian Doctrine I enclose with this one. Meanwhile, my dear friend, I tell you that I have now lost hope of assuming the office of governing the hospital. It was the Religious of the hospital who wanted me to become the administrator. But the Temporal Section, i.e., the secular one\(^2\) that is in command has not said a word to me about this. This tells me, therefore, that if it were God’s Will that I undertake this office, He would have touched the hearts of those people who would seek me themselves without being manipulated. They, not having done so spontaneously, could have cast shadows and become a real obstacle to the work in the future. However, my dear Carolina, let us continue to pray that even in this, the Will of God may be truly fulfilled. Well, on one hand I feel sorry, but on the other I am content. It is not that I would have difficulty attending to the girls and to the Hospital, because, as you say well, this is our main plan. My difficulty in taking up this commitment would instead compromise my ties with my family and the carrying out of my other duties, especially the needs of the Hospital and my obligations to it.

If the Lord leaves things as they are, this is how I would go about the matter so as to carry out things in the best way and obey at the same time. I am told that they hope to find a Governess who is good in all respects. I will take the chance to go to the hospital for the usual visits, get acquainted with the newly-elected and, if I see that we can get along, little by little, I shall try to become friends. We may do so, in such a way that no one will notice it and without threatening anyone. Then, when our friendship is established, I will try to draw her to our ideas in such a way that though she is in the limelight, we could try to carry out our Plan\(^3\) sweetly and wisely. What do you say, my dear?

I am a bit anxious about you, I fear that you are upset, or rather, that you are agitated. If

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\(^1\) St. Charles Borromeo, archbishop of Milan (Ep. 1, lett. 8, n. 4, pg. 23).

\(^2\) Temporal section, that is secular. The many hospitals of Verona were all assembled in that of the “Misericordia” whose administration was entrusted to the so-called “temporal Section” Its members were lay people, more or less indoctrinated with new ideas.

Fr. Steeb and Fr. Leonardi would have liked to entrust this charge to Magdalene of Canossa, but the administration did not appreciate the choice because the fidelity and the attachment of the Marchioness to the Church and the Pope was well known to all. (Cfr. Casetta, op. cit., pg. 113, 114).

\(^3\) M.d.C., Plan B. 6. 6, in (Ep. II/2, pp. 1415-1418)
I could become a bird I would come to keep you company for some time, and how happy I would be.

Oh God, my dear Durini, how many troubles of every kind we have in this world. I had decided not to speak to you any more about this division in Verona \(^4\), but I always fall into this trap. I must end because I am short of time. All the rest in the next letter I will send you. I send my usual greetings to those you know, the rest is of course for you. With a loving embrace. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

\(^4\) French and Austrian
Magdalene's experience of suffering makes her exhortation to a confident abandonment to God’s help more convincing. Durini has lost the support of her spiritual director, but she should not be disheartened: God wants to be her only support.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 22 March 1801

Although I longed to be able, to pay back a little this time, by writing to my dear Carolina, time has deceived me again. Therefore, I will write to you, if not as much as I want, at least as much as I am able to write. First of all, let me tell you that, yesterday, I received your dear letter of the 18th, which clearly shows me your situation. I confess that I feel it very deeply. Oh God, my dear friend, I too need to tell you what I think. It is impossible not to feel, but there is nothing to fear about how God disposes things. You are not at all at fault in missing that support, which, after all, the Lord Himself had given you. I, at least at the moment, am not at all at fault in believing that in a few days we will get back our tranquillity. My dear Carolina, God wills it. He will be your only support, and, I hope, He will give me peace as well. Were I not held back by a thousand concerns, in a moment like this, I would gladly make a trip to Milan. But if our fate stays, or, as the saying goes, is sealed, at some time or another I will surely be able to come. I think I will be able to amuse you a bit. I must confess that I feel pained only to see you so distressed. It is not because finding yourself so isolated may be prejudicial to you. You will see that the Lord will supply for everything. He has removed every support so that He alone may sustain you. If you love me, take courage.

I cannot promise you to go to our Lady of the People because, being alone, I am afraid to walk to the Cathedral, but I promise you to send some good persons and to pray at home or in some other Church nearby. Please, continue to pray for me. In my previous letter, which will come to you together with this one, I told you the reason why I have been advised not to

1 Her confessor who was called to Rome. FONTANA FRANCESCO LUIGI, Cardinal, Barnabite Priest, born at Casalmaggiore (Cremona) on 28.8.1750. He died at Rome on 19.3.1822. He taught Literature, Latin and Greek in the Colleges of Bologna and Milan until, in 1797 he was elected Provincial of Lombardy. Cardinal Gerdil wanted him in Rome as consultor of the Congregation of Rites and the Holy Office and as Secretary of the Congregation for Oriental Rites.

In 1804, in his capacity as theologian, he accompanied Pope Pius VII to Paris for the coronation of Napoleon. In 1807 he became General of his Order. Because he had to prepare the Bull for the excommunication of the Emperor, from 3.1.1811 to April 1814 he was detained as a prisoner at Vincennes. Then he returned to Rome. In 1816 he was made a Cardinal. (The Bull of excommunication was dated 10 June 1809) (cfr. C. Testore in *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, vol. V, pag. 1495, c.1).

2 MADONNA DEL POPOLO. A figure of the Virgin venerated in the Cathedral. Even at present the people of Verona have a particular devotion to this wooden statue adorned with gold, of the Virgin seated on a gilded throne with the child Jesus in her arms, at whom she gazes with an exquisite maternal attitude.

Her chapel is the first to the left, beside the presbytery.

3 The CATHEDRAL of Verona. It is a Church whose origins date back to ancient times, since it was constructed on the site of a Christian Basilica of the V Century A.D. It has a Gothic-Roman façade. The interior is divided into three naves supported by gothic pillars and with a vault decorated with gold stars. The marble ring that encloses the presbytery was designed by Sammichelli (cfr. *Quattro passi per Verona*, Ed. Bettinelli, Verona, 1957, pag.35).
accept the post of governing the Hospital. Let us leave this matter, too, in God's hand and wait for the moment decreed by Divine Providence.

My sister Maffei\(^4\) will deliver this letter to you. She is coming to Milan on business, and, this is only for you, also to recuperate a little. But do not speak about this, because she does not want me to tell anyone, much more so because she is rather anxious. Imagine, being pregnant, with her fears, afflictions, as well as all that she experienced the other time, these things are not at all helpful. You will receive together with this letter the Catalogue of the Priests and Lay Hospitallers\(^5\). By and by, as they will give me the remainder, or when they will tell me, I will write or send it to you. I also thought of sending you a booklet of a Novena, which, they say, can work miracles. I hope that in your situation, it will calm your anxieties.

Please excuse me because the booklet is not a new one. I cannot find any here. So I am sending you my copy. I will borrow a copy of one of the ladies here.

In the next ordinary post I will write to you about Merli\(^6\) and the rest. I understand your character well. Time does not permit me to write more. I embrace you tenderly. Please convey my greetings to everybody you know. One more word since I have a moment. Much love to our dear Viscontina. Tell her that things are settling down. I am eager to introduce here too, the prayer of the Three Hours\(^7\), since some of the Filippini Fathers are interested in it. With regard to this, I will beg either you or her, for the music about which she wrote to me. Goodbye, my dear friend, from the bottom of my heart. Tell me what Viscontina says regarding my last letter to her.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene

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\(^4\) LAURA MAFFEI, the first child of Ottavio Canossa. She married Marquis Antonio Maffei in 1791, the last descendent of the second branch of the Maffei family. Her heirs were her four daughters: the first married Count Nuvoloni; the second Marquis Zenetti; the third Count Morti of Ferrara; the fourth Count Calcagnini of Ferrara (cfr. Various genealogies from: *repertorio genealogico delle famiglie confermate nobili e dei titolati nobili esistenti nelle Provincie venete*, compiled by F. Schröder, Venice, Tip. Di Alvisopoli, 1831).

\(^5\) A part of the Rules of the Brotherhood (Ep. 1, lett. 5, n. 7, pg. 15).

\(^6\) A patient in the hospital (Lett. 2, n.4)

\(^7\) Devotion of the Three Hours agony of Jesus on the Cross
The sorrow of Countess Durini does not decrease. Magdalene supports her affectionately. She assures her that she has asked for the prayers of Cevola, a young lady, who has been ill for quite a number of years and is suffering a lot. She mentions the progress of her charitable work.

My beloved Friend,

Verona, 24 March 1801

I am more at peace, my dear Carolina, regarding what I wrote to you that was afflicting me so much. I tried to reason things out in case what I fear comes true, but it consoles me a lot to think that it may not happen at all. Meanwhile, let us say ‘God’s will be done’ and hope for the best. I would also like to hear the same about you, my dear friend. I wish that you, too, be comforted and peaceful. You will say that, unlike myself, in your case you have no hope. You are just partly right in seeing your affliction as irreparable. But my consolation proceeds from hope and is therefore not so strong as yours, which is grounded on faith. Do not think that I say this because I look at your troubles with binoculars and my own with the microscope. No, my dear friend, I assure you, if I could spare you from them and undergo them myself, I would do so with all my heart. Since this is impossible, I would like to console you as much as I can. I went to visit Cevola.1 If you remember, she is that young lady who has been sick for sixteen years. Without telling her the reason, I have asked her to pray for you. She greets you and wishes to hear from you too. I feel sure that the Lord will console you. I am longing for Saturday2 to have news from you. I believe that few persons can desire to see you at peace as much as I desire it. Remember, my dear that the Holy Virgin is the helper of the afflicted. You may guess that I have so many things to tell you, and that I have forgotten all of them. Meanwhile, let me tell you that today, the 25 instant, I met Manzoni3 while he was attending to a sick Lady. I conveyed to him your greetings and he appreciated that very much. He told me a thousand things that I should tell you on his behalf.

Thanks to the Lord I continue to be very pleased with my girls and with Christina4. A second companion has been proposed to me, who, they say, has all the necessary qualities and with an agreement of some advantage to me, though not a big one, on condition that she depends in everything on Christina, so that both may follow the prescribed method. Here, too, dear Carolina, prayer is needed. That's all for now. At another time I will tell you the final decision.

Catherine Merli5 is always in the hospital. If her mistress is ready to give her some alms, and she gives them on time, you could send them to me when my sister6 returns. Fr. Carlo7,

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1 A young lady of the Veronese aristocracy struck down by paralysis, of which she suffered for 17 years, i.e., until her death in 1817. She was an example to all but especially to the ladies of Verona, for her acceptance of suffering and for her prayerfulness.
2 The postal system that was called “ORDINARY”, had various despatches, but the usual one was on Mondays. The “day of the post” was Friday, at least for the correspondence between magdalene and Durini.
3 MANZONI ANTONIO, a medical surgeon
4 The lady taking care of the girls (Ep. I, lett. 9, n. 3, pg.26)
5 The sick person known by Durini (Ep. I, lett. 2, n. 4, pg. 7)
6 Her sister Laura was married to Antonio Maffei (Ep. I, lett 13, n. 4, pg. 36)
Matilda, and all the others in my family convey their greetings to you. Convey mine to your husband, to Viscontina and to your sister. Concerning what you asked me about whether I have received all your letters, I tell you, my dear, that I have always faithfully received a letter by post every week, besides those that I have received on particular occasions. I, too, have written to you once a week, by post. I have done so also on some rare occasions, because there have not been such occasions or really very rarely. But you must remember that, since I always receive your letter two days after I have sent you mine, I can answer your questions only one week later. Therefore, I am always one letter behind time, however hard I try to be prompt.

I have to speak to you about the Catechism, but I will do so next week. You too should tell me something about your aunt, who is a nun, about the Canoness, and of your project regarding visits to your Hospital. I mention this only to remind you about it. I can wait for the time when you are calmer. I will also tell you, another time, something about our visits. Goodbye, dear friend, love me as much as I love you, take heart, I am always

All yours, Magdalene

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7 Steeb Don Carlo, member of the Brotherhood (Ep. I, lett. 6, n. 6, pg. 11)
8 Bunioli Matilde, her helper in the apostolic activity (Ep. I, lett. 5. n. 6, pg., 29)
9 Durini’s aunt (Ep. I, lett.10, n. 11, pg.30)
10 Countess Teresa Gallien de Chabons (Ep. I, lett. 10, n. 12, pg. 31)
11 The “Ca’ granda” or Main Hospital of Milan
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene is following the Spiritual Exercises while at the same time attending the celebrations of Holy Week. So she writes briefly, since she does not have much time.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 30 March 1801

This week, my dear Carolina, you should be satisfied with just a few lines, because, being Holy Week we have the Spiritual Exercises here. Then there are the liturgical celebrations too. So I have very little time available. At home I must give as much time to Carlino\(^1\), and Uncle Borgia as the time I spend in Church. Let me tell you however, that if I cannot write you a long letter, I do not forget my humble prayers for you.

Enclosed with your last dear letter, I received the prayer sent to me by our Viscontina. It is just what I needed. My surrender is so partial. Now I do not know whether it is out of boredom or desire, but I have decided not to think of it any longer. Wait for a long letter with many pages next week. Today, 1 April, I had been to the Madonna of the People\(^2\) to carry out your errand.

Goodbye dearest friend. Rest assured of my unchanging friendship. I am and always remain

Your Magdalene

Ps.: My usual greetings to those whom you know.

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\(^1\) Canossa Carlino, cuginetto e figlio adottivo di Maddalena (Ep. I, lett. 8, n. 6, pg.23).

\(^2\) Our Lady’s picture venerated in Verona Cathedral (Ep. I, lett. 13, n. 2, pg.36).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved friend,

Verona, 7 April 1801

I must reply to two or three of your letters, my beloved friend, to the last but one to which I replied only briefly last week, to the one I received in the last ordinary post and to a third one that I received on an occasion, together with a letter from dear Viscontina and the devotional books both of you sent me. First of all, I beg you to accept my thanks and to convey them to our friend, together with my most cordial compliments. Please tell her that I will reply to her very precious letter by the next mail, because a thousand commitments have taken up all my time. I began writing this letter yesterday morning, and I do not know whether I will finish it today by 8 p.m.

I have been keeping good health for some time. But I will tell you, my dear, that the illness my sister¹ says I often have, is but a very slight fever that affects my humour. This is what the doctor says. It comes almost every year in winter, and at times, it lasts for months. But in spite of it, I do not lose neither sleep nor appetite. I do not lose weight nor do I become pale. The first year I had it, they made me stay in bed for two months. I was subjected to blood lettings as a cure. And it passed off in its own time. Now that I have learned the lesson, I do not mind it at all. When I also have a cough and cold, I go to bed. If I do not have a cough, as this year, I do not bother about it, because it hardly troubles me at all. My sister asks me how I am. I really feel very well. So though I may have this fever I still answer that I am keeping well. She then asks me for how many days I did not have any fever. When I will say, “today”, she says, ‘see, you do not want to say that you are not well”. The fact is, I assure you, that my illness is such that I often forget about it. It does not give me any other inconvenience than having it unwillingly for an hour or two, and if, at that time I have something to do, I do not remember it, or even notice it. I have made this long dissertation to tell you how things are. Thank you so much for being so caring regarding my health.

I thank you, my dear Carolina for your gentleness towards my sister. You are right when you say that those people you met embarrass you. I feel the same way too. So, as much as possible, I put in practice the words of a certain Veronese song, that says: ‘Keep away, keep away’. This is between the two of us. To tell you frankly, I feel that the journey of my sister, in the uncertainty in which we are, has been a bit immature. Perhaps it will not help her business as much as she hoped it would. Perhaps it is my foolish desires that deceive me. Maybe it will be good at least for her health. I talk freely to you, my dear friend, being certain that you will not speak to anyone neither of Canossa, nor of my fears.

Yesterday, half of our City, the part beyond the river Adige, has changed masters². Today the

¹ Magdalene’s sister, Laura di Canossa in Maffei (Ep. I, lett. 13, n. 14, pg. 36 ).
² After the Treaty of Luneville (February 1801).
Austrians have taken possession, I believe, of Porta S. Giorgio, and certainly of Porta Vescovo. On the bridges we have sentinels of both our masters. I am quite calm, my dear Carolina, or at least up to now I am calmer than in the past. Pray for me and for Verona. You tell me that you have received the Catalogue of the hospital, but you did not tell me your feelings about it. Fr. Pietro, who greets you, would like to know your opinion. Since his health is always so precarious, he has not been able to give me the remainder of what you asked for. I cannot speak to you of the hospital not even today, because I have no time. I have to end this letter today 9 April, before the mail leaves. Through the next ordinary post I hope to tell you about the last decision of the Governess. Please continue to recommend me and have others recommend me to the Lord so that I may perfectly fulfil His will.

To quieten myself, I need to add another thing that only your friendship gives me the courage to dare. Do not speak to anyone of the Veronese song I had quoted earlier, because I know only the first words. It may even be a bad song. So please do not mention it, because I do not want to cause evil to anybody. Forgive me, my dear, love me and believe that I am all yours. I enclose a letter of Fr. Carlo. I have always sent your letters to Fr. Giambattista, but I have never received a reply.

If we continue to be a divided city, and if it is not too much trouble for you, send me some copies of the French Catechism to distribute to those who need it. Goodbye, dear friend I embrace you, and am yours forever. My usual greetings.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene

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3 One of the gates, which after the Treaty of Cambrai (1529), was constructed by Venice, with a new wall, around Verona. The one of S. Giorgio was only repaired, since it was constructed in 1525. Artistically it is inferior to the others: Pallio, Vescovo and S. Zeno (cf. C. Cipolla, *La storia politica di Verona*, Ed. Valdonega, Verona, 1954).

4 Another gate which, after the Treaty of Cambrai (1529), was constructed by Venice, together with the new wall for defence. The gate of Vescovo is artistically excellent. (Cf. C. Cipolla, op. cit.).

5 A part of the Rules for the Botherhood (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 7, pg. 15)

6 Fr. Bertolini Giambattista, Filippino (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4, pg. 17)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

17 (Verona#1801.04.14)

The reading of the «method» of the hospital in Milan gives Magdalene a first chance to evaluate critically the limitations of the «Brotherhood». It also urges her to pass on her zeal for charity to others, especially to the women employed in the material assistance to the sick. The problem of the Governess for the hospital in Verona is still unsolved. If the choice does not fall on her, the will of the Lord will be clear regarding her plan of assistance of the patients. At the moment she has another problem to resolve: the situation of a young girl, whom the Marchioness has taken away from an undesirable environment.

My beloved friend,

14 April 1801

I do not understand why the mail did not function well last week. My dear Carolina, I, too, have been deprived of your dear letters. Only yesterday did I receive the one dated April 8. I have never missed to write to you on the usual day, whether briefly or at length. There has been some obstacle even with your mail.

My health is good, my dear friend. I hope it is the same with you, although you do not tell me. Our situation is not as bad as I feared.

My sister wrote that she was pleased to see you, and that she found you as I had told her. From what I hear, I believe that at the moment I am writing to you, she is on her way back home. She also wrote to me about the great goodness of your friend, the owner of the house. I am more and more convinced about my idea that the Milanese ladies are really very good.

Let us get down to our business. I am very pleased with your idea regarding the method in the Hospital followed by your Association. I find it more useful than ours, which, with regard to us women, consists in nothing more than feeding the sick, as you have seen. You already know that I speak openly, and your goodness and friendship allows me to freely tell you what comes to my mind.

This thought has come to my mind. Suppose, besides the companion that each of you takes along, you were able to get some of those other girls interested in your Association. You told me that they are forced to serve the sick. But, as they do not do so out of vocation, they are not able to perform it in a way such work demands so as to awaken a spirit of love in them. This, you see, is only my idea and perhaps it is out of place, as I already understand that we should regulate ourselves according to circumstances. For instance, our method could be quite useless in your Hospital and yours, although it is better, may not be feasible in ours. Here, they have not yet nominated the Governess, and it seems that they would like me to go there, and carry on my work in the meantime. If the Lord wants me there, He will level out the difficulties on my part. I know that the lay Chairperson wanted to speak to me, but I don't

1 Description of the method of the "Pious Union for the Hospital" in Milan (Ep. I, lett.10, n. 4 pg. 29)
2 Of "the Hospital of Mercy" in Verona.
3 Election of the new Governess (Ep.I, lett. 10, n. 7 pg. 30)
4 Il PRIORE SECOLARE was the President of the administration of the Hospital of Mercy. It was a civil hospital which was transferred in 1812 in the large convent of S. Antonio del Corso. It was established in
know about what. If he comes before I close this letter, I will tell you what he says. Otherwise I will do so next week. Meanwhile, continue to recommend me to the Holy Virgin, and also beg others to pray for me, so that I may fulfil God’s will. As for me, I will not take any step. I want to see how the matter unfolds on its own.

I was truly pleased with the news about your aunt and the Canoness, I would like better health for both of them, but it is fitting to say that the Lord allows it to make them totally perfect. Fr. Pietro Leonardi is getting ready to begin, in a few days, the Catechism classes for the servants. I hope that the book you have sent me is helpful. He is a little better, but because of his health, I think he delays in bringing me the methods you want. One of these days he will be coming to see me. I shall wait to write to you about the way I think we will agree for Catechism here, to make it coincide with the overall Plan\(^5\), without making it too obvious. Please convey my greetings to your sister and also to your husband. All the members of my family greet you too. Greet lady Checca. I never forget you. Goodbye, my dear Carolina, love me as much as I love you, and believe me, I do so constantly. Stella and Luigi kiss your hand. Merli has told me to tell you so many things that I would not finish writing all about that even if I wrote until tomorrow.

Today 15 April, the Chairperson of the hospital was here, but he did not say anything about the governess. May the Divine Will be done. So that the ordinary mail does not come without giving you some trouble, I beg you, if possible, to look for the Family Delfini\(^6\), in Cuneo. Find out if an individual of this family has been serving in the Cisalpine Artillery of which he was a Captain and Commander two years ago. Find out whether he got married and if anyone knows where he lives, and finally, of how many persons this family is composed. Note that it seems that this is a noble family, and that this man is called Luigi. He seems to be the father of that young girl whom, as I told you, I have picked up, and taken away from a bad place, where she was, it seems, not because of any fault of her father. For greater safety, I recommend that you be very prudent in looking for him. He must never discover that the one who writes knows this young girl. Neither should he know that we are looking for him because of her. This is because I do not want them to take her away. And I, since I do not know if they are good Christians, I would rather keep her poor, but good, than expose her to becoming a bad noble lady. I embrace you again.

Your Magdalene

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1773 with the assets of the suppressed Abbey of S. Zeno and was built first in square Bra. (Cf. "Giornale della Santa Casa della Misericordia" del 1801).


6 Family DELFINI, a noble family of Cuneo. We have no news of her father Luigi’s reply, we only know that Maria Angela Delfini or Dolfin, daughter of Luigi, remained in the Retreat Canossa and died at 14 years of age in 1807 (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit. f. 160).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

In Milan there is a person who has a plan of charity similar to hers. Magdalene is happy about it, because it seems to her that, by founding merging these charisms, it will be easier to fulfil her «dream» that is still not very clear to her. Durini will have to arrange a meeting with that person.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 21 April 1801

Your letter dated 14-15 April has consoled me deeply, my dear friend.

I said, finally I can entertain myself a little longer with my Carolina, since, to tell you the truth, I do nothing else than speak about you when I can, since I cannot speak to you. Every time, when I write to you, I have a thousand things to tell you, and often I leave out some of them. Therefore, I will start by telling you that my health is good, and that I can assure you that I shall not get sick, neither in spring, nor in summer, nor in autumn. I passed the last winter better than the others. Maybe I am becoming stronger, and getting better and better. Regarding my sister¹, she has written that already twice she was about to have the fortune I was waiting for, that of meeting you. But she did not find you at home. I assure you that she wrote in a way that I understand she really meant it. So, on your part be at peace. On my part, my dear friend, I know your friendship and your heart well. I cannot doubt it, even for a moment. I was very happy to hear that you found her in good health. I must confess that I am always anxious about this, because I know that that trouble she has still persists. Between us I can also tell you what the problem is, so that you will not mention it, nor speak to her about it. For a month and a half she has been spitting blood almost every day, sometimes abundantly. They tell me that it is nothing to worry about. But when she is away, I always fear that something might happen to her, and that I may not be able to see her again. I already have my usual worries.

Thanks so much for the catechism books and the beautiful frame of St. Camillo. I like it very much. I have already begun distributing the catechism books. Regarding the patron Saint of the Hospital, he does not seem to want me just now. The new Governess has just been appointed². I believe she is the right choice, even for our plans. I will describe her another time. In the meanwhile be happy because I too am satisfied. I cannot tell you how happy I feel

¹ Laura Canossa Maffei. (Ep. I, lett. 13, n.4, pg. 36).
² RAMBALDO LODOVICA (1762-1833) Rambaldo Lodovica (1762-1833) (1762-1833) devoted herself to apostolic works and was directress of the Hospital of Mercy for more than 30 years. She considered such a hospital like “her own family and for the rest of her life lived therein” (A.S.M. - Archivio di Stato - Milan, Parte Moderna, Studi, 280, letters declining to assume the direction of the Imperial College of the Angels, January. 1812).
She was born in Corfù in 1762. At two years of age she was orphan of both parents. She was taken care of by her grandmother, the Marchioness Teresa Sagrâmoso of Verona, who sent her to the Benedictine Sisters for education. She was endowed with physical and moral gifts; she had renounced marriage so as to devote herself to the works of charity. She was a zealous and intelligent collaborator as the Hospitallers hoped. She served the poor for 32 years, renouncing also more lucrative offers and greater honour. She served the poor with exemplary charity until the end of her life, which occured in 1833 (Cfr. G. Casetta, Il servo di Dio Don Carlo Steeb, Poliglotta Vaticana, 1964, pag. 116-117)
to hear from you about that person in Milan, who has an idea similar to mine\(^3\). My dear Carolina, I seem to see great prospects that God wants something done. If the lady ever passes through Verona, you would do me the greatest favour to arrange a way for me to speak to her. You can be sure that I will keep it a secret.

You already know, that I have the rules of some Convents, similar to those of the Ursulines\(^4\). I have been promised the rules of the Hospitalers. In short, if we are able to meet we can be of help to one another. I could give all the rules I have. She can help me with her example and direction. But my dear friend, I am afraid I do not deserve such a consolation. If you see that a meeting is not possible, find out at least whether her Plan considers only the education of abandoned girls\(^5\) or also assistance in the Hospital; whether it is restricted only for the benefit of women, or is extended to both sexes as mine is.

Do not be sorry that the establishment is not to be made in Milan, because all of you are well provided with orphanages and hospitals. But in the ex-Veneto\(^6\) region, starting from Venice, there is nothing at all, not even a Ministry for the Sick. Nor are there Missionaries. It is for this reason that our Plan\(^7\) hopes to make up for all these necessities.

I have not yet met Fr. Pietro. See how many things I still have to tell you. I beg you then, dear Carolina, not to compliment me so much. What is the big thing that you do not want to leave to me? You have confused me instead, because indeed I always write volumes to you. What is worse is that I cannot overcome this shortcoming. My great pleasure is to talk to you, so that I do not even know how to write briefly. I am always begging you for a letter. This is enough. Forgive me. Accept my proposal to disturb me whenever you want, with total freedom. I too beg you for the same freedom with you. My usual greetings to those you know. My family too sends you their wishes. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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\(^3\) A Plan of Magdalene that was not yet finalized (Plan B6.6)

\(^4\) Name of the religious Congregation founded in Desenzano by St. Angela Merici (1474-1540) in 1535. It is the first secular Institute in the Church for ladies. Its members live in the family and devote themselves to all the works of charity and to the teaching of the Christian Doctrine.

\(^5\) Raminghe, girls who were orphan because of war.

\(^6\) The ex-Republic of Venice

\(^7\) Plano B.6.6, in Ep. II/2, pages 1415-1419
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved friend,

Verona, 28 April 1801

You have done very well, my dearest friend to write to me even by the ordinary mail, because, I must confess, that when I have no letters from you, I seem to lose my head. I have already received your short letter sent me through my sister\(^1\), who also gave me detailed information about you. I thank God and am quite happy about her health, and now that she has returned, I feel less anxious. She tells me that she has met you several times; I know well, my dear Carolina, that your way of life is very simple, but I assure you that I am equally obliged to you for your good intentions to assist her even more than you have done, if the situation of both of you had permitted it. Thanks for all the goodness you have shown her.

I am afraid that in this usual post I shall not have the time to write to our dear Viscontina. In this case, I beg you to convey to her my cordial wishes, and tell her that her little errands have been taken care of. Tell her that if her friendship with me is real, she can command me with freedom and you too should do the same. Fr. Pietro, who has a high regard for you, is keeping sufficiently well. Finally, next week, there will be a longer session with the other religious companions of the Pious Union of the Hospital\(^2\). They will then clearly state the Rules to follow. I will send you a copy. Regarding the catalogue\(^3\) you have received, note that there are many Religious, but they all have other engagements besides the hospital. Some are assistant Parish Priests, others teach in the Seminary, some are Confessors of nuns, except Fr. Pietro, who, as you know, has also at least three or four other commitments. But they do as follows: in a month each takes a turn for one or two nights. When they have a turn of two nights, they are on duty for one night every fifteen days. Then, the rest of the time, they attend to their other engagements. If, on a particular night they are not free, another substitutes for the one who is unable. Then that person substitutes the other when it is his turn. These Religious then, during the day, at a time convenient to them, go to instruct the patients, to hear their confessions and offer similar services. Since they are serving the Hospital out of charity, even if all of them are unable to attend, the work does not suffer, because there is also the Chaplain chosen by the Hospital who is always available. There are also other very zealous Religious and those who are less busy. These help each other. May be this method will be possible even in Milan.

My dear Durini, how happy I am to know that our ideas are similar in everything. Both you and I are thinking only of enkindling the spirit of charity in those girls who assist in the hospital. Would that I could think like you in everything. If I have not explained myself sufficiently regarding the Religious, tell me what is not clear and I will reply. How much I

\(^1\) Laura Canossa Maffei (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 4, pg. 36).
\(^2\) «Brotherhood» (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 6, pg., 12.).
\(^3\) Those enrolled in the « Brotherhood ».
would be willing to pay to be able to enclose Fr. Pietro himself in a letter, so that he may explain everything to you perfectly. As this is impossible I shall try to make up as best as I can.

Do not be upset if everything has not succeeded yet for Caterina Merli. Know that by a strange coincidence, without saying that neither you nor I know it, I was told that soon help will come from Gonzaga.

Our project for the Catechism, of which I spoke to you, has not been put into effect yet due to the present circumstances. We shall begin the catechism classes for the servants only next Sunday, in the Church next to the Hospital, that is the Church of St. Agnes. Like last year, as soon as the matter is finally settled, Fr. Pietro would like to find ways to ensure that each family sends all or some of its servants. I hope that he will succeed to do so peacefully. I will then write to you about the means he is going to try to use in order to succeed.

I must also tell you about the Governess, but I leave this for next time.

Please give me some news about that person who has a Plan similar to mine. Only to know about it and to think of it fills me with the greatest joy. My dear Carolina, are you tired of my talking and my questions?

Please do not get tired of loving me. This is enough for me for then I shall be sure that you will forgive all the rest. My regards to your husband and to Marchioness Arconati. Everybody sends you greetings. Orti has asked me to wish you the best in every thing. Certainly she does not love you as much as I do, but she too loves you very much. Goodbye, my dearest friend, remember the one who will always be

your most affectionate friend
Magdalene

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4 Carolina Durini did not find any way to help Merli.
5 Merli was a servant of the Gonzaga family (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 4, pg.7).
6 Church of St. Agnes. It was located in Square Brà, where there was the Municipio. A road in the Major District was called by that name. It was mentioned in the Statutes of the notai in 1268. It was a poor church, surrounded by malfamate houses. Being unable of financial self- support, in 1443 it passed the jurisdiction on to the close parish of S. Donato alla Colomba. After various events, in the second half of the XVIII Century, the church was renovated by Cristofoli, but in 1803 it was sconsacrata. In 1819 fu occupata dal corpo di guardia austriaco, trasferitosi dal palazzo della Gran Guardia, e là rimase fino al 1837, anno in cui l’edificio fu atterrato per costruirvi il palazzo della Gran Guardia nuova, adibito in seguito a municipio (Cfr. Collana « Le Guide »: T. Lenotti, Chiese e conventi, Ed. di Vita Veronese, 1955).
7 Rambaldo Lodovica (Ep. I, lett, 18, n. 2, pg. 47).
Magdalene is planning to meet Father Bellavite in Mantua. In 1796, he had founded an orphanage for boys and, in 1800 he opened one for the girls. Magdalene informs Durini about her plans.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 6 May 1801

Last week I was pleased to receive two letters from you, my beloved friend. This was either because you have been very fast, or it was due to the mail. I hope to receive another one on Friday, since I did not receive any this week.

My dearest Carolina, I am much obliged to you for remembering me, but I assure you that this is reciprocal. If I do not remember you as much as you deserve, at least I do so with the tenderest of affection.

If you only knew what beautiful ideas sometimes come to my mind when I think of what your husband told me on the possibility of seeing you again! Do you remember that he said he would come to Verona in autumn? He said that he would leave you with me, and go to Rovigo. It is better that I do not expect too much. But this seems such a sweet desire for me and I do not even want to abandon it. Let us leave this consolation in God's hands.

To talk to you of our business, let me thank you in the first place, for the rules you have obtained from the Stella\(^1\) Orphanage. I imagine it will be a place in keeping with the beauty of your Country. Besides let me tell you, that though ours is a very small one, I would have liked you to see the House\(^2\) that we have taken on rent for the few girls I have. Unfortunately it is not ours, but even thirty girls can be comfortably accommodated in it. They show me girls from many places, but I am slow to accept them, because you know how scarce our resources are these years. Up to now I have only those three whom you know.

I hope to make a trip to Mantua soon. The main reason for this is that I want to talk to Fr. Bellavite\(^3\), see his orphanage for girls and to get his opinion on various points. In these two orphanages he now has about 101 persons to care for. What sanctity and trust in God can do! Let us go on because time is fleeting. I have received an offering from Gonzaga Soncini of Mantua, for Merli. Caterina is greatly consoled as you may imagine. She thanks you a lot and will pray for you. I want to tell you that I am going to Mantua, well in advance, so that if either you or the Viscontina need anything from there you might let me know it. Later, I will write to you everything I shall come to know about Fr. Bellavite.

I hope that the obstacles that have come up in the execution of our desired Plan will not frighten that person\(^4\). Nothing is more evident and inalterable than this: there will be great

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1 Stella, the famous orphanage of Milan. From 1777, the cloister, adjacent to the Church of S. Pietro in Gessate, hosted the kindergarten for the orphans that St. Jerome Emiliani had founded (1532) in Corsia del Giardino, near the oratory of St. Martin. The Milanese still call it «Martinitto», i.e., Martinetti, the little inmates of the institution. The little girls are called “Stelline” because they were lodged in the same quarter of S. Maria della Stella (or Via Stella), today Via Corridoni. In 1808 the prioress was Luigia Dagènes (Cfr. Milano Sacro, Tip. Motta al Malcantone, of that year).

2 House in the quarter of the Filippini.

3 Magdalene of Canossa to Durini, 6 May 1801 (Ep. I, p.52).

4 Reference to the person who had a plan similar to hers (Ep.I, lett. 18, n. 3, pg. 47).
obstacles when works for God's Glory are at stake. Rather, I believe that if there were no difficulties, one should be wary. It may be because the devil is indifferent to the work, that is, that he is not afraid of anything. I am very eager to hear from you about this topic. Please tell me all you can about it.

I am pleased to know that she has become your sister’s friend. The Marchioness Arconati will encourage her, if she needs it. Perhaps you have started your beautiful Plan for the Hospital. You describe your laziness to me so well, but, indeed, I do not see it at all in practice. Our good Religious continue with unparalleled zeal to assist in the Hospital. Thanks be to God for this! If one of them is absent, they find another soon. But what is our Hospital for this Country? Fr. Pietro tells me that the ignorance of the sick persons who are admitted to the hospital is incredible. And what about those who cannot be admitted because the place is too small? I do not know if this is the condition only of our part of the country or whether it is a common evil even in Milan. There is a general ignorance on religious matters that is frightening.

I think that your Plan is trying to remedy especially this ignorance. I still have to talk about our Governess. She will not take up her responsibility until the 15th of this month. Therefore, I will speak about her the next time. It is already late and my sleepiness, this evening, does not allow me to continue. Goodbye, my dearest friend. My usual regards to you. Greetings to all of you from all of us.

Be it evening or morning, be it at work or at rest, I remain

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene C.

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5 Plan of the «PIOUS UNION OF THE HOSPITALLERS» instituted by Fr. Felice De Vecchi and Marchioness Teresa Bentivoglio Arconati, who attributed this inspiration to Magdalene of Canossa (A.C.R., B. 87, Raguaglio della pia unione di carità per l'Ospitale Maggiore di Milano).

6 Rambaldo Lodovica (Ep. I, lett. 18, n. 2, pg. 47).
The plans in the Canossa family have been easily upset because of greater and more urgent needs. But Magdalene does not seem to worry about that. She postpones her plans and waits.

My beloved friend,

Grezzano, 14 May 1801

This time, I wanted to get news from you more than ever, my dear Carolina. Instead I see that your letter is delayed. I am worried about you, because I fear you are not well. When those who are usually well, have even a headache, I fear that they are really sick. You say that I am so courageous, because I have fever so many times, and do not pay any attention to it. This is because I have got accustomed to it and have seen that there are no serious consequences.

My coming to the countryside will not disrupt our correspondence, but may disturb its regularity. Even in this irregularity in the mail, we must have patience. I already feel that I will be here only for a few days. I will make use of as many occasions as possible to correspond, and soon after I return I will resume it as before. In my last letter I had written that I was thinking of making a trip to Mantua, and that I wanted to know your opinion and that of our dear Viscontina. All of a sudden, because of my family, my brother wanted us to come to the countryside. I am not thinking of cancelling the trip, only I fear that your letter, if you ever wanted anything, may not reach me in time. However, do write to me and I will try to get all that you need. This letter does not have any special purpose. Imagine! my Carlino does not allow me a quiet moment, so that I almost do not know what I am writing.

Before I left Verona Fr. Pietro had already had a session for drawing up the rules and clarifying them definitively. I assure you that he is becoming more and more zealous, day by day. This year, in spite of his reluctance, he was made Superior of the Company of the Religious. When I send you the book, you will see, my dear, how many commitments he has. The Governess must have assumed her charge on the 5th of this month. They want me to befriend her. To do so it would be necessary for me, that she resembles you at least a little. I have not seen her yet. On my return I will tell you more.

Regarding what you think about that person, who has a Plan similar to mine, let me tell you that you and I seem to see things the same way. I too have been thinking that it would be very useful to show her my Plan, in order to get more ideas and perhaps even combine them. But I did not write to you about it because, I said to myself that you, being on the spot, will act prudently and will do what is most fitting.

I believe that the lack of academic preparation is a great proof that such a work comes from God, rather than from human intervention. I hope that divine providence will arrange everything according to God's will. Do pray for me, my beloved Carolina. I will not forget to pray for you especially in these few days of my stay in the countryside, where I have a lot of

1 Canossa Carlino, Magdalene’s small cousin (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 6, pg.23).
2 Fr. Pietro Leonardi, superior elect (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 6, pg. 12).
3 Rambaldi Lodovica (Ep. I, lett. 10, n. 7, pg. 47).
4 A person from Milan who is thinking of a plan similar to hers. (Ep. I, lett. 18, n.3, pg. 47).
time to do so. What a wonderful thing it would be if you could come here with me this autumn. Goodbye, my dear friend. How I wish to have news of you. I send you my usual greetings, and from all the others too. I embrace you heartily and hastily, because the mail is just leaving.

Today the letters came from Verona, but I did not see any from you. I still hope that it is only the fault of the mail. But I am anxious because I would not like you to be sick. Have someone write a few lines on your behalf if you cannot do so, so that I may know how you are. Goodbye, my dear.

Always address your letters to Verona.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

22 Grezzano#1801.05.27)

The correspondence with Durini has not been interrupted, but only delayed. This is because Bonifacio wants his sister to follow him in his continuous business journeys. Magdalene, however, does not forget her friend.

My beloved Carolina,

Grezzano, 27 May 1801

Perhaps you will accuse your Magdalene of negligence, my dear friend. All this is because I am neither in Verona, nor at Mantua, nor always in the same place in the countryside. So that we may understand one another well, I had better explain to you, that before leaving Verona I received a letter of yours in which you told me that you had a strong headache. I answered this letter from here, at Grezzano\(^1\), and you might have received it by now. The mail then delayed in sending me your next letter and since I was very worried for fear that you were sick, instead of writing to you I wrote to our dear Viscontina, in order to have news about you. I did it in another village named Casaleone\(^2\). Then, I was happy to receive two letters of yours, in which, however, you do not tell me anything about your health, of which I am very concerned. But they consoled me a great deal. I also received one from our Viscontina. Therefore, I must answer to one dated sometime in May, I do not know the exact date, and to the one dated May 20th. First of all I must tell you that I am very well and that I am always hopeful of going to Mantua. However, this wish has not yet been granted.

Because of family business I have to move from place to place. My uncle brought Carlino back to Verona, since there was smallpox at Grezzano. I had to please my brother by staying in the countryside and I go with him wherever the business calls for him. I do not regret being here, but I did feel the detachment from the little boy, although I am more attached to my brother, and I enjoy more freedom without the little one here. I do not know whether we will go to Mantua, or whether we will stay longer here, or whether we will go to Verona soon. Now that we are Sovereign\(^3\), we have new errands coming in at every moment, and it is necessary to change direction almost every day.

You can easily imagine with what great pleasure I received the outcome of the

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1 Grezzano comes from the word «gregge» (which means sheep). In earlier days it was a vast territory with a few country houses amid extensive pastureland. The few inhabitants belonged to the ancient Parish of St. Andrew. It was only in 1145 that a Church was built at Grezzano in memory of Pope Eugenio III. Today it is used as the Parish Hall. A little village grew at the boundaries of the lands belonging to the Gonzagas and the Scaligeri households. In the XV Century, all this vast territory of the Parish, excluding the Parish property, was acquired by the Marquises of Canossa. In 1414 SIMON OF CANOSSA bought it for 3,000 ducats, a paltry sum, because in 1412, passing from the army of Viscount Filippo Maria to the flag of the Venetian Republic, he was able to subdue a Veronese uprising. He acquired it from the Fiscal Department of Venice. Here the Cardinal Luigi Canossa spent his holidays, hunting for big game and raising horses. GREZZANO was the See of the Vicariate for several years. The building of the Canossa Palace at Grezzano was started by Sanmicheli and the work continued (together with that at Verona) by Pellesina. Later these were suspended. Finally Marques Carlo, the grandfather of Magdalene, got it completed. He called Adriano Cristofoli (1717) to direct the architectural work. The building has 365 windows, as many as the number of days in a year. (Information gathered from the present Parish Priest at Grezzano).

2 Comune 36 km. from Verona. Don Zamperini was Parish Priest in 1803.

3 As it belonged to the Cisalpine Republic, it was not dependent on Venice.
encounter with that person. I think that she is French.

I am convinced that Fr. De Vecchi will soon grant the foundation we desire, because I heard that he gives her permission to write. I hope you will continue giving me news about her resolutions. Meanwhile, I thank you very much for everything and I will read the rules and the Plan with great joy. If the Lord blesses our project, these rules will be very useful. But, as I see, much prayer is needed. Now that I am here, except for this little business, if I want I can have more time for myself. When I go to Verona I will have to decide to take some other girls who have been proposed to me. Then, I will relate everything to you.

Maffei has her girls vaccinated, but to tell you my opinion sincerely, it seems madness to me. I believe that Abbot Andres found my Plan too extensive. I guessed so from his reply to the letter I sent him, when I contacted him, as I told you. I am curious to know if he lives in Milan.

Your project for the hospital, according to me, is taking root very well. You relate to me wonderful things regarding your inability, but, in this case, I do not want to believe you. Forgive me, but I very much like the idea of starting only with certain people in order to test the methods well and to keep the unity of spirit that is so necessary at the beginning. At the same time I do not understand how you and the Viscontina can be disturbed, because I know that both of you will adapt yourselves to everything. Yet, as long as the matter succeeds, I bow my head, even in what I do not understand.

Oh God! I am sure, my dear Carolina that this project of yours will serve so many poor people. I suppose that you will encounter some obstacles, and many things to make up for, since your place is so vast and numerous. But you will also do so much good. How happy I am. I beg you to embrace our Viscontina for me, and to thank her for her cordial letter to which I will answer as soon as possible. When I will go to Verona I will convey your regards to all those you mention, since I am here without Stella.

Goodbye my very dear friend. My greetings to Arconati and to your husband. My warm regards to Mrs Checca. Do pray for me. I do the same for you. I am totally yours forever.

I thank you for all the trouble you took for Cuneo, of which you have already written to me. Goodbye. Always address your letters to Verona

Your Magdalene

4 The same person who had a plan similar to that of Magdalene. (Ep. I, lett. 18, n. 3 pg.).
5 Fr. FELICE DE VECCHI (1745 - 1812). Barnabite and Parish Priest of St. Alexander in Milan. He organized the «Pious Union for the Hospital". At Milan he was the coordinator of the Christian Opposition against impiety and natural laicization. He was noted all over Italy for his activities of missionary preaching, and was sought after even by the Sovereigns of the Italian States. But it was in his own city that he brought out treasures of unlimited charity, the outcome of his intensely fervent interior life. In 1801 he founded the Pious Union of Beneficence, at the Major Hospital of Milan. This was very similar to the Brotherhood of Verona. He also started houses for penitent women and children in danger, schools for the education of poor children and parish schools in various parts of the city. His collaborators were some women from Milan, especially Marchioness Teresa Arconati Visconti nee Trotti, and her sister, Carolina Trotti married to Durini. Through the latter, Fr. Leonardi and Fr.Steeb were introduced to Fr. De Vecchi and through him they collaborated with the Catholic Movement of Milan. This movement was directly connected to that in Turin and Bergamo. (cfr. G. Casetta, op. cit. 116 - 117 and L. Valdani, Vita del p. Felice DE Vecchi, Milano, 1861).
6 Plan of «that person» from Milano (Ep. I, lett. 20, n.5, pg.)
7 Laura Canossa Maffei.
8 One of the members of the Christian Friendship.
9 Still uncertain and undefined, yet it envisaged free schools, assistance in the hospitals and the teaching of catechism. Plan B6.6.
Magdalene’s attention is centred around the charitable work of Fr. Bellavite in Mantua. It seems to have the same orientation as her own, and at the same time gives her greater confidence.

My dearest friend

Verona, 2 June 1801

On Saturday I returned at last to Verona, my dear Carolina, after a very happy journey, and a short stay, of not even two full days, in Mantua. All the same, I had the fortune to speak to Fr. Bellavite twice. He was good enough to let me see everything in his orphanage for girls. He replied amply to all my questions, yet these were not enough to satisfy my curiosity, because of lack of time. I assure you that speaking to him and speaking to a saint, in my opinion, is one and the same thing. The house is so clean, and as modest as a monastery. There is nothing more you could wish for. Everything, you see, in its sobriety, is perfectly in place. If I am not mistaken, there are 52 girls, and of different categories with regard to the training. Some of them work on cloth, others learn tailoring, sewing and similar trades. All of them are taught reading, writing and arithmetic. There are 5 teachers. Between these 2 orphanages, I think he has more than a hundred persons under his care. The Lord blesses his faith and holiness, and I believe, provides sustenance for all of them, from day to day. Truly, I had a perfect occasion to understand my nothingness, in every aspect. He told me to have courage and gave me the permission to write to him as often as I want to, so that I may have the possibility to get whatever light I require very easily. If you would like to know more about this, write to me, and I will try to respond to your questions in the best way possible.

What consoles me very much is the promise that he made, to recommend me to the Lord, so that His holy will may be done. I would like to tell you some other things, but I will write to you with the next ordinary mail, as I want to see if, on that day, the letters reach faster.

Today I met Fr. Pietro, who asked me to convey his greetings to you. He also wants your advice. The Rules of the Religious Brothers of the Hospital are almost ready. Your revered Archbishop had asked Fr. Cristofoli for them, as you know. Fr. Pietro, therefore, would like to know if, after examining those he will send to you, you intend to give them to the Archbishop, or to send them to him through someone else. I think that perhaps, this would be a nice chance to open the way to work together. Or do you really think it more fitting that they send the Archbishop a copy directly? As soon as I arrived, I was glad to receive your dear letter dated 27 May, in which you assured me that your health is good. I cannot deny that I was very worried when I was in the countryside, as I had no news about you. But by the time I received this letter, I had already received two others from you. Therefore, I am now perfectly at peace regarding this. Your moral evils do not frighten me. However, I will keep our agreement. I have also received, from a gentleman who came to Verona, a small letter from you, a few lines from our Viscontina and some notes, besides the indulgences. Many

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1 Fr. Bellavite Domenico, founder of an orphanage at Mantua (Ep. I, lett.20, n. 3, pg. ).
2 Rules of the Brotherhood (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 7, pg.).
3 Mons. Filippo Visconti (Ep. I, lett.5, n. 6, pg.).
thanks to those who have sent them to me. My dear Carolina, what a great joy it has been for me to read the Plan$^4$. It is so similar to my ideas. On Saturday I will speak to you also about this. Let me use this limited time to thank you over and over again. I beg you to convey my usual greetings especially to dear Viscontina, as I doubt whether I will be able to write to her this time. Finally, I embrace you wholeheartedly, while I assure you to be, endlessly yours,

my beloved friend

Your Magdalene

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$^4$ It is the Plan of “that person from Milan” whose name is unknown.(Ep. I, lett. 18, n. 3, pg.).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

24 (Verona#1801.06.05)

The selection of the Governess for the Hospital of Verona has taken place. Magdalene has not been entrusted with this task. However, she thinks that the person chosen may be able to smoothen out the many difficulties that are coming in the way of her plans.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 5 June 1801

I will also try this, my dear Carolina, to write to you with the Sunday mail, instead of the one of Thursday, to see which is better, so that I may reply to you more promptly. I have so many things to tell you that I don't know where to start from. I will start from what would be my greatest consolation, and you already know what I am thinking about: the idea, the hope you give me to see you again one day. It is better that I do not stop to think about it, but I keep that hope very much alive in my heart. It is true that Milan, being at the Centre, seems to attract us easily. But this is so for the Heads of families. If it depended on me I would go even to America to see you. Therefore, let us hope that in one way or another, we will have a chance to spend some time together. If the Lord allows us to live in peace, as it seems, perhaps Rovigo will help me. Well, let us speak of other things, because if I linger on this thought, I will not do anything anymore, and will not go on writing. On my return, I was very happy about the progress of my girls. But dear Carolina, what is this satisfaction of mine compared with the work of Father Bellavite? I am working on taking in a fourth girl. I do not know what the result will be.

I will write to you about it. If you ever have a chance, you would do a great favour to Cattarina Merli by letting her mistress Soncini know how grateful she is for the alms she received. She would like to write a few lines of thanksgiving to her, hoping that this would help her on other occasions, that might occur as time goes by. What do you advice her to do? After returning, I inquired how the new Governess of the Hospital is doing. It is a great satisfaction to know that everybody likes her. I have not seen her yet, but soon I will come to know her. She is one of our Ladies, but one who you do not know. I think that she has always been helping her family, all the time she was at home. She is unmarried and is around thirty years of age. Fr. Charles Steeb casually told her that the hospital was looking for a Governess. Since she seemed to agree with the proposal, he spoke to the Temporal Section, who chose her from among the nine persons proposed. Note, my dear friend, the advantage I may have for our work. The Governess is thankful to the Temporal Section. I would say that the Session is very happy about her too.

Therefore, if a need arises to introduce some novelties, little by little, without overshadowing the authorities, we will be able to do it. On the other hand she accepts even the

1 One of the business destinations of the husband of Carolina Durini. City in the South of the Veneto Region.
2 La solita ammalata degente all’ospedale (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 4, pg.).
3 Soncini Gonzaga Carlotta (Ep. I, lett. 2, n. 4, pg.)
4 Rambaldo Lodovica (Ep. I, lett. 18, n. 2, pg.).
5 Lutheran convert, who became a member of the «Brotherhood» (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 3, pg.)
6 Lay Administrators of the hospital. (Ep. I, lett. 12, n. 2, pg.)
Religious personnel. If, with the passing of time, there is any dissension, Fr. Carlo will be able to smoothen out the difficulties on every side. Who knows? Perhaps the Lord has so prepared this for His other works as well. Perhaps we can do things even better this way, little by little. I tell you, when we go there, you will see that things are better. I hope that now you will be happy about this.

Today, 6 June, I received your dear letter dated 3 June. I realize, with great joy, that your project of the hospital is taking root. Dear Carolina, I would have liked to have some part in it, but, before God, I am afraid that it is nothing at all. Please continue to pray for me, that I may serve the Lord earnestly. Your Louise will be part of the Plan. I am sorry about how things are, that is, that I was not able to fall in line with her. However, at times, the points on which we differ, do not get resolved. Tell me please. Is the Institution of this person, that is, the Plan you sent me, the one of Monsignor Bossuet or an amplification of that of St. Vincent? Please try to find out also about the method they more or less follow in the community, when they are not with the girls. I am sure that in order to keep alive so perfect an Exercise of Charity, an interior life very much united with God is certainly required, in order to overcome the great distractions inseparable from that vocation. It is true that in the evening, when school is over, the girls go home. So also at midday. But I am also curious to know, if we have the same views and understanding in this regard too. Perhaps, my dear friend, you will not do it without profit for yourself too. Do it when you have the time. I always disturb you a lot, I feel a little remorse about it. Goodbye, my dear, have a good night and a good day. Do remember me. I am going to sleep now. My greetings to all. Everyone here sends you their greetings.

Your dearest friend

Very affectionately, Magdalene

7 The person is unidentifiable merely from the content of Lett. 18, n. 3, pg. .
8 BOSSUET JACQUES-BENIGNE, Bishop - orator. Born at Digon on 17.9.1627, died in Paris on 12.4.1704. He belonged to a family of magistrates. He studied in a Jesuit College and was ordained a priest in 1651. In 1659 he began his brilliant preachings which lasted for a period of ten years. In 1670 he was named preceptor of the Dauphin of France. His demeanor in court was worthy of a Bishop: he knew how to admonish Louis XIV, he helped him overcome his passions, and contributed towards the conversion of La Vallière. In 1671 he was elected Bishop of Meaux, which was not only a very important position, but being close to Paris, he was often called upon regarding the affairs of the Church in France. His priestly life was exemplary. He was the director of several pious Religious. A helper of the poor, he also took care of the publication of catechism texts (Cfr. C. Boyer, in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. III, pag. 1948-50).
9 ST. VINCENT de PAUL. (Pony, in Guascogna, 1585 - Paris 1660). Born in a modest peasant family, he was ordained priest in 1600. In 1623 he obtained a licentiate in Canon Law. He knew Fr. De Bérulle and was influenced by his spirituality. His activities included:

1) assistance to the poor, the sick and needy. For these he founded the Confraternity of Charity, which he later entrusted to the Daughters of Charity, whom he organised.
2) the sanctification of the people through preaching and missions.
3) the reform of the clergy, through retreats, the association of the Tuesday conferences, seminars ..
A rather hasty letter, but it ends with the happy news regarding the consolidation of some work of Magdalene.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 13 June 1801

You are right, my dear Carolina, when you suggest that it is better that I send you my letters through the Sunday mail so that I may receive your letter before writing to you. Yesterday, I received your answer to my last two letters, as well as a letter from our Viscontina. This time I will be rather brief because I have had a lot to do. I already know that you do not measure my affection by the length of the paper I use. If you knew how much I laughed when I read that you were pleased with my supposed holiness. It does not matter, since it is just on paper. Let us hope that one day it will come about. Imagining this somehow makes you happy, and for some reason, I, too, feel happy about it. But I wish it was really true. Fr. Pietro and Fr. Cristofoli totally accepted your idea regarding the rules. I made a mistake when I wrote to you. It was not your Archbishop who had asked for them, but the secretary of the Archbishop who was in Verona together with him. At the first opportunity, I will send them to you and I will be able to tell you more about this. Here, thank God, despite the division of the City, the Company is flourishing, and is getting established really well. I have had no time yet to write to Father Bellavite. You know, dear Carolina, that I feel as if you and I are just one person. Consequently I presume that you and I know the same things. Therefore tell me what you would like me to share with you, and I will do it.

In short, it is certain that soon I will take in another girl, perhaps even some more. The Lord is smoothening the difficulties, one by one, and I hope that even your plan for the hospital will be established well in time, since it has so many obstacles. Recommend me to God. I send you my usual greetings. Many thanks to your sister for taking the trouble to copy all those papers for me. I am in a hurry. I embrace you and am all yours. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene.

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1 Cristofoli Don Giuseppe, member of the «Brotherhood» (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 9, pg. ).
2 Mons. Filippo Visconti (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 8, pg. ).
3 Verona under the French, Verona under the Austrians.
4 The ‘Brotherhood’ (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 7, pg. ).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

26 (Verona#1801.06.16)

A simple letter accompanying the Rules of the Religious for the Hospital, and two other booklets, that are delivered to Durini by a passer-by.

My Beloved Friend,

Verona, 16 June 1801

On the occasion that Major Lucioni\(^1\) is coming to Milan with due permission, I finally send you a copy of the rules, my beloved Carolina. With the next ordinary mail, I will tell you what they have told me orally. You will also find enclosed, two booklets of the Way of the Cross, by the author of the Filotea\(^2\). It was translated here. One booklet is for you and the other for the dear Viscontina. In a hurry I embrace you, my dear friend. Goodbye. Fr. Pietro sends you his compliments. My people greet everybody as usual.

Your Magdalene of Canossa

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1 Like Major Chasseloup he was one of the officials of the French army and was a friend of some of the noble families of Veneto and Lombardy.
2 Title of a devotional book of St. Francis de Sales.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

27 (Verona#1801.06.18)

The Marchioness refers to her previous letter and tries to explain better what, in a rather brief manner, she had pointed out earlier.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 18 June 1801

A proverb says that he who looks for something will find it. On pursuing our search, we have found the way to write to one another, after having received a letter from each other. Today I have received a dear letter of yours dated 17 June. I hope that by this time you have received another letter of mine, together with the Rules of the Religious\(^1\), and the papers that I presume were submitted by the Temporal Prior of the Hospital\(^2\) to obtain the Government’s permission, after having first received the Bishop’s approval.

If possible with this ordinary mail, I will send you the book you wish to have; that is if Fr. Pietro has not gone to the countryside as he had wanted. Otherwise I will send it by the next ordinary mail. I still must send you, at the first chance, the charts used by the Religious in the Hospital. If anything is not very clear, write to me, my dear friend, and I will ask Fr. Pietro. Then I will reply.

I do not know if I am right regarding the Papers. I was not able even to see them, because I was given them at the time when they were being sealed. With someone else, I would not have courage to let them admire my beautiful head, but I know that you will have compassion on me. If at this time I do not remember things well, at another time I will be able to give you better information. I think that Fr. Pietro told me that in order to get the permission of the Government, the Prior has presented a Memorandum. I think, but I do not know for sure, if it was submitted together with those other papers, which are not the Rules.

My dear Carolina, your Magdalene has a big head, as you already know, but she loves you with the heart.

I confess that it surprised me a lot that that good Religious is afraid of the air in the Hospital in summer, especially in a Hospital like yours. Here, though you know how narrow and miserable it is, none of the Ladies, who, as you have seen, do not stay long, but not even any of the Religious who assist day and night, has ever contracted any sickness. Perhaps, I, according to the others, have too much courage, or, more probably, the Lord allows these obstacles to give you the chance of greater merits. Listen, my dear Carolina, to a beautiful Veronese idea: two Associations are needed, one for winter and one for summer, just as we all have different sets of clothing for the two seasons. Forgive this madness of mine, but, seriously speaking, if that Religious persists in his fears, a braver person should start first, and perhaps the result might encourage him. In these hot months he might begin by thinking over the project. He might then start it when the season is cooler. Once it has started, the next year, he will not have those fears anymore. The young girl I have spoken to you about, is called Teresa\(^3\). She is seven years old. I do not know how things will turn out, because I know so

\(^1\) Belonging to « The brotherhood » (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 7, pg.).
\(^2\) President of the Administration of the Hospital. (Ep. I, lett. 17, n. 4, pg.)
\(^3\) TERESA CAVEGGIARI. The fourth child accepted into Magdalene’s boarding house.
little about her. She will enter with the others in the next month of August. The first three girls, thanks to the Lord, are doing well up to now, even the smallest one.

I thank you for remembering my Carlino, who is very well, and has grown a lot, but my dear Carolina, pray that he may be good. In a world like this, those who have boys worry a great deal; and you are fortunate not to have these fears. Convey my greetings to your sister, and to your husband. Goodbye my dear friend. Accept the warm regards of my family and of Matilde. Stella kisses your hand. Poor Cevola, you already understand that I am speaking of that sick woman, is in a quite bad state.

Goodbye dear Carolina, be happy, and encourage yourself. It is impossible that things that serve God's glory and the benefit the neighbour, as is the case with your project, do not encounter some obstacles. The Association of our Religious has overcome incredible problems, but now it is flourishing wonderfully. Goodbye, dear. A thousand greetings to Viscontina.

Your Magdalene

4 Bunioli Metilde (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 6)
5 the young sick lady from Verona. (Ep. I, lett. 14, n. 1.).
6 The members of the Brotherhood. (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 7).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

28 (Verona#1801.06.24)

The Marquis Bonifacio is thinking about getting married and, according to the customs of the time, his relatives make arrangements for it. Magdalene, with maternal anxiety, asks Durini a very detailed, but secret information on some young ladies of the Milanese aristocracy.

My beloved friend,

24 June 1801

I have so many things to tell you, my dear friend, that I start to write, today, in order to be sure to have time to tell you everything. First of all I tell you that I have an errand, which on the one hand I regret and on the other I like. I feel sorry, because I am going to trouble you, and I am pleased because I know your friendship, your prudence and your confidentiality. I do not know to whom they could have turned to better than to us.

Therefore, let us come to the errand. They would like you to please get information about the personal, physical, and moral qualities of the young lady Anguissolla, the second one. For example about her health, her personality, how much will be her dowry and her inheritance. But more than everything else we would like to know her character, her way of thinking and her Religion. I understand that it will not be easy to know these three latter things. Therefore there would be no problem even if you answer me in a few months’ time.

They would also like to know where, and by whom she has been educated, since we know that her mother has been away from her daughters for a long time. I also beg you for information about another Milanese young lady. Certainly, it will be easier for you to inform me about this one, since I have also spoken about her when I was close to you. She is the young Marchioness Roma.

My dear Carolina, do not hesitate to be absolutely frank about these two ladies. Everything will be kept as a big secret. Besides it concerns the unhappiness of one of these ladies if she enters into a quiet family like mine and similarly, the unhappiness of my brother if he should marry a lady of the latest fashion.

I do not need to tell you anything about your Magdalene. I believe that I would be more worried than all the others, if I would see my brother treated differently from what my affection makes me believe he deserves. Much more, because you see that each of these two young ladies must surely not be lacking other excellent chances. Forgive me even this time, dear friend. I am good for nothing else except to disturb you. Knowing your prudence, I know it is redundant, to recommend the greatest confidentiality.

At last I had the chance to see, rather, to speak at length with the new Governess of the Hospital, since she was so kind as to come and visit me. According to my limited judgement, I find her very suitable for every relationship. She is specially filled with charity and dexterity, able to govern as it should be. Well, I think that the Lord really wanted her in that

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1 ANGUISSOLA - Daughter of a brother of Maria Teresa of the Marquises of Grezzano
2 Marchioness ROMA BEATRICE - Daughter of Marquises Roma Orsini (Ep. I, letter 4, n.8). Magdalene asks for detailed information about each of these as a probable bride for her brother Bonifacio. The information may have been excellent, but neither of them will finally be chosen.
3 Rambaldo Ludovica (Ep. I, lett. 18, n.2)
place. But I confess, my dear Carolina, that I fear that we will not build a close friendship, 
because our characters seem to be quite different.

Perhaps I am mistaken. Now that we know each other, we will see each other quite 
frequently. I will tell you the rest later. Today, 27 June, I am happy to receive one of your 
brief but dear letters, dated the 23rd June. Undoubtedly it was written before you received my 
last letter. I am sorry that, from what I understand, you have not received the Papers I sent 
you. Perhaps they have reached you by now. The person to whom I had entrusted them, 
assures me that surely you must have got them. Give me some news about my Rule. I have 
not been able to get back your booklet. If I get it before the mail leaves, I will send it to you 
together with this letter. I am glad that you are in the countryside, my dearest friend. Perhaps, 
who knows, things might work out in such a way that we will be together for some days. This 
is just a simple idea of mine. Goodbye, dear, I leave the rest for another time, because I am in 
a hurry. Goodbye, my compliments to your husband. I am forever

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

29 (Verona#1801.07.04)

The house near the Filippini Church, which is sufficient for the initial demands of Magdalene’s charitable work, is put on sale by the owner. Magdalene would like to prevent this. She asks for prayers so as to know the will of the Lord.

My beloved friend

4 July 1801

From your dear letter, which I received a few hours ago, I notice that you are not in the countryside anymore. Your vacation has been shorter than mine, but I hope that you returned in good health. My dear Carolina, it was my Luigi’s mistake if you have not received my letter. He did not give my letters to the Post. You may be sure that, when I can, I do not omit to write to you, my dearest friend. I leave everything, but never my writing to you, when I can. Indeed, I assure you that the week seems to me so very long on account of this. It looks as if the day to receive your letters and to write to you, never comes. This time I will be brief as I have little time, and since I have been very busy. They want to take the house of my girls away from me. I am trying my best to prevent it. Please, pray the Lord, if it pleases Him, to bless this matter. At last I am sending you this booklet. I think that Fr. Pietro does not want to have any copies. He told me that if you ever intend to reprint it for him, he would rather have another abridged version used by the Religious Hospitaliers, in which the most necessary and most useful items from many authors have been collected. Now, my dear Carolina, we are attached to the Cisalpina. Consequently here all your Laws are published.

I am very glad that the package has reached you safely. I confess that I feared that the person to whom I had given it, had lost it. On the first occasion, you will receive the booklet of the Way of the Cross, for that friend of yours. I am glad that you like it. But, my dear Carolina, do not thank me so much for these little favours; they are nothing at all. Would that I could really serve you in something noteworthy. Rather you profane the name of Iva Pasqualino. You see who I am, and I make a more famous imitator of him.

I need to end, but first let me laugh a little on what you might have said when reading my last letter, for that particular information, yet which is very important. Regarding the information, I thank you very much for the letter from Cuneo. God knows what a bear that gentleman is: well, I wish him good luck.

I expected you to mention your project for the hospital. I already know by experience that this type of business faces a thousand obstacles. But my dear friend, you will see the effect. We should not be afraid, rather, oppositions should give us courage and hope that it will bring a better outcome. Yet I was frightened by all these beautiful things, and often I am afraid. Goodbye my dear, my usual regards to you. I embrace you heartily. Pray for your most affectionate friend

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1 Coachman of the Canossa Family (Ep. I, lett. 1, n. 12.)
2 Part of Verona governed by the French (Ep. I, lett. 8, n. 3.
3 A Character of those times
4 The Delfini Family, nobility of Cuneo (Ep. I, lett. 17, n. 6)
The choice of the future bride of Bonifacio is still uncertain and, since the problem is quite delicate, Magdalene reveals her apprehensions to her friend. For the moment, obstacles regarding the house near the Filippini seem to be smoothened.

My beloved friend,

11 July 1801

I thank you endlessly, my dear Carolina for your letter dated 8th July and for the information, which, in your goodness, you have given to me. Those of Roma¹ are really detailed, but you will do us a favour to tell us everything of both, when you come to know more. I would rather say that a lot of the things you have written about the first young lady, I have also heard here in Verona, where they talk in the same positive way. May the Lord bless my dear brother in this important affair. Remember him sometimes in your prayers. I assure you that I tremble when I think of it, because, I dare say it for God’s glory, as far as I know and see, he is an angel, and he has always been such. This love for a bride would be his very first.

From this let us turn, now, to another matter that has troubled me a great deal. You know that they wanted to sell the house that I have taken on rent for seven years, for my girls. I went around, I spoke and whispered. Now the buyers have withdrawn, and therefore, I am at peace again. For how long, God alone knows. Christina ² was more worried than I was. What I regretted most was to lose the proximity to the Church of the Filippini, for the doctrine, and for all the rest. I am in the process of getting some other girls, besides those whom you know. Remember my dear, to pray a lot for your Magdalene because I need much prayer even for this work.

I never told you what Father Bellavite, recommended to me for my girls, besides telling me how wonderfully God cares daily for the many persons he has gathered. Instead of the Association of the ‘Three Soldi’³ about which I wrote to you sometime ago, he suggested that I should search for, among the rich Ladies and the merchants, one person for each of these classes. This should find associates in his class, everything without prescribing three soldi, but leaving the amount to the discretion of the associated person. I believe this is the way he has been doing. Note, however, that he did not disapprove of my idea. I tell you this because, having told you the first one, you may know also what he advised me, as a more efficacious means.

Soon, maybe, I will have the good fortune to see this saintly Religious again, since my aunt who lives in Mantua⁴, would like me to go to see her for a while. Then she would take me to Parma, and then return home. I do not know what I will do, since I have to decide according to the circumstances of my family. In case something is settled, I will write it to you. My wish to see you again is merely for myself, in case my brother decides to marry someone from Milan. Then, it is possible that one day or the other, I will run to you with some pretext.

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¹ The Patrician Family from Milan of the Marqueses Roma Orsini. (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 8.).
² The lady who took care of the children. (Ep.I, lett. 9, n. 3).
³ The Company of the persons who collected alms. (Ep.I, lett. 23, n. 1, pg.).
⁴ Countess Matilda of Canossa, Magdalene’s aunt, married to Count Giovanni Maria D’Arco. (Ep.I, lett. 83, n. 1).
On your part then, my hopes are the promises of the Count your husband, to whom I beg you to convey my compliments as well as to all those whom you know. Lots of wishes to dear Viscontina, to whom I will write as soon as possible. At another time I will say something about the Doctrine classes of Fr. Pietro. Goodbye, my dear. We would like to know whether in your country, they would let a Religious live in peace, who after having left Milan, returns to his monastery, not as a migrant because he already lives in the Cisalpina. How is your aunt?

Goodbye, my dear friend. I am yours more with my heart than with my pen.

Your very affectionate Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Uncle Borgia and Carlino are sick. Physical tiredness and various worries occupy Magdalene’s time, but, all the same, she finds moments to keep in touch with her Milanese friend.

My beloved friend,

(undated)

I gladly forgive you, my dear Carolina, for not having written me a longer letter though I have such a great longing to discuss with you at least what you have written about St. Camillo[^1] and the Hospital. It is true that the feast of this saint comes but once a year, and consequently you will tell me about it again the next time, and yet, should your brevity occur more often I still would forgive you.

I thank you again for the information about the young lady Roma. As for Anguissola[^2], for the moment it is better to wait a little, because I am alone in the city with uncle Borgia and Carlino. Therefore I do not want to undertake an arbitrary action until I ask their opinion when they return. My dear friend, I would be so happy in this world, if I knew that the Lord would wish me to stay at home for ever as I am now, if only my brother would find a bride resembling you. As for me, whoever he chooses, I hope we will love one another, but if she happens to be from Milan, I would have an extra motive to love her even more, because I feel that anything originating from your city, would seem to me loveable. In spite of this, I keep my opinion jealously hidden from my brother and from whomsoever tries to counsel him, because I think that anyway, afterwards, according to how things turn out, this should best cultivate peace among us. The affairs for my house are still unsettled. I cannot imagine how they will end. Do pray for this intention and also for me.

This time I am extremely brief because I am very tired and because of Carlino’s illness. He doesn’t want me to leave him at all, I must keep close to his cot. We were afraid it was smallpox, but now my fear has subsided since he does not have fever any more. I think of your good intentions, and now I am going to sleep.

Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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[^1]: St. CAMILLUS de LELLIS born at Bucchianico of Chieti on 25 May 1550 of a noble family of Abruzzia. As a child and a young boy he was very vivacious. He lost his mother when he was 13 and his father when he was 17 years old. Until the age of 25 he lived amid the risks and adventures of war. A wound on his foot forced him to enter the St. James Hospital for Incurables in Rome. He returned there after a few years for a second time and after having donned the habit of the Cappucchins. When he was not accepted by the Cappucchins a second time, he devoted himself to the service of the sick, with an iron will and an ardent exuberance that even St. Philip Neri could not control. In 1854 he was ordained priest and founded a Congregation of God-fearing men who consecrated themselves to care for the sick for the love of God. The Congregation called “Ministers of the Sick” was approved by Pope Sistus V in 1586. St. Camillus died in Rome and was proclaimed “Patron of all the sick and of hospitals” by Pius XI (cfr. M. Vanti in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. III, pag.438).

[^2]: Daughter of a brother of Maria Teresa of the Marquis of Grezzano. (Ep.I, lett.28, n.1)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

There is some hope for Magdalene: soon she will go to Mantua to Father Bellavite and perhaps with him she will take some decision for the future of her work, which is still uncertain and indefinite.

My beloved friend,

25 July 1801

I am beginning this letter before the mail arrives so as to be ahead of time, and be able to write a longer letter to you. Since I know your concern for my Carlino, I assure you that he is much better. Therefore I have much more time for myself. Should he continue to improve, it seems probable that at the end of this month I’ll go to Mantua, and then proceed to Parma in the beginning of August. But I am not quite sure yet. Meanwhile do continue to address my letters to Verona, and if I will really leave, I’ll let you know where to reach me with your mail. Do pray for me my dear friend, in this special time, and ask others to pray as well, because in Mantua I want to try to approach Father Bellavite\(^1\), and this step needs a lot of prayer. He himself has established the work of the orphaned girls quite well. On my part this is something contemplated in my dream and the written plan that I sent to you a while ago. This is why, my dear Carolina, I ask you to pray. Later on I will describe the whole plan to you more clearly, since I have a few other things to tell you this time.

A thousand thanks to you for your kind letter of the 22\(^{nd}\) July. Your prayers for me cannot be better directed than they are. My dear Carolina, it seems possible that the Lord would like me to do some work for him, so that his power and mercy may better shine, by using me, the weakest of the instruments he has. Who knows if what I am trying to do is not the beginning of it all? Please, do not get tired of praying for this cause, and be sure of my very cordial and infinite gratitude. I really was hoping that, by this ordinary mail, I would be able to write a longer letter to you, and be able to write to our dear Viscontina as well. But something which I will relate to you another time, has prevented me from doing so.

A thousand compliments to you. Tomorrow I shall start writing to both of you through the ordinary mail. Just a word on the information you sent me. If I was not sure of your goodness, I would be afraid of bothering you; but knowing you so well, I take courage once again.

Now they would like to know, but only at your convenience, the name and surname of that ex-Jesuit who is Anguisola’s\(^2\) teacher. Then they would also like to know the consistency of the inheritance\(^3\) of this family, and how much the birthright of the first born would amount to, if the laws concerning this birthright\(^4\) still exist. In addition, they beg you to tell us, if in Milan, you know anybody else who is really suitable for my brother. I understand that it is only because of your friendship that you can bear with so much nuisance. But I cannot refuse to satisfy those who give me such annoying errands. Now, as the courier is just about to leave I barely have the time to hug you heartily.

Your Magdalene

\(^1\) Fr. Domenico Bellavite, founder of the orphanage in Mantua. (Ep.I, lett. 28, n.1.)
\(^2\) Daughter of a brother of Maria Teresa of the Marquis of Grezzano.
\(^3\) “the inheritance”
Various feelings trouble Magdalene, and this letter reflects them, as it also reflects various changes of residence: Grezzano, Mantua, Parma. Her meeting with Fr. Bellavite has renewed her hopes and doubts. Magdalene realizes that much prayer is needed.

My beloved friend,

Grezzano, 28 July 1801

I begin writing this letter in the countryside so that, God willing, I may complete it at Mantua. Before ending it, I hope to be able to tell you whether I shall proceed to Parma, or return to Verona. By this you will already understand that my Carlino has recovered. I hope that this time I will be able to tell you a lot of things since I am alone here, with my brother who has a lot of business to take care of. Consequently, being completely alone, I can spare the time to entertain myself happily with my beloved Carolina. I do not remember if the other time I had written to you that Fr. Pietro, who greets you, would like to know what you think about the Rules of the Religious of the Hospital; if you are in favour of them. In short, he wants to have your opinion. He is always firm and unchangeable in his holy enterprises. I believe that if he wants, the Government is ready to give him a helping hand, since these are matters that benefit the public, that is, caring for poor boys and the hospital. For sometime now, besides the usual Catechism that you know is taught every Sunday morning at the Misericordia Hospital, he has started at the same time, in the nearby Church of St. Agnes, catechism classes for servants. This is done by two Religious in the form of a dialogue, in which one plays the part of the teacher and the other of the ignorant person, making it very pleasant and beneficial.

Today, 1 August, I resume my letter from Mantua. My calculations about writing to you, often prove false. I arrived here on Thursday morning, and by this time I have spoken to Father Bellavite twice. We perfectly agree on the whole, but we have concluded nothing definite except to keep on praying. I will leave all my papers with him, and on my return from Parma we will come to some conclusion. Then I will write to you about everything. Oh God! How much prayer I need.

My dear Carolina, today I had the consolation to receive from Verona your much appreciated letter dated July 29. How happy I was to read it, and how great would be my joy if I could see you in Parma. I will go on Tuesday with my aunt and we will be staying there until Saturday. I do not want to solicit you because I already know that your friendship does not need to be coerced, but you may imagine what I would like to tell you to make you come here, if it depended on you alone. I am sorry that I was not able to write to you in advance so that you would know where to send the mail, because I came to know of my departure only on the day I actually left for Mantua. Well, I do not add anything else. You who know my heart, may imagine how I would like to see you, to embrace you and to be with you. Concerning my brother’s affairs, if I do not write about it now, I will answer by the ordinary mail, since I am in a hurry. Embrace my dear Viscontina, and tell her not to think that it was because of a lack of care or affection that I did not answer her as yet. The lack of time has really deceived me.

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1 Carlo di Canossa, cousin and foster son of Magadalene of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 6).
2 Of the “Brotherhood”
3 The Church where the Doctrine was taught to the servants. (Ep.I, lett. 19, n. 7).
4 Fr. Domenico Bellavite founder of the orphanage in Mantua (Ep.I, lett. 20, n. 3).
If you write to me, address your letter to Mantua. Goodbye, my very dear friend. My usual compliments. I am and will be always

Your Magdalene

PS. I beg you also to tell Viscontina, that, to my great dismay, I found her book still here. It was given to me by Fr. Giambattista. There was no chance to send it to Milan. I am hoping for an occasion to send it to her. The house where we live in Parma is called Forty House, that is, the House of the Bec, a short distance from the College. Note that we stay alone in an apartment, we do not even see the owners.

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5 Fr. Bertolini Giambattista, Filippini priest (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4).
6 In spite of much research it has not been possible to locate the whereabouts of this house.
7 The boarding of the “Luigine” of Parma (Ep.I, lett. 97, n. 1).
Magdalene was not able to meet Durini at Parma and feels sorry about it. The number of her girls has increased, but so do the difficulties: the house has been sold, two teachers have withdrawn, only one remains, and therefore there are negative consequences for her work.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 22 August 1801

This is the first time, my dear Carolina, that our correspondence, has been interrupted after the war. I hope it will also be the last time, since I have decided to put into practice the proverb that says: “Those who have time, should not wait for it to come”.

I received your dear letter that was like a visiting card, in Mantua, immediately after my return from Parma. But suddenly, as usual, I had to leave Mantua again, with my brother, and I passed through Grezzano, hoping to be in Verona, and to be able to answer you in time for the mail.

From Grezzano I wrote to dear Viscontina, and I started writing a letter to you too. But my hopes failed. Both these letters were not sent, neither to Verona, nor to Mantua, and I returned only on Monday. Here then, my beloved friend, is a small judicial process, without proofs, and without witnesses, because it must be judged by your heart, which will justify mine. So here we are, corresponding again in our usual way.

Therefore, I will tell you first, that I enjoyed my trip, and that I am in very good health. Your card has been a poor substitute if I compare it with the happiness of embracing you in person. I confess that I felt very disappointed when it seemed that I was nearly going to see you, and was then deprived of this opportunity. I had a new occasion to see how far I am from the virtue in fashion, which I also need so much, as I will tell you later. Two of your brothers-in-law were so kind as to come to visit me when I was in Parma, Count Durini and Marquis Calcagnini, I think. I was not lucky enough to be at home when they arrived. I would have wished to meet two people related to you, and to speak about you. Please thank them for me when you see them and convey my compliments to them, and to everybody as you know. This time, although I would like it, I am afraid I will not be able to tell you everything because I have so many things to write about, and because of my big embarrassment. I shall not speak about Father Bellavite in order to make a perfect description through the next mail, which I believe will not displease our Viscontina. Instead, I tell you at once what has happened so that you may pray for me and tell others to pray as well.

1 Between Napoleon and Austria.
2 The holiday Villa of the Canossa family. (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 1).
3 Prudence, against the dangers of a police that is getting very suspicious, even though Hope was the virtue that was praised in the dramatic victory that celebrated the surrender of Mantua in the beginning of 1797.
4 Count ERCOLE DURINI, one of the brothers of Carolina Durini’s husband.
5 ERCOLE CALCAGNINI, Chamberlain of the Duke of Parma. He lost the feuds in 1797. In 1817 he died, hailed by all as a wise and honest man, a philanthropist. He had married Maria, the daughter of Count Giacomo Durini. They had two sons: Francesco (1789) and Tommaso Guido. Francesco was the Assistant to the Counsel of State of the Kingdom of Italy. When the Italian Kingdom was suppressed, he returned to Ferrara, that had been restored to Pope Pius VII. He was nominated Knight of the Order of Christ and Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. He married Silvia, daughter of Marquis Antonio Maffei of Verona and Laura Canossa. (Cfr. Litta, Famiglie celebri d’Italia).
6 Fr. Domenico Bellavite founder of the Orphanage of Mantua (Ep.I, lett. 20, n. 3).
First of all, the house of my girls has been sold. Besides having to look for a house, I am also compelled to look for one, rather for two teachers. This is because Christina and her mother7 have gone back to their home. They felt the load was more than they could carry... You may understand, my dear Carolina, how worried I am about this. However, I hope for the best in everything, but I need prayer. I do not know if I told you that I have five girls and that the sixth one will be coming soon.

Goodbye for this evening my dearest friend. Metilde, my first helper in this work, has asked me so many times to convey her greetings to you. I will tell you the rest in my next letter. Goodbye, dear. Good Night.

Your beloved friend
Magdalene C.

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7 The two ladies who took care of the girls in the House situated on Via dei Filippini. (Lett. 9, n. 3).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene hopes to be able to replace the two teachers who left, but the selection is not easy. What is also unclear is the possible fusion of her work with that of Mantua. Fr. Leonard’s work, instead, is about to get the support of the Government. He will therefore start gathering and educating some poor boys.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 29 August 1801

I too, my dear friend, was sorry for not having seen your brother-in-law Durini⁠¹ and being unable to at least speak about you, since I could not talk to you. But let me tell you that the abbot Andres² told me how this gentleman said that my beloved Carolina speaks so much about her friend Magdalene, as much perhaps, as I speak and think of you. Now, dear, I hope that you too will beg the Lord to provide me with a good teacher for my girls because this is something that worried me from the beginning. See that I am immediately speaking of it, because my preoccupation on this point is not yet over. I have not yet found a suitable person to replace Christina³. I have various girls in view, two of them would be suitable. I hope to be able to tell you the outcome by the next mail: about selecting the teacher and perhaps also about the house, since some of them have been proposed to me. My greatest help comes from Metilde⁴, who is a great relief to me. My dear Carolina, you are right to say that in the works where God’s glory is concerned, difficulties are to be expected. They will be overcome if the works are truly His own.

Father Bellavite’s⁵ words did not encourage me much because we did not know then what had happened here. Even just his example inspires courage, but to do something I would need some of his holiness as well. In everything we hope only for God’s Mercy. In the midst of all my anxieties, it is a great pleasure to hear again about your beautiful project of the Hospital⁶, which I have deeply at heart. I think that nothing is missing that would make you doubt whether or not it is from God. I hope it will be all for His glory and of great advantage to the people, more so because of the big difficulties that you encountered at very moment. I beg you to continue to tell me something about it for my relief and consolation. I hope that this letter will reach you sooner than the usual ones of every week because I have to hand it over to a Religious, who tomorrow will be at Brescia, from where he will put it in the mail for Milan.

I beg you then, when you can, to tell me what you have promised, regarding the other parties, that would seem good for my brother, besides the two we have already spoken about. This too, is an interesting matter for me!

Concerning the hospital, I do not think I ever told you that even our Republican⁷ Government has looked favourably on the institution of the Religious⁸, that is, the Association of the Religious. In fact, it has shown that it was pleased with Fr. Pietro, their leader.

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¹ Ercole Durini, brother of Carolina Durini’s husband (Ep.I, lett. 34, n. 4).
² One of the members of “Christian Friendship” (Ep. I, lett. 22, n. 8).
³ The Lady who was taking care of her girls. (Ep.I, lett. 9, n. 3).
⁴ Bunioli Matilde who entered the Institute in 1820 (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 6).
⁵ The founder of the orphanage at Mantua (Ep.I, lett. 20, n. 3).
⁶ Of the Pious Union of the Hospitallers of Milan.
⁷ Cisalpine Republic.
⁸ Of the “Brotherhood”.

Association, thanks to the Lord, is in full bloom. Now he is starting to gather and educate some poor boys. Tell dear Viscontina that I embrace her, and that in the next ordinary mail, I will give her Fr. Bertolini’s\(^9\) answer, because, due to bad governance, it is not very easy to find him at home. Fr. Bellavite was in Verona, and came to see me, but not to miss the chance of this post, I cannot tell you yet what attempt there might be. I hope that everything..... will be resolved, that he will establish his work for the girls and mine, and perhaps.... Therefore, I embrace you with the most tender affection, and I am forever

Your very affectionate Magdalene

\(^{9}\) Fr. Giambattista Bertolini, a Filippini priest (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

36 (Verona#1801.09.06)

A very brief letter. As Durini has shortened her last letter to the minimum, because she had to change her apartment, so too does Magdalene, who has to move her girls to another house.

My beloved Friend,

This time I have received only a few lines from you, my dear Carolina, because you had to change apartments. I too fear not to be able to write much as I have to look for a way to move house. You may imagine how busy I am. With all this, this week, the General Chasseloup\(^1\) has to come to Milan, and I will write to you at length on that occasion, a few lines each day. Let me tell you first of all that a house, through God's help, has been found. It is only a few steps away from my home. I am also firmly convinced that I shall find two very suitable teachers. Pray much for me and love me. Be convinced that I love you too very much. Goodbye, my very dear Friend. I only have time to embrace you

Totally yours, Magdalene

6 September, 1801

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\(^1\) General and Commander of the army under Napoleon. (Ep. I, lett. 11, n. 1).
Magdalene has reassuring news about her work: she has found a house and the two teachers. But now she has to ascertain the content of two packets, so that the recipients and the senders may be helped. The first one is for Viscontina, the second contains a credit account, which, if it can be reimbursed, will increase the meagre budget of the work of Fr. Pietro Leonardi. Durini should see to collecting them.

My beloved friend,

Suddenly I am told that General Chasseloup will leave tomorrow for Milan. I do not know if I will be in time to deliver this letter to him. Meanwhile I am writing it. If he has already left, either I will wait for another chance or I will send it to you by post. Meanwhile, I am happy to entertain myself for half an hour with my ever dearest Carolina.

If you receive this letter of mine by hand, you will also receive two parcels. Kindly deliver the bigger one with a thick blue cover to our Viscontina for me. It is from P.G.B.B.\(^1\) Embrace her for me, and tell her to forgive me if this time, for the usual lack of time, I do not write to her. I will do so another time.

The second smaller parcel, is a new favour that I ask of you, my dear Carolina, for the sake of Fr. Pietro Leonardi, who, as I guess, wants you to acquire merits useful for his work even in Milan. If I am not mistaken, I think that they are Papers or Credits\(^2\) already recognized as valid by the Cisalpine Government. Rather, to explain myself better, I think that somebody, a Religious, had a credit with the Austrian Bank. This Credit has been recognized and accepted by the Cisalpine Government, and the creditor has surrendered it to Fr. Pietro for his work, if he can withdraw it. Therefore, he has requested me to send you these papers. He would like you to find out if they will pay everything, which I think is impossible, or a part of it, surrendering the remainder to the credit of the Nation, so as to draw at least something. He personally, will write to you in greater detail, as I cannot tell you much more on the matter. Neither do I want to recommend it to you, as I know your inclination to do good and your interest in our work. Know that I am very angry with General Chasseloup, for not having told me about his departure. So the parcels are still here, and I am sending you this letter by mail.

I was very glad to hear from your letter dated the 9th, that your project for the hospital\(^3\) will come into effect in a few days’ time. How greatly God will reward my dear Carolina. You will see in reality how much good you will do. I also see that the persons I have now are few, but thinking about all the holy works done, whatever they are, I find that almost all of them started with very few persons. When the work is founded for the Lord, He sends them many others. I would be sorry if you were not in the number. I hope you will make me happy by continuing to speak of your work.

I am very happy, dear friend, that I have found a house\(^4\) and two teachers, according to what I hoped for, sent me on purpose by the Lord for my girls. Thank the Lord for me.

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1 Fr. Giambattista Bertolini (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4).
2 Files of bank accounts.
3 The Main Hospital of Milan.
4 The quarters near S. Zeno in Oratorio, situated on the present Via Regaste.
prayers have surely contributed. Keep this letter because if I have a chance to send you the packets, and will not be able to write to you at length, I will have already told you about them through with this one. Goodbye my dear, my very dear friend. Regarding my brother, to tell you what I feel, you are right. If by chance you hear of someone really suitable, do let me know. Goodbye, dear. The mail is leaving: I embrace you, my usual regards.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

38 (Verona#1801.09.19)

The desire to reach her friend in Milan to be reassured of her health, turns into a pressing advice to take the necessary precautions, since she cannot do anything else.

My beloved friend,

19 September 1801

Since I cannot in person do what I would want to do with my heart, namely, to fly to my dear Carolina, these few lines will serve to pay you a very brief visit and to keep you company for a while. I pray that you may take care of yourself prudently, and that you remain at home. From what I have seen last year, I cannot believe at all in that egoism of yours. I rather wish you were so. You have a right to some rest even if you do not think so. At the same time I beg you to care for your health. Let that cough be over before you expose yourself to the cold. Do not get up so early in the morning. In our Veronese jargon, we would say, take care of yourself. If you do not want to do so for a thousand reasons, do it for the thousand and one, that is, to spare yourself the sorrow of finding out that you are sick. Remember, if it is hard for you, I dispense you from writing to me for the moment, since dear Viscontina is so good as to give me news about you. The news from my side, thank God, is good.

I am afraid that at the beginning of the next month I will have to go to the countryside. This would disturb our correspondence a bit. But if this happens I will think of some other ways. The other day, I was glad to see Fr. Bellavite here. Having made a trip to Verona, he came over to greet me.

We have spoken again of that project I told you about, and without fail I will explain it to you in the next ordinary mail. Today it is too late. He spoke to me about courage. Goodbye my dear, my very dear friend. I thank you also for Fr. Pietro, who, for the sake of his health, has gone to the springs¹. Have no doubt that I will recommend you to the Lord. Take care of yourself and remember that I have the greatest affection for you. My usual greetings. Goodbye, dear.

Your very affectionate
Magdalene

¹ Thermal curative waters. (Cfr. Lett. 70, n. 5).
A very important letter. A problem is getting clarified in her mind and her heart: what ideal she should follow in her assistance to the orphans, so that they may insert themselves well in society, after their formation. For the time being she thinks she has to work side by side with Fr. Bellavite.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 27 September 1801

I do not understand, my dear Carolina, what your silence means. Even if it is your fault, I attribute it rather to the mail. I think it impossible that neither you nor our dear Viscontina have not written to me. Rather, I do not even want to speak about this, as I hope to receive some letter today, or tomorrow. It is a coincidence that agitates me. I want to receive news from you especially now because you are not well. I, too, like you, was in bed on Friday, with some fever and the treatment of issuing blood according to the custom of our country. But I assure you that it did me much good. Today I am perfectly well, I am on my feet and can get out of the house, because I have no cough. When I have it, I stay at home, and also in bed.

Finally let me tell you about Fr. Bellavite. Listen to my project and tell me what you think of it. I have proposed to him something which, I believe, I have already discussed with you. To gather girls seems to me a small thing. It is done in many countries. But to educate them well and to see positive results in those coming out of these Orphanages, in the sense that these girls become good Christian mothers of families, does not happen often. I think the fault lies in the lack of persons who devote themselves to education out of love for God, and by vocation.

Besides, since there is not an adequate number of persons devoted to this matter, the continuous change of people may generate so many different ways of thinking. This will surely disturb the good education of even the more well regulated Orphanages. I therefore proposed to him, to have a house next to his Orphanage, where he should form some teachers for this purpose. Another time I will tell you what we have concluded, and what I proposed to him, since I was not able to write these past few days because of my silly illness.

My usual greetings. I embrace you my very dear Carolina, and I am all yours.

Your Magdalene
Magdalene still worries about the health of Durini. Then she rapidly outlines the institution she would like to begin, but, probably, dependent on Fr. Bellavite: a secular dress, the original Rules of the Salesians, education of poor girls, visits and assistance to the patients.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 4 October 1801

I will start by telling you, my dear Carolina, that I am in the best of health, and that the little care I take of myself, that you attribute to carelessness, is simply because the illness was really very slight. I earnestly wish that you go on obeying your physician, and take care of yourself. Then you will be able to do everything you wish to, once you are well. Give me the biggest proof you can of your friendship and of your affection, by trying to get well again. Dear Viscontina, to whom I will write in the next ordinary mail, has consoled me a great deal by giving me good news about you. Do convey to her my warmest regards. Also tell her, that as far as I know, I do not see any occasion of my going to the countryside, as I had thought. Therefore, if she knows of some persons who are passing through Verona, she should kindly help me to hand them the books and the Papers of Fr. Pietro. I received your dear letter sent through the last ordinary mail, three days later than usual.

Let us now speak of Fr. Bellavite. After proposing my idea and convincing him about the need of the formation of these teachers, if he decides to establish a union under his immediate direction, I offered to join him, when I am sure that this is the Will of God, when my brother gets married and Carlino will be put under the care of a teacher. Note that he has some noble ladies, who are widows and who are quite determined to join him. We are thinking of remaining in secular dress, of obtaining the original Rules of the Salesians and of adding to the education of these girls, the visits to the sick. What do you think? We then decided to pray much and to wait for the Will of God to be manifested through events. It seems to me that in this way we would be starting on solid grounds. But you will say, what are you going to do with your girls? I will tell you another time. Goodbye, dear. Meanwhile love me as I am all yours, wholeheartedly

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

41 (Verona#1801.10.10)

As in her last two letters, Magdalene, after giving Durini further advice about her health, outlines the choices she could make in her work: she could remain in Verona and be independent from that of Mantua, provided that the foundations were sure, or merge her work with that of the Filippini Father.

My beloved friend,

10 October 1801

I do not know if I have to start my letter by thanking you for the beautiful books you have sent me, and that are so dear to me, and telling you that you should take care of your health since certain detailed news I had from certain Milanese people who passed by here, didn't quite satisfy me, or complaining for not having received your letters in this ordinary mail. I do not want to complain because I hope to receive them tomorrow.

Therefore, I will start from your health, which everybody assures me is good now, but I think that in the past it was worse than what you wrote in your letter. That sometimes I am in bed is a small matter, because I am subject now and then to small inconveniences that end up in nothing. As for you my dear Carolina, as you are quite healthy, between you and me, I would not like to think such an ailment is connected with that constipation that you had last year, when, at early dawn, you went to the Spiritual Exercises\(^1\) in that small church close to us. I recommend myself to you. You know that here a proverb says that it is better to have polenta that lasts, than chicken that gets over quickly. You already understand me. I will not add anything else, as I imagine you will be annoyed with this type of advice. Forgive me. It is because of my friendship and attachment to you.

Besides, I thank you so much for the beautiful books you sent me. They are very dear to me. I will give one to Fr. Pietro too, and to some others, as a help. May God reward you, my dear friend, and our Viscontina. At times, much good can be done with your books, to these Religious from the countryside. Well, I thank you very much. You might know that, to a large extent because of my lack of foresight, I did not have the chance to see that good noble lady who passed by here. I am full of confusion, Viscontina will tell you the rest.

Finally, last Monday I transferred my girls to the new house\(^2\) which is close by.

I am very happy about the new teacher\(^3\). I always fear, that since I am not worthy of her, the Lord might take her away, or that she might get tired, although she shows that she is very happy. I have not found the second yet. Please beg the Lord that he may send me another one. Concerning Fr. Bellavite, this is what I would do about my girls. Note that the matter is not decided but only discussed since it will take time for the situation in my family to be settled, and most of all, for me to see clearly what is the Will of God.

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2. Near the Church of S. Lorenzo in Corso Cavour. «A big house, with land and a courtyard in the area of S. Zeno in Oratorio, the one that now bears the number 5 at Via Rigaste S. Zeno.” (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit. pag. 194).
3. METILDE GIAROLA, the third teacher, who continued to work with Magdalenea until her death. She was the one who bought the house in the area of S. Zeno “for and in the name of and with the money of the citizen Magdalene of Canossa”. The date was 21 September 1802, even if at the land registry office this purchase was registered on 16 September 1803. For family reasons, Magdalene could only proceed to take possession definitively in 1820.
In such a case this is what I think. I mean to continue to establish my work more firmly, as much as possible. Either the endeavour here succeeds, and once established, it no longer needs my help, and I can go with Fr. Bellavite⁴ to help him in the formation of the Institution, which will sustain his girls and mine; or the Institution is established here as it could be done in Mantua and God sends me some other companions who are widows with whom to accomplish the same things here, and thus I remain here. Or if the work here remains small, limited, without a sound beginning as it is now, I will go to Mantua with my girls and teachers. This is a matter which requires much prayer. Do not forget it, my dear friend, remember also the one who loves you and who is all yours.

My best regards to all, especially to the Marchioness Arconati. I embrace you and I am your

Magdalene

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⁴ Founder of the Orphanage of Mantua (Ep.I, lett., 20, n. 3).
Magdalene shows her discontent about the delay of the letters. Nothing else of relevance.

My beloved friend,

I think that you are starting a habit which is not good, my dear Carolina, if it is your fault, and not the fault of the mail, as I still hope. I have seen no letters from you neither in the last mail, nor today. It is true that last week you provided me with the chance to meet the noble lady from your city, but it seems strange to me not to receive your letters for such a long time, even by post. Today, I do not want to worry because I still hope to receive one tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, as long as your silence is not because of your health. If so, very unwillingly, I would be patient if you are unable to write to me.

I pacify myself with the idea that if you were really ill, our dear Viscontina would have written to me. Enough, this evening I must remain between fear and hope. I am without your letters just at this time when, last year, I had the great joy of being with you a lot. Do you remember our trips on Saint Teresa’s day? This year I am near you with my heart only, and I am also deprived of your writing.

This morning 17 October, I received your very dear letter, my dear Carolina, dated 14 October. I am greatly consoled to hear that you are getting well. Therefore, do not bother at all about my earlier complaints.

You made me laugh at the idea of my supposed perfection, that gets so upset for its shortcomings. Instead, I think it is a new defect. But because you love me, and are sorry for me, you want to interpret everything positively. However, I am very pleased, that both of you are not displeased. At last, today, I find a chance to send you the papers and the books of Viscontina. With this letter I will answer all the items of your letter, which comforts me very much. I wait with impatience for the descriptions you promised me. Meanwhile I embrace you with the most tender affection, and beg you to extend my usual regards. I must finish because the mail is leaving. Goodbye.

Your friend Magdalene
A simple letter that accompanies the papers of Fr. Pietro.

My beloved Friend

Verona 17 October 1801

I hoped I could have the chance to write to you at length, my dear Carolina, but I have no time at all. I will compensate in the next postal delivery. I am sending you the papers of Fr. Pietro, which you know about.

I embrace you again, and I am forever,

Yours affectionately

Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved friend

23 October 1801

This week, contrary to custom, the mail is very punctual. I am happy to receive your very dear letter this morning.

I am infinitely glad that you are well, and that you write that you are taking care of yourself. I confess that although invariably I agree with every item of yours, sometimes I am an unbeliever. Therefore, when Fr. Sega arrives, I will receive one of your letters, my dear friend, describing your work, and the opinion that you said is similar to mine. I thank you in advance. I would like to tell you that here the work of the hospital has been a bit stranded because of the absence of Fr. Pietro, who wants me to convey to you his best regards, and for the illness of his companion, not Fr. Cristofoli, but someone whom you do not know. Fr. Pietro has been to take the thermal water treatment. Now he is well again, although he got sick in Valdagno. He returned the other day. His companion too, who is his strongest support, is improving. So that you can imagine that things are getting better and better. Fr. Giuseppe Cristofoli also asked me to convey to you his best regards and to tell you to be of good cheer, that now the Divine Mercies will be ours, and that we will be happy. Do you remember our disagreements last year when he related so many unpleasant things? Know that I had this obligation to convey his regards more than fifteen days ago, but I never wrote to you about it, because I had no time. I have not found the second teacher for my girls yet. One of these days, another young girl will be coming. Beg the Lord to send me a second teacher like the first one, for whom I cannot praise Him enough.

I gave Fr. Pietro two of those beautiful booklets, you sent me. He was very pleased with them. Answer, my dear friend, a curiosity of mine. Why don’t you say a word on the matter of Fr. Bellavite? Either you are not convinced about it, or you do not want to speak to me for some reason. Note that I would not like to have frightened you with this project. What I wrote to you is only an agreement made between the two of us (he and myself) on the necessity and, at the same time, the difficulty of finding teachers suitable for the education of these girls, and that they could be more easily formed by him, rather than elsewhere. This was the reason why I wrote to you.

But for the time being, everything is entrusted to the hands of God. Therefore, do not worry at all about expressing your opinion. Probably next week I will go to the countryside at Grezzano. Then, perhaps I will make a trip to Mantua. But I will write to you first, if this happens. In this case, I would be very unlucky if I were to leave before the return of that lady.

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1 Born in 1776 in Nogarole, he was Parish priest of S. Andrea Lipella, a Church that was constructed on the site of Via Zambelli, N°7 and that was well known for the celebration of the “Month of May”. The Parish was suppressed in 1806 and incorporated into the Parish of S. Fermo. Lipella is quite a common Veronese surname.

2 Fr. Giuseppe Cristofoli, member of the «Brotherhood» (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 9).

friend of yours. But since her brothers told me, if I am not mistaken, that they will return for
the feast of the Saints, I hope to be still here when they pass by. Imagine. Since I cannot see
you, at least I am glad to see persons who either belong to you, or know and esteem you.

Goodbye. Remember to convey my regards to dear Viscontina, and to everybody as
usual. Greet Mrs. Checca for me. Stella, Luigi, everyone, always tells me to send you their
greetings. Goodbye, dear. Love me half as much as I love you, and that is enough.

Your most beloved friend
Magdalene of Canossa
My beloved friend

Verona, 29 October 1801

Before leaving for the countryside I am beginning to write to you, my beloved friend, for fear that my time will be too short. I am going to Grezzano with Carlino, and this will make it difficult for me to make a trip to Mantua, which I thought I could organise. Continue to write to me at Verona. I will be slower, or the mail will be slower to deliver my letters, but I will always be exact in writing to you regularly. I have received your very precious letter today from Fr. Gaetano, together with one from dear Viscontina. I thank you cordially for everything. As for the work I like it very much. I feel a bit sorry that I too am not from Milan, or that you are not in Verona. I only say a ‘bit’, because it is better to be happy with what God wants us to be.

You, my dear, envy the fate of those who live in freedom, and, indeed, I too, find it very sweet. But in spite of this, as you can see, those who are free, have more desires than they fulfil. Those who are bound fulfil more than they desire. I am very pleased however, that the one who works is a person I love much, out of affection and of interest, since you will remember our agreements. I hope that from time to time you will continue to give me your evaluations. I already foresee some storms. But let us not fear. After the bad weather, the calm that returns is even more beautiful.

You will know that I have guessed rightly. I have not been able to end the letter before leaving Verona. I end it today, 4 November, the feast of your great Saint, at Grezzano where I am now. My dear Carolina, today you are always present to me. May God make you similar to your Saint, as I heartily desire.

When the family Nava arrived, I was not able to get acquainted with them, much as I wanted to. They must have already told you how they arrived very late, on their return. Despite this, the young noble lady took the trouble to write to me a sweet card, which was brought here around midnight. As I was already in bed, it was given to me the following morning, at nine o’clock. Thus, as she wrote, they had already left at eight o’clock. You see, therefore, my dear friend, how unlucky I am. It seems it just had to turn out that way to displease me. What will dear Viscontina say?

Please, if you believe it is not too much liberty on my part, I beg you to convey my regards to this worthy Family. My excuses, my thanks, as you think best. Regarding my brother, I will tell you that I do not see anything immediate. But between us, I believe he will not take long to make a decision. It seems to me that if the present circumstances were not critical, by this time he would have been already engaged. Regarding what you kindly wrote

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1 It is not possible to identify this person.
2 St. Charles Borromeo (Ep. I, lett. 8, n. 4).
3 NAVA, the family of the sister of Viscontina. The Countess FULVIA NAVA TRECHI was a lady-in-waiting in the palace of the Vicereine. Teresa Confalonieri, from correspondence, writes to her husband on 6 May 1814: «I will ask, for your knowledge, what Nava, Visconti and Trotti will do. ».
to me, I have related everything. I will not say another word, if they do not first speak about it, that is, either my brother or the teacher.

But since nearly everyday someone is proposed, I hear it spoken about and I seem to understand that there might be some possibility of a foreigner. However, note that all this is my reflection, since I have not seen any one here. I see also a lot of indecision in facing the subject. Therefore, this makes me think that they are really in earnest. If you have any proposal on this account, write to me. I do not know what to say without speaking at length, because I confess that, if I think a little, the respect, the affection, the friendship I have for the Milanese ladies, would betray me, and they would discover for which foreigner I am in favour of. In this case it is better to avoid the subject.

That’s all, dear Carolina, therefore give my greetings to Arconati and Viscontina since I have to finish now. Goodbye,

Your Magdalene
Magdalene and Durini’s correspondence has been momentarily interrupted because of their vacation: Magdalene at Grezzano and Durini at Fabrica. Resumption of a regular exchange of mail may be possible with the return to the city of the two noble ladies and, above all, with the expected proclamation of peace between the French and the Austrians.

My beloved friend

Grezzano, 12 November 1801

What is the cause of your silence, my dear Carolina? It is about fifteen days that I am in the countryside and I am deprived of your letters. Perhaps, I have unintentionally hurt you on the occasion of the visit of the worthy Nava family. Although I have not tried to displease you at all, do forgive me. I was not very lucky either to get acquainted with those gentlemen when I spoke to them, or to talk to them when I came to know them. But you see, partly I am joking, I do not want to damage your friendship, by really believing that you are hurt. Whether you write to me or not, I love you equally. I imagine that you are in the countryside, since I think this is the season in which you usually go there.

I am still at Grezzano and have no hope of going to Mantua. Rather, I think that next week all of us will return to Verona, from where, I hope, we will resume our correspondence. Note that I always remember and hope for what the Count, your husband, told me, that is, one year to bring you to Verona in this season when we are all calm.

I hope that everything will be solved with the general Peace, which will give every Country the possibility of seeing their government well settled. So we will all be at peace. Then, I will begin imagining seeing you here with me next year. Goodbye, My beloved Carolina, remember your Magdalene. Greet your husband for me, Arconati and Mrs. Checca. Goodbye. Love me since I am

Your Magdalene of Canossa

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1 The family of the sister of Luisa Visconti (Ep.I, lett. 45, n. 3).
2 The country villa of the Canossa family (Ep. I, lett.22, n. 1).
3 Peace never achieved even if greatly hoped for by the members of the second coalition. In fact, the Peace of Amiens (25 March 1802) was very unstable and, in May 1803, was broken and a third coalition formed.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina

Verona, 22 November 1801

Last Thursday I returned to Verona, my dear friend, without being able to make my trip to Mantua because of my Carlino, whom I did not want to leave so as not to displease his father. Since we decided to take as few persons as possible to the countryside, I was afraid that he would be displeased if I would leave the boy in the charge of only one woman. And, to tell the truth, I think it was a happy coincidence because, if I had then gone to Mantua, probably I would be still there, because of the waters that have flooded the city, inside and outside. I did not want to be away for so long for the sake of my girls.

I must reply to two very precious letters of yours, one dated 11th and the other 18th of this month. First of all, I will tell you that you cannot give me greater joy than that of assuring me that you are again in good health. Take care of yourself and keep well. Let me tell you again that polenta that lasts is better than chicken that gets over quickly. As I told you, this is a proverb of Verona. I also promised to do the same myself. Regarding the rest, my dear, I am well. I would not be able to guess who dreamed of telling Marchioness Nava that I had a headache, a physical ache I never suffer from. She might have wanted to kindly inform me of her return, and the people of the inn replied, presuming I had a headache, when they sent me the notice at midnight, a notice that I received only in the morning, as I already wrote to you.

Thank God, at Grezzano we had no damage at all. The waters did not disturb us. Therefore the river Olvia did no harm to me, as you feared it might. Here they say that Milan was flooded and this, though it is a common evil, makes me worry for you and the other friend of ours. My dear Carolina, the Lord is very angry. This punishment of the flood is very grave. You have no idea what desolation and ruin there is in the countryside. We must only say: God’s will be done!

I will not dwell at length about it in this letter because one of these days I will have the chance to meet one of our parish priests, known for his piety and knowledge, whom I esteem.

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1 Fulvia Nava Trechi, a relative of Luisa Visconti (Ep.I, lett. 45, n. 3).
2 Olvia: a small river that flows not far from Grezzano.
3 GALVANI Don NICOLA (1752-1823), Archpriest of St. Giovanni in Foro in Verona, Professor di Moral Theology in the Seminary and spiritual director of Magdalene after the death of Don Libera (Cfr. Dalle Vedove, la giovinezza del Ven G. Bertoni e l'ambiente veronese dell'ultimo '700, Roma, 1971).

The parish of St. Giovanni in Foro can be found in Corso Portoni Borsari, not far from Piazza Erbe. It was constructed in ancient times on the ruins of the Foro, then later rebuilt. Now it is part of the parish of St. Eufemia.
and know very well. He was chosen to accompany our Vicar Ridolfi, whom you know well, to Lyon.

In this letter I will answer to all the rest. A member of my family, who was chosen among the nobility is my uncle, Carlino’s father. Love me as much as I love you, and remember that I am all yours.

Your Magdalene

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4 Mons. GUALFARDO RIDOLFI, a fine figure of a gifted and noble priest, later elected as Bishop of Rimini. He listened most attentively to Magdalene in her villa at Grezzano. He expressed opinions a little different from Don Libera and wanted to talk with his Bishop, Avogadro. He was the Vicar General of the Diocese at the time of the marriage of Rosa Canossa with Count Giacomo Orti. (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit. p 113)

5 The Congress held in that city in December 1802 having the aim of reorganising the Cisalpina Republic after the occupation of Napoleon.

6 The Marquis GEROLAMO DI CANOSSA, son of the Marquis Carlo and younger brother of Marquis Ottavio, father of Magdalene, was born in 1741, had married Countess Maria Claudia Buri and died in 1816. He was a Knight of the Holy Order of Malta. When his brother Ottavio died suddenly, he became the tutor of the orphaned nieces and nephew, among whom was Magdalene.
Magdalene is worried about her uncle Jerome, who is not able to obtain a dispensation from attending the Congress of Lyon, and for the Archpriest Galvani regarding accommodation. She recommends the latter to Durini, so that she may find some acquaintances for him in Milan and at Lyon and be assured of appropriate hospitality.

My beloved friend

Verona, 24 November 1801

This is the matter I wrote to you about in my last letter, my dear Carolina. This letter will introduce you to a Religious, the Archpriest Galvani, a Parish priest renowned for knowledge, and piety, who will be going to Lyon together with our Vicar Ridolfi. Indeed, this Congress is a burden for me, because he is my confessor.

Let us leave aside this matter and come, my dear, to another matter which your goodness and friendship encourage me to ask you about. His itinerary will take him for only one day to Milan, but you know that accidents may occur on a trip especially in this season, either in going, or in returning: an illness, a misfortune in a foreign country, money may become useless, and also superfluous. Therefore, first of all, I recommend him to you in all the events that may occur to him. I hope, however, he has no motive to cause you trouble. I would like to beg you also for another thing, that is if, either you or Arconati, have acquaintances in Lyon, or in that area. Kindly give him some letters of recommendation so that in any misfortune he may find some reliable support, though he has no need of anything at all. If Monsignor Nava has not left yet, and if this does not trouble you, I think you could do him a favour to introduce him, so that in Lyon, they may keep company to one another, at least. Dear Carolina, forgive me for all this trouble. You see how much I take advantage of your friendship and how convinced I am that you will not wait to open my letters after those strangers have left, as indeed, does your dear Magdalene.

Oh God, my dear, how much anxiety this Congress causes me, because my uncle, cannot decide whether to go or not, and cannot get the dispensation he has rightly asked for. As long as it is a question of material things, patience. But to see dear persons forced to go, or subject to a thousand sorrows, is rather painful.

May the Lord give us patience in everything and some peace when He wishes. I have been very happy and consoled about the beginning and the direction your holy work is taking. Tell me, I beg you, if you think it useful to arouse charity towards the patients in the girls who assist them, as we said. Already, even without this, I hope that you will bar the road to hell to many souls, as it seems to me, because our hospital follows the norms of yours, and here there is such an ignorance, the Religious tell me, that people would go to hell just because they do not know the Mysteries of the holy Faith.

I have accepted your suggestion concerning getting simple persons to pray for the

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1 Confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene. (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 3).
2 Congress of Lyon (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 4).
3 Mons. NAVA GABRIO, ordinary burser for almsgiving; Archpriest of St. Ambrogio, Vicar General of the Archbishop (Milano Sacro, op. cit. p. 58).
4 Girolamo of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 6).
matter planned with Fr. Bellavite, and before leaving from Grezzano I recommended myself to the good country ladies I am acquainted with.

Remember, however, to get people to pray. I am always happy about the teacher of my girls. I have accepted a very young girl. One of the five I already have, and who is also very young, is dying. I have not found the second teacher yet. Goodbye, my very dear friend. Give my wishes to Arconati and Viscontina, and convey my regards to your husband. Fr. Pietro conveys to you his greetings and thanks you for everything. He will reply to me regarding the sale of the Pamphlets, because I, too, think it is the only expedient way to cover at least a part of the cost. Now, I hope we will resume our correspondence which was interrupted by our vacation.

I forgot to tell you that Fr. Pietro has finally decided to occupy a house close to the hospital, where he will take the boys he has already gathered. I feel that now he will really be able to begin his work, but in a private manner. Rather, if you ever have the chance to see our Monsignor Vicar, do not mention this to him. Luigi and Stella, who is very afflicted because she has lost her only daughter, kiss your hand. They always tell me that they pray for you every day. My family, Orti and Metilde convey their greetings to you; I tell you this time, once and for all. Goodbye, greet Mrs. Checca for me. I embrace you with all my heart.

Your Magdalene

PS. Listen, my dear. An idea comes to my mind about the trouble that I am giving you, to make it clear. The only thing that this Religious dislikes, if it were possible, is staying in an inn in Lyon. He wishes to be in a quiet place. If you or Arconati, have some acquaintances in Lyon, I beg you to write a letter to get him a more quiet lodging, without troubling yourselves, of course. If you do not know anyone in that place, patience. I will not say anymore. Give my regards to Arconati. Goodbye.
News of little importance: Fr. Pietro’s documents, the damage caused by the flood in various properties of the Canossa family, excluding Grezzano and Verona, the very serious illness of Carlino’s maid, who is by now convalescing, and the most serious illness of one of her small girls, who will certainly go to Heaven. While assisting the sick, Magdalene feels that her vocation for the sick is growing stronger.

My beloved friend

Verona, 3 November 1801

You may have already received a letter of mine, my dear Carolina, when the Archpriest Galvani came, and you might have said that I have a beautiful head in sending Fr. Pietro’s Papers to you without speaking to you about them. When I had received them I was so tired that I did not have strength to write another letter. The one you have received had been closed and despatched many hours before. Do not worry, however, for my health, which is good, I had a little cold, but there was no need of issuing blood, nor of staying in bed. Now I can go out, and I have recovered completely.

I tell you this in detail because knowing your friendship and your affection, you should not worry, because I do not deserve it and also because there is no reason for it.

To return to our papers, Fr. Pietro compliments you. You might have seen that the two last documents are authentic, and although they belong to two persons, uncle and nephew, I think that the whole income will be for setting up the Work, as you know. Regarding the income, he told me to write to you, if you are able to obtain the sum from the Cisalpina, something I believe to be impossible. Although the Republic has recognized this debt, he begs you to sell the goods, or for the half the price, or for whatever it is possible to obtain for them, warning you that over the Debt, the Republic should also pay the interest, and this would bring in some advantage. If this is impossible try to withdraw the money, or sell the goods.

I thank you for your concern about the floods, but I will tell you that, thanks to the Lord, here in Verona, the Adige has not risen beyond the normal level, I would almost say. Grezzano ² is far from all the rivers, so that I have not suffered in any way. Certainly our goods have been greatly damaged because the majority of our lands were flooded. But we need patience. Know that I, too, was worried for Milan, because they had told me that it was flooded. I was consoled by the fact that you did not speak of it. But I beg you to tell me something about it. I spent the last days with the sick, since the maid of my Carlino was close to death, and one of my girls is dying. The maid is recovering, but the little girl’s case seems to me desperate. I hope that the first one who will go to heaven from this house will be an advocate there for the work. She is only seven and a half years old. She promised to pray for me. But I want her to promise to pray for you too, and for our Viscontina.

Dear Carolina, if you knew how much my inclination for the sick rekindles, in the midst of these sick people. I am very happy for the good direction your holy Work is taking, and that you, too, will start to go to the hospital for this purpose. The Lord will bless it abundantly. I have another idea for you. I will tell you another time of something to add, which would improve it, but perhaps I might be mistaken.

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1 Read December, because the Archpriest Galvani has already arrived in Milano.
2 A villa of the Canossa family in the countryside, used for holidays. (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 1)
Goodbye dear. My cordial regards to Arconati and to Viscontina. I am forever

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Carlino’s restlessness prevents Magdalene from writing with calm. Magdalene thanks Durini for being very kind to the Archpriest Galvani.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 11 December 1801

It is impossible for me to explain, my dear Carolina, how much I am obliged to you, for your great kindness to our Archpriest Galvani, and for your concern for me.

I cannot do anything else, but thank you for taking care of everything. Indeed your friendship has done much more than I had requested, and I thank you a thousand times. I felt with true pleasure that he was in good health. It is true that he had written a letter to me two days earlier. I am a bit worried about his crossing the Alps. However, let us hope in the help of God.

I wished to write to you and to thank you first. But my dear Carolina, they thought of changing the method of the mail so that it is better for me to send my letter before receiving yours. I want to try to change the day to see if we can start again as before. Even the Archpriest tells me how well you treated him. I assure you that, because of his humility, one does not recognise his worth. But dealing with him, you will find he has many qualities.

I am writing without any intention, at all, because I always have my Carlino at my side, who does not give me a moment of quiet. This is because of that sick lady I spoke to you about the other time. My little girl is still alive. Greet dear Viscontina for me, and tell her that she is always present in my mind, but that I can’t write to her because I have no time, due to my sick ones.

As soon as possible, I will write to you about that idea of mine, which probably will be yours too. Regarding the Association of the Three Soldi I don’t know why I have never spoken about it. But here I have started it. It is slowly increasing. But I confess that because of my little ability and my little courage, it is growing very slowly. Goodbye my dear. I do not have time, except to embrace you. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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1 Confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene. (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 3).
2 The maid of Carlino.
3 The smallest of the children taken in by Magdalene. (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 4).
4 People who sustained the work of Magdalene with alms giving. (Ep.I, lett. 7, n. 4).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina

17 December 1801

My Carlino, who is dictating me this letter, tells me that I should write to you, that he sends you his love, and that you should come to visit him. Now if she can, better, since she can, your Magdalene will write to you. I am very well, but because of the delay of the mail, neither have I received any letter in this ordinary post. Instead, I have received a letter of yours, my very dear friend, last Monday, and I will tell you about it. Momolo did not get any dispensation, but he has taken a vacation on his own. Many others have done so in the case of marriage; may God shower his blessings on him.

I was surprised at the idea you tell me about the Damina Anguissola, who, seems to me, is the eldest daughter, because here according to rumours she would marry a Veronese, but not my brother. I think, however, that this rumour has no foundation. I cannot dissimulate to you what I feel because you are a Milanese, and because either personally, or by fame, I know so many good persons, that I would like that in some way before coming to a decision, he should come to Milan. Enough, may God bless him, and grant him a Christian companion.

Here they say a lot of things regarding the Lyon travellers. Someone supposes they will proceed for Paris, others say quite differently. The fact is that, in reality, after they left Turin nobody knows anything. I believe that your zealous Archbishop wants to reach his sanctification. His departure makes some sense here. My dear Carolina, remember much your Magdalene, who is in great need, especially during these holy days. I wish you with my whole heart, my whole friendship, my whole affection all the blessings and the happiness of these holy feasts. You will say that these are ancient customs, but know that I love you according to ancient and modern customs.

My little girl is still alive and suffering, and the other maid is recovering. I have a lot of things to tell you, but I have no time. My usual compliments. Goodbye, dear, I am always

Your Magdalene

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1 Person unknown
2 Daughter of a brother of Marchioness Maria Teresa of Grezzano (Ep. I, lett. 28, n. 1).
3 The city where a Congress was held in 1802 to reorganise the Cisalpin Republic after the occupation of Napoleon.
4 Mons. Filippo Visconti
5 The smallest of the children Magdalene has taken in (Cfr. Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 4).
6 Domestic servant of Carlino.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

52 (Verona#1801.12.25)

The work of the hospital in Milan, organized by Fr. De Vecchi and by the Marchioness Arconati, is in constant progress and Magdalene thanks the Divine Mercy and congratulates the two Sisters Durini. Father Bellavite in Mantua recommends, to subsidize Magdalene’s charitable activity, an association different from the «Association of the Three Coins».

My beloved friend,

25 December 1801

I cannot express the joy I experienced when I read in your last letter, my dearest Carolina, that the holy Work of the Hospital is so well established. Even though I do not cry so easily, I could not refrain from weeping, feeling consoled that something which gives so much glory to God and is of such benefit to souls was established in such a short time.

But you see, my dear, your friendship makes you a little unfair in granting me an appreciation I don’t deserve. However, not to lose myself in these contrasts, I leave this decision to Divine Mercy, from whom I simply hope some part of the merit you have acquired. And what shall I ever say, my dear friend, of this Work that fills me with great joy and zeal, and of dear Arconati, but to thank, together with you, the Divine Goodness who so gently and strongly leads faithful persons to follow his deep design.

Also the present Government will support this work in any case, since, they say that it stands for establishments useful to humanity. What I wish, now, for your city is that these ladies may find men Religious who can hear confessions and little by little establish a Sodality of Religious like ours whose men Religious, besides hearing the confessions of women, may also do a charitable service to the men as the Ladies are doing to the women.

Perhaps I will be mistaken, and there won’t be need of it, or I will speak on the idea of our small Hospital, yet I cannot but tell you, my dear friend, also this thought of mine, submitting it to yours which are more correct than mine.

The “Association of the Three Coins” is growing a little stronger, and is spreading, despite my great indifference, only by the providence of the Lord. I will tell you, also, that when I was in Mantua I spoke about it to Father Bellavite; his opinion was that establishing the Sodality, the members should pay according to their wish, and he suggested to me to look for a Merchant among the merchants, and so on for every class of people. But to tell you the truth, the example of another “Association of Four Coins” a month, which is well spread out and more abundant than all the others, and that has provided me with my idea, makes me doubt about his opinion regarding the various towns. As for the converts, then, I wonder whether you know that here we have a Retreat House, a very beautiful building established by a Filipino Father, a few years ago, only with the alms collected by him. Some of these converts are of extraordinary holiness and with miraculous gifts, as I was told. This house was sustained, either the whole or partly, by an Association following this method. The Confessor of this place was one of the first theologians of the town, who died last year on account of a bomb which dropped on the Church of this Retreat House while he was celebrating. Now, there are troops in a part of the building, I don’t know about the remainder. If you, or the

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1 Pious Union of Hospitallers.
2 Cisalpin Republic
3 Fraternity.
4 Hospital of Mercy in Verona
5 People who sustain this good work with offerings. (Ep. I, lett. 7, n. 4).
6 Founder of the Orphanages of Mantova. (Ep. I, lett. 20, n. 3).
7 Of the Order of St. Philip Neri
Arconati would like to obtain correct information of the beginning, the methods, of everything, write to me and I will send you what you want.

The part of your letter that didn’t cheer me up was that you are still having a cold. I don’t understand why you have a cold so often nowadays. Tell me if you have fever, if you have a cough, how are these colds of yours? All these worry me a little. By experience of this type of ailment, I am a teacher, but please, do me this favour, tell me more about it.

Fr. Pietro, who conveys to you a thousand compliments, thanks you also for your work, and entrusts himself totally to you. I beg you also, because I was given this errand, to know if it is true that the Cisalpine has issued in Milan a decree, forbidding the sale of the *Fideicommissis*.8

I have a thousand compliments and a thousand wishes for you from so many people, Orti, Stella, Luigi... but I am tired since it is past eleven o’clock. Therefore, I’m going to bed, begging you to give my compliments to those whom you know. We have no news at all from Lyon. I thank you again so much for everything. How can I say that my Carolina doesn’t know how to do many things?

Goodbye, dear, I am very well, goodbye

Your friend

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8 Of what one inherits. (Ep. I, lett. 32, n. 2).
Durini announced a visit of one of her friends. Magdalene would welcome this person very much and she tells Durini how her day usually unfolds.

My beloved friend

3 January 1802

In this ordinary post, I am trying to write to you as in the past to see if it is the case of rearranging our correspondence, my dear Carolina.

Yesterday evening I received your very precious letter, which although short, gave me the happy news that you are well again. You take good care of yourself, but I know, by experience, an excellent remedy against colds. For the time being, for lack of time, and being out of season, I don’t want to speak about it as you may believe that I speak out of interest, that is, so that I may see you.

Concerning the time I would be free, my dear friend, when that person whom you wish me to meet will come. I, too, warmly desire to know her, imagining that your friendship will make me acquainted with some other good person. I would say that if you will let me know, more or less, a few days earlier, I will be available at all hours. If it were a momentary, a casual thing, then I would say that at home I am free up to nine o’clock in the morning, except Saturday, when I may go to the hospital; if there is no need, I am always at home, and am free from eleven to two o’clock in the afternoon. After lunch I am free at half past three, but if I don’t know the time, probably a little later I could be out with Carlino. In the evening immediately after the Ave Maria, I am at home, and I am free the whole evening. I have tried to guess who this person can be, and that worthy Mademoiselle Louise came to mind, if I am not mistaken, who might go again to Vicenza. Regarding, my dear, what you wrote to me in your preceding letter, to which I can reply only today, thanks to the post, I would say that what your holy work is missing in order to be perfect, as I wrote to you some time ago, is the Sodality of the Religious. I wrote to you in my last letter, without knowing then that you would ask me. This is in reply to what you wrote some two weeks ago.

Goodbye dear, my regards to Arconati, to Viscontina, and to those whom you know. I embrace you, and I am all yours, having just time to declare myself full of affection for you. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

\[1\] The lady who has written a similar Plan to hers (Plan B6.6). (Ep. I, lett. 24, n. 7).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Mgr. Phillip Visconti, Archbishop of Milan, forced to participate in the Congress of Lyon, despite his old age, died in that city and Magdalene participates in the pain of Durini who loses, in that Prelate, a supporter of her work. Nevertheless the charitable activity of Milan keeps up its rhythm and Magdalene asks for some clarification.

My beloved Carolina

9 January 1802

I will start saying, my dear friend, that today I am happy to receive one of your very precious letters, much dearer to me since it is a long one dated 4 and 5 instant. I already heard, to my great sorrow and that of everyone, about the loss of your excellent Pastor.¹

If we look at the things with a human eye, we should say that the trip to Lyon in this season, has been the cause of his death, but if we lift up our gaze and think of the holy death of St. Francis of Sales², similar in so many circumstances to that of your Archbishop, then Dear Carolina, our thinking and talking may change. One of the things that came to my mind, reflecting on these losses, is that your pious Institution will suffer for this loss. I do not fear anything for it, but knowing that he was in favour of it, I felt specially sorry also for this. But the Lord is the only help we cannot lose.

I inform you that I have finally found the second teacher for my girls, and I am full of hope that she will succeed well, as the first is doing. My little girl³ is always in the same state, alive but suffering. At the first chance I will send you all the documents, that is, the methods, how our Retreat House for the Converts⁴ was, and I will tell you all I know about it. I am very happy to hear about the progress of your beautiful work and your beautiful ideas, that, if God wills them, they will mature.

When you can tell me about them you can be certain of my silence, as I did some time ago when you wrote to me of your present Work.⁵ It will be a great pleasure for me when you decide to do so. What I really desire is that the Lord may bless also your fundamental Work⁶, so as to prevent many evils, to destroy so much ignorance, and to strengthen Religion as much as possible.

Besides, I will tell you that I also admired how you started the one you have already established with such maturity and prudence. This, humanly speaking, has preserved it from a thousand obstacles, that would have been inevitable if there were less reflection and prudence; therefore I hope that also the second one will succeed as well.

I infinitely rejoice with you for your recovery and that your husband wants you to take care of yourself. Dear Carolina, how unfortunate it is that we are far apart. If we were in the same city, I would have liked to remove your boredom of taking care of yourself with the air of Montebaldo⁷, of which, as you know, I abound.

¹ Mons. Filippo Visconti (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 8).
² The death of Archbishop Filippo Visconti was similar to that of St. Francis of Sales because the latter died too during a long journey, (Ep. I, lett..6, n. 8).
³ The smallest of the children taken in by Magdalene (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 4).
⁴ Durini, Arconati and Viscontina are planning to open a new Retreat House for the converts.
⁵ Idem
⁶ Pious Union of Hospitallers.
⁷ A group of Veronese mountains; here it signifies the witty character of the Veronese.
If that Religious, who has to pass by here, needs conversion with regard to making visits, I beg you to convert him, my dear. Without knowing him, I fully esteem him, from what you say about him, and for his relationship with Arconati. Persuade him that this time it won’t be a visit, but I would like to find another term, but the time doesn’t allow me. Another time I will tell you more. Carlino never allows me to be calm. Goodbye, my dear, love me as I am and thanking you for everything.

Your Magdalene

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8 Fr. Felice De Vecchi, Barnabite Father and Director of the “Pious Union of Hospitallers” of Milan. (Ep. I, lett. 22, n. 5.)
Magdalene shows her attempts to regulate their exchange of letters, since the postal service is precarious. She assures solidarity in prayer while waiting for the election of the new Archbishop of Milan and defines the Canossa household and herself, as having the “air of Montebaldo”.

My beloved Carolina

Verona, 15 January 1802

Look at our difference, my dear friend; in this ordinary post, you tell me, that you want to write little, because you had not received my letters and I will write to you as much as possible, because I wish to write to you, and because, contrary to the usual, I have received your dear letter dated 13 instant, this day, that is, one day earlier than every other week. Know that to try to put our correspondence in tune again, I have tried to write to you as I did some time ago, one day after, but I see that they still delay, so we need patience and I will write to you when I can. It is enough for me to assure you, my dear, that I wrote to you every week; this week I have been one day in bed, as I needed issuing of blood, but I assure you, with all sincerity, that it helped me a lot, and that I am in very good health.

I desire and I hope that the Lord will grant you a Pastor similar to the one you have lost. I confess, my dear, that I, too, understand how much your church needs him. But my prayers are too weak to get him for you, but I won’t miss praying for it, and to have some good persons whom I know would do just as well.

I will have people to pray also for your holy Work¹, but the obstacles don’t worry me at all, rather I rejoice at them. It means the future will be better still. I have thought what a similar term we could use not to mention the word “visits” to that person² who will pass by here. You could tell him, in truth, to suppose that he is coming to a hospital since I have always so many sick persons in my house. In any case the location of our house is opposite Montebaldo³ and with me here, even if there were no sick ones, he can presume that he is visiting a mental hospital. Forgive this madness of mine, dear Carolina. From your dear letter I understand that you are rather confused and mortified, and I would like you to laugh, if you can. Goodbye, dear, I have just time to embrace you and to say that I am

Your very affectionate friend

¹ The Retreat House of the Converts
² Fr. De Vecchi Felice (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 5.).
³ The group of mountains facing Canossa Palace (Ep. I, lett. 7, n. 1.)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina

Verona, 22 January 1802

How much, my dear Carolina, you take delight in tormenting yourself. The Lord gives you the sorrow in taking to himself one of your brothers-in-law\(^1\), of whose eternal salvation you must be morally certain and, besides the sorrow which your good heart has felt, you want to think that you have not taken enough care of him. I can really witness to your feelings, your concern for him from what you told me when we were together. You imagine that you didn’t do enough for him, but this is certainly far from true. Well, my dear Carolina, I empathize with you, we all feel like that when we lose a dear person. We think we have not done what we should have done, but I beg you not to afflict yourself further. I guarantee that you have also done more than your duty. As for the loss, then reflect, that our good God has crowned his mercy by putting an end to his suffering, as we cannot deny his natural misfortunes.

Imagine that you will be worried also about your family.

It is a great sorrow for me who loves you as much as I do, to be unable to cheer you up on such an occasion because of the distance that separates us. Patience even in this. Be assured that I am closer to you with all my heart and with my love more than I am physically away from you. Come on, take courage, do not think too much. When you write, tell me about your health and how you are faring.

Be calm, my dear, regarding Gianetta from Treviso\(^2\) when she will come. I will do as much as I can to find a support for her in her town, or what you will write to me, and regarding the subsidies, don’t worry, everything will go well. You already know that I, too, have some accounts with you. The women here of our Hospital have told me to greet you, I don’t know how many times. Since I remember now, this time will serve for all the others. One of them, Bridget, is requesting you to get information about a certain Mr. Paul Guarnieri, to know whether he is still alive. He was once at the post office, has two children, one is a physician, the other is a lawyer. I don’t know whether this person is her brother or her nephew. Before she dies, this poor lady would like to know if he is alive. Beloved Carolina, thank the Lord for me for the second excellent teacher He has sent me. Pray that He may give me the grace to profit from His gifts. Goodbye, my dearest friend, greet all those I know. Goodbye. I am

Your Magdalene

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\(^1\) CARLO MARIA TAVERNA was the brother of Costanzo, the husband of Paola, Carolina’s sister. He was a member of the Committee for the new Regulations concerning pious works and places of charitable organisations present in Lombardy. He was parish priest in Milan (Cfr. Famiglie notabili milanesi, op. cit.).

\(^2\) A girl who needs to find a job and to be morally helped.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

57 (Verona#1802.01.30)

Magdalene reassures her friend about her good health and informs her that, though the teachers are excellent, the direction of the work is hers, that is, she holds all «the power».

My beloved Friend

30 January 1802

I start now, my dear, to praise the mail, because I see our correspondence perfectly back to normal again. Thanks to the Lord, I am very well, and you are surprised at the frequency of my blood issuing. You don't know the custom of our town where for the smallest thing they extract blood. This year, I tell you with all sincerity, contrary to many winters, I am in good health, and I assure you that I have all possible chances, even too many, not to get sick. This time with the multiplicity of things you seem to wish to tell me, you won't speak to me of what concerns me most, that is, of yourself. From an event however I judge, my dear Carolina, that you are in good, or excellent health, at least I hope so, and it is because your very precious letter is rather brief, and I observed that when you are well you write to me more briefly. How naughty your friend is with you! Yet I do you justice and understand that it has to be so, because then, you have more time, and though I am very pleased to entertain myself with you by letter, I am happier that you write to me briefly.

I didn't see that certain Giannetta yet, I hope, however, that she will not take long to come. According to my reckoning she should be close by. I won't miss to pray, and to let people pray for both, your brother-in-law and your English teacher. You make me laugh with your supposed “iced” heart, which is cold only towards yourself, because you want to trouble and torment yourself for what instead should cheer you up. What greater proof do you want for this patient (brother in law) than the Divine Mercy you wrote to me about?

I think that Father De Vecchi is the Director of Arconati and of Mademoiselle Louise, is it true? If it is so, let me know when he is coming. Concerning the second teacher I will tell you, that, although like the first she is better than myself, I still have the authority and since I live very close by, I am there very often, and some hours with the girls entertain me a lot. So you see that our thinking is similar.

If I have no other time, I give you my usual compliments. Goodbye dear, I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am all yours.

Your Magdalene

PS. If you see the archpriest Galvani, as I believe you will, because I imagine he will pass Milan on his return, I beg you to convey to him my regards. My Carlino sends you a kiss. Goodbye.

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1 The girl who needs to find a job and support. (Ep. I, lett. 56, n. 2.)
2 Carlo Maria Taverna, brother of the husband of the sister Paola Taverna (Ep. I, lett. 56, n. 1.)
3 Unknown.
4 Spiritual Director of Teresa. (Ep. I, lett. 22, n. 5.)
5 That lady who had written a Plan similar to hers. (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 3.)
6 Confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 3.)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene is anxious to know Fr. De Vecchi, whose probable visit had been announced by Durini without however clearly giving his name. She guessed and she promised herself to seek much spiritual help and a lot of light for her work.

My beloved friend

Verona, 6 February 1802

My poor Carolina, you have written to me at length, though you are perfectly well. I am very well, too, and I say it with all sincerity. The Lord sees my need. This year, until now, he allows me to be on my feet. Maffei resembles you in this behaviour, the care of you both for me makes me appear unnatural, not to say also false, but I assure you without double meaning, or deceiving, that I am very well.

If this letter comes on time, my dear, that is before you have delivered the credits of Fr. Pietro to the Archpriest, I would beg you to take them back because Fr. Pietro is afraid that if they get into the owners’ hands, they may repent for the offer to which they are now disposed. He told me, further that they would be happy with half the value, but regarding this part, I will give you more precise instructions as soon as possible.

I am very delighted for not deceiving myself in imagining that he is the worthy person, who will soon pass this way, and I am twice as happy in thinking that you will help me to get acquainted with him. You may imagine my pleasure in getting information about your holy Institution, which is progressing rapidly, with equal joy and surprise, and how many details I will ask him, regarding these great plans which we always tell or ask one another in writing, and how I will listen gladly to the inspirations and suggestions she will give me…I regret, my dear friend for being very brief in this ordinary post. I promise to double my writing at least in the future. Be assured, however, that I am close to you and I entertain myself with you with my heart. For charity’s sake, take care of yourself in following again your method, pray for me, goodbye dear Carolina, I am heartily

All yours, Magdalene

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1 Laura Canossa Maffei
2 Bill of credit (Ep.I, lett. 37, n. 2)
3 Don Galvani (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 3).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene’s work has a patroness in heaven, because the little girl, sick for a long time has passed away. Two other young girls have taken her place. This news is conveyed to Durini with great rapidity, because Magdalene’s brother-in-law, Count Serègo, will go to Milan to for some relaxation, in spite of the dangers and the hardship of the trip.

My beloved Carolina

Verona, 10 February 1802

My promises are similar to “sailors’ vows”, when I have to write long letters. My dear friend, from this bad debtor take what you can. My little girl¹ has ended her suffering last Sunday, and I hope she has gone to pray for us, as she promised me, since she was only seven and a half years old. I have accepted two others. I tell you this to comfort you. She has promised to pray especially for you and for Viscontina.

I am amazed that you didn't receive my letters in the last ordinary. Perhaps we have praised the mail too much. I enjoyed, my dear, a very pleasant surprise in opening your last letter, as I found one from the Archpriest Galvani², of whom the people here spoke as if he had died, a thing that gave me great sorrow. I guess that one day or another he will return. Meanwhile, my dear Carolina, I thank you again for everything. From him I will know some news of your health of which you often refrain from speaking to me. Yesterday, because of a lot of difficulties concerning my girls, it has been impossible for me to end this letter before the departure of the mail; but I have the happy chance of one of my brothers-in-law, the husband of the my youngest sister. He is called Serègo, who, I am sorry to say, to tell you the truth, is coming to Milan on a tour, and wishes also to know you. He says that he needs to enjoy himself a bit, and he is right, indeed; but with these roads that they say are so dangerous, and in this season, I don't know how one can wish to amuse oneself travelling. Yesterday, 15 February, the Archpriest returned. They say he is in very good health. I have not seen him yet. I desire to see him because I hope to have news about you. I have a thousand things to say to you, but I am not able to, not even today. Goodbye my dear, very dear Carolina. Love me always that I am indeed

Your very affectionate Magdalene

¹ The smallest child taken in by Magdalene
² Confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene. (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 3.)
The Archpriest Galvani is back from Lyon and has brought comforting news about the health of Durini, not so serene about that of Viscontina but Fr. De Vecchi’s visit is soon approaching and the doubts will be clarified. In the Lombard capital, perhaps, a meeting of Magdalene with her friends could be possible; but by now it is only an uncertain prospect, because she has to accompany her uncle Jerome, who was named member of the Cisalpine Council, whose headquarters are in Milan, in which he would have to participate every two years.

My beloved Carolina,

19 February 1802

I was happy to hear from the Archpriest Galvani,\(^1\) very good news regarding my dear Carolina. You will say now that I will believe you. Sorry! You told the truth. He has assured me that you are looking well, and he doesn't know how to express how much he was obliged to you.

He told me that the letters, which you gave him, have given him special comfort. My dear I renew my distinguished thanks to you. However, I felt sorry for the other part of the news he brought me about dear Viscontina, who, he says, is very downcast. Knowing to a large extent the virtue of our friend, I made a thousand judgements about her, and I fear that her fervour will destroy her. Give me, please, some news. Meanwhile I feel full of hope since on Wednesday or Thursday, I will meet the very worthy Fr. De Vecchi\(^2\) and get news about all of you and your holy Institution. You can imagine how much I will ask him about the whole thing. I will inform you of everything in the next postal delivery. Meanwhile I am very happy entertaining this thought and assure you that you have given me a great pleasure.

Later, when he returns, I will hand him our Rules as we agreed. I mean to say, that if I will have the chance, I will send them to you first. I had thought of sending them to you through my brother-in-law\(^3\) because I knew that he wanted to come to Milan, but I did not believe that this trip was going to be so soon. As for Gianetta\(^4\) you want to get angry before you know the reason. In truth, I confess that also with your anger you inspire in me more affection, than fear. Know, however, that, to my surprise, I have not seen her yet. Be calm, I will not displeasure you at all, neither regarding Gianetta, nor for any other reason and the greatest sorrow I may receive from you is if I realize that you don't dispose of me with that liberty, that our friendship requires.

Don Pietro reveres you distinctly, and begs you to send those two bills of credit soon after you have drawn out half of the value of each. If it were more, much better, but if you are not able, at least half of it, and when they give them back to you, send them to me.

After having spoken to you of serious things, I want to speak to you of a beautiful dream, that is of a project I drew up yesterday. My uncle has been nominated, I don't know in which Council, so that he must go to Milan every two years. Yesterday I have made plans to come with him, but notice that this is a dream. Goodbye my very dear friend, greet Viscontina and Arconati for me. Love me that I am

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\(^1\) Confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene. (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 3.)
\(^2\) Director in Milan of the “Pious Union of Hospitallers” (Ep. I, lett. 22, n. 5.)
\(^3\) Count Serego, husband of Eleonora.
\(^4\) A girl from Treviso. Durini entrusted her to Magdalene. (Ep. I, lett. 56, n. 2.)
Your Magdalene
The longed-for meeting with Fr. De Vecchi has taken place and finally Magdalene has been able to have precise news on the charitable activity of Durini and her collaborators. The clouds, that inevitably are pending over it will dissolve soon, as Magdalene wishes; meanwhile she asks the help of the Countess in two things: that she may assist her brother Bonifacio, who is in Milan for business, if he encounters difficulties and that she may pressurise the Hydraulic Department of the central Government to give the necessary consent for the construction of a bridge on the River Mincio between Monzambano and Salionze, to avoid the continual accidents that happen in that place.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 25 February 1802

As I have the consolation of hearing good news about my dear friends, and all the holy Works that the Lord has wished to establish through them, I am in grief regarding the dearest of all, that is, about you, my dear Carolina. Your letter, which I have received yesterday from the worthy Father de' Vecchi, makes me think that you are in some great anguish, a very common evil in our general circumstances. I have not neglected to recommend you, as much as I can, to the Lord, and I will continue to do so. Meanwhile, whatever the matter is, keep up your courage. You already have overcome big difficulties, with divine help you will also overcome this one. Could I, as I would like, be of some relief to you! For my peace of mind, tell me when you can, if your anguish is over. Father de' Vecchi conveys to you a thousand wishes and has asked me to tell you that he is very well, and has had a good trip up to now. This morning, to my disappointment, he left for Padova. Yesterday I had the pleasure of being with him for two hours, and I found him in every respect as you have described him. Perhaps I am indiscreet, but I had the joy to have a thorough knowledge of your very holy Institution. Now I am fully satisfied and all my desires have been fulfilled. Oh God! dear Carolina, pray for your Magdalene who lives only on desires.

Now, according to me, you should do nothing but to establish the Company of the Priests, if it is not yet established. We did not speak about this for lack of time, and about fixing a place for Converted women. On Father’s return, I will hand him the Rules, as we have agreed. May the Lord bless, and establish all that has been started. Now, my dear, I will tell you who will be the carrier of this letter, he is my brother, who is going to Milan together with two other citizens of ours to compliment the Vice President, on behalf of our City. He will pay you a visit on my behalf, and so I will be able to have more recent news when he returns. I inform you that there is also that Religious, who has educated him, and who perhaps will bring this letter to you even before my brother comes, if he is very busy. He has been the one who told me to write about the young Lady Roma and Anguissola, I don't know if in accord with my brother or in a way unknown to him.

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1 Director of the “Pious Union of Hospitallers” in Milan and Confessor of Carolina Durini.
2 Similar to that organised by the “Brotherhood” (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 7).
3 The Institute that Fr. De Vecchi and the noble Milanese Ladies were organising (Ep.I, lett. 54, n. 4-5).
4 Bonifacio of Canossa.
6 Rossi Don Pietro, tutor of Bonifacio (Ep.I, lett. 1, n. 3).
7 Belonging to the families of the Marquis Roma and Marquis Orsini of Milan (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 8).
You may say that I have written to you about him, but not that he had told me about it. I am quite at peace in the divine will. I hope that my brother will be well, and nothing unfortunate will happen to him, but you already know, the one who loves, fears. In case the Lord allows some misfortune, I hope, my dear Carolina, you will do me the favour of assisting him with your light and direction; I say the same about his guide. I confess that in the sorrow I feel now for his departure, I take comfort in thinking that he comes to a city where you are, in case a misfortune occurs to him.

I am not good for anything else but to give you some troubles, but you are such a good and capable person that I always take new liberties. Know that in the business I recommend to you I foresee a great advantage for my girls.

I enclose the Papers that deal with this matter, which, in short, is this. The Municipality of Monzambano9 or of Salionze10, has asked the Commission for the Veronese Waters11 permission to build a bridge, at its own expense, on the Mincio12 in the village of Monzambano because, for the lack of this bridge, a lot of people has been downed every year. Often people die on the other side of the river, without Sacraments and medical help. The Commission of the Waters, has written to the Commission of the Waters of Mantua and after having made various objections, to which the Municipality of Salionze, a small town, like Mozambano, replied, finally it seems that they have sent the matter to Milan for approval. Perhaps the answer has been given already, but if it were not, and you have some contact with the Water Company, I would beg you to see if it is possible to get the consent.

You might say what connection has this with my girls, I will tell you about it another time. Besides, I will tell you that also without this, I feel compassion for that poor population, first for their soul, then for their body. If you did not realize it, here is another attempt I am making for my girls and you could try it for your converts, to provide them with assistance. In our villages Lent13 preaching is customary as well as recommending to give alms once to a poor person, another time to another one. I have recommended myself to some Religious to whom I have given some “fedi”14 recommending them a needy family, to distribute to their various friends, and I hope to bring about a lot of subscriptions.

Do not speak much about this to those who will deliver this letter to you. I am afraid that my brother might say that I am disturbing you too much regarding the first matter. And it is true. I do not enclose any copy of the Papers because I think they are useless… Goodbye, my dear Carolina, If I could make myself into a boot, just for two days, I would do so willingly, very willingly, to embrace you. Things being as they are, I shall remain what in fact I am, a pumpkin, and I embrace you only with my heart, but with the most tender affection possible.

Goodbye, dear, I am forever totally,

Your Magdalene

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8 Daughter of the brother of Maria Teresa of Grezzano (Ep.I, lett. 28, n. 1).
9 Monzambano. An agricultural Centre on the right bank of the River Mincio, in the province of Mantova. In 1800, Napoleon defeated the Austrians. In 1848 and in 1866, the Piedmonts clashed with the Austrians.
10 Salionze, a hamlet of the Municipality of Valeggio in the province of Verona.
11 It is like our “Town Council” which deals with the water problems of the city.
12 A river in the Lombardy Region (75 km.), emissary of the Lake of Garda, a left tributary of the Po. It flows through the lowland forming a lake in Mantua. In 1800 and in 1814 the French defeated the Austrians.
13 A sacred time of 40 days in preparation for Easter. In Magdalene of Canossa’s time, as through various centuries of history, it was characterized by an intense preaching on the Passion of our Lord and other liturgical forms.
14 Subscription Certificates
This is a very confusing letter, but I hope you will understand it. We do not see Gianetta ¹⁵.

¹⁵ The girl from Treviso recommended to Durini (Ep. I, lett. 56, n. 2).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

A few lines to complete the preceding letter, delivered by the Marquis Bonifacio. The answer regarding the bridge is already at the Municipality, and does not need any other intervention. Her brother-in-law Serègo is on a trip to Milan and wishes to meet Durini.

My beloved Carolina,

1 March 1802

Only two lines, this time, my dear Carolina, since you might have received my long letter through my brother. Concerning the bridge I begged you to refrain from speaking about the matter, because the answer has already come. I don't know what it is, but for the moment, not to create any confusion, don't speak about it, even if you would be able to help me.

I asked about the health of Count Ernesto Bevilacqua, who is in the countryside, and everyone assured me that he is in excellently health. I thank you, my dear, for your kind concern toward my brother-in-law, who, since I know he esteems you greatly, I suppose he will try to get to know you, and if he has no chance to meet you, don't bother about it. If you see either my brother, or his tutor, kindly tell them that their letters are kept at the post office. Goodbye dear, very dear Friend. I now have six girls. I will speak about them in the next ordinary. Goodbye from my heart

I am forever yours,

Magdalene

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1 Bridge on the River Mincio between Monzambano and Calionze (Ep. I, lett. 61. n. 9).
2 He was born in 1756 of Alessandro and Margherita Negrobuoni of Brescia. He had married Felicita del Conte Scarampi from Villanova of Turin. He belonged to an illustrious and old family of German origin, established in Verona in the XII century and spread to Ferrara and Bologna (Cfr. Albo Nazionale, Famiglie nobili dello Stato Italiano, op. cit.).
3 Count Federico Serégo, husband of Eleanor, (Ep. I, lett. 59, n. 3).
4 Bonifacio of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 61, n. 5).
5 Don Pietro Rossi, tutor of Bonifacio (Ep. I, lett. 61, n. 6).
Durini’s welcome of the Marquis Bonifacio has been very good and Magdalene thanks her, as well as the Lord for His assistance in the work of the Milanese noble Ladies, while that of her “Hospital of Mercy” in Verona is uncertain.

My beloved Carolina,

7 March 1802

Every time that I start writing a letter to you, my dear friend, it is an occasion to thank you for something, since as I am indebted to you for thousands of things, and at times I fear that I may trouble you.

Enough, I don't know what to say, but to repeat that I thank you for all the gentleness you have shown to my brother, and to my brother-in-law, and to tell you again that I will be always very grateful about it. I hope that Arconati may have had news from Father de' Vecchi. Well, the other time I imagined that you could have news about him from my brother, two days before the mail, and instead I was delayed in sending them to you. I must repeat that also on this matter, I have greatly admired his zeal and his prudence.

He gave me a detailed story of your Pious Work, of the many obstacles you have encountered, the good that is done. Oh God what holiness, prudence and behaviour in those who administer, and in those who work! I hope that obstacles will be overcome, since as I heard, your holy Work stems from prayer. Indeed we, you see, are in deep waters, let us admit it, I want to say that the work of the Hospital is shaky and not stable. I will tell you everything another day, when I will have to write to you on another matter, which I would not like to have happened. Today I am rather tired; dancing and dancing throughout the Carnival; instead, in Lent we get tired of small things.

Goodbye, dearest Carolina. Love me. Be sure that I am yours, but totally yours.

Magdalene

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1 Bonifacio of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 61, n. 6)
2 Count Frederico Serègo, husband of Eleanor of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 59, n. 3).
3 Director of the «Pious Union of the Hospitallers» in Mantua (Ep. I, lett. 22. n. 5)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

A new unforeseen trip to Milan of the other brother-in-law of Magdalene, Count Orti Manara, who, wanting to go to Rome, has to apply to the Lombard Capital for the passports. Magdalene, reluctantly, begs her friend to show him the easiest way to get them.

My beloved Carolina,

8 March 1802

Oh God, my dear friend, all my brothers-in-law, this year, have the mania to travel. Here is my brother-in-law Orti\(^1\), who wants to go to Rome, and is forced to come to Milan to get his passports for that region. Therefore, he wants to see you, and if it is not possible to get them, he wants me to beg you to teach him the way to obtain them.

I would prefer him to stay at home, but since he has this whim, indeed he has none other, I beg you, if it is ever needed, to suggest to him the procedures to have the passports.

Forgive me also for this new trouble, I confess that I am almost sorry that people know that I know you because I have always a motive to disturb you. I wanted to write to you a thousand things on this occasion, but I lack the time. I cannot do anything else but embrace you whole-heartedly, and to say forever that I am

Totally yours, Magdalene

\(^1\) Count Jerome Orti Manara, husband of Magdalene’s sister Rosa of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 2).
On behalf of Bonifacio, Magdalene expresses again the gratitude of both of them for the most cordial welcome towards her brother and his tutor but her friend is the only one who knows the anguish of Magdalene. Her sister Eleonor Serégo seems to be very sick and Magdalene would also accept her death if that were the Will of God, but she fears that the young spouse would not be able to resign herself. Durini should help her with her prayer.

My beloved friend,

14 March 1802

I have so many reasons, and so many favours, for which I convey to you a thousand thanks, my dear Carolina, that I don't know where to start from. You say that you have not done anything for my brother, and I tell that you could not have done more indeed, and that he and his Tutor are lost for words for all the gentleness, attentions and goodness you have shown them. They commend me to thank you warmly for everything, and to tell you that they hope to see you again but here in Verona. Thank goodness, they had a good trip, and arrived in good health. Now then, my dear, I must thank you for myself. I assure you with all sincerity that although a trip to Milan would be indifferent for me if you were not there, at the same time it would be the most longed-for trip and the only trip I would make in order to see you again and to get acquainted also with your other good friends, and to see again also dear Viscontina; as a consequence, believe me, I would be happier in a bunker with you than in a Duke’s palace without you, my dear friend. I do not see any flattery in taking advantage of your kind attention, and because I am not convinced at all that there will be a chance for me to come to Milan, and because my coming would be too much of an inconvenience for you. Don't doubt, however, that in such a case, I will look for a way to be as close to you as possible. Meanwhile, I thank you infinitely for everything, and I will be forever very grateful to you.

My dear Carolina, I am rather afflicted, and I want to tell you the motive for my affliction, so that, without mentioning it, especially to my brother-in-law Serego, you may pray and ask others to pray to the Lord. My sister Serego has been sick for fifteen days. Presently she is on her feet, but I fear a great deal that she may end up having a chronic breast disease. Oh God, my dear, she is twenty three years old, is not ugly, she has a very good future, you may imagine how much I would feel losing her, but my great pain is thinking what kind of resignation, what virtues are necessary for her to have perfect resignation. I have so many things to tell you, this has taken the place of others; I recommend myself to you begging you to pray to the Lord, I am also resigned about losing her if He wants, but I would like her to pass from my arms into His. Goodbye, my very dear friend, a thousand regards from me to your husband, and greetings to the Arconati. If I will know anything from Venice I will write to you. I embrace you, and I am

totally yours, Magdalene
Durini has hidden partly her physical illness and Magdalene is sorry, and equally because Eleonora is still not well. Don Leonardi has been close to death and the hospital struggles on; the financial demands of the Government are so excessive as to prevent accepting sick people. Magdalene’s only consolation is: the small ones of the “Retreat” have increased: there are seven.

My beloved Carolina,

At last, my dear friend, your good heart and your affection for me have betrayed you, and you have revealed to me what I already knew from others, regarding that small cold, of which you took so little care on account of your laziness, as you told me this autumn. I would like to scold you a little, but knowing for what reason you have done it, it is necessary that I forgive you. I beg you, however, not to be so secretive about it, because, to save me from a pain, indeed you give me a thousand of them, frightening me every time you have some pain, as I am afraid that you hide it from me. I thank you for the remedy that you suggest to me. I don’t know if it will be adopted by our physicians. During these last days I have been in great anguish for my sister; after the breast attack, a colic followed with high fever that frightened me a great deal; today the pain is moderate, and at long intervals. She has a little fever, but the pain in her breast oppressed her more. I tell you this so that God may dispose according to his glory and will, and for the good of her soul. Don Pietro has been close to death, now he is better. The illness overtook him while in the countryside where his zeal had drawn him to preach. We are all angry because we would like him to give up preaching, otherwise he will give up his life and all the other enterprises. The hospital work is rather languishing after his departure. Well, if they continue to demand that our very poor Hospital pay the ‘taxes’ and the contributions as they do, the work of the Religious soon will be superfluous because now they receive only the sick in their last stage, the number of beds has decreased, and soon they will be forced not to receive other sick people. Imagine what a horrible thing. Enough, let us speak of happy things, we have said enough of melancholy. May God dispose even of this hospital according to His will.

I have accepted the seventh girl, also a seven year-old. Metilde is sufficiently well, Nicolini4 has been made superior, to her great dismay. The first one is my head, my right arm, my helper on the field, all that you want for my girls, the second is the one who prays for everything. I convey to you the greetings of both.

Therefore, I thank you so much, as well as dear Viscontina, for whatever you have done for my brother-in-law Orti5. You were concerned beyond what I have asked you for. Dear Carolina, I hope that you may get a real reward for your concern, and attention, which I understand too well, and I hope that the acquaintances you have introduced to him may help him to maintain his goodness. On my part, and on behalf of my sister Orti6, who greets you deeply, I also convey to you our most sincere thanks. Goodbye dear, my regards to your husband, a thousand greetings to Arconati. I am totally yours. As I cannot write anymore, a hearty goodbye

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1 The Hospital of Mercy
2 The “Brotherhood” (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 7)
3 Bunioli Matilde, aiutante di Maddalena (Ep. I, lett. 5, n. 6).
4 Suor Luigia della Croce, monaca delle Terese (Ep. I, lett. 2, n. 3).
5 Count Jerome Orti Manara, husband of Magdalene’s sister, Rosa. (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 2).
6 Her sister, Rosa of Canossa, in Orti
Your Magdalene
The sick are all improving, but Magdalene feels physically the apprehensions and the works that still prevent her from writing at length.

My beloved Carolina,

28 March 1802

This time I cannot write you a long letter, my dear Carolina, because I have had a lot of things to do, and because also, to tell you the truth, yesterday I was not so well. Today though, I am well. Yesterday I had no time, I had to be with my sick sister, who, however, is getting better. You believe that I fear a great deal without a reason; that could be true. I don’t think so. God wants it so in this case. I thank you so much for the remedy you suggested, it seems to me clear enough, I will suggest it to our physicians.

Fr. Pietro is better. Please, do greet dear Viscontina for me a thousand times. I cannot write to her because of the lack of time and tell her that I thank her for the music I received, and that I will reply to everything with the next ordinary. Goodbye, my dear, I cannot but embrace you, be at peace; this evening I am really well. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The horizon is clearing, because the sick, who have caused so much apprehension to Magdalene, are better and the young Marchioness feels compelled to give therapeutic suggestions to her friend and to reconsider a possible amplification of her work. If she succeeds in accepting a third teacher, the second could help her to realize “her ancient plan” about the hospital.

My beloved Carolina,

4 April 1802

I was surprised, my dear friend, to hear that you have not received the other letter I wrote to you with the last ordinary. Be at peace, though. With regard to me and my sister¹, I am really well, and I assure you sincerely. My sister has no fever, and gets up from bed; now I hope very much that she will recover, provided she takes care of herself. I thank you however, for your concern and for the name of the remedy. See how beautiful spirits meet together, my dear. I knew this remedy as I had taken it years ago for an obstinate cough. When I came to know about yours, I wanted to suggest it to you, but I did not do so because you know already that I didn’t know the real reason immediately. Since I have another remedy which I think is better, which I took, which my sister will take, I waited for a while to propose it to you, since it was not time yet. However, I believe a great deal that now it is opportune if the physicians will allow it, and I am very grateful to you. I would like you also to agree to take mine. Enough for today, I don't want to say anything else. Dear Carolina, I am preparing to receive the seventh girl, I ask you to remember this little Work² in your prayer to the Lord. A third teacher has been recommended to me. According to what I am told and from the results shown by some girls educated by her, it could be said that she is one in a hundred thousand. But you see how many and varied are the worries that this resolution arouses. To be fully open with you, I am thinking that one of the two I already have, could come with me to the hospital and in this way we could try to realise the old plan. But I am afraid of failing and to disturb peace and economy. I ask you to pray the Blessed Virgin to obtain light for me. I have time to come to a decision, this is a great advantage.

A thousand regards to dear Viscontina, to whom I hope to write when I have a chance one day or another. I am always asked to convey a lot of wishes to you, from my brother, his Tutor, my brother-in-law³, who doesn't know how to thank you for so much gentleness towards them, and I thank you on their behalf and mine. Well, you already know, accept them from all, and convey mine to those whom you know. Goodbye, my Dear. What is happening to your Giannetta⁴? I embrace you, and I am well in heart. Goodbye dear

Your Magdalene

¹ Eleonora Canossa married to Serégo
² The “Retreat” of Magdalene of Canossa.
³ Frederico Serégo (Ep.I, lett. 59, n. 3)
⁴ La ragazza di Treviso raccomandata dalla Durini e mai venuta a Verona (Ep. I, lett. 56, n. 2).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

69 (Verona#1802.04.18)

It is Easter and family engagements certainly don't allow Magdalene to linger in her correspondence but the regularity of her letters must not be interrupted: a few thanks and a request for prayer because her "vocation" for the sick, if it is according to the divine dispositions, might take place.

My beloved friend,

18 April 1802.

I have to tell you a thousand things, dear Carolina, but I won't be able to tell them all because time won't allow me. I have received two very appreciated letters of yours, one from the mail and the other from a particular occasion, together with the music, and the association, that you have kindly provided me with. First of all I thank you for everything, in particular for your concern in getting for me this great advantage of this association. I can really see that your friendship is seeking my true good, that is, the good of my soul, and I am infinitely grateful to you, because I am in dire need of it. I cannot tell you how dear you are to me. Pray to the Lord so that if He wills it, He may smoothen the way, if such is his holy Will, so that I may truly follow that inclination, regarding the sick, which I do not as yet dare to call vocation.

Either tomorrow, or day after I hope to be able to talk to the Archpriest of St. Vitale,¹ and be at peace that in one way, or another, I will try to settle the question, but don't compliment me if you love me. All must be done for the Lord, but, my dear Carolina, I hope that the Lord is happy with our friendship. Since it is Easter day I cannot write any more because I have no time. I will make up another time. You have done very well not to sell the "credits"; send them to me as soon as possible. Goodbye my very dear friend, please greet dear Viscontina. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

¹ The parish priest of the Church which is the present Church of S. Paolo Campo Marzo in Verona, Via XX Settembre.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The Canossa has to go to Grezzano because Eleanor, who has not yet fully recovered, may recover complete health. This will also happen to Durini if she will follow her advice: to go to drink the waters of the Virgin of Mont'Ortone, while being a guest in Verona, where the same cure is possible and meanwhile to finally meet her Veronese friend.

My beloved Carolina,

2 May 1802

You had news about me from a lot of Milanese people, my very dear friend. In spite of this I cannot refrain from writing to you, much more because I could not do it in the last ordinary, and that perhaps our correspondence is going to be disturbed again, since, next week I am forced to go to the countryside. What bothers me more than anything else is the reason for this trip, that is because of my sister, who never recovers, and the physicians wish that she should try to change climate. Since the air of our vacation place has always helped her, they want to try. Don't forget her to the Lord, my dear. I hope that in your holy Exercises you have also remembered me as I need it much. I was surprised to hear that you did them after Easter, here we do them before it. By the way, I was forgetting to tell you to continue dispatching your letters to Verona, for I receive them, though a little later. As I could not write to you with the other ordinary my dear Carolina, I have written to our Viscontina about a certain girl. I repeat to you, my dear, the same thing. I have not yet seen the Archpriest, but this should not be a problem for you; if she cannot be settled in Milan, send her to me and we will try to manage. How much more pleasant would your dear company and you be to me, than all these Milanese people, although I still view them with a lot of sympathy. I confess that after knowing you when I see the Milanese people, because they are from your city, they speak like you, and they remind me of you, and I think I am seeing something which is part of me. I am seeing the Milanese for two days and tomorrow will be the third day. I don't name them to you because they will tell you. Even my Carlino has given them errands for you. My dear Carolina, the time is approaching for you to take that remedy that would be opportune for you, if this be the case remember that I count on your friendship, which will be satisfied with a mediocre lodging, but absolutely you must come and stay with me.

Also my brother begs me to ask you and your husband for the same favour. Oh God, what beautiful days, and what beautiful ideas come to my mind. All this to let you see that this project is not just to see you, but because I know that this would be the only remedy for

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1 At Grezzano (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 1).
2 Eleonora of Canossa Serégo (Ep.I, lett. 59, n. 3).
3 Usually they consist of eight days of recollection in order to dedicate oneself to things of the Spirit (Ep.I, lett. 41, n. 1).
4 Don Galvani, confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 3).
5 MONTE ORTONE o MONTORTONE, is a small village situated on the northern side of the mountain of the same name, which is part of the Euganei hills. It is famous for its mineral water, and is generally known as the baths of Abano. The temperature of the water varies from 56°C to 68°C and contains mineralizer elements. ("Da Diz. corografico, op. cit. pag. 366).
6 Bonifacio of Canossa
your precious health; if the physicians think that it is better that you go to Montartone, I will be satisfied to enjoy your passing through, but be assured; I tell you sincerely that it will be very beneficial to you. I assure you, my dear Carolina, that I don't write these things for anything else but out of my affection for you and that I don't magnify at all the effectiveness of this remedy for a disease of the lungs. Try to convince yourself, as for your husband I do not think it will entail much. Goodbye, my very dear friend

Your Magdalene
Finally the girl, whom the Countess Durini had recommended to Magdalene for many weeks, has come to Verona. She will be at the service certainly in the houses of some noble ladies, as soon as the Archpriest of St. Vitale, who should take care of her, will be available. However, the Marchioness is struck by the attire of the young girl, which is in accordance with fashion, even if sufficiently modest.

My beloved friend,

9 May 1802

For your peace, my dear friend, I will start by telling you that the young girl arrived safe and sound, and begs me to convey to you a thousand thanks for all the charity you have shown her. She says that she won't forget to pray for you. Besides she asks me to inform you that the conductor has treated her very well during the whole trip, that she was very happy and that she behaved as you had recommended her. I don't know yet where the Archpriest will decide to settle her, probably in a house not very far from him with a wise woman. I will tell you later how things turn out. Meanwhile, my dear Carolina, be at peace. The Archpriest and I will try every means to preserve the fruit of your charity. I was a little surprised by her fashionable clothing, yet it is more modest than what they tell me that people use, because it is covered, but I don't want to frighten myself for this, since she has also shown her readiness to change it. At that same meeting I have received a dear letter of yours as well as a gold coin. You want all the reward for yourself. My dear this is not in accordance with the laws of true friendship.

Regarding Fr. Pietro’s business, I cannot say anything in this post because he is in the countryside, and the person who replaces him did not give me any reply yet. Meanwhile let us suspend every resolution, I will write to you as soon as possible. Don Pietro’s poor health is the cause of all this confusion.

Dear Viscontina’s thanks for having enjoyed the company of those good gentlemen for some moments made me laugh, and forgive me, there is nothing at all that deserves thanks. Yes, I would like to thank you with my voice, in writing, in prose, by poetry, if you would do what I told you in my last letter regarding your health. But to tell you the truth, I trust more in the advocates I will find, than in you.

I have with me for a long time the book of our converts. I would have sent it to you one hundred times, but as I was waiting for Father de’ Vecchi, I wanted to hand it to him. If he will delay much longer, then I will send it to you. I know that this worthy Father has done a lot of good in Venice, and perhaps now in Vicenza he will do even more.

My sister is getting better, now my uncle Borgia keeps me busy because he is sick. I don't have however imminent fears, but I am afraid that he may be chronic, because he is eighty years old. Goodbye beloved Carolina, I am forever, sending you my usual compliments. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

1 Giannetta of Treviso (Ep.I, lett. 56, n. 2).
2 The Archpriest of St. Vitale (Ep.I, lett. 69, n. 1).
3 Methods used in a retreat for converts.
4 Director of the Pious Union of Hospitallers of Milan and Apostolic Preacher. (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 5).
Bonifacio returned to Milan and Magdalene sends a very short greeting to her friend. Special reasons keep her from writing at length.

My beloved Carolina,

12 May 1802

My brother, who is forced to go to Milan, will tell you, my dear, the reason for which I cannot write to you a longer letter, and the reason why I cannot write to dear Viscontina. I beg you to deliver to her that small packet of books that my brother will deliver to you. I wanted to add others for her and for you, but time prevents me from doing so. I will do it at the first occasion.

You see, my dear, not even on this new occasion am I able, for a thousand circumstances, to see you. It is definite that to give me this chance you have to come here. My health is excellent. I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am both near and far at the same time.

All yours, Magdalene
The suggestion given to Durini to cure herself with the Waters of Mont'Ortone has been interpreted in an inaccurate way and Magdalene is sorry, but still insists on the validity of this cure. There was also some misunderstanding with the Archpriest of St. Vitale regarding the placement of the girl sent from Milan, but Magdalene assures that she will solve everything. The work in the Milanese hospital is still catching Magdalene’s interest a lot. However, she would find it opportune to place it next to a kind of House of correction, similar to that in Verona, but it should be run by the Salesian Sisters so that “God’s love may reign more ever.”

My beloved friend,

Verona, 18 May 1802

Having been informed most kindly by Father de’ Vecchi through his very precious letter that Wednesday he will be in Verona, I start this letter which will be as long as possible, so as to deliver it to him, and also to excuse myself for not having been able to write to you with the last ordinary. I restart writing today, 19th. My dear Carolina, you already have noticed that is impossible for me to come to Milan; I thank you a thousand times for your kindness. For the time being, let us not speak of it, but with you I am a little angry because you think that, inviting you to take the Waters, is a pretext of mine to have the fortune, and consolation to see you. I assure you, my dear friend, that although, as you may imagine, I extremely desire this pleasure, however I would renounce even this, and I would be happy that you take another road to go to Montartone if you didn't want to stay here, provided you use the remedy. Here they consider this the best for the lungs, and I assure you that various people with this ailment have recovered, and those who were threatened felt totally strengthened. Speak of it to your physicians, this is a tonic remedy. The time you detract from your many affairs you will gain back with that which you would use in curing yourself, if again you will get a cold. Well, don't refuse me, you should not say no.

I was rather mortified by what the Archpriest of St. Vitale wrote to you. After I handed over to him the girl, I have not been able to speak to him yet. I will tell you that we had agreed that before coming to any definite decision, he would have tried her for about twenty days, at a good woman’s house in the parish, and that he would decide after the result. One of these days I will see him again; if the things will go well, and if we can put her in domestic service, you will see that worries will be over for everybody. If the result will be bad, we will look for some other more suitable expedient, and most proper that is possible, but don't bother about it. You Milanese have done so much for her, let also Verona also do something. Meanwhile, you and Dear Viscontina be at peace, I will write to you about what will happen. Now let us not speak of this any longer, but when I reflect on your holy work of the hospital I think it is essential also for your relief, if possible, that the institution should be of a place similar to ours, called ‘Soccorso’. I send you the book, and if anything is missing, or if you have any query, write to me and I will inquire, and then I will reply.

1 Director of the Pious Union of Hospitallers in Milan (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 5.)
2 Monte Ortone, renowned for its thermal waters. (Ep.I, lett. 70, n. 5.)
3 The priest to whom the girl, recommended by Durini, was entrusted. (Ep.I, lett. 69, n. 1.)
4 Giannetta from Treviso (Ep. I, lett. 56, n. 2)
5 Pious Union of Hospitallers.
6 A new type of correction centre in which the religious aspect alleviated the harsh discipline, with a more human treatment of the in-mates.
It seems that also the Government could be interested since we are dealing with a certain type of Reformatory\(^7\) but where, we hope, God's love may reign. I warn you that the Virgin Headmistresses were different from the true idea of the one who founded this Pious Place, because the real plan was that some Salesian Sisters\(^8\), which we do not have here, would run it on the idea of those Salesian Sisters running the Houses of Penitence in Paris. They, being, I think, widows, or at least advanced in age, seemed to be more suitable. On the same occasion I take liberty to send you some books of the Way of the Cross\(^9\), because I think they may be useful in Milan. I add six more and beg you to give them to dear Viscontina, to whom I will write if time will allow me. If I will not be able to do so, I will write on the first ordinary. Embrace her for me, and convey many compliments to your husband, to Arconati, and to everybody whom you know. Do me the favour of sending to my brother the packet Father de’ Vecchi will deliver to you for him, because I don't know where he is lodging, and therefore I take the liberty to send it to you; if he has left, keep the packet and the letter with you, and you can despatch it back to me on some occasion. Forgive me for troubling you. As the departure is approaching, I must declare myself forever.

All yours, Magdalene

\(^7\) A remand home – where children under age were sent to be re-educated.

\(^8\) Sisters founded by St. Francesco of Sales. (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 9).

\(^9\) It is a practice of piety which consists in meditating on some of the episodes of the Passion of Jesus Christ, distributed in 14 stations, to remind the faithful of Christ’s journey to Calvary. The origin of this devotion is not known.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

74 (Verona#1802.06.13)

In this letter an attempt, inspired by Father De’ Vecchi, begins to unfold and arouses enthusiasm in the two Durini Sisters as well as Magdalene, whom they have asked to be their collaborator. They would like, through some elegant and convincing patterns, to correct the rather immodest fashion of the time. Magdalene is totally available, but finds it necessary to start with the pattern of France, and correct it.

My beloved friend,

13 June 1802

You are right, my dear Carolina. At times I am a little extravagant with you, I have scolded you a bit too much on account of the Waters. I’m sorry for having scolded you, but I’m not sorry for having solicited you to take this remedy, which I think, is the best medicine for the lungs. Listen! Either I am a too quick to judge, or you are too narrow minded. I don’t know what kind of luxury there can be to take the Waters. As for the baths, I confess that without a real need I, too, do not like them, and really I have proposed them to you without reflecting, but regarding the Waters, it never crossed my mind that they can have this character of luxury. However, I am also taking them now for several days, as a preservative, and to strengthen my lungs. Therefore, forgive me for the first part, but tell me what your physicians have decided. Remember that the time you suppose you’ll lose in taking care of yourself now, you will regain twice over by enjoying good health. Even my sister is now in Padua to take the Waters, this means that not all physicians think in the same way.

My dear Carolina, having written to you in a hurry in the last ordinary, I was not able to ask news of your nephew, although I was commissioned to do so also by my brother, and by the Tutor. However, I did not forget to tell my little girls, which are eight now, to recommend him to the Lord. I beg you to give me news of him, and to embrace Arconati for me. Also tell me something of the health of the Canoness. Therefore, regarding what I told Arconati from the most worthy Father de’ Vecchi, I will tell you, that very gladly I would call to my help all the air of Montebaldo. To succeed in the objective, I think that to succeed happily, it would be necessary to start with the Fashion models of France, and to regulate ourselves on that, correcting it with loveliness, and this would be necessary to continue to do for some months, until the new system takes place. Then, we will more easily succeed. Meanwhile, all these towns will enjoy some benefit from Milan; and I will esteem both of you as cleverer than Father de’ Vecchi in preventing the offence of God.

Besides, I volunteer myself to do whatever I am able to. I will sharpen my mind as much as possible, without being, however, a great “expert”, but I think that the fashion model is necessary. I am going to bed, my dear, because I am very sleepy and it is late. I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am indeed

yours but all yours
very affectionate Magdalene

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1 The waters of Mont’Ortone, famous for cures. (Ep.I, lett. 70, n. 5).
2 The “air of Montebaldo” to indicate a humorous character. (Ep.I, lett. 7, n. 1.)
3 Examples of Paris fashions.
The problem of the fashion catches Magdalene’s attention. With the Archpriest Galvani’s help, she has discovered the mechanism of the fashion models that come from the French capital city, are sent to Lyon, then, to Milan and from there to the whole Italy. The exclusivity belongs to the members of one family only, the Arnaud family and if it could be possible to reach the leader of the other merchants, “a very good old man”, who lives in Milan, perhaps the problem would find an easy solution.

My beloved Carolina,

20 June 1802

I don’t know what to say about the mail, my Dear Carolina; on the last the ordinary\(^1\) I wrote a long letter to you, and I sense from your dear letter that you have not received it. Perhaps, by this time you have already received it. Really, if things continue, my patient doesn’t need constant assistance anymore as in the past. Consequently, my dear, I will be more exact in writing to you. I regret that your physician’s opinion is so opposed to our medicine and to my desires, however, I adapt myself now and I, too, agree with you. Remember, however, my dear, that it depends on our descriptions, but supposing that you have been exact in this, I will not speak anymore of waters, neither of baths, and I keep imaging that in future you will be in good health, and to see you on some other occasion. In my last letter I wrote, my dear, regarding the matter of which Father de’ Vecchi\(^3\) spoke to Arconati; talking one day of it to the Archpriest\(^3\), he gave me a light which for you, perhaps, will be useless, however, I want to tell you about it. He says that the distributor of the fashion models is in Milan, is a certain Arnaud\(^4\), who lives in Contrada Larga opposite to the Theatre of the Canobiana\(^5\). This is a family of merchants composed of the father, who, he says, is a very good old man, and three sons. One of these brothers is in Paris, from where he sends these beautiful fashion models to Lyon to another brother living there, and from Lyon they send them to their father in Milan, from where they are then dispatched to the rest of Italy. Who knows, we might be able to assist the source as the brooks.

My dear Carolina, if only you, nobles of the capital city, think that you are good at it, you are mistaken; with the next ordinary, at the latest, I will send you an inspiration of Montebaldo. Notice, however, that I am ending my letter today 24\(^{th}\) June, as I could not do it on the day I had started it.

From your last dear letter, I understand, dear friend, what you tell me about that good Cremonese lady, who must pass by here. I will be happy to be acquainted with her, and I will tell her whatever she wants to know. To tell you the truth, as I already begged you, I much desire to leave the thing buried when there is no further need, for a greater spiritual and temporal advantage of the work. I am more glad to share my ideas, because little, indeed, had been done, when they can serve to the glory and the service of God. Besides the usual happiness I feel of speaking about it with you, and to speak to you. My uncle has had a relapse, but there is no danger of life for the moment. I fear, however, that he will always be

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\(^1\) Postal service.

\(^2\) Director of the Pious Union of Hospitallers of Milan. (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 5).

\(^3\) Don Galvani Nicola, confessor and spiritual director of Magdalene of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 3).

\(^4\) The most popular tailor among the nobility of the time.

\(^5\) THE THEATRE of the CANNOBIANA, was opened in 1779 and operated for almost a century. Towards the end of the century, after the two theatres ‘La Scala’ and ‘La Cannobiana’, were given over by the State to the Milanese local Council, the less important of the two (Cannobiana) located in Via Larga, underwent a radical transformation and re-opened with the new name of Teatro Lirico.
chronically ill. Goodbye, in the meantime, dearest Carolina, remember that I love you and that I shall always be yours.

Embrace dear Viscontina and our Arconati, give me news of her little boy and of the Canoness. Remember me, all of you, to the Lord, as I need it greatly. Warmest goodbye.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The question of the therapy of the Waters of Mont’ Ortone should have been closed. Magdalene, instead, though in a reticent manner, returns to it on a lighter note of reproach to her friend, because in the background she hoped that, in that manner, she would see her again.

My beloved Carolina,

June 1802

I had and wanted to write to you, my dear friend, since the last ordinary, but a thousand occupations, among which, first of all, my patient, has prevented me from doing it at all. I thank you infinitely for all the goodness, that you, the Count and all your family have shown to my brother, and his Tutor. Both convey to you their distinct thanks and compliments, which I kindly beg you to convey also to your family and to dear Arconati. From what everybody says about her, I cannot tell you how much more my desire to know her increases. Indeed, for me it is enough the fact that she is your sister, but I hear many other qualities about her and I am very happy about what you say, that she takes me as her friend. Please greet her for me. Now I start to visualize that it may be possible, one day or another, to see you again. Note, however, that this is just a wish. I sincerely object that I would make a trip to Milan mainly for you, but I think that you would not be very willing to come again to Verona. You do not even condescend to think about my projects, you do not speak anymore of baths, nor of waters, you care neither for your health, nor for the concern of the one who loves you. Well, if I would not know how much you really love me, I would think that you don’t even believe me. I have so many things to tell you, that I am not able, my dear, to add all I would like to write on this matter. However I have finished what I want to say about it, and I keep it for another time. I feel a little offended, although your friendship seeps through my heart, explaining your reasons, or, better, your excuses.

I have received, my dear, the money that dear Viscontina and you have sent me for the known young lady¹. I hope in the future ordinary to be able to tell you where she has been settled, that is, the place found by the Archpriest of St. Vitale². I have also received the “Cartelle”³ of Don Pietro, and I thank you for your troubles. I also warn you, my dear, that if, by chance, they would like to have them free of charge, I will surely write to you, but you will still be disturbed. This time it is entirely my fault, for not being able to find a moment to send you an answer.

My uncle is a great deal better, my sister is getting better every day and will complete the cure of the waters she took in Padua. Goodbye beloved friend, time compels me to embrace you.

Your Magdalene

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¹ Giannetta of Treviso (Ep.I, lett. 56, n. 1.)
² The priest to whom Giannetta was recommended. (Ep.I, lett. 69, n. 1.)
³ Certificates of Credits (Ep.I, lett. 37, n. 2.)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

1 July 1802

Since Chavalier Casati has kindly come to give me the news of my very dear Carolina, and to bring mine to you, I want, my dear, to take this occasion, not only to tell you that I am very well, and that I love you always in the same way, but also to talk to you freely about the fashion models, because I am always afraid of doing it by mail. Therefore, I am sending you a sketch of a design, which is only an idea, and indeed it is not even totally according to my taste, but the person who has invented it could not do better, and I don't trust much to speak to the one who is more capable of doing it for fear that it might not be a secret at all. For instance, I would have liked the whole “cottola” light blue, without black finishing. I would like a very rich overall, because here with these narrow dresses we see some indignity, and a lot of scandal. The same too with the “corpettino”, I would have liked a black and rich sleeve, that could close below the elbow with a ribbon, and underneath, up to the hand, a light blue sleeve similar to the overall. The immediate departure of Count Casati prevents me from being able to send it to you in a more complete way, and also to send you a profile of the same design so that you may get some idea of the waist, and I will send you this when it is finished. You, who have more beautiful ideas, will improve the work of Montebaldo as you please, or even you will do it much better yourselves. If the matter will later succeed, and you had some other ideas, write to me and we will look for something of a better taste. I also regret that due to the great hurry of Count Casati, I have not been able either to know his wife, or to serve him as I would have desired. I am also sending you a few copies of the indulgences. I have put together those that I have preferred with some others. Perhaps they will be useless because you already have them, but in case you want some others tell me so that I will send them to you. Goodbye, my dear, very dear friend. I have just time to embrace you, and to declare myself to be all yours. I am very impatient to see your Cremonese friend. Goodbye, my usual compliments. My brother conveys his to you.

Your friend Magdalene

1 Count Giuseppe CASATI of the branch of the Counts of Spino and Nosadello.
2 Examples of Paris fashion (Ep.I, lett. 74, n. 3.)
3 Overall
4 Bodice
5 Air of Montebaldo to indicate a humorous character.
6 MARIA TERESA MAJNO VISCONTI, married to Count Carlo Zaccaria Visconti of Cremona.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

(Verona#1802.07.07)

Another fashion model, that portrays, somehow, Magdalene herself. She explains it, but feels that it is difficult to make herself understood without saying everything.

My beloved Carolina,

7 July 1802

A few lines, my dear, because you might have already received my news and another letter from Marquis Casati. ¹ I send you the other fashion model² you know about. Don't bother about what it deserves. Correct it, change as you please and according to your very wise experience. I believe that this is one of the essential things to draw God's Blessings on our Country. Note that the small portrait I am sending you, should have, according to my opinion, a black bodice suitable to the natural waist, and that the scarf that crosses behind, as well as the shawl, or the handkerchief in front, must fit well with the shoulder, or be placed high on the shoulder. Goodbye, my dear friend, my letter is short this time, but always with the same heart, being all yours at all times. The next time I will answer your last very precious letter. Goodbye, goodbye. Remember that it is a ‘Montebaldo’ portrait and that I don't have little curls on my face because that is an art to help make the ugly ones appear beautiful, and I want a crepe on my face. My beauty doesn't need to borrow anything. Even my neck is not as bare as the painter drew it. Had he copied me, it would have been too ridiculous, and at the moment I do not claim to be elegant.

Your very affectionate
Magdalene

¹ FRANCESCO CASATI. Born in 1764, he obtained degrees in both branches of the law and became a member of the college of jurists.
² A new fashion model.
The attempts made by the Durini Sisters in the field of fashion have encountered inevitable obstacles. Magdalen, comforts them hurriedly because she has no time and assures them that “great acquisitions are not made without great efforts.”

My beloved Carolina,

11 July 1802

Perhaps, my dear, this time I will be as concise as you. This doesn't jeopardise our friendship. When time is lacking few words are sufficient to understand one another. Concerning the sample, I thought you would have evaluated it in the same way as I did. I refer to what I said in my last letter. Don't be alarmed by the difficulties you find on your way, my dear Carolina. I hope that everything will go well, because great acquisitions are not made without great efforts. I wish I could help in sustaining you, but I am good for nothing except in complicating things for you. Once for all I offer you my limitations in this and in all the rest. The first time you write to me, tell me what happened to the Cremonese lady whom I have not seen anymore, and of whom you don't speak to me any longer. Tell dear Viscontina that I will write to her on the next ordinary, ask her to forgive me if I have not been able to do it before this, and that I embrace her.

Best wishes to Arconati, and to those who asks you about me give my regards. I have a lot of things to tell you, but today I cannot. Pray for me, goodbye my very dear Carolina.

I am all yours

Your Magdalene

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1 Maria Teresa Majno Visconti, married to the Count Carlo Zaccaria Visconti of Cremona.(Ep. I, lett. 77, n. 7.)
Difficulties regarding the possible corrections of the fashion continue and Magdalene finds new words of comfort. But, at the same time, Durini’s consent is needed. Fr. Steeb and Fr. Leonardi would like to approach Fr. De’Vecchi to begin a form of collaboration. If the Countess thinks it opportune, despite the extreme modesty of the Father, she may give her assent.

My beloved Carolina,

17 July 1802

I start writing to you today, my dear, to tell you something more, that is, to be a little longer. At times the mail delays some of my letters, yet they still arrive. Write to me as you are able and I am content with a few lines; now let us speak of our business. Perhaps I explained myself badly. I never intended to say that the ‘air of Montebaldo’ should be spread everywhere, but only to give you an idea of our inclination, of what had to be changed or corrected, either by Monsieur Arnaud1, or by you, or not even looked at, but to be sent to you only on account of the inspiration of these outlines; concerning the rest I liked your dispositions infinitely, and I too, find it much better to defer a little, rather than to lose or to risk to lose everything. If there is no success, though I hope for a good outcome, in that case God will accept our intention and we need patience. Tell Arconati that I embrace all of you wholeheartedly, that she can save ten or twelve souls in the hospital and in this work, if it succeeds well, she can prevent millions of sins. I speak regarding the time she can use taking it from the other activities. I confess that I, too, see that we have to overcome a lot of difficulties and that the most important one is to attract Monsieur Arnaud to our side, but if the Lord wants it, with His help everything will go well. You say that you get scared, but I see that you only foresee difficulties. When I will see the Cremonese lady2, I will tell you the result of our discussion. I hope she won’t delay a lot, because I wish very much to see her. There is much probability that next month I may go to Parma as usual, but of this I will speak to you when I will be certain about it.

I have a matter which I wish to explain clearly to you so that you do not doubt about the confidentiality I have kept in other meetings. When you wrote to me last winter about the beautiful work of your Hospital, you also told me to keep it a secret, and I did so. Later on, seeing that the matter was public I still kept silence, though not in such a scrupulous manner. When Marquis Casati passed by here and told me so many beautiful things, I related everything to Don Carlo and Don Leonardi. They, being very happy about it, have one wish only, which I did not want to grant them without first asking for your permission and advice. They would like to write to Fr. De’Vecchi, who, they think, is the head of the work, to congratulate him and to start a mutual exchange, which they hope may be for the Glory of God as they can have the opportunity of sharing their insights, but I, for fear that Father de’Vecchi, who gave me a lot of information of your holy work, and told me to keep silent, and indeed, nobody knows, for fear that he or you be displeased by this letter, I do not want them to write it without writing to you first. They will do what you believe to be the best, so I wait for your answer. Goodbye, my very dear Carolina, there is much I would like to tell you but I will keep it for another time. I often think how Arconati can do so many things, since she also

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1The most popular tailor among the nobility of the time. (Ep.I, lett. 75, n. 4.)
2 Maria Teresa Majno Visconti, married to Count Carlo Zaccaria Visconti of Cremona. (Ep.I, lett. 77, n. 7.)
3 Marquis Francis Canossa (1764-1837). He was a man of great commitment and piety. He played important governmental and municipal roles in Milan. He was involved in various charitable works. He became acquainted with the Marchioness Magdalene of Canossa through Msgr. Zoppi and a good protector of the Institute.
has a little boy, and prays a lot. I am very lazy even though my Carolina doesn't believe it because she loves me too much. Goodbye, dear.

All yours, Magdalene
Magdalene has been waiting for some weeks to meet the Cremonese lady, whose visit had been announced to her by Durini and who, in the field of assistance has ideas similar to hers. She, who has solicited that meeting, intends to clarify her own ideas through that exchange, as they are rather uncertain and unclear, but the delay is without justification. Regarding the problem of “fashion”, Durini turns to Paris and Magdalene smiles at her friend’s boldness.

My beloved Carolina,

25 July 1802

I would be very curious to know why the mail delays my letters, my dear Carolina, since I feel that you did not receive the letter I wrote to you with the last ordinary post. The virtue in fashion\(^1\) is always present, I do not know if you remember it. However, you were the one who pointed it out to me. I had to practice it, my dear, also for the Cremonese lady, who, either has taken another road, or had some impediment, but I did not see her, nor do I know if she has passed by. I confess that I wished greatly to be acquainted with her, first of all to see if our ideas are similar, and then to ask her information about a certain institution of Cremona, which could join mine and Father de ' Vecchi made me specially reflect on that. As soon as I have some spare time I will write to you clearly what I think about it. Meanwhile everything needs prayer, don't forget it, I beg you. I don't think I have ever told you that I have eight girls, but we will speak about it another time. I still have some hope about the Cremonese lady, that is, to see her on her return. In any case we will follow the fashion. Regarding the fashion, trifles: Paris....

I would never believe you were so fond of the fashions, but these days it is better that I should follow the fashion too. I thought of introducing to you another lover of fashions, whom I recommended to you, and whom you favoured so much this December, when he went to Lyon to look for those fashions, that now are fashionable. Being a friend, as I told you of Monsieur Arnaud\(^2\) I hoped he could settle things with you.; but now no one speaks of his trip any longer. Embrace dear Viscontina for me, and tell her that since I have to disturb her, I will write to her with the next ordinary, since circumstances will be favourable most probably on Thursday. Goodbye My dear Carolina, love me, and remember me.

Totally yours, Magdalene

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\(^1\) Prudence (Ep.I, lett. 34, n. 3).
\(^2\) The tailor most popular among the noble people of that time (Ep.I, lett. 75, n. 4).
The Milanese Countess is always waiting to meet the person who is directly responsible for fashion in Italy, Monsieur Arnaud, and Magdalene reassures her, showing her that the impudent fashion that comes from Paris is only used for the theatre, which is not appreciated by the Italian people and is not even accepted by the French. Magdalene is still waiting for the Cremonese lady.

My beloved Carolina,

1 August 1802

The very long process I wrote in this ordinary to dear Viscontina, will make me brief in writing to you, dear friend. To start from our business, I will tell you that you have guessed the person who was supposed to come to Milan, but now no one speaks of his trip. It came to my mind that at the beginning, until you get acquainted with Monsieur Arnaud, and come to know him, I think you could dwell on the discovery made that in Milan these fashions, which come from Paris, are only for the theatre, that they are derided for their insipidity and indecency by the French, and that they would desire vague and gentle fashions, like those worn by the ladies of Paris that preserve the decorum of the sex. I tell you this idea of mine which has come to me, but perhaps, my dear, it is a false or incoherent idea. I am used to tell you everything, so that I also annoy you with my thoughts. I am a little embarrassed about the Cremonese lady1, because, to tell you the truth, I, too, would like to see her and my trip to Parma seems to be fixed immediately after the middle of this month. Tell me, I beg you, when she returns, because as this trip suits me perfectly, I could then take measures to combine, if possible, both things.

Pray for me and ask people to pray. I have to make two important decisions for my girls. Our Advocate is the most holy Virgin Mary: pray to her for me. Goodbye, dear, very dear Carolina, in the next ordinary I will write everything clearly to you, because time is lacking. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

1 Maria Teresa Maiani Visconti (Ep.I, lett. 77, n. 7.)
Magdalene was organizing the trip to Parma, being invited as usual by her aunt, her father's sister, Matilde D'Arco Canossa. In that city the meeting with the “Luigine” strengthens her commitment to self-giving for the poor and suffering, but her trip, for the time being, is suspended. In fact a lot of matters pending hold her back in Verona: she is dealing with the acquisition of a house for the girls, is accepting a third teacher and perhaps a fourth one, so that she could begin the free school for the poor girls.

My beloved Carolina,  
7 August 1802

I don't understand, my dear friend, why with this ordinary I am deprived of your letters. I fear that your health is not good, because on this matter one cannot know anything from you, because of your goodness. Meanwhile, I am waiting for the mail to arrive, you could have written at least two lines. I will start by saying, my dear, that I believe that my trip to Parma will not take place, because some business has come up regarding my aunt1, however, I am not at all certain. Would you believe that my only sorrow about this change is the fact that when I am in Parma it seems to me to be a little closer to you?, and this the truth. But just the same everything will be well.

My dear, I want to tell you something about my plans as I need much prayer in this regard. I am trying to buy a house for my girls and I need the Lord’s help to inspire a generous person to donate it.

I am contacting a third teacher who, I believe, will also be able to train the other teachers, because, as I am told, she has the qualifications and the qualities needed for it. Finally, after settling both things, I will begin in the girls' house, in a room separated from mine, a free school for poor girls. I have in view also a fourth teacher, who has introduced herself to me. She seems to me quite capable. My dear Carolina, in such a case I need some advice from you. Meanwhile, I am in great need of prayer. Perhaps I won't conclude any of these things, but I repeat it, my dear because with you I don't know how to keep silent on anything, so pray for me, and get others to pray for me. Subsequently I will tell you the result of these negotiations. Don Carlo was happy about your answer, and happier still for the chance to come to know Father de' Vecchi.

I have not been able to speak to Don Pietro yet since he is very busy with a new institution of which I will tell you later. He has no free time. He advances in holiness like a giant and I confess that I feel greatly confused. Goodbye dear, very dear Carolina, love me, remember me. I have only time to say that I love you, and that I am totally yours. How is your Work going on? the house and the Converts? Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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1 She belonged to the D’Arco family of Mantova which was of Bavarian origin, establishing itself in Italy in 1124. The Countess Matilde of Canossa, daughter of Carlo, married the Count Giovanni Maria D’Arco in 1762, son of Francesco Eugenio of Mantova. (Cfr. Albo Nazionale, Famiglie nobili dello Stato Italiano, 1965 Ass, Historiae Fides).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

16 August 1802

Since, my dear friend, I am unable to come in person to visit you, as I would wish, and to keep you company, as you have done to me so cordially when I had scarlet fever, I want at least to be in your company for some moments, with less pleasure, but not with less affection than yours at that time. You should know, my dear, that I am very much obliged to my scarlet fever as it was at that moment that I had the opportunity to establish with you the bond of friendship which still unites us, but now on your part you could spare it, not only because we cannot be together, but also because I believe we cannot love each other more than we do.

I have not been able to send you this letter with the last ordinary since it was impossible for me to end it. Today, 22nd August when I finish it, I have also the joy of receiving your excellent news. My dear Carolina, I hope you won't imitate me, but I beg you, no, I command you, if friendship and attachment can give me this right, do not imitate my poor judgment in curing the scarlet fever.

You will see the great advantages you will receive from this inconvenient illness, when it is over, and well cared for. You will be annoyed by sermons I think; with mine you have this advantage: when you don't want it, turn the paper over. Do not bother about me, but take care of yourself.

I am infinitely happy with your beautiful correspondence. We will make a big show, we are all beginners with fashions. But indeed, I am extremely happy about it. When the source is sweet, all the brooks are sweet, and the merit belongs to the one who sweetens the source. What a beautiful impression my Carolina will make in heaven; if the Lord, in his mercy, will grant me to see you, then I will convey to you my congratulations. I would like to give you a passport for half the journey. My brother-in-law\(^1\) returned from Rome, and joins his thanks to mine, for all the goodness you have shown him, and for your letters. Please thank dear Viscontina, because my head made me forget her. I have accepted your good suggestion about writing to Marquis Casati. May God preserve us from this calamity, not only particularly, but also in general, because here it would be a true desolation. My business I already wrote to you about, is always in the same uncertainty; this week must be the decisive one. I confess that I tremble a little because mainly I don't have virtue, and I am not quite resigned. My next letter will tell you the outcome, meanwhile pray and get others to pray. Goodbye, dear, very dear friend, a thousand wishes to Arconati, my usual compliments. My trip is postponed to next week, so I hope to see the Cremonese lady\(^2\). I came to know that she lived close to your sister, and that both were very edifying to those who were taking the baths. Goodbye, dear.

Your Magdalene

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\(^1\) Count Girolamo Orti Manara, husband of her sister Rosa (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 2.)

\(^2\) Maria Tersa Majno Visconti (Ep.I, lett. 77, n. 7.)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The scarlet fever has disappeared and Durini is well, but complains of an involuntary psychological refusal to return to hospital visitation. In facing her appregension, Magdalene proposes the great value of the action done out of good will and not just out of enthusiasm. For the moment the Veronese problems seem not to have an immediate solution, but it seems that the free school can be implemented. For this Magdalene begs Durini to get information from Don Carlo Riva Palazzi about directives necessary for running the school well.

My beloved Carolina,

My dear Carolina, thank God you have finally recovered. How happy I am, and how I wish not to hear anymore that you are sick. Tell me, my dear, but tell me sincerely, do you think there is any benefit from the scarlet fever, that is, do you feel your lungs free, your spirits lighter, well, how is your strength and good spirits? What I don't understand is the fact that they forbid you to go to the hospital, when already they allow you to go out, and consequently to be exposed to the air. You do very well to obey, but I don't understand what analogy is there between scarlet fever and the Hospital. Concerning your being indifferent regarding this prohibition, if it is so, you will have greater reward than we, that is, of Arconati, and myself who have a natural inclination to go. I assure you that, at times, I fear I do not have any merit because of my methodical coldness in going there. Now, however, I go rarely, especially because of Carlino. But for you who have to think about when you go, this is for you more meritorious. I thank you infinitely, my dear Carolina, for troubling yourself so much with regard to the Marquis Casati. I am very grateful to you, and I promise a lot of prayer for you also on the part of those friends of mine. About myself, I do not know yet what to tell you; it seems that the Lord wants to be prayed to a lot, and this is right. For the time being, everything is suspended. It seems that the greatest decision taken is to open the school little by little, but much still needs to be agreed upon, and I don't have yet any of those answers I was waiting for, as you know. In spite of this, whatever the outcome, it seems that the school can start. At your convenience, since this new project won't start so soon, please ask Don Carlo what methods he was following in his school. For example the pupils' age, when he received them, the distribution of the time, especially the feast days, what did he require from them in order to receive them and you, my dear, tell me sincerely what Glory of God will result from this school, if the results can be seen in Religion, and in the behaviour of those who will be educated. Dear Friend, embrace and thank our Viscontina for the relationship of the good Pilgrim; if you know anything about it, subsequently do me the favour, either one or the other, of letting me know something about it. Goodbye, beloved Carolina, I am and will be always

Your Magdalene

PS. Please continue to pray for me.

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1 Don Carlo Riva Palazzi, of Milan (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 6.)
2 The reference is not at all clear.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

11 September 1802

Everything is suspended. Durini did not write, and Magdalene fears for her health; nothing is definite about the house, the teachers, the school. Even the trip to Parma, coming soon, will probably hinder the meeting with the Cremonese lady.

My beloved friend,

This time, I feel like scolding you properly, my dear Carolina, because you have not written to me, or let others write two lines. You are the cause for keeping me worried this whole week. If you had really recovered I would not, then, accuse you at all, but as your health is, not to send me any letter is too much. Perhaps, you did not write so as not to give sorrow, in letting me know that you have been sick, and you always make me fear not knowing the truth on this point.

Please forgive my bad mood, but dear friend, if you want us to make peace, give me, or let others give me your new.

Through the domestic servants of Count Casati\(^1\), I have received a very kind letter of Marquis Casati and another of our Viscontina, together with the books you have sent me. I beg you to thank one and the other for me, and in the future ordinary, I will have the pleasure to reply to both, because today I am very busy and it is impossible for me. My dear, I am rather compelled to be concise with my pen even with you. I don't have any definite news concerning my business, it seems that everything will be decided next week. Please, do pray for me.

Forgive my bad humour, but, my dear friend, if you want us to be at peace, give me or get others to give me news about you.

Most probably on the 20th of this month I will finally make a trip to Parma. I regret it a lot because the Cremonese lady will probably be passing by when I won't be here. Next time I will write you a long letter.

Goodbye, very dear friend, write to me and love me. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

\(^1\) The Family of Marquis Francesco Casati (Ep.1, lett. 77, n. 1.)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene writes briefly from Mantua, that she will leave shortly for Parma, and then return, but her continuous moving about doesn’t allow her to have regular correspondence with Durini.

My beloved Carolina,

Mantua, 21 September 1802

Last Saturday, dearest friend, I suddenly had to depart from Verona, hoping or being sure to be in Mantua before the departure of the mail for Milan, and consequently to write to you as usual. But, my dear Carolina, on account of my family situation, I arrived on Monday evening, instead of Monday morning and here I am, less exact than usual, and very disappointed for not having been able to be so. Tomorrow, I leave for Parma, where I will stay until Saturday or most probably until Monday. Then, I will return to Mantua, and I believe that I will stay there at least the remainder of next week. I have a lot of things to tell you, my dear, but today I have no time. Best wishes to dear Viscontina, and to Marquis Casati, to Arconati; I will write, as soon as possible to the first two people. Goodbye, dear, love me and remember me.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURI

88 (Mantova #1802.09.29)

Durini needs information about a young man belonging to a noble Venetian family, that of Count Ottolini, and who could be the presumed bridegroom of one of her nieces. Magdalene gives her the information with meticulous care, assures that she will enquire better and will also be more explicit.

My beloved Carolina,

Mantua, 29 September, 1802

I hope, my dear, that you will already have received another letter of mine from Mantua. I wrote it before leaving for Parma. This morning I received one of yours from Verona. I cannot answer it in detail until I return to my city. Meanwhile, I will tell you to continue to inform me about your health, otherwise I am not able to be calm. With your casualness I think that you are concealing something from me, and I would like to know really how you are.

Concerning the information you are asking for, you will be served in the most exact way, my dear, as soon as I will be in Verona. But it is worthwhile that you notice that to be able to give information about his behaviour, it is necessary that you give me the name of this Count Ottolini 1 because there is a father and there are various children; I don't know whether they are male or female, so as not to be wrong. Regarding his financial status, it will be easy for me to discover everything because the person who manages his business in Verona, is also an assistant of my brother in his business.

Perhaps, your brother-in-law 2 already knows that this family is of Veronese origin, but who, not long before the fall of the Venetian Republic, was enrolled in the Golden Book 3. Consequently Count Ottolini settled in Venice, and married a Venetian Noble.

His mother who belongs to one of the best families of Verona has always lived there. A little while ago this Lawyer whom I mentioned, one day at lunch said that they were waiting for him, I think, in Verona, where they have a house, which is, I believe, the largest of our city. I only fear that this family has suffered infinitely in past circumstances, for being really faithful to our Prince, that is to the Venetian Republic.

Ottolini, the father, was mayor of Bergamo during the fatal moments of the revolution 4 which he tried to prevent. As a reward and against every custom, he was made a Venetian Senator, but the movement that absorbed all of us, was also his ruin, and he had always a lot of problems. This is what I can tell you today. I will tell the remainder another time, that is, as soon as I will know it.

My trip to Parma has been very enjoyable, I believe that I will spend this week in Mantua. I have a thousand things to tell you about Bellavite 5, and about a discovery I came across in Parma. But today I am not able. Please, my dear Carolina, convey my apologies to Casati and Viscontina. Recommend to the first one the known business. I only wish you knew how I fear for the Piedmont region, but I fear that greater evils will happen to us.

Enough, May God be merciful towards us, we can only hope for His mercy.

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1 Count Ottolini, about Magdalene speaks in detail, is a relation of Don GIULIO OTTOLINI of Milan. He is mentioned as the father of the young man, of whom information was being sought, since he was asking the hand of a niece of Durini, the daughter of Count Antonio, brother of the husband of Durini.

2 Costanzo Taverna, husband of Paola, sister of Durini.

3 A register in which important people or things are noted. The “Golden Book of the Nobility”, in this case, is that of the Venetian Republic of the 19th century.

4 The “Veronese Pasch” of 1797.

5 Father Domenico Bellavite, founder of the orphanage of Mantua. (Ep.I, lett. 20, n.3).
Goodbye, dear, very dear Carolina, I wonder why I wasn’t able to arrive in Milan! Goodbye, dear, my usual regards. Goodbye.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene
Magdalene has numerous short pieces of news for her friend; among them the solution of almost all her more immediate problems emerges: she has acquired the house and «without money», she has engaged the third teacher, has received the rules of the school from Don Carlo Palazzi, though she has not been able to see them yet; the opening of the school should not be delayed much longer.

My beloved Carolina,

17 October, 1802

I am equally full of credits, and debts with you, my very dear friend; of credits because it is a long time since you wrote to me just one line, and in this ordinary you didn't write to me at all; of debts because in the last ordinary I also didn't write to you, and because I must provide you with that information, and I feel mortified because I am not able to give it to you until Thursday because that Lawyer¹ is on holiday in the countryside. Therefore, I turned to another person for fear of postponing for too long the pleasure of serving you, but until Thursday I cannot tell you anything precise. Later I will obtain this information, if you want, from the Lawyer, when he comes back.

Dear Carolina, my brother is again in Milan for his usual business. I have not given him the letters for you because he knew that you were not at home. It would have been impossible for me, too. This time I did not wish to come with him, because you were in the countryside. Therefore, he did not have the pleasure of seeing you, but I hope to get some news about you from his description, at least. The Cremonese² lady, to my great regret, passed by when I was travelling. After my return I have been very busy, my dear. I bought the house I spoke to you about through a simple transaction, because I had no money ³. I have engaged a third teacher so that, if the Lord, in His mercy, blesses the Work, in a few months' time we shall begin the school ⁴.It seems to me that the Lord has accepted your prayers and those of others, concerning this new Teacher; either I am mistaken a great deal, or she will help us greatly.

I thank you very much for the beautiful Rules of Don Carlo.⁵

It seems to me that dear Arconati wrote them. Greet her for me. I, too, would be very happy to be close to her because her example would be for me of great help, and encouragement, but, instead, I don't even have the luck of knowing her. Tell her to pray the Lord for me and you do it, as well, my dear, as I have an extreme need of it. I have not been able to reflect on the Rules, you have favoured me with, but they seem to me very beautiful. For today I cannot do anything else but embrace you. Now that you are in the countryside, I hope you will have more time to pray for me. Goodbye, very dear friend. Heartily I am

Your Magdalene

24th October: Since I could not send you this letter, last Monday, as I wished, I add what I would have written to you, today, in the other letter. This is the information about

¹ Francesco Bongiovanni, legal advisor of her brother Bonifacio (Ep.I, lett. 88, n. 2).
² Maria Teresa Majno Visconti (Ep. I, lett. 77, n. 7).
³ A house with land and a courtyard in the area of St. Zeno which belonged to a Priest Don Carlo Franceschini. The contract was concluded on 21st September 1802 and the document states that the sum of 300 ducats was paid. In reality, the owner must have made a donation because Magdalene writes that she had no money. Magdalene was not present at the signing of the contract, but a certain Metilde Giarola acted for her and probably paid the sum. (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit. f. 155, lett. 41, n. 3). This contract of the house of St. Zeno in Oratorio can be found in A.C.R.
⁴ The free school according to the plan of the works of Magdalene.
⁵ Don Carlo Riva Palazzi, Milanese. (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 6.)
Ottolini, I managed to gather until now. The young man is a person of good nature, kind hearted, and with good manners. Some time ago he was in love with a Venetian girl. His father, who didn't like this choice, sent his son on a trip to Vienna. He abandoned totally the plan his parents disliked. I cannot tell you the rank of the Venetian young girl because I don't know it, but they really praised the young man.

I assure you, my dear, that I tremble in giving this information to you, because since his family has come to Verona only a few months ago, one hasn’t got the information one wishes to know, because a friend would know the person deeply, but I cannot find such a person in our city. Anyway, when the lawyer comes, we will know more. Regarding the income, they tell me it is good, that there are funds, but they are deeply in debt. There is another brother and a sister promised as a bride. Perhaps, now she is already married. Today I cannot tell you more.

I am very well, my dear Carolina, and I also hear from our dear Viscontina that you, too, are well. I wish that you may recover perfectly so that you may do a lot of good as you have done until now, although you do not believe it. Perhaps as you health grows stronger, even your courage will be strengthened, because from your letters I understand that you are rather downcast. Forgive me, but you are distressed simply because God wants you to serve Him differently from Arconati and perhaps even differently from me. On my part, I am sure that I could swear it, I think that you are serving Him very much more and much better than I. It seems that the Lord wants from you the merit of the work, not your person and your appearance. I, instead, have the appearance without the substance. You may say that Arconati has one and the other. This is true, but God does not want from everybody what he asks of one person. Let us be consoled as we have to deal with a good Father and I hope He will keep us with Him, forever united. The mail compels me to finish. Goodbye, my very dear Carolina. I am and I will always be.

My brother came back.

Your Magdalene
Magdalene was able to complete gathering information on Count Ottolini and communicates it to her friend, without other news, because she is busy.

My beloved Carolina,

31 October 1802

In this ordinary I did not have the joy to receive your letters, my dear friend. I imagine that this will find you in the countryside.

Here are the Lawyer's statements regarding the known person, very similar to the previous ones. The young man is good, but has no great talents; however, he is good and I judge him of good nature by what I am going to tell you. He was in love with a person in Venice, by birth inferior to him, and he wanted to marry her as I already wrote to you; his father sent him to Vienna; on the way, reflecting, he wrote a letter of apology to his father, and abandoned his plan. A lot of income, but many debts, on account of general mishaps, and particular misfortunes of this family when we were part of the Venetian Republic, as I already wrote to you. The only difference consists in the fact that there are three brothers and two or three sisters. I am not sure whether any girl is married or is going to marry. If you want to know something else I did not notice, write freely to me, my dear. Excuse me if I cannot write any longer because today it is impossible for me. Be assured, however, that you are always present also in my silence, and that I am and will be always

Your very affectionate Magdalene

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1 Francesco Bongiovanni, legal advisor of Bonifacio. (Ep.I, lett. 87, n. 2.)
Durini has just returned from vacation, but her fear of not being fully recovered remains. Magdalene comforts her, assuring her that certain symptoms show the contrary. She then justifies herself for having unintentionally not been able to welcome the sister-in-law of the Viscontina. She asks to be helped to solve the compassionate case of an eleven year-old orphan, who, in order to help her sickly step-mother, is begging for money the whole day long, in serious moral danger, while her Milanese relatives could help both.

My beloved Carolina,

I rejoice, my dear, because you are back to your home town, and also in good health. I already understood from your letters that you were unhappy, and that you didn't want to speak to me about it so as not to worry me. According to me, your fear of being in the number of the chronic cases should have disappeared, also because you have seen that the good air of the place where you have been has helped you instead of harming you. Try to get some relief also in the city so as to continue enjoying the advantage of the countryside. Believe me, my dear friend, often lack of courage comes from lack of strength. Now that you have recovered a little, I beg you to take things easy. Don't depend on your courage and momentary strength to work now, because you will consume them too soon.

Forgive me for so much advice on a matter so dear to me. I sincerely hope that you will keep well for the tender affection and friendship that I bear for you but even for the glory of God for which, I know, you care much. I believe He appreciates your taking care of yourself as he does the penance’s of another. I am in perfect health, my dear. If Fr. de Vecchi will grant me the favour of coming to greet me, he, too, will prove to you that my state of health is really excellent; it could hardly be better. That slight colic has been so light, and brief, that I do not remember it any longer. Rather, to satisfy your friendship, I will tell you that, regarding my health, I am growing stronger and stronger and since that time I had the fortune of having you in Verona, up to now, my health changed from good to better. I have written to dear Viscontina about this colic, so that she would understand me more for not having taken care of her sister-in-law Ciceri as much as I wished to. Truly, I had some pain the whole day long. But if I were able to go alone, I would have gone anyway, but since I had to go to the inn, I had to find a gentleman, who could accompany me, and the gentleman, that is, my brother, although he agreed, could only accompany me very late, and Ciceri, to my great dismay, had left. The following morning the gentleman left for the countryside, but even if he were available, I had to stay in bed some hours, so that I could not see her anyway.

Let this be between ourselves. I confess that at times it is quite a burden not to be able to go out freely, although I see that my status demands it. I tell you everything because I know how much you love me. Therefore, for your peace of mind, I tell you that it was really a little thing. I hope you have received my last letter with the known information. No compliments, if your brother-in-law wishes more information, write freely to me about it.

(The letter continues, but the ink is very different)

I must beg you a favour, my dear. I understand that I must speak clearly so that you may understand me. Here in Verona there is a certain Milanese Teresa Pojaghi who was married to Joseph Laporti from Brescia. They say that Joseph was at the service of the Austrian Government. He was taken as a prisoner by the French and on his return from France he was

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1 LAURA VISCONTI of Somma, sister of the husband of Luisa Visconti, Joseph, and married to Count Giuseppe Ciceri.

2 According to the custom of 18th century a noble woman never left the house without a male companion.
forced to serve the French or the Cisalpines, I’m not sure which. Then, he was sent here to be liberated. He was living on alms, but before turning again to the Austrians he got sick and died in our hospital. Note that earlier he had another wife from Monza, who had given birth to a girl who is now about 11 years old. The rather sickly widow and the girl lived for several months in a hostel, where they still are. They both live on alms which the girl gets by begging, as you may imagine, along the roads of her village and the countryside; she begs either alone or in the company of other girls who are in her similar situation, because her step-mother has neither strength nor will to beg. You may notice how exposed the girl will be in a few years’ time. Were she two years younger, I would have put her with my girls, but as you know I do not take in girls if they are older than 9 years. On the other hand, I would have caused her step-mother to die of hunger. Therefore, I beg you to speak to a certain Battista Ermini, a porter at St. Simpliciano, at Porta Comasina, if I am not wrong. Ask him whether he has received any letter from this Pojaghji who was working as a dressmaker in his shop and convince somehow her brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and the relatives he knows, either to welcome her in their house in Milan, or to support her here, as they think better.

As for the little girl, you might kindly ask him whether he knows who her mother was. Maybe her relatives in Monza, knowing the young girl’s state, will accept her. In this case, I need to trouble you even about Monza. But, first of all, it is necessary to know something about the step-mother, because we cannot settle the girl if the step-mother is not settled, otherwise losing the girl, the step-mother would lose every means of livelihood. With regard to living on alms, I would think that Verona is less dangerous for the girl than Milan.

Please, forgive me for disturbing you, my dear Carolina, I would like to see if we can prevent losing a soul, which humanly speaking might happen here later than in your place, but certainly it will happen.

Last Monday, I was unable to send this letter to you, my dear. Therefore, it is as long as it can be. Today 13th November, I had no satisfaction in receiving your letters. I am still worried about your health; rather, I would be happy if you had taken revenge since you, too, had no letters from me. I will be angry if you don't write two lines to me or get someone to write them for the next ordinary.

I say this so that you know what I think. Lots of greetings to Arconati, and to Viscontina. Tell the latter to kindly tell me my debt about the aleurmes. My dear, you solicit me to come to Milan. Do you think I need solicitations for this? But I foresee that if my brother doesn't resolve to choose a Milanese, something that could be, your Magdalene doesn't know how to hope for it.

Goodbye, my beloved friend, with my whole heart.

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3 At present an industrial and commercial centre in the south area of Brianza, about 15 km. from Milan, which is becoming an important city. (Cfr. Modernissimo Dizionario Illustrato, Ist. geogr. De Agostini, pag. 720, col 3a).

4 SAN SIMPLICIANO, is a noteworthy Church in Milan, without however any particular aspects of importance which is situated in Piazza San Simpliciano at Porta Comasina, the present Porta Garibaldi, in the north east of Milan, between Porta Volta and Porta Venezia.

5 Idem.

6 A strong liqueur which is very sweet, with a strong aroma and red colour.
In the Canossa household the sick alternate; uncle Borgia is better, but Carlino has “false smallpox”. Father De Vecchi, by not stopping in Verona, has disappointed Don Pietro’s expectations. He wanted to speak to him about the work of the Veronese hospital, still lacking in many aspects. Magdalene also has to think about the transfer of her girls to the new house; the third teacher has come, but the second one leaves and Magdalene’s projects are slowed down.

My beloved Carolina,

19 November 1802

Both of us are very right for being disgusted with the mail, my dear Carolina. You don’t speak of the last long letter I wrote to you; my dear, since the days are so short, now, it is advisable that we get used to receive the letters when it is possible. Therefore, I promise not to scold you any more, not to do it for any reason at all. I have a thousand things to tell you, I will say what I can because Carlino has a false smallpox, we say here, and he keeps me quite busy. I had no chance to see Father de Vecchi when he passed by, as I wished; Don Pietro, too, wanted to see him very much and to speak to him about our work in the hospital, which, I must confess, is doing very well among the men Religious and the laymen who assist the sick at night, but languishes among the noble ladies, starting from myself. I think it is three months since I last went there, and I do not think I will be able to go soon, because I am busy with my girls, and still with Carlino, who now is growing. I don’t know who to leave him with when I cannot take him along: uncle Borgia continues his convalescence, which, we may say, is a continuous illness, so my time is taken up.

Besides, my dear, if it is true that the Lord has used me somehow to begin your holy Work, it is also true that He alone is doing everything. If possible, without troubling you, I would be pleased to see the description you speak of. I am sure that it will bear real fruit even here. I would like very much to know how the other idea of the Converts is proceeding. Perhaps, the Lord will soon send you a means to accomplish it in Milan. Notice that it is only my idea; if things will get clearer, I will write to you. I am very busy because in a few days' time my girls will move into the house I bought. At the moment I will not be able to begin the school because the second teacher is leaving and only the first and the last will remain with me. Both are so holy that I am unworthy of them. Until God provides me with other candidates I will wait. This, my dear is the greatest difficulty: devout women are easily found. But it is not so easy to get true vocations. Goodbye dear, pray for me, the mail is going to be dispatched. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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1 Chickenpox, a minor illness, which manifests itself in small boils similar to those of smallpox but smaller.
2 Great uncle of Magdalen, brother of her grandfather Carlo. (Ep.I, lett. 3, n. 2.)
3 The Milanese noble ladies wanted to open a Retreat centre for converts. (Ep.I, lett. 54, n. 4.)
4 In the district of St. Zeno in Oratorio
Carolina Durini is afraid of showing too much of her own personality when writing to her friend, as it might not be for the Glory of God and she apologises for being an egoist. Magdalene reassures her: when one writes frankly, there is no such a danger; rather, writing does some good and serves the Lord better, as it happens to her. The problem of the orphan and her step-mother is not yet resolved. They have decided to go back to Milan.

My beloved Carolina,

8 December 1802

Here I am entertaining myself with you as much as time will allow me, my dear Carolina, and always troubling you anew. Now that Carlino is out of bed, now uncle Borgia is in bed once more. I cannot say that he is sick again, because from last year until now he is always ill. If the illness does not turn into a serious one, and that seems to me to be the case, however, at his age it is right to be preoccupied, recommend him to the Lord that He may grant him, when he will take him to Himself, a holy death; this is what is most important. I hope, however, that the Lord will still leave him with us. I thank you infinitely for what you have done for the Pojaghi case. You should know that the day after receiving your very precious letter, without knowing it and without seeking any reply, she came to me, and told me that she had decided to go to Milan for many good reasons which she explained to me. Then, I also told her the answer of Battista Ermili. I recommended to her firmly the little girl and she promised me to take care of her, provided she will be good, and I recommended them that if she could not keep her with herself, rather than entrusting her to an uncle, her husband’s brother, of whom she spoke to me, who has no wife and works as a servant of a Frenchman, she should rather put her in a convent, as in the case of Stelline. To tell you the truth, this lady Pojaghi seems to me a very good lady, but since she is a step-mother I am taking the liberty to give her a short letter for you, asking you for the favour to write to me if the little girl has come safely, and to renew to her step-mother my recommendations, and if it were necessary, kindly recommend her to Battista Ermili, who seems to have a lot of influence on the brothers-in-law of the lady Pojaghi, so that they won’t reject her as not being one of their own. I confess that if this young girl’s age were not beyond what is prescribed, I would not let her depart. But her age and the custom of our town, and in the Coffee Shops where she asked for alms since she had neither mother, nor daughter, nor support or relatives and her vivacity, have forced me to let her go. Perhaps it is for the best, because as I already told you, her step-mother seems to me a very good woman. I have done so because she will respect you. What keeps me peaceful is the fact that she herself resolved to leave, without my involvement at all, and I tell you this so that you need not fear she has hurt us, as she decided this without her knowledge of it. Forgive me once again, my beloved Carolina, the patience you exercise with me will permit you to reach the heights in heaven. Do you know that now you will have to bear patiently again because I want to scold you? You speak to me, as usual, of your selfishness, and I have just the opposite idea from the one you have of yourself. Listen, please. We love each other with a true heart. We write to each other freely. As a consequence, at times we are brought to speak of things which concern God and His Glory and you, dear friend, are always afraid to let some words escape which reveal your mind and your heart and this with your friend. Or, if some words appear on paper, then you call it egoism. My dear Carolina, let us be frank with each other, I beg you! Since we are poor

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1 Teresa Pojaghi and her daughter (Ep. I, lett. 91.)
2 Custodian of the Church of San Simpliciano, Milan.
3 Loa Stella, a famous orphanage in Milan (Ep. I, lett. 20, n.1.)
4 The bars we use today.
wretches. I say this to please you, because as for me I am truly so. Would you like to deprive both of us of the pleasure to deal openly of the things of God and do you wish to be restricted with me and measure our words which I am speaking with my usual frankness, that have done me a lot of good, spiritually speaking. If your delicate conscience makes you afraid of egoism, then write to me freely out of friendship, or if not for this, but to serve the Lord a little more, because, really, what you write to me, does me a lot of good and you are the cause of it all.

You have done very well, my dear, to grant me the pleasure to see Father de' Vecchi; when he will return, I will explain everything to him orally. Goodbye, my dear, today time is lacking, my usual compliments to all. Goodbye.

All yours, Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Pojaghi, the orphan's step-mother, returns to Milan; she has a letter for Durini, so that the Countess may ascertain whether the young girl is assisted by her uncles and doesn't fall into great danger. Meanwhile, Magdalene hopes that the year, beginning soon, may give her the opportunity of meeting her friend.

My beloved Carolina,

17 December 1802

I cannot understand, my dear friend, why the mail is not bringing my letters. I am in good health and I am not or should not be angry with you, for any reason, and it is impossible for me to forget my dearest friend. I wrote to you, my dear Carolina, last week and I have varied the day thinking that the letter might arrive more promptly, but not even this has helped; this time I want to bring this letter myself to the post office, and see if it can reach you. In my last letter, I wrote that Teresa Pojaghi, before she knew I had written to you, had decided to go to Milan with the girl; that I had taken the liberty to give her a letter for you, just a line, so that she should interest herself in looking for a place for the girl. Pojaghi seems to me a good lady, and she has promised me to take care of her provided the girl is good; but my fear is that I came to know from Pojaghi herself that the girl has an uncle from her father's side, who is unmarried, and who was at the service of a Frenchman. I would not like that the lady hands over the girl to the uncle and be ruined by learning French. Rather I prefer that she tries to get something from the uncle so as to keep her with herself or with her sisters or put her in some Conservatory, if there is one in your place. Note that I do not know anything about the qualities of her uncle, only being at the service of the Frenchman frightens me; therefore, I beg you, when she comes to you, remind her of the promises she has made to me, and hold her in subjection so that she doesn't sacrifice the girl. From the dear letter of our Viscontina, I have the joy to hear excellent news of your health, a thing that infinitely consoles me. My dear, take care of yourself so as to be able to give more time to the divine glory and to acquire your reward in Heaven. My compliments to Marquis Casati and my most sincere thanks to the same. If possible, I hope to have in our shops the type of sugar that may help to tackle the problem we have in summer. I don't know if I am wrong, but until they are calm, I think it is better for me to keep silent, and to speak only when the movement of the clouds will reappear. Advise me, however, if I think badly, or well.

If this letter comes to you as it should, it will arrive on time to tell you that my heart wishes for you the happiest feasts and the very best new year. For myself I desire that they be filled with every divine blessing. Another desire I also add, but I wonder whether it will be fulfilled, is that I hope that the coming year will not pass without meeting you, my beloved Carolina, but I have no reason to flatter myself that this desire will turn into hope. Uncle Borgia is better.

I haven't written about the girls because as I want to write to Viscontina replying to what she asks me about the Teachers and the house, and she will tell you about it, because I have no time.

Goodbye dear, very dear friend, pray for me, love me as much as I love you. Best wishes to Arconati, and my usual compliments to your husband. I am forever

Your very affectionate Magdalene

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1 The case of the two poor people, Mrs Pojaghi and her daughter.
2 This term is used to indicate an institution run by nuns where children are educated or exceptionally it may mean an orphanage. This is the meaning that Magdalene uses.
A very short letter accompanying a copy of the book Filotea. Marquis Casati, will give other news orally.

My beloved Carolina,

I cannot write more than two lines to you because time is lacking. From Marquis Casati you will know the reason for my silence. I am sending you only one copy of the Filotea¹, as it is impossible to find other copies. It is a miracle that I managed to get this one. I hope to be able to send you another one as soon as possible. Please, forgive me, my dear, but I would not take this liberty with anybody else.

Goodbye, my dear, very dear Carolina. My usual compliments to everyone.

Your Magdalene

¹ A work written by St. Francis of Sales (Ep.1, lett. 6, n. 8).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

96 (Verona#1802.12.26)

Pojaghi bothers Durini a little. Magdalene is sorry and insists that she will cover the expenses, if any. Now she has a hidden desire and others might call her “crazy” for it; therefore, she asks her friend for advice. Some Recluses of the Christian Retreat passed through Verona. Since their main vocation is education and instruction of the poor, and it is so difficult to find valid teachers, with due caution, she could entrust her school to some of them.

My beloved Carolina,

26 December 1802

From your very short, yet precious letter, dated 2nd, although you do not tell me, I understand that besides receiving the letter Pojaghi brought you 1, you have received my last but one that I feared was lost. My dear Carolina, remember that I have recommended Pojaghi to you so that you may observe where she places this girl, whether she keeps her, or places her somewhere else, as she told me, but I don't want you to take up the smallest burden at all, other than a word of advice. Now I am worried for having sent and recommended her to you. Do me this favour, if you allow me again, tell me if, to ensure her, some expenses are needed and the relatives cannot or do not want to pay them, my dear. Tell me exactly how much is needed, otherwise I will take it as a sign that I have bothered you enough. Meanwhile, I thank you infinitely for all the trouble you have taken on her account; you have done much and you could not have done more. May the Lord reward you in Paradise.

My uncle and Carlino are both quite well again, the latter much better than the first one. From dear Viscontina you might have heard about the situation of my girls. In a few days’ time they will be ten of them as I have accepted two others. Recommend the matter of the school to the Lord.

I am not sure when the school will open as I don’t know yet when I can have suitable personnel to be teachers. I have one in mind; it will be what God wants it to be. Until now, I don’t know what we’ll conclude. You should know, my dear, I have a wish, but it is a crazy wish; however, I want to tell you about it and you will sympathise with me even now as you have always done on other occasions. Various Religious, called the Recluses of the Christian Retreat 2 came here again and again. They have been lodging in the Monastery of St. Salvar 3, next to your residence when you were close to your Magdalene. I have not spoken to them, also because I did not know anything about them. They have no vows and their life of great silence and union with God is very austere. Their main aim is education of the poor girls they gather, but especially instruction through charity schools, as I would like. They live entirely on Providence so that, they not only do not ask, but even reject funds, if somebody wants to give them. They tell me that those who have been here are gifted with special talents. One could speak, I think, five or six languages, and the others were very skilled in manual work. At the beginning I got frightened, because this institution began in France at the end of the Monarchy, then, also because this institution embraces both sexes, as there are also men Recluses of the Christian Retreat, and both Institutions were founded by the same person. Then I became peaceful when they assured me that this Institution founded two Houses in Rome, many others in Switzerland, about which I did not reflect, one in Friuli and one in Alexandria close to you.

1 The young girl Pojaghi recommended to Durini (Ep.I, lett.91)
2 The first example of a lay institution.
3 MONASTERY of SAN SALVAR CORTE REGIA. The Monastery was suppressed in 1807 and trasformed into living accomodation. (L. Simeoni, op. cit. p. 272).
When they were here I was in Parma. Also Don Carlo Steeb spoke to me about them and said that if they could, they would have remained there willingly. However, tell me all that you know, if you heard about them, and do not tell anyone this thought of mine, because I want to be called crazy only by you. See what came to my mind: instead of becoming mad, as I do, in looking for teachers and then forming them for the school, if it were useful and agreeable, I could take this into account, though with caution and after asking for information, I would do this.

Goodbye, dear, my dearest Carolina. Where is Father de' Vecchi? I embrace you and I am

Totally yours, Magdalene

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NB. The original letter is missing; only a type-written copy exists.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

97 (Verona#1803.01.01)

Since she has time, Magdalene fulfills a promise she has made some months earlier and explains, in a detailed manner, how the charitable activity of the «Luigine», a secular Conservatory in Parma, is growing. She greatly admires it. And Fr De Vecchi? He didn’t pass through Verona, perhaps, because she has displeased him in something.

My beloved Carolina,

1 January 1803

This week I am deprived of the happiness of receiving your letters, my beloved Carolina. What does this silence mean? Perhaps that the mail has delayed my own letters, or that you are very absorbed with the Angels who sing glory to the Holy Child, that you have forgotten the earth, as well as your Magdalene. Allow me to interrupt you for a moment, and let me take some time at the beginning of the new year not to form anew, but to remind you of our ever old and new friendship.

I have an old debt with you and dear Viscontina, my dear. It is time that I honour it. However, it will be difficult for me to pay it all at once, you will get it as everyone does from bad payers. This debt is to describe to you the establishment in Parma that I admired so much last September. It is called "the Luigine"1 because St.Louis is their patron. It is very similar to the Institute of the Daughters of Charity. It is a lay Institution. The members have neither vows nor enclosure. There are twenty of them: twelve are teachers, two unmarried young ladies are under training to be teachers and the others, I imagine, are domestic servants. Beside the Conservatory they have three houses in the poorest areas of the town. Every Monday morning, three teachers go to one of the three houses for the whole week, until Sunday morning. On Sunday, having no school, they spend the day altogether at the Institute. Next to the Institute there is a hall where three teachers hold a school of charity for poor girls and pay them for their work. When I went to Parma the four schools comprised three hundred girls altogether.

Last Autumn the Superior of this Pious Place was a certain Irish Abbot Camerfort, nominated by the poor Duke as Superior, and perhaps he still holds this position. I have so little time. My beloved Carolina, please greet our dear Viscontina, and Arconati. Goodbye, I embrace you, and I am in great expectation of your letters.

Totally yours, Magdalene

PS. Tell me, my dear, what is the matter with our worthy Father de 'Vecchi, if he has returned to Milan, as they tell me. I am afraid that some traits of mine displeased him so that he does not want to come. I know of his holiness. If it is so, tell me about it, my dear, since you love me, and as you know, I will try to correct myself. Goodbye.

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1 The Institute - CONSERVATORIO DELLE LUIGINE – had its beginnings in 1755, when the Foundress, Rosa Orzi, took in six poor girls who had been abandoned by their parents and passed most of the day on the streets. These children were called Luigine because of their patron St. Luigi of Gonzaga. In 1799 the Institute was juridically recognised by Duke Don Ferdinando of Borbone. Rosa Orzi, a Domenican tertiary, descended from a good family which had fallen into decline, and thus she worked as a house maid for various upper class families in Parma (1706-1783). The co-founder of her Institution was Fr. Eugenio Porta, a Domenican and her spiritual director. He was Professor of Moral Theology and Sacred Scripture at the University of Parma (1724-1802). The aim of the Institution is to prepare poor girls to become teachers of other poor girls of the city, that is the formation of teachers for the working class. (Notizie date dallo stesso Conservatorio delle Luigine di Parma).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

98 (Verona#1803.01.09)

Magdalene is no longer convinced that the institution of the Recluses of the Christian Retreat can be complementary to her own. Instead, she is always very enthusiastic about the «Luigine» of Parma, and describes other details about them. Magdalene conveys a lot of news concerning various subjects.

My beloved Carolina,

I am always unhappy about the mail, my dear. You have punctually received my letter dated 26th but not yet the latter dated 2nd which you should have received on the 4th. I understand that I have to accept this for the rest of this winter. You may receive my letters in the following ordinary post. I doubly regret that my letter to dear Viscontina has gone lost. I beg you to tell me if she receives it, otherwise I will write to her again. Meanwhile, convey my best wishes to her as well as to all the people you know. I sincerely assure you that I now regret having sent you the Pogajhi girl because I fear she might be a burden to you. I simply wanted you to watch her and hold in subjection her stepmother until she would settle her properly. Kindly, from time to time, tell me something about her. Regarding the Recluses I don't know if I told you that at the beginning they seemed to me extraordinary and that I feared much just like you. But what calmed me down was the many praises of the Religious where they live, those of Don Charles Steeb who is their confessor, and more than anything else, the fact that two houses were founded in Rome.

Besides, I think that those who passed through Milan are the same Sisters who passed through here. In my opinion, in such matters we can never be cautious enough and afraid. After their departure, I had been given a book to read. I think it is the same you were given in Padua. To tell the truth, it struck me very much. Yet, my self love realised that the substance is more or less similar to what I drew up in the Plan you have, except the austerities, which I would never have imagined. I was not displeased with the institution, which needs, I think, special sanctity. I mean that it expresses ideas similar to mine in regard to education and parish missions but not about the sick as you know, and, I never had the spirit of poverty, trust, detachment and charity described in that book.

Therefore, listen, my dear, since you want to help me, when you will have the chance to write to Rome, kindly ask the Very Reverend Father Fontana if a House of the Male Recluses of the Christian Retreat and another of the Female Recluses of the Christian Retreat have really been founded there and what is the purpose of this Institute, and who is its founder. Meanwhile, I will make people pray, and, who knows, God might send me some subjects for the school; however, with his help, we will do, I hope, his will.

Soon my girls will be ten altogether. I am quite happy about my two Teachers. Please thank God for me. Regarding the Luigine I didn't tell you that from what I understand all the Teachers live a perfect community life; that is, they work in the Conservatory, and are dressed and fed by the same. I don't know if I told you that they have given me the book of their prayers for the school, which I will use, if the Lord wants me to open my school. I am very well, but during the last days they have extracted blood twice according to the custom in Verona, for a small thing, but they have cured me.

1 The poor girl recommended to Durini (Ep. I, letter 91)
2 Recluse Nuns of the Christian retreat (Ep.I, lett. 96, n. 2.)
3 A Plan, in draft form, of the Canossian works of charity. (Plan B6.6)
4 Fr. F. Fontana, a Barnabite, who has become a Cardinal. (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
Cevola\textsuperscript{5}, that is the sick person, has been on the point of dying for two months; now she is returning to the previous state. The Parish priest of Saint Maria Antica\textsuperscript{6}, as far as I know, is well, but in my next letter I will inform you better. My very faithful assistant, or better my teacher, Metilde\textsuperscript{7}, I mean the one you know, who, I confess, is the one teaching me how to carry on the work, but who for family reasons I cannot have as superior of the same work as I would like, is up after an illness, that frightened me a little, and many times she has asked me to greet you, and to recommend her to your prayers.

I will tell you the rest of the news another time; time is lacking,

I am wholeheartedly all yours,
Magdalene

\textsuperscript{5} The very sick person is recovering (Ep.I, lett. 14, n. 1.)
\textsuperscript{6} One of the most beautiful Churches of Verona. It dates back to 7\textsuperscript{th} century and still preserves the original structure of three naves. It is located in the open space where the Arche Scaligere can be found.
\textsuperscript{7} Matilde Bunioli (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 6).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

99 (Verona#1803.01.10)

Many people who have known and admired Durini have entrusted Magdalene to convey to her their regards, but there is an unexpected and comforting news as well: the Government of Verona has granted to the Terese Nuns and the Discalced Fathers, thought to be semi-mendicants, a monthly cheque, which is not very substantial, but allows them to hope that suppression of religious orders is only a bitter remembrance.

My beloved Carolina,

10 January 1803

Since I have a secure means, I want to communicate two short words, my beloved Carolina. Yesterday, I wrote another one to you, but perhaps this letter will come to you before the other by mail.

I confirm that I am excellently well. The Parish priest of Saint Maria Antica is very grateful to you for remembering him, and today, I can certainly tell you that he is very well. Mother Nicolini, my friend as you know, is well. She is a Superior to her great sorrow. She proceeds along the way of holiness with gigantic steps. My ladies and Luigi, often ask me about you, and the latter has entrusted me often to tell you that every evening he prays. Everybody conveys their greetings to you. Also Don Charles Steeb is well. My dear friend, I think I have told you everything you wished to know about our acquaintances.

Regarding the Terese Nuns there is some news from Milan. This has consoled me, and has consoled greatly the Nuns too.

They have received a notice from the Government of Verona, that since they are considered mendicants by the Milan Government, they have been assigned 16 liras a month from Milan; we do not know for how long. As you see the sum is very small, like a sleeping pill, but it is consoling because it seems a disposition contrary to our fears. Similar alms were also given to the Discalced Fathers. We also have the advantage that our municipality is contrary to ecclesiastical suppressions, so that I hope for the best. I beg you to tell all this to Marquis Casati, and also to convey to him my compliments.

Oh God! My dear Carolina, I was mortified by what you said in your last letter in which you mention the corruption existing in Milan, which unfortunately has been known to me for some time. Evil is becoming proportionately common, and though the Government pays lip service to Religion, I am very much afraid that immorality will end up by robbing us of our faith. What on earth can we do to prevent such an evil? I am really at a loss. My dear, pray for me, pray for everyone.

To change topic, if it is possible, I will include two lines for our dear Viscontina. If I cannot, because I am very embarrassed with a General who is lodging here, hopefully for a short time, please embrace her for me, and give her the sum of money I owe her. I will send it

1 Sr. Luigia of the Cross (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 3)
2 The coachman of the Canossa household.
3 Member of the «Brotherhood» converted and became a priest. (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 3).
4 Monastery of Verona where Magdlene stayed in 1791. (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 3.)
5 The LIRA was the ideal currency of the whole of Europe, divided into twenty coins and each of these divided into twelve units. There was a certain variation in the value of the money from one city to another. Thus, there were Milanese liras, Venetian liras, Italian liras, ect. (Cfr. P.G. Molmenti, la storia di Venezia nella vita privata, Torino 1880, p. 92 ss).
6 Carmelite Fathers.
7 That of the Italian Republic.
8 The Italian Republic is contrary to the law of suppression of Religious Institutes. (Ep.I, lett. 159, n. 4).
to you later. I add also a little thing for the girl Pojaghi⁹. Goodbye my dearest Carolina, love me as I love you, remember that I am always

Totally yours, Magdalene

⁹ She sends a small offering for the young Pojaghi girl (Ep.I, lett. 91).
Father De Vecchi has finally returned to Verona and Magdalene and Don Leonardi are satisfied about it. But there are discordances in the behaviour of the Government of Verona: some sacred places have been turned into public buildings. Marquis Casati, who knows how to act with great prudence, will try to see if it is possible to prevent other troubles.

My beloved Carolina,

17 January 1803

This week you will receive two short letters from the Abbot Lavarini, who comes to Milan with people belonging to the Government for business in the city. I have written two lines also for him. Thus, since the mail is so uncertain, that is, there is so much delay, if you want, you may use him to write to me. Meanwhile, my dear, I assure you that I am well, but I have a small hospital here at home, but nobody with a serious illness. I am always more and more satisfied and full of admiration for the most worthy Fr. De Vecchi. He will have told you that Don Pietro Leonardi spoke to him in my house and for your consolation let me tell you that I certainly believe in the happy outcome of this meeting for the Divine Glory, and you my dear, are the cause of it all. I beg you to convey my regards to Marquis Casati, to whom I do not write personally for lack of time. Tell him that here they have removed the measure ¹ regarding the Parish Church of Sant’Eufemia ² run by the Augustinian Fathers, as well as that of the convent, which they thought of using as a place for the French Officers.

I would say, they could use other places without disturbing the sacred places and especially a place like a Monastery. According to me, this Monastery is less stable, since it was separated when the city was divided. For me, the principles for making a decision are wrong, and I repeat they could use other places which are not sacred. Therefore, I beg Marquis Casati to act with dexterity as he knows how, so as to inquire what is the intention of Milan about this matter. If he cannot find out, of course, let him drop the matter.

In case, my dear, Abbot Lavarini speaks to you on this matter, don't let him know that I have spoken to you about it. It seems to be the usual practice that they adopt in every city; I know that they proposed to my brother to sell our house and our hotel in Mantua for this purpose. Goodbye, my dear friend, with haste I am all yours.

Magdalene

¹ «To remove the measure» - take possession of an area to use it for civil or military buildings.
² Church of S. EUFEMIA. With a small nave, a barrel vault, which was constructed in 1300 and later modified and enlarged. It was administered by the Augustinian Father.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

101 (Verona#1803.02.06)

Magdalene cannot continue visiting the hospital, because she almost has a hospital at home with sick relatives. The case of Pojaghi worries her, while the doubt on the Recluses of the Christian Retreat is resolved. Father De Vecchi has dissuaded her from approaching them, for the moment.

My beloved Carolina,

6 February 1803

How indebted I am to you, my dear, two ordinary mailings have passed and I have not been able to write to you. I cannot go to visit the patients in the hospital, and the hospital has come to my house. Our Viscontina will have told you that last week I hoped to be able to write to you up to the last moment, then, because of my patient, it was not possible. Thank God, however, my brother, as well as Sarego,\(^1\) are well, that is, the first has perfectly recovered, the other gets up for a few hours. Because of this illness, my sister has been deprived of the pleasure of knowing you; my dear Carolina I am convinced that I, knowing you, consequently I love you and if I could come to see you, I would come there also with a malignant fever. Now my uncle Borgia is more sickly than usual; I am expecting him to return to bed one day or another. But let us come to ourselves; I must answer two very precious letters of yours, and to answer in an orderly manner I will start from the case of Pojaghi\(^2\). I will tell you that, when you want to tell me anything, that is, to warn me of anything I may do wrong, it will be a gift to me, and I beg you to always do it without calling this test of your friendship a pedantry as you do in your dear letter. Regarding this particular matter, I cannot deny you that it was a burden for me to see that I have been troubling you indiscreetly, after being compelled to trouble you so much at other times. You are very right to say that this is not to have God in sight but only the creature. Your letter, however, consoled me somehow, but I think I am not totally wrong because I know how many other commitments you have, without my adding new ones. Since you want my opinion regarding the question whether to leave the girl with her step-mother or to take her away, I would do as follows: I would let the Parish Priest decide on the matter. I think that he certainly is a worthy person, and might know the situation of the family where the girl is; so you can remain calm in every way.

Among the things of which I spoke about with Fr. De Vecchi during the meeting, I had the pleasure to deal with him as I will tell you soon. We also spoke of the Recluses of the Christian Retreat\(^3\) and he too is of your opinion, namely that, for the time being, we must not entrust the youth to them, until we know them well. Therefore, my dear, don't hurry to write to Rome as the news will reach there eventually. You see, my dear, because of the girls I am immediately forced to trouble you again, although I have tried to trouble others, not to abuse your goodness. I was told that, in the Police force of Milan there is a certain Mr. Giacomo Valenti\(^4\) who has a brother here... But, my dear, the mail is departing, and I don't want to let another ordinary pass without writing to you. Goodbye, I embrace you wholeheartedly, and best wishes to Visconti. Goodbye dear.

Your very affectionate Magdalene

\(^1\) Eleonora of Canossa, married to Sarego

\(^2\) News concerning the girl recommended to Durini (Ep.I, lett. 91).

\(^3\) A Religious Congregation of Nuns (Ep.I, lett. 96, n. 2).

\(^4\) She will deal with it in the next letter.
The Government of the Cisalpina Republic has no worries, though unbelief and depravation are spreading in its territories and there is a great increase of corruption in customs. Many priests are worried, and especially in Verona, Don Leonardi, Don Steeb and Magdalene of Canossa would like to organize a cycle of Missions held by Father De Vecchi, a preacher of exceptional virtue and a convincing orator. But the Government doesn’t like the idea and consistently postpones the permission. While waiting in vain, Magdalene asks Durini to intervene in another compassionate case. A vicious noble, a certain Valenti, wastes all his possessions while his wife and three children live in poverty. An uncle in Milan, who is helping them, is not aware of their situation: he should be advised to plan his assistance in another way.

My beloved Carolina,

13 February 1803

Here I am to tell you, my dear, what I could not tell you in the last ordinary. First, I have the pleasure of telling you that my two patients have almost recovered; uncle Borgia, contrary to my expectations, is still out of bed, but still weak. I am in good health and my brother-in-law Serego1 will confirm it. Since his wife is well, he wants to make a trip to Milan even this year; I was in doubt whether to take this chance to send you this letter, but for fear that he might stop in Brescia too long and delay it, I will send it by mail.

I have received two letters from our Viscontina and none from you, my dear. You are right, I, too, haven’t written to you for sometime, but still we continue our relationship, when we cannot write to one another, through our common Friend.

If I do not write with my pen, be sure that I do so with my heart, and I am convinced that you do the same. I thank you for whatever you did, together with dear Visconti, so that we might have Father De Vecchi. Tomorrow, I will see Don Carlo Steeb2, and in the next ordinary I will tell you what he will tell me. Yesterday, reading to him the first letter from the friend received by post, in which she mentions the difficulty in getting it now, he asked if it were possible to get it for the novena of Pentecost. From the letter I received today, and that he did not see, I fear he will not have it even at that time.

Don Pietro Leonardi3 was struck by Father De Vecchi, who kindly described minutely to us all your holy work, and left me a written description of it. Don Pietro is making great progress in everything. He has about 30 boys4. He causes me a great deal of confusion just as your friends do. You, however, have a bigger advantage than myself because you are the Lord’s instrument for His works. He keeps you hidden from the eyes of the world, and He crosses your paths so that you cannot go personally, but His works are realized, and as for me, my dear, everyone sees the little good I do. Words are more beautiful than Works, and may God spare me from the fact that at my death nothing remains but a little smoke. Anyway, dear Carolina, let us not lose heart. I always fear that you may often be very disheartened. Be of good cheer; the Divine Mercy will be our wealth; don’t oppress your heart too much, I will try to do the same. Pray for me, I will do the same for you; the Lord will help us, and be happy. I have told Father De Vecchi what I believed opportune to do, or better to assist the work of the Converts. He told me that he would like to know it, and he will manage himself according to the opportunity. I have no time to deal at length with this matter, this time, as I have to finish telling you about the new trouble I am forced to give you. In the other ordinary,

1 The husband of Eleonora of Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 68, n. 3).
2 The priest of the Brotherhood (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 3).
3 The Founder of the Brotherhood (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 4).
4 An Institution for street children (Ep.I, lett. 18, n. 5).
I told you that a certain Mr. Giacomo Valenti who works with the police in Milan. He has a married brother here. He has various children and, through his own fault, he has been reduced to such a state of destitution that his wife could not even attend church for lack of decent clothing. Yet she receives three liras of our coin every day. Among these children there are two girls. They wanted to give me one of them, and I would have taken her but her age prevents me from accepting her. They, too, were also in the same state as their mother, and, worse still, illiterate and beautiful. Some pious people felt compassion, they found someone who offered to help for some months and placed them in one of our Conservatories, which, although you already know how miserable they are, they are a heaven for them. We know that their father has written to his brother in Milan as if he were the one who put the girls in a monastery, and asked him for financial help and squandered that too. Therefore I beg you, my dear, if you have any prudent person who could talk to this Mr. Valenti telling him that the girls have been taken by pious people, and put in a Conservatory, for the time being, until they find someone who can assist them, and that the assistance he is able to give them, instead of handing it to his brother, to give it to you, or to the one you think will send it to Verona by a reliable hand. My dear, the one who commands me does not want my name to be mentioned because they afraid, perhaps, that they beat me up. I am joking you see, but really in order to avoid what might happen, they don't want my name to be mentioned. Dear Carolina, you see that your friend often gives you occasions to be patient, and to cooperate to save some souls. Goodbye, my very dear friend, Love me, believe me, I am all yours, full of obligation, and affection.

Your Magdalene

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5 VALENTI GIACOMO, working for the Police in Milan, brother of Antonio, whose children are reduced to misery because of his neglect. Magdalene mentions this case in many letters. (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit.).

6 An Institute in which poor children are looked after. (Ep.I, lett. 94, n. 2).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Uncle Borgia is always seriously ill and Magdalene has no time to write; therefore, she sends only a simple greeting.

My beloved Carolina,

I don't know what to think about your silence, my dear; oh God, perhaps you are unhappy with me, I have not received a line from you in the last two ordinaries.

I have no free time at all because uncle Borgia, after I wrote to you that he was weak, has now gone to bed, and the heart attack this time is very serious, and I don't know what will happen; the physician fears that he will not recover from it, so do recommend him to the Lord, my dear, and forgive me if I cannot write to you, because you already know how old people are. They cling like children to those who are with them. Accept these words of mine and all that my heart would like to tell you. Write to me at least one line. Greet for me dear Viscontina. Goodbye, love me, and remember me.

Your Magdalene

Verona, 28 February 1803
There is a fleeting hope about Father De Vecchi and Magdalene expresses her joy and that of Don Steeb. Also the Valenti case has prospects of a solution and the Sisters of the Convent of the Teresas are less anxious about the danger of being suppressed: the Marquis Casati of Milan has promised to help them. Her recompense to him would be her prayer to the good God, that he may grant him his longed for heir.

My beloved Carolina,

6 March 1803

Of the many things I should and would like to tell you, my beloved friend, I will tell you what lack of time will permit me. My uncle is always in the same state, however, he is going to be a chronic case up to the end, rather than an immediate danger, as long as the insufficient breathing he experiences from time to time, doesn’t accelerate his death. I recommend him to your prayers.

I will start by telling you that Don Carlo Steeb will be very happy to be able to get Fr. De Vecchi, one day or the other when the permission comes. I thank you on his behalf, and on my part too for what you have done for my poor Verona. We stand by Divine Providence. When the Lord is pleased to send His mercy to us, it will be a great grace because I assure you that even here the need is very great.

Regarding your disposition in helping me with regard to Mr. Valenti, I am very obliged to you, but do not worry if you have not been able to do it immediately because, according to me, we would not have been in time to prevent him in any way, because the girls' father wrote to Mr. Valenti eight days before I begged your help. It will teach us for the future.

I was very happy to hear about Marquis Casati’s recovery. Do not doubt that the Teresian Sisters will keep on praying on account of his great charity to them. They will also pray for you, my dear, since you have been the cause for finding them a good patron. An idea came to my mind about this. When Marquis Casati had the goodness to come to greet me and seeing my Carlino, he showed a great desire to have an heir. So I thought that the Teresians might pray for him. I noticed that in the lives of the saints, many were born as a result of a lot of prayers. I believe that his family is able to bring up a saint.

Have you finished the arrangements for the marriage, my dear? I don't think so, they will be rather interrupted than finished. I know that his bride is a very worthy young lady, just as worthy as the bridegroom. Since her name is Magdalene, I hope that her name will remind you of your Magdalene.

It is because of an unusual coincidence that I have these relationships; you should know, just between you and me, she had been proposed to my brother, but while they were getting information, which was excellent, it seems that the Lord had destined her to form the happiness of another family, and not of ours. He disposed that the matter was concluded with this Piedmontese gentleman, and I am pleased because somehow he belongs to you. Oh God, if you knew how much I quiver every time I think who will be the bride of my brother. Do me this charity to keep him present before the Lord God, that he may find a good Christian lady. However, do not say anything about this, my dear; you know that I can’t keep anything from you.

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1 A priest, member of the Brotherhood
2 Uncle of the girls put in an Institute (Ep.I, lett. 102, n. 5).
3 Sisters of the Monastery of Verona (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 3).
4 One of the Marchionesses of the family Roma who married a son of Lorenzo Galeazzo Trotti, brother of Durini (Ep.I, lett. 28, n.2)
Please give my best wishes to dear Viscontina, to whom I will write as soon as possible. Tell her that I have received her dear letter, but not yet the box of the Relics. Various times I wished to speak to you of our Viscontina, my dear, because I felt it was a lack of trust in you. In the past, I tried to keep silent, fearing to show to our common friend that we were on confidential terms. Now that this danger, I think, is over, as soon as I have some spare time, I want to make up. I cannot tell you how happy I am about the new idea, that the holy Work of the hospital has given you concerning the girls. I will take this week to think about some project. I am not good for anything else but to “build castles in the air”. I have written more than what I thought, my dear. Goodbye, dear Carolina, my usual compliments. Goodbye.

With regard to Father de Vecchi, do it yourself. If they can get him they will have obtained a very special grace.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

105 (Verona#1803.03.13)

In Milan, a group of Priests and Durini are thinking of a new work for abandoned girls and Magdalene applauds the idea, but she wants to know more details so that she may express, with competence, her opinion, which is being asking for.

My beloved Carolina,

You see, my dear, what a displeasing combination for me the mail has become. I regularly receive your very precious letters and you always receive mine later. You always have the goodness to bear with me any way, but these delays annoy me. However, I can sincerely say that the few moments of quietness I can steal from my patient, are for you. Now my uncle¹ is much better, and again gives us some hope that we will still have him with us for some time. For fear of not being able to write at length, I will start to speak of your new beautiful project, hoping that you have already received the other letter I wrote to you in the last ordinary. Therefore, you want to know what I think, my beloved Carolina. Regarding that matter, as a whole, I would not be able to praise it enough. I think it is far more for the Glory of God than that of the converts², although that too is excellent. Regarding the carrying out of this plan, you didn’t tell me, my dear, if by girls, you mean small girls to educate, or young adults, half-educated, not yet instructed. In any case your project that thirty people administer the donations, a scudo a month, seems to me very suitable, provided you can find people of such good will, who do this charity for God’s sake. I mean to say that these people who administer these alms must not think they have a right to command, or disturb your work. If we are dealing with young girls, this is what I think would burden you less. If they are Milanese, then you may place them with “Stella” (name of an orphanage) and perhaps the “Exposed”³. If they are not from Milan, then it seems me you could find Orphanages in their respective towns, and if they are good try to put them there. As for the Veronese who are not nine years yet, and who are really in danger, I offer you, my dear, to take as many as I can afford. About some from Mantua I can still get information about the Imperial Orphanage⁴, and also try to find some places there by means of some acquaintances. Thus, we could try places in various towns, and where you think I can help you, if you are not displeased with this idea, without compliments freely employ me. In this way you will be alleviated of some of the burden, and you could stay with those who are really abandoned or because the orphanages of their towns may be dangerous, or because there would be no other way to accept them.

If you speak then of adult girls, the thing, my dear, will be much harder, although I believe that various Conservatories⁵, and especially the one founded by a certain Count Aldo⁶ a few years ago in Ferrara, or in Bologna, receives them. In this case it would be worthwhile to assist them in getting some jobs that bring some advantages to the Work. In the next post, I will speak of a teacher you have in Milan. I will send you her name and address. She had also taught my girls. However, don't say that I have told you about her. I will tell you the reason

¹ Uncle Borgia.
² Another Institution for abandoned girls in Milano (Ep.I, lett. 54, n. 4).
³ EXPOSED: this name was given to girls of unknown fathers and mothers who didn’t want to be named, who were taken care of by a community (State or Province) in an orphanage. This work was undertaken by Religious Institutes encouraged by the Church. (Cfr. Maconi, in Enciclopedia Catt., Vol. V, pp. 615-616).
⁴ Imperial Orphanage of Mantova.
⁵ Orphanage for grown up boys and girls.
⁶ A conservatory for girls of a certain age.
later. If you think she is suitable, employ her as a teacher through the usual procedure, without showing that it came from me.

I would like to tell you that if you ever wish to have the Rules of the Count Aldo, I can help you because I have them.

Dear Carolina, accept my heart, not the length of the letter of the one who writes to you. My wishes to my dear Viscontina and my usual compliments. Pray for me, I have no more time, goodbye dear, very dear friend.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene continues nursing her dying uncle, therefore, she limits herself to brief news and thanks.

My beloved Carolina, 20 March 1803

I start this letter in the antechamber of my uncle who is sleeping, and I will write to my beloved Carolina until he wakes up. He is improving, but very slowly. Let us come to our business. In this mail I didn’t receive your dear letters, but I had the pleasure of receiving one and to hear news about you from my brother-in-law Serego, who conveys his compliments to you and has assured me that you are very well. You inconvenienced yourself with the books, my dear, and I infinitely thank you for it; I do not know what my brother-in-law told you. To tell you the truth, I wanted him to see about them so as not to inconvenience you. My uncle has woken up too soon, I can only add a last word. Kindly tell all these things to our Viscontina, and tell her that her box has arrived safely. I thank her for the picture, and that I will write to her in the next ordinary. To you, my beloved friend, I will do the same. Goodbye, meanwhile pray for the one who loves you, and who is all yours. Goodbye

Your Magdalene
Magdalene has little time but is involved in many affairs; she managed, though only for a few days, to follow the Holy Exercises, to take comfort in the various sermons held in Verona, though she is still waiting for that of Father De Vecchi. Now she would like to resolve the problem of Viscontina, who let her understand that she could be her companion in her charitable activity in Verona; she can also point out a valid help for the new work in view in Milan.

My beloved Carolina

2 April 1803

I will answer your last two ordinaries\(^1\), my dearest Carolina, however, I do not know whether I will be able to tell you all that I would like to say. I have seen, my dear, a new proof of your good heart, and of your attachment to me in your description of the persons more suitable for my brother. Do me the charity to recommend him to the Lord so that He may bless him.

I have communicated your letter to the Tutor\(^2\) who appreciated it very much. I will try to be as calm as possible on the choice God allows them to make, either concerning those you mention, or of any other who has been proposed to him. I believe that you can see further ahead than the others for a thousand reasons, consequently, I would prefer that you make the choice where you see things clear. However, it is convenient that I be indifferent as much as I can.

It was impossible for me to reply to you even last week. My dearest Carolina, I resume writing this letter today, Holy Saturday, to finish it, perhaps, on Easter day. I did not forget to pray for your husband\(^3\) during these days; I too have made the Holy Exercises, even if only for a few days, preached by Don Leonardi and another religious priest of St. Luke’s\(^4\) and, if the Lord permits, I should profit from it. This year here in Verona, besides the Exercises for those who will be ordained\(^5\) on both sides, that is the Austrian and the Republican; there were Spiritual Exercises for the people in five churches. It seems that the Lord still looks at this city with special mercy, it is enough that we correspond. You might, perhaps, say, why do you wish to have Father De Vecchi when you have them? For a thousand reasons that I cannot tell you now since time is lacking, having so many other things to tell you. My dear, I have not missed to pray for you, too, though weakly. I thank you for your charity in remembering me in your prayers. Continue doing so because my need cannot be greater. I am on the verge of taking on a third Teacher. If things go well, I will open an external school. I will tell you subsequently how things go. A great deal of good could come from this. A third thing I would like to say, but oh God, being alone I don't see any hope for it now. I would like to speak to you more at length, but my dearest Carolina, you discourage me because you don't tell me anything on the subject of our Viscontina\(^6\). I am afraid I have displeased you, sincerely without any intention, and with a heart that hates to give you any displeasure. If you could answer me a word on this point it would console me a lot. I am looking for an occasion to

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\(^1\) The mail service

\(^2\) Don Rossi, the Tutor of Bonifacio.

\(^3\) Count Carlo Durini, husband of Carolina

\(^4\) CHURCH OF ST. LUKE. It was founded towards 1173 by the Order of the Knights of the Cross. The Order was suppressed in 1656 and the Church was assigned to the Confraternity of the Sacrament, which in turn was suppressed in 1807. The Church became a parish including that of St. Silvestro and part of Ognisanti. (Cfr. L. Simeoni, op. Cit. Pag. 184).

\(^5\) The candidates for the priesthood of both parts of Verona.

\(^6\) Magdalene had wrongly interpreted an affirmation of Viscontina, as if she desired to go to Verona and help her.
send you the Rules of Count Aldo, who, as I heard, is already enjoying Heaven, a prize for his charity. The name of that woman who has taught that job to my girls is Giovanna Chierici. She is a woman of government we say, in the Gherardini House, for the widow Litta Gherardini. I will tell you that she is a widow, advanced in age, who seems to me very good, but I don't know her well enough to be able to judge her with certainty, if she would be able or not to preside over a similar work. She is very skillful in washing veils, lace, to colour muslin, to wash ribbons of every colour, stockings of silk and similar things, and this is the job she taught my girls, but in a short time, because she was leaving, and in that little time I was very happy about her in every way, but I was not able to discuss things in depth. She lives, being a retired person, with the Gherardini family, with one of her married daughters, and she told me that to colour this muslin in Milan, she and her daughter earned one or half a shield a day, if I remember well. Although she is advanced in age, her activity is amazing. In our city these jobs bring great advantages. I don't know if it is the same for you. She also washes dresses embroidered with gold, and with colours. My girls cannot profit from this because they are very small. Besides this is not the one I wrote to you about, I have already spoken about that one. I thought that Father De Vecchi had told you about her. He knows her very well and he told me to let him do it. She is the Marchioness Cavriani, who seemed to be well interested in Verona with regard to the Converts. I don't want to deprive my city perhaps taking a good person away, but if she had to work for the greater Glory of God in Milan, I wished, for my peace, to tell everything to Father De Vecchi. Even here it would be good if some people could think about the poor Converts who leave the hospital, but there is no one, but your city is more populated, consequently... I thought, therefore, to tell everything to Father De Vecchi; I won't repeat it because I have no time. You see together with him, what is best for the greater glory of the Lord. I could not get the new books of the three Hours except the one of Holy Thursday; I will send them together with the Rules. The function, they tell me, was better than last year. Tell this also to dear Viscontina. They say this time that the function was more devout. Father Gian Battista was the reader. I went there, but I could not enter on account of the big crowd. I will write to you more extensively on another occasion. Goodbye my dear, very dear friend, greet Viscontina, and Arconati for me; how much I need to talk to you, but on paper we can hardly explain. Love me as much as I love you; when you will receive this letter of mine, Festivities will be over. You might not see them on paper yet, but I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that you may be happy. Goodbye dear, time is lacking.

PS. My uncle is better and is out of bed.

Your Magdalene

10 April 1803

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7 Founder of a conservatory.
8 TERESA LITTA VISCONTI ARESE, in D'ADDA (1752-1815) had married a second time Marquis Maurizio Gherardini of Verona. She was a lady in waiting at the Court of Vicereale. (Cfr. Gallavresi, op. Cit. P. 67). The daughter of Litta was Vittoria. The palace of the Litta family can be found in Corso Magenta in Milano and testifies to the grandeur of the ancient Milanese mansions. (Cfr. La Patria, op. Cit. P. 218).
9 Retired.
10 The shield, in the Italian States, was a coin worth about five golden lire (Ep.1, lett. 99, n. 5).
11 Marchioness Maria Teresa Cavriani, cousin of the Canossa family.
12 Interested in retreats for converts in Verona.
13 Prayer books for the “Three Hours”.
14 Father Giambattista Bertolini, a member of the Filippini Fathers.
Since the various attempts to moderate the immorality of fashion are not successful, Magdalene and Father Giambattista Bertolini take another direction, which is conveyed to Durini.

My most beloved Carolina,

22 April 1803

What does this silence of yours mean, my dearest friend? Last week I thought that being a festive week you would be immersed in prayer but this makes me fear a great deal for your health as I do not see any response from you at all. Do me this favour, if you want me to be calm, write to me two lines. I have not sent you this letter by post, my dear, since my brother had the chance to go to Milan on account of business in the city. Think how my heart would follow him so as to see you again and our Viscontina and to get acquainted with Arconati. The circumstances don't allow it, so it is better not to think of it, and speak about other things. I am sending you the Veronese books of our function, I don't know if you will like them. To me, yours seem more affectionate. I also add the music, my dear Carolina, so that you may have a complete idea of the taste in Verona. In this case love for my city doesn't distort my judgment, as our production seems a lot inferior to yours. Appreciate them as they are. Since I am certain of this occasion, I will tell you what we discussed with Father Giambattista Bertolini. When I saw that our attempts did not succeed as we wished with regard to clothing, one day, while talking of the indecent fashion which we see here, though they tell me that they are much less indecent than in other places, we were trying to find a remedy. Since Father has one or two penitents among the most fashionable women, and another still who can be considered the latest authority on the matter, if she would continue to go to him, because actually she has been known to him only for a short time now, we concluded that, if we could manage to convince her to accept the latest yet decent fashion, we would find a solution to most of our problems. He wanted your model; may God bless the remainder if some others will come, from time to time. Send me some. Then I will let you know the result. Goodbye dear, very dear Carolina, I am always short with my pen, but with my heart I am always yours.

Goodbye, my usual compliments.

Your Magdalene

PS. Since I have no time to write to dear Viscontina, I am sending you the book delivered to me for her by Father Giambattista and I add six other copies, that I beg you to give her from me. Embrace her heartily, and tell her that I will write as soon as possible. Regarding the article to remedy the indecency of the clothing, I beg you to tell me if you know any person who is a real friend of Melzi. Then I will tell you the reason. Goodbye once again.

1 The Filippini Father (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4.)
2 An example of the new fashion.
Magdalene is worried the frequent trips of her brother and his Tutor; a decision is going to be made in Milan regarding the choice of her brother’s bride. However, she is not informed and prays that her Bonifacio may find a companion worthy of him. That choice may lead to other developments: Magdalene’s possible orientation to clarify her future mission.

My beloved Carolina,

30 April 1803

It will be much easier for you to imagine it, than for me to explain how happy I was in receiving today you dear letter, dated 26th April. I don't know for what reason, but instead of receiving it yesterday, the day of the mail, it has been brought to me only today. I believed that even this week I would be deprived of the pleasure of your letters, and a thousand thoughts questioned me about your silence. May the Lord be thanked, my beloved Carolina, for the reason that has deprived me of this happiness. I hope you have also remembered me in your prayers. I hope you will receive a letter of mine either from my brother or from his Tutor. Just between us, frankly, I don’t know what their intention is about the bride, as they have not spoken to me about it before their departure, and I, my dear, for fear of making mistakes, although I did have several chances, I did not mention anything. I believe, however, that the Tutor did not come for nothing. My dear, I am more convinced, that out of your great love for your Magdalene, you would have sacrificed the love for your city rather than friendship, but if the young lady is already engaged, we will say that the Lord has not wanted to give us not even this one. Meanwhile, I keep asking for prayer from all the people whom I believe are the best. May God bless him out of His mercy. I assure you, dear Carolina, that by the grace of the Lord, my brother is very good, and I think that a Christian bride united to him would cooperate a lot in our City to the Divine Glory. As for me, talking to you with that friendship that I really profess to you, the idea of a sister-in-law doesn't give me thoughts, much more because, My beloved Carolina, I do not know when the two bonds that hold me, that is, Carlino, and my sick uncle, will be loosened and which will be God’s plans for me. And here is one of the motives for which I would like Viscontina with me, so as to have her example and her insights, a person who could be my teacher and companion, and facilitate my way with my family so as to give myself freely to those things which the Lord seems to will from me, merely out of His mercy.

What, my dear, has given me courage to address some word to our friend, has been a sentence in one of her letters, in which, jokingly, she told me to keep a place for her among my teachers, so that she could come to learn. I am happy not to have displeased you on this point, and I cannot but admire our Viscontina more and more, and not desire her more and more for the sake of Verona, but for the good that, I think, could come about. As for me, my dear Carolina, if I were in Milan I would not but enjoy your company and the small things that I do, which in this city mean a lot, as there are no provisions, while in your city they would mean nothing at all. I am unable to do great things, but if the One who performs small things through me, would like me to do greater things, if it is for a greater good, I would not mind to remain in Verona or to come to Milan. Goodbye, my dear, very dear friend, love me and believe me I am all yours. A thousand greetings to Arconti whom I deeply wish to know. Goodbye.

1 Bonifacio of Canossa
2 Don Rossi, Tutor of Magdalene’s brother, Bonifacio
I hope that Father Giambattista\textsuperscript{3} has found a way to be helpful in the question of fashion, since he has managed to obtain, as his penitents, some of the ladies who are an authority in this field.

May the Lord bless everything. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

\textsuperscript{3} Father Bertolini, a Filippini Father.
Unclear hints of problems in the Durini household. Magdalene’s hurry is due to the arrival of the third teacher, who interrupts her writing.

My beloved Carolina,
[Verona] 9 May 1803

With great sorrow I read in your very precious letter about Viscontina’s great loss¹ as well as yours; and since I cannot but take interest in all that concerns you, I regret too, a great deal that you have lost your evening engagement, which I believe was very useful for your soul and for your body, allow me to tell you: your good heart, which at times is oppressed, needs the joy of Arconati, and, if you want me to be calm, do me the favour of writing to me how you spend your evening now. I don’t know how Father Giovanbattista² managed to fend himself from the cold weather, no need for you to worry about it, my dear. We will do what we can, and the Lord will appreciate our goodwill. I cannot tell you more because I have been interrupted. My third Teacher came, pray for me. Goodbye, dear, be of good cheer, and greet Arconati for me.

Your very affectionate Magdalene

¹ An allusion to a situation which is not clear.
² Father Bertolini, a Filippini Father.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

111 (Verona#1803.05.22)

Magdalene has been able to host a niece of Durini; she congratulates her for the politeness of the young girl with whom she was able to speak of her friend, the only recompense for the impossibility of meeting her directly. The Valenti case perhaps may have an excellent solution. Now Magdalene knows that the grandmother of the three girls is wealthy and is lodging with the Salesian Nuns of Porta Orientale in Milan: Durini could explain to her the sorrowful situation of her relatives.

My beloved Carolina,

22 May 1803

I must reply to two very precious letters of yours, my dear Carolina. I received one from your amiable niece¹, the other from Marquis Casati. I will do as much as I can since I have many sick people to look after in these days. Uncle Borgia suffers from lack of breath repeatedly so that we fear more and more of chronic dropsy, Maffei and all her young daughters have measles² but all of them are better, seven of my girls had it and six of them are convalescing. A little girl sick with severe fever which has never left her since she came, is now dying. She will receive Viaticum tomorrow morning. Since she is only nine years old, the Sacrament will also be her first Holy Communion; pray for her so that she may soon go to Heaven. I will tell her to pray for you.

Talking about persons in good health, I want to tell you that your good niece has arrived here very safely. All of us have admired her good qualities, and I tell you this with my usual sincerity. She remained one day only after her arrival, as she wished to be in Venice on the day of Ascension. I took as much time as possible off to enjoy her company, not as much as I wished on account of my patients. I assure you that especially her behaviour and her gentleness aroused in me a great respect for her. Then, Marquis Casati confirmed to me excellent news about you and I received your letter in which you say that I might see you again. You should know that at times I think of what would satisfy me most in this world: I must say that, as you understand, one of my most outstanding wishes would be that of seeing you again, so that, my dear, if you can, give me this consolation. Regarding Mr. James Valenti³ they made me believe that his mother, called Teresa, widow Valenti, is at the Salesians⁴, near the Oriental Door⁵. She retired there so as to live peacefully among the present circumstances. If this is so, it will be easier for you to find a way to help this lady to be concerned with her grandchildren, as Mr. James had suggested to you, or to help him, if you can do this charity to these poor girls, try again later. Forgive me for everything, my dearest friend; lots of greetings to Visconti and Arconati; I should speak to you of Father De Vecchi, but sleep forces me to embrace you, and to go to sleep since midnight is at hand. Goodbye.

Your very affectionate
Magdalene

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¹ Fraganeschi, daughter of Beatrice Durini and of Marquis Fraganeschi
² Measles.
³ Uncle of the two daughters of Valenti (Ep.I, lett. 102, 105)
⁴ Nuns founded by St. Francis of Sales.
⁵ Porta Orientale, the present Porta Venezia in Milan.
If Durini would be convinced that the cure of the Waters of Mount Ortona might be very useful to her physical comfort, it would be also the only chance for the two friends to meet, which doesn't seem possible in any other way. After all, in Verona there are a lot of people who wish the Milanese countess to visit them again.

My beloved Carolina,

May 29 1803

I have made a judgment on you, my dear, not having received your letters in this ordinary; the judgment is this, that you have been busy in attending the holy missions. Did you ask the Holy Spirit for the grace your Magdalene needs so much? I am sure you did as I also had done for you. Most of my patients are well, others are convalescing; uncle Borgia is better, only my poor little girl is dying with no hope of recovery. She has received the Anointing of the Sick. She is perfectly clear in the mind but goes on suffering. Recommend her to the Holy Virgin, I feel such pain for her, indeed. My beloved Carolina, how much joy I will experience if the dream about Mount Ortona could be accomplished, so that I may see again a friend like you. I don't want even to ponder too much on this thought. If it will not take place I will feel too upset. I believe, my dear, that you do not need to be solicited as I know how much you, too, love me. For this reason, my dear, overcome whatever is possible, and give me first, and all the others who know you, this satisfaction. Remember that all, here, repeat what I am telling you, and it would be a real consolation for all of us. So as not to disobey your command, I end this letter before going to bed, since midnight is round the corner, and I need to sleep a lot. Goodbye, my dear. My usual compliments. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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1 ANGELA GIAVELICH, daughter of unknown parents, from Dalmatia, died at the age of nine.
2 Monte Ortona. In other letters (cfr. lett. 70, n. 5), Magdalene used the term Mont’Ortone or Montortone.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Physical tiredness, partly due to constantly assisting her uncle, who is always seriously ill, doesn't prevent Magdalene from comforting her friend on her husband's illness and from conveying to her the happy announcement: she has opened the external school in the house of the girls.

My beloved Carolina,

3 July 1803

To say it frankly, I, too, my dear friend, would not like us to get accustomed to letting a few weeks go by without writing to each other. The greatest motive for my silence, or, better, the only one is the uninterrupted illness of uncle Borgia, who wishes me to stay with him; consequently my free moments are very limited, and I am so busy that it is often impossible for me to write. Thank God, my dear I am well, and I always love you as usual. I would like to hear that your husband is well again and to know you are calm; however, as much as I know you, you do not fail in resignation, but rather your heart, that loves a great deal, spurs you to fear about some great evil which does not exist. You know that St. Francis of Sales praised a similar heart in the Saint of Chantal, only he wished that she would be more calm. My dear Carolina, you seem to be born to torment yourself. I thank you for the news you give me about my brother, and for your goodness in getting the tickets for him; the chariot races and jockeys seem to me indifferent, and I am very sure that he was not scandalized by this gentleness.

How many things I would like to tell you but lack of time prevents me from doing so. Your thanks concerning Fraganeschi displease me because we did not do anything for her; especially because I am very busy with the sick. On Saturday, the School for external pupils started in the House of the girls. Pray that it may go on well. What about our dear Viscontina? Goodbye my dear Carolina, midnight is ringing and sleep forces me to embrace you. Goodbye, many regards to Arconati. Has the Teacher handed over to you the Paper of the Rules of the girls of Count Aldo?

How are Louise and the Canoness?

Goodbye, I’m going to bed, dear Carolina.

Your Magdalene

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1 The saint of sweetness.
2 St. Giovanna Francesca Fremito of Chantal and St. Francis of Sales founded the Sisters of the Visitation. (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 9)
3 Niece of Carolina Durini
4 According to the Plan of Magdalene that was taking shape with more security.
Count Durini’s illness worries even Magdalene, not so much for its gravity, which is not yet visible, as for Carolina who is more and more psychologically disturbed. The momentary return of Fr. Fontana to Milan will help her. Meanwhile they can focus their attention on two other problems: a new attempt to limit immorality brought about by the fashions and the "storm" that is raging against religious Institutes.

My beloved Carolina,

10 July 1803

I will practice patience for a little while. Yet you should not think that I’ll be pleased if we do not write to each other for weeks. I have given you a bad example when my uncle was ill, now that he is better, I will make up for it, and if you won't correct yourself as I hope, I will write to you twice a week. I am a little worried about your husband, on account of your silence. Please, give me some news for my peace, because besides my respect for him, I cannot but be concerned for the one who belongs to you, and of whom you are concerned. Regarding the Count’s illness, I heard that they ordered him to take the waters of Abano. How much I wish, if this remedy is useful as they say here, that your physicians may know about it as ours do!

I did not write to you any more with regard to the trustworthy Fr. de’ Vecchi, because Don Carlo did not reply to me. I think that the latter’s zeal is obstructed by insuperable difficulties, this is why he told me lately that perhaps he will make a trip to Milan and conclude orally, with regard to what he has been able to obtain here. If you see Father de Vecchi, please, convey my regards.

17 July

You see, my dear, because of all my pride, I have not been able to end this letter at the last ordinary post. On Friday, I had the joy of receiving your very precious letter. You are, therefore, in the countryside, my dear Carolina. Enjoy yourself as much as you can, or better, try to raise your spirits as much as you can, and if you have some spare time, give some moment to your Magdalene. I am glad about the news you give me of Fr. Fontana’s return to Milan for some months. I imagine that he will help you to calm yourself. This is what I think you need.

Although it is useless for you, I want to send you the printed Rules of Fr. Bellavite. Perhaps they could in part help you for the plan of the Converts; if not you will at least have an idea of the sanctity of the person who wrote them. I finally opened the school for external pupils, but I only have four little girls, as it is only one week since its opening. I beg you to pray for me as I am in great need of prayer. Listen, my dear, to another idea which came to my mind about the clothing, that we hardly started here, and of which I don't know the outcome: to speak to, or let some physician of a well known religion, order the girls to wear the corset for health reasons, and if it is possible, that all women should wear it. In fact, I remember, that when I wanted to be a discalced, since the discalced Sisters do not wear a corset, though they wear something similar under their habit, our ladies were all shocked at

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1 Thermal waters.
2 A Barnabite Father Francesco Fontana who later became a Cardinal.
3 Cf. note 25. These are the "Regulations of a House erected in Mantua in 1801, the ones Magdalene read and sent also to her friend Carolina Durini.
4 Retreats for converts in Milan.
the thought of all the illnesses I would have to face for not wearing one. The storm\(^5\) which is gathering, frightens me, I recommend the calamity again to Casati. Here, by unceasing prayer we will try to disarm the threats of God’s power. Goodbye, beloved Carolina, a thousand regards to Arconati when you see her. Goodbye, love me and remember that I will be always

All yours, Magdalene

\(^5\) People began to fear the suppression of Convents.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

31 July 1803

My beloved Carolina,

Here I am again, without receiving your very dear letters for fifteen days, my beloved Carolina. You had promised me to write from your countryside residence, but you have fooled me. If I did not think that you are still on holiday, I would begin to fear that you do not love me as much as you did up to now. Forgive me, my dear, this is an injustice which you do not deserve. However, do me this favour: drop at least two lines, some news about you.

The storm of which you spoke to me threatens more and more, and in the houses there is a general feeling of dismay, which is extended to the families of those involved. Nicolini who is praying and begs for prayer, recommends herself to you, and to Casati. Give me the news you know about this matter. Also this year it has been planned for me to go to Parma, but I have no wish to go. The only motive, which attracts me a little, would be that of seeing again the Luigine Nuns so as to draw new light for my school, which, thanks to the Lord, goes on well but slowly. Our Austrian Nuns are very consoled with the permission they received to wear a habit, or are about to receive, and the same is for the Religious on the other bank.

The departing mail, forces me to embrace you, my dear Carolina, goodbye I embrace you, and I am

Your Magdalene

PS. My letter could not depart with the Monday ordinary post, therefore, if you allow me, I add two other words. I was told that you returned from your holiday on Friday, therefore, I hope, my dear, to receive news from you.

Here people say that the Decree from the Holy Father, with the consent of His Holiness to the suppression of all Religious Institutes, has reached Milan. Such a thing causes great sorrow, indeed, to those who love Religion and the Republic.

I hope, if this is true, that the Filippino Fathers are not included in this decree, since theirs is not a Religious Institute, as you well know. Please give me your opinion.

I cannot tell you yet about the Austrian Nuns’ permission to have a religious dress, since some people say one thing and others another. I will tell you another time.

You might have received the Rules of Father Bellavite, from the Teacher. Sorry for not writing to you, for lack of time.

Tell me also what you think about them, as well, and what Arconati says. To her, and to our Viscontina convey my deepest regards. Again I embrace you, and I am all yours, Goodbye.

(Postmark of departure) VERONA A DEstra

4 August 1803

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1 The fear of the suppression of convents.
2 Sr. Luigia of the Cross (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 3.)
3 The Conservatory of the «Luigine» of Parma (Ep.I, lett. 97, n. 1).
4 Belonging to convents on the other side of the Adige.
5 Priests without vows (Ep.I, lett. 5, n. 5).
(Postmark of arrival) MILAN 6 August 1803

To Madame
Madame Durini, née Trotti
MILAN
While continually receiving news of various kinds, some worrying and others more tranquil, Magdalene hopes to make a trip to Milan.

My beloved Carolina,

7 August 1803

On Friday I was happy to receive your very precious letter, my dear Carolina; although it was brief I was very pleased with it. Yesterday morning I had the consolation to see my brother returning in good health after a very safe trip. I was also confirmed concerning the good news about you. I wish to hear that your mother-in-law is back to health so that you may at this moment be at peace and free. Do not tire yourself too much, my dear. Since the person who returned to Milan will remain for three or four months, so you may do everything peacefully. May the Lord grant you that peace which will spur you on to work ever more for His Glory.

Your last letter makes me regret for having written to you that I fear you do not love me anymore as once upon a time. I was wrong, forgive me. I can see that it is not impossible for me to go to Milan, but it is still a hope; let us see if it will come true. The news regarding the newly established houses, seems to have calmed down. What does Casati think about this? And what do you think? I beg you to tell me what you can, so that there won’t be any surprises.

What’s happening to my dear Viscontina? I have written to her eight or ten days ago but I had no reply. I presume that she is not able to, but not knowing anything in detail for some time worries me.

Goodbye, dear, the teacher and my brother convey to you their regards and thanks, together with mine. Goodbye! My usual greetings, I embrace you heartily.

Your Magdalene

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1Fr. Fontana, a future Cardinal (Ep. I, lett. 13, n. 1).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

117 (Verona#1803.08.14)

A teacher of the «Retreat» is seriously sick and her forced absence from the job endangers the running of the school and the boarding-school. On account of this, Magdalene’s letter is brief:

My beloved Carolina,

14 August 1803

I already wrote to you, and I want to keep it, for you, my beloved Carolina, keep silent as much as you want and I will continue to write to you until I help you to resume your usual correspondence. I know that you are quite busy, but a few lines are enough for me. I beg you to recommend the work of my girls to the Lord, because beside the usual need, I have, at the moment, one of the Teachers seriously sick and in great pain, not only, but it could be for a very long time, since she has articular pains. See, for the internal girls and the external school I have only three Teachers. When one is sick, it is difficult to find a suitable replacement, unless the Lord sends me someone. I beg you to pray for me. Goodbye dear Carolina, love me. Extend my usual compliments to those whom you know, I embrace you, and I am

All yours, Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

118 (Verona#1803.08.21)

There is a new possibility of a trip to Milan, as well as going to Mantua and Parma, a ray of light among the great storms: anxieties and hopes, therefore, for both the noble ladies.

My beloved Carolina,

21 August 1803

I must forgive you your silence, My beloved Carolina, as I too needed indulgence for the same reason. When we have sick people we cannot make any plan at all. However, I feel sorry for the suffering of your mother-in-law¹, because when one is advanced in age, long illnesses cause great fear. Give me news when you write to me.

My dear Carolina, the idea of coming to Milan is just a hope, perhaps I will be mistaken, but if I were able to come, and were to go often to my relatives, I know that Arconati lives next to them, so that somehow we will find a way to meet. The point is, my dear, that I may be able to come. Enough, let the Lord do as He wishes. I believe that after tomorrow I will go for a few days to the countryside, then to Mantua from where I will write, and perhaps to Parma.

May the Lord kindly keep the storms² away entirely. In this season they would ruin our rites. The whole point is that our Archbishop ³, on his return, may bless us all against these fears.

Tell me, I beg you, if your physicians have taken any interest in humanity. Goodbye, dear friend, if I go to Mantua I will write to you at length because I will have time. Goodbye, you are revered by my dear ones. Give my usual regards to everyone, I embrace you, and I am

All yours
M.C. (Magdalene Canossa)

¹ Countess MARIANNA, daughter of Count Felice Amedeo Ruffino of Diano (Turin) and wife of Giangiacomo Durini, Count and feudal Lord of Monza (Cfr. Famiglie notabili milanesi, op. cit. Tav. 3a).
² This always refers to the fear of suppression.
³ AVOGADRO GIOVANNI ANDREA (1735-1815), Venetian noble, entered the Company of Jesus at 16. After the suppression was lifted he took up residence in Verona joining a group of ex Jesuits who were led by Fr. Fortis. He was Bishop of Verona from 1790 to 1805 and during this period he suffered under French domination; he was imprisoned and escaped death by a single vote. In 1805 he renounced the episcopate. (Cfr. Butturini, l'evoluzione della Chiesa Veronese dall'episcopato del Morosino (1773-1789) a quello dell'Avoigadro, in "Chiesa e spiritualità nell'Ottocento italiano", Verona 1971, pp. 103-146).
Even the last attempt to intervene in fashion has little effect, therefore, it is better to let it drop since results are so poor. Also the Valenti problem must be clarified so as to come to a solution.

My beloved Carolina,

4 September 1803: Verona

My short trip to Mantua deprived me of the joy of writing to you with the last ordinary. I did not go through Mantua, you see, my dear Carolina and I stopped such a short while that I had no opportunity to write to you. I don't know whether I will return in a few days' time for family affairs, meanwhile I will write to you from here, my dear, and if I will leave, I will write to you from where I will be. I must reply to your two very precious letters. First of all I rejoice to hear that your mother-in-law is recovering. I wish her good health, but while Father Fontana is in Milan I would like you to be free.

I do not think that our physicians as well as yours are prepared to write for the sake of humanity. They only exhort by words, and according to my opinion, unless it is an eminent person who writes, this is not helpful, because some famous person may oppose a mediocre one, and do a lot of evil. I believe we should be satisfied with the little we can do through our words. I am very grateful to you for whatever you have been able to do by means of lady Valenti, and I also warmly thank Marquis Casati too. I do not add anything else, but if it were possible to let this lady know that we do not ask anything for Paolo Valenti, that she is only asked for some help for his two daughters, who, out of dire need, have been put in one of our boarding houses where they are safeguarded and educated in the best way possible. But with an education different from that of their birth, and their personal worth, because they really behave very well; that the help they ask comes from the idea that their father could be helped by her or by his brother, but it comes from their need, because the monthly contribution which is given them out of charity, at times is lacking, and it might be taken away because the one who gives it to them cannot afford it. Then, the two beautiful and good girls would have to return to asking for alms. Finally, that they ask for it out of charity, not out of duty. If the Lord will assist them along this path, he will bless your words, my dear Carolina; anyway, he will compensate you for your charity, in Heaven.

I have no more time to tell you as much as I would like. Best wishes to dear Viscontina, and goodbye with all my heart.

Your Magdalene

PS. I didn't reflect, my dear, to tell you that besides the two girls, there is also a very needy boy, who lives with his father and mother and if this lady Valenti wishes, and would be able to help these poor innocent people, it would be a great help. However, act according to your prudence.

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1 Countess Marianna Durini (Ep.I, lett. 118, n. 1).
2 A Barnabite Father, Francesco Fontana (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
3 Grandmother of the two Valenti sisters. (Ep.I, lett. 102. n. 5 112, n. 6.)
Magdalene will return shortly to Mantua and, even if she will remain for a little while, she won't miss visiting Fr. Bellavite’s work. The meeting with that Father revives and disheartens her at the same time, because she feels so far from his holiness and his confidence in God. She must also rectify a mistake about the information of the Valenti case.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 17 September 1803

I start this letter today, my beloved friend, to be more certain to end it before the departure of the mail, as I want to say various things, if possible. I was not able to write to you in the last ordinary as I wished because both my granduncle and Carlino were not well.

My granduncle is as usual, that is, out of bed, and Carlino has recovered. I think that in the coming week I will make a trip again to the countryside, and to Mantua to bring home an aunt of mine, who has been with me here since, as I wrote, I returned from there.

When I am in Mantua, my great entertainment consists in spending as much time as possible with the girls of Father Bellavite.

I confess, my dear, that I am rather depressed, not so much for the number, the direction, and for what the Prioress says about the fervour of those girls. You told me some time ago in one of your letters in which you encouraged me, and I really needed it, that we need take heart to persevere in overcoming the difficulties and therefore I need Fr. Bellavite’s sanctity and trust in God. Assist me, my dear, with your prayer to the Lord. I am in great need. The storm which then worried me has ceased totally, the two sick teachers have now recovered quite well, but every day I realize how much I need divine help.

When you can, kindly, tell me what is happening to Mademoiselle Louise. I must make up for a great mistake on my part regarding the case of Mr. Valenti¹, whose daughters you cared for. The name of the father of the girls I recommended to you is not Paolo but Antonio; and he was at the Venetian Service at the time of our Republic of St. Mark. The girls say that their father had other brothers, the name of one of them could be Paolo.

I am glad to know of your mother-in-law’s improvement, and I hope it may continue. A thousand regards to Mrs. Arconati, and to Viscontina. How is your Work in the Hospital², and of the Converts proceeding³? Reply to these questions of mine at your convenience. Meanwhile, love me, remember me, and be assured that I am, and I will be always wholeheartedly

All yours, Magdalene

18 September

¹ Antonio and not Paolo the father of the two Valenti girls
² The main Hospital of Milano (Ep.I, lett. 14, n. 11).
³ The Work with the Converts
Durini, perhaps, doubts if she should offer to the Lord the interruption of the correspondence with the Veronese friend, but Magdalene is convinced that the Lord is pleased with that friendship and that, rather, it will also continue after death. Therefore, the one who arrives first in heaven will have to pray for the other, until the other, too, goes there. Meanwhile, the two Veronese priests are still pressurising again the government to allow Fr. De Vecchi to preach.

My beloved Carolina,

2 October (1) 803

I should have written this letter also from Mantua, my dear friend, because I had to return there, but due to the change of plans of our guests, I had to stay in Verona; with the firm intention that our correspondence doesn't have to change anymore. What do you say about it, my dear? You tell me, and rightly so, that we should die a little every day to something, but since I hope that our friendship is not displeasing to the Lord, I think that it should be the last thing to die to in this world and it may even be strengthened after death. Better still, if you allow me, my wish is that we make a pact, that is, that whoever of us, whom the Lord in His mercy, will welcome to heaven, first should always pray for the one who remains behind, till we are reunited. Tell me, do you agree? I pass from death to life now. I cannot say what happened to Mademoiselle Louise because she never says a word. I always dream of seeing my dear friends again, one day or the other, and if this could come about, Mademoiselle Louise is a person I would like very much to know. Now let us speak a little of the highly esteemed Fr. De Vecchi. Fr. Charles Steeb has not been able to conclude anything about the Missions, up to now. Now, my dear, Fr. Pietro has given me the errand to beg you to tell Fr. De Vecchi that he begs him, if he has no other commitment after the Missions in Mantua, not to take any other until Fr. Pietro has a definitive answer, which will come in a few days’ time.

I, my dear Carolina, would rather say this, that you ask Fr. De Vecchi if, immediately after the Missions in Mantua, he has precise appointments, if, by chance, the licence can be obtained, if he would be free to do this good work for our poor Verona. In case he is engaged immediately after, then, would he be able, during his apostolic rounds, to grant us this favour? My dearest friend, forgive me also for this trouble, goodbye, dear. I have no time. My usual regards and goodbye in a hurry, but wholeheartedly.

Your Magdalene

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1 The person who had written a Plan similar to her “Plan B6.6 (Ep.I, lett.24, n.7)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 8 October (1)803

With equal amazement and sorrow I notice, my dear friend, from your very precious letter I received this morning, that the letters I wrote to you, by four ordinary mails have been lost. I feel sorry because, out of goodness and friendship, you worried about my health, which, thank God, is excellent. I regret it because it was about some affairs, and I am sorry because I don't know how this disorder has come about. Let us see if this letter too will suffer the same crisis as the others; I want to carry it myself to the post. I remember that another time something similar happened, then, after a while, it all came back to normal. From your last letter I hear with great pleasure about the new Pious Institution that holy Religious and those good ladies are going to establish in Milan.

Tell me, at least, if you know, what is the purpose of this institution. Passing the other day from the church of the Discalced Fathers, who have started the novena of Saint Teresa, I also remembered the kind entertainment we had along the road after the Benediction and the fatal anniversary of our dear Viscontina. Greet her and Arconati, when you see them. I would like to repeat to you the content of the other letters but fearing that this may follow the same path as the others, I wait until I have a reply to this. If this reaches you, I pray you to tell me when Fr. De Vecchi will come to Mantua. Goodbye, my very dear Carolina, how much I would like to go back to that time when I think how happy I was to be near you! Goodbye, beloved friend. I am and I will be always

All yours, Magdalene

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1 The indication is so vague that it cannot be clarified.
2 The Church of the Carmelites who at present have a convent along Corso Porta Palio.
3 The death of the husband caused by cholera.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

16 October 1803

My beloved Carolina,

Finally, my dear, I hear that you have received my various letters, and I was so glad to get your last very precious one, because it was so long. I thank you for replying to all my letters, and I take advantage of referring to some of the articles with the same freedom, because of your friendship.

I did not at all set aside the articles of the physicians, my dear. I only hope that the doctors write for the good of humanity; I hope that they suggest a good remedy for the disturbances that people suffer. I do not know if they will succeed to convince the public. I do not know about Milan, but here some of our ladies, to prevent these illnesses, have slowly begun to wear the bust again, either for their own advantage or in order to follow the fashion of Paris. The Lord will reward you in Heaven for all you have done for the poor girls and the little boy Valenti. However, if Casati feels that it is not the moment to make a new attempt, do it at the most opportune time. Only it would be enough for this lady to know whom she has been assisting. At times, if she can, instead of assisting the children, she may help their father, without even going through you. And in cases that are so desperate she could get some help, even if only at death, remembering these poor victims of other people's misbehaviour, being cautious so that the others too may not be destroyed.

Let us come to Fr. Bellavite. I too agree that his Rules seem so full of the Spirit of God and they clearly show the heart of the one who wrote them. But to tell you the truth, certainly due to my weakness they seem to me too perfect for our girls. In spite of this I say that his sanctity will help to put them into practice in more ways than one. This is because the Lord will grant success to what he does, and since he is the confessor of all the teachers and girls you can see how much easier it is to imbue all with the same spirit. I did not deal closely with those teachers, with the exception of the Prioress, whom I know to be a soul as described by the Rules: full of God, of charity and creativity.

Besides knowing Bellavite, I do not know any of the teachers who were present at the beginning of this Work and who are still teaching there, except the Prioress. What surprised me and gave me great pleasure this year in this Institution has been the great veneration and admirable dependence that all have towards the Prioress.

I have other things to tell you on this matter, and on the Missions, but I have no time, goodbye, dearest, until my next letter. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

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1 The brother of two girls of the Valenti family (Ep.I, lett. 102, n. 5)
2 Fr. Domenico Bellavite, founder of the orphanage at Mantua (Ep. I, lett. 20, n. 3)
3 The Work at Mantua.
PS. I forgot to tell you, my dear, that here people are afraid of a thunderstorm. Some time ago Niccolini’s house was damaged by lightning. It might again damage our gardens, what do you say? Let us remind Casati about the lightning-conductor.

4 Sr. Luigia of the Cross, the Carmelite nun.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Uncle Borgia is very seriously ill and Magdalene feels it deeply. She cannot wait to give her friend in Milan the longed-for news: her brother, Marquis Bonifacio, has chosen young Countess Francesca Castiglioni, as a bride, worthy of him, indeed. Durini knows her.

My beloved Carolina,

5 November (1)803

Although both of us were prepared to bear up with one another, when our correspondence is interrupted by a just reason, another similarity unites us. You, my beloved friend have your mother-in-law 1 unwell and I have my uncle 2 who has already received Holy Viaticum 8 days ago and is still struggling with death.

This time the disease is so far advanced that we have little hope that he will recover. He seems, however, to still prolong for some time.

I beg you, my dear, pray and ask for prayers for him, that the Lord may grant him perseverance, patience and a holy death.

I must speak to you of another matter, my beloved Carolina, but I confess that my head is so obstructed by these thoughts of my uncle, that I doubt I shall be able to speak as I feel of a topic that fills my family with joy. At last the Lord has expressed His Will to my brother, and he has chosen Countess Francesca Castiglione 3 as his bride. You already understand who I mean, my dear. I mentioned the title on purpose so that you may understand who she is: the daughter of Castiglioni Crivelli 4. However, do not tell anybody else what I am writing to you, except to your husband and our Viscontina, until the matter is known also in Milan. I cannot dispense myself from telling you this for a thousand reasons, among them, affection, and friendship are the first ones. Goodbye, my beloved friend. I am going to my uncle, who today, 7 November, when I end this letter, is very seriously ill. Pray for him.

Your Magdalene

1 Countess Marianna Durini (Ep.I, lett. 118, n. 1)
2 Uncle Borgia, brother of grandfather Carlo (Ep.I, lett. 3, n. 2).
3 Bride of Bonifacio.
4 Mother of Francesca Castiglioni, the bride of Bonifacio
My beloved Carolina,

Do not worry, my dear Carolina, if this time I make use of Stella\(^1\) to write to you. Beside my uncle Borgia, who is always suffering, I am coughing continuously, but the cough is diminishing and has forced me to be in bed only for one day for blood issuing. But it is difficult for me to write so that I take advantage of our friendship to get help from somebody else; I am glad about the improvement of your dear little nephew\(^2\); it is useless to tell you this, but, please, keep him away from the air because you well remember what happened in Verona, as Doctor Zoppi\(^3\) related to us when you were here. One day or the other I believe that you will see my brother, who since Saturday is at his bride’s home in Mozzate\(^4\). I will write to you further by the next ordinary mail, hoping to be able to do it myself. Meanwhile, I embrace you wholeheartedly. My usual compliments. Goodbye. The secretary kisses your hands and begs you to recommend her to the Lord, assuring you that she, too, will pray for you. Again goodbye

Yours, beloved Carolina

PS. Do not worry. This is just a little indisposition.

Your Magdalene

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\(^1\) The chambermaid of Magdalene.

\(^2\) Marquis Giuseppe Arconati, son of Marquis Carlo and Marchioness Trotti Bentivoglio (Ep.I, lett. 125, n. 2).

\(^3\) Doctor GIOVANNI BATTISTA ZOPPI. His name is listed among the physicians of the city of Verona and its surroundings, in the Official publication of 1785, found in the archives of the State of Verona.

\(^4\) A region of Lombardy, in the province of Como. It is a large village, situated on the right bank of Bozzenta, near the road that goes from Milan to Varese, almost at the beginning of the lowest hills of Varesotto. There is a remarkable house with a delightful garden, which once belonged to the Dugnani family and then passed on the Seminary of Milan (Cfr. A. Amati, *Dizionario corografico dell’Italia*, Vallardi, Milano 1878, p. 447)
The young Countess Castiglioni is going to belong to the Canossa Family and Magdalene is happy about this. She would like her to be an example for the Veronese ladies both regarding fashions, and about going to the theatre. She could do greater good than many preachers together, through her dignified elegance and her refusal to attend indecent shows. Arconati, who is her family’s friend, recommended by Durini, could exhort her.

My beloved Carolina,

4 December 1803

I start telling you that my cough is a great deal better. However, my dear Carolina, if you can, do not tell my brother or the Teacher that I have written to you, as it would seem that I have neglected writing to the Castiglioni family. As a fact, my strength allows me to write very little, and I have no time since my uncle’s health remains poor and he does not leave me free even for a moment.

I assure you that I am taking care of myself as much as possible, and as much as the circumstances I am in, allow me. A proof of this is my silence and this letter. To tire myself less, I am writing it in bed, and I would not write to you at length if I did not hope that we could get much good out of it.

To speak with our usual frankness and friendship, pray, my dear, for your Magdalene who has, perhaps, never been in such great need of prayer. On another occasion I’ll tell you the reasons. Meanwhile pray for me.

You may have heard that my brother, at the moment I am writing to you, has perhaps already got married. However, this should not take away our hope to see one another again, at some other meetings, my dear. Meanwhile, here is what I would like, if your prudence thinks that we will bear fruit. You know what the big cities are. Our young spouse, due to her situation, enters into a position of doing greater good for the Divine Glory than many preachers, through fashion and the theatre and through everything else and even more so because she is from Milan.

I do not mean that the poor girl should do some good by living like a buried person, or dressing as an old lady, but only I would like that, out of service for the Lord, she should avoid indecent fashions and shun certain open iniquities that, at times, are publicly shown here. Do you understand, my dear? You already see how much dexterity is needed. Listen to what I would like to say: you should speak of all of this to Arconati, and if you see that a word would help, let everything rest with us. If you feel that we could benefit by Arconati’s friendship with the bride’s mother, I would like that she let her see the great good her daughter could do. I would like to say a positive word about the work of my girls, because, my dear, I treasure peace at home, and if the bride is not well impressed by it, I would not like that even a little bitterness should arise. Goodbye, my dear. Love me. See how much I take advantage of your friendship. You too could do the same with me. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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1 Family of the bride of Bonifacio, Francesca Castiglioni.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

18 December 1803

I have recovered from my cough, my dear Carolina, I assure you with all sincerity. Do not worry any longer about me, and let me thank you for your care for me. I already wrote to you another letter the other week. I would be sorry if it was lost, much more because I spoke to you of things that I was in need of; please try to search for it at the post.

I have been very busy during these past days. My dear, I could say that my uncle is dying. My Carlino has been seriously ill. Now he is better, since he has no fever. The preparations for the marriage of my dear ones are going on. So you can imagine, my dear, how busy I was. Now I assure you that I am well, and my greater occupation concerns my uncle. Our newly weds ¹ and the Teacher ² revere you, and ask pardon because the shortage of time did not allow them to come to you before leaving Milan. Our young bride is very happy, and is the happiness of our whole family.

My dear Carolina, do not torment yourself about the idea that it will be more difficult for us to see one another again. If the Lord is pleased to give us even this joy of meeting each other, He will open the way.

If anyone asks you whether the bride is dear to me, tell everybody that she is very dear to me, and that I am very happy about this choice, because I am so, indeed. Many wishes to dear Viscontina to whom I will reply as soon as possible. This letter is as confused as my head. Be satisfied with it at this time. This confusion, however, does not prevent me from loving you just the same. Greet Arconati, I embrace you, dear. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

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¹ Marquis Bonifacio and Francesca Castiglioni Canossa.
² Fr. Pietro Rossi.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

128 (Verona#1804.01.01)

The bride is really worthy and would be able, since she will receive dresses manufactured in Milan, to be also "the model" of the Verona fashion. From the Lombard capital there should come elegant, but at the same time, modest fashions for her. Could Arconati intervene about this matter?

My beloved Carolina,

Finally the mail has also kindly sent my letters to you. My beloved Carolina, I would have liked it better if they had arrived as they were supposed to, because, my dear, out of your goodness, you would not have worried so much for my health, which, thanks to the Lord, is excellent, and for the other motive you know well. Besides, I will tell with all sincerity that as you say very well, I flatter myself that things will be all right on their own, because I am coming to know, more and more, of our bride’s\textsuperscript{1} good education, to which she responds really admirably. If God keeps on blessing her as I hope, she is and will be the happiness of my whole family.

Now let me tell you that the evil in Verona is not being scantily dressed, but the evil is being dressed like statues, if you can understand me. Very narrow dresses with sleeves of another colour … this is our fashion. If, by chance, by the dexterity of Arconati we could have a new fashion, how beautiful a model we would have! Know that ready-made beautiful dresses and ordinary dresses for our dear sister-in-law must come from Milan. If you happen to have some elegant but modest patterns to propose, please do so. They are covered up to the neck, but appear as if they were not. I have studied much to invent some new cutting, but my weak imagination has not come to any result.

I entrust the matter first to the Lord, then to your prudence. Your suggestions, however, are very right, my dear.

I am full of human respect right up above my hair, this is the reason why I need prayer. As for the rest, you see my situation, I need recollection and time for myself and for the Work that the Lord seems to ask of me. Due to my weakness, I am afraid that because of this wedding\textsuperscript{2}, I will have instead to come closer, more or less, to the world. I am still tied up with my patient\textsuperscript{3} and Carlino. Until the Lord frees me from these two obligations, I cannot do anything. Now, since I feel the weight of so many ties and see my weakness in virtue, I recommend myself to the prayers of my dearest friend, so that the Lord will enlighten, dispose and facilitate all that He asks of me, now and in the future. I open my heart to you, dearest Carolina. Therefore, pray for me as you already do and make others pray for your Magdalene.

Uncle Borgia has a chronic illness. He is always suffering and it is a long illness. I am waiting for the Parish priest of Saint Stephen\textsuperscript{4} to come any day. Therefore, I hope to send you the information you wish, in the next ordinary mail, about that poor young lady.

With great happiness, from one of your dear letters, I noticed that you are allowed again to engage yourself in the hospital. Your fear of working with your sister\textsuperscript{5}, if you allow me to say so, is too much. I am happy that you work together with her because I hope you will be at

\textsuperscript{1} Francesca Castiglioni Canossa, bride of Bonifacio Canossa

\textsuperscript{2} It is the wedding of her brother Bonifacio with Countess Francesca Castiglioni. For biographical information (Ep. I, pp. 552 and 584.

\textsuperscript{3} Her uncle Borgia. For biographical information (Ep. I, p 9

\textsuperscript{4} Romanesque Church in Verona, said to be built on the ground where 40 Veronese martyrs were buried during the time of Diocletian.

\textsuperscript{5} Marchioness Teresa Trotti Arconati
peace. I am away from it for more than a year. I am short of time and paper. I wish you a year full of the divine blessings. Goodbye, dear, goodbye, I am yours

Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

129 (Verona#1804.01.04)

The zeal of the organizers has found a compromise in the face of opposition from the Cisalpine Government. Fr. De Vecchi may preach the Spiritual Exercises but not the Missions; one, however, is just like the other. Even if he has still to wait, it is better to agree on that.

My most beloved Carolina,

4 January (1)804

You might say, you write either too little or too much. However, I love you equally when I write to you, and when I am forced to keep silence. I beg you, my dear Carolina, to ask Arconati where Fr. De Vecchi is now. Finally, thanks to the Lord, Fr. Pietro has found the way to give the extra ordinary Spiritual Exercises, which, just between us, will be the Missions."

We were not worthy and therefore God allowed the obstacles to be insurmountable up to the present time. Therefore, I foresee that they will be overcome later. We shall try to see that when the highly esteemed priests of Fr. De Vecchi’s group pass through, they may be able to speak to Fr. Pietro, so that they may come to a conclusion for the future. I assure you, my beloved friend, that we have an extreme need of this spiritual help and nobody, according to me, could succeed better in promoting the Divine Glory than they.

I am very much consoled about this new mercy the Lord seems to bestow on us, and if we could have these Fathers, I think that we could see very beautiful things. My patients have improved a lot, except uncle Borgia, who is always in a chronic state. I have spoken to the Assistant Priest of Saint Stephen 1 concerning the young girl. The parish Priest is ill with apoplexy. We have found what she calls the ‘small convent’, but until she speaks to the Archpriest, she does not know who he is. Next week you will know the rest, my dear.

Goodbye, I embrace you with my whole heart. Love me as much as I love you. My usual compliments.

Goodbye, I am

your Magdalene

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1 Romanesque Church in Verona, said to be built on the ground where 40 Veronese martyrs were buried during the time of Diocletian. (Ep.I, lett.128, n. 2)
Duties accumulate: Magdalene is busy with a young Veronese girl, ill in the hospital in Milan, but asks for greater details, because those she has are insufficient. Durini should succeed in repatriating a young Milanese who, being a victim of her weakness, wants to rehabilitate herself and, with the help of her relatives, to find a place in the Lombard capital.

My beloved Carolina,

15 January (1)804

I doubted whether I would be able to write to you in this ordinary post, my beloved Carolina. But now I have the time to tell you, that I am well and that I have missed your dear letters in the past two ordinary mails. I hope that the mail is the cause of this silence and not your health. Because of this do send me news of yourself, or repeat them if you have already sent them to me, because, being winter, I fear about your cough.

You must have received the news I sent you from Fr. de' Vecchi, my dear, regarding the missions. Since time is lacking, I refer to the letter I have written to our common friend Luisa recommending us, Fr. Pietro and me, to both of you, always if it is possible. From this priest you might have had the name of a poor Milanese young girl, who is in our Hospital. She is about thirteen or fourteen years old. She made mistakes, but is converted, and would like to return home. Fr. Pietro, therefore, who conveys to you his greetings, begs you to investigate if it is feasible to take her, or better, if her grandmother or her sister are willing to welcome her, or really if they could give an employment to the girl that keeps her out of danger. This young girl says that these relatives have the means to do so. If this is so, Fr. Pietro would like them to find a way to get the girl back to their country. Note that he also told me that she has not made big mistakes, because she is of tender age. Forgive him and me for this new trouble. He could have got more details from the Religious who is assisting her, but, I think, he was not able to come to see me. Regarding her faults, regulate yourself in speaking about them with charity and prudence, much more because I do not know the details. Concerning the girl from Verona who is in your hospital it was not possible, my dear, neither for the Parish Priest, nor for his Assistant, to get any information though they have made enquiries about her. Therefore try to get some other facts, write to me, and I will search anew. Goodbye, my beloved friend. My usual compliments. I embrace you heartily, and I am

Your Magdalene

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1 Luisa Visconti Castelli
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

22 January, 1804

The other day I received your very precious letter, my beloved Carolina. Infinite thanks to dear Arconati. I hope that the Lord will add this merit also to the many others she deserves. We have done everything possible for the fashion. If God does not give us the joy of a successful outcome, let us adore his divine judgment. It is great that we managed, as you say, to see some good people follow this somewhat gloomy trend. In the matter of modesty, I cannot but praise ours. Honestly, she can set an example to all young brides in Verona. But you already know my desire, I would like to destroy that style and I hope that it will not last long, first because every fashion changes and secondly because I see that some of the dresses we have at home have the skirt open, so we can see the under-dress in front, and this breaks the statue-like clothing. Also the waist-line is longer, and this, too, is beneficial. Therefore let us leave the matter in God’s hand, until some other occasion to help will arise.

Fr. de’Vecchi informed me about your Work, my dear. I feel that it is going on very well. Please, when you write tell me how much is the debt of the association, because I have forgotten it. It is bad to make the accounts with our Viscontina, because she always says that she owes me money.

Goodbye my very dear Friend, love me, remember me to the Lord, and be assured that I am all yours.

Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

A young Jewish girl, whose godfather, uncle Jerome, supported her in the college, has just married. Magdalene, who considered her part of her family, had prepared an outfit for her and assisted her for the wedding. Now this work too is over and Magdalene can occupy herself more fully with her own future. Durini offered to be her collaborator in Milan. But what is the Will of the Lord for her? She insistently asks for prayers.

My beloved Carolina,

There are so many things I have to tell you, my dear friend, that it will be difficult to say everything in the brief moments I can spare. Our correspondence, indeed, my dear, is very restricted. I have uncle Borgia, who is in a continuous state of chronic illness, and he is getting worse these last days. Perhaps because of the cold, he has been very seriously ill. Besides this, I have had to attend to the marriage of a Hebrew girl who became a Christian. At baptism she took my uncle as her godfather. He supported her studies in the monastery boarding school. After my aunt’s death she somehow depended on me. I have kept her with me until she got married; just for ten days. But she keeps me rather busy on account of her wardrobe. And you, my dear, for what reason have you been silent? I suspect one thing only, and this pains me, as I would not like that the little boy of Arconati is still seriously ill. When you write give me some news about him for my peace. I owe you an answer to a letter and to an errand of yours, my dear Carolina. But for this last one, though I urged the one who ought to inform me, it was still not possible for me to get what I need. I will not be able to inform you even through the ordinary post of Thursday. This is what they told me. Excuse me if I cannot answer you with promptness as I would like, but I assure you, it is not my fault.

You tell me, my beloved friend, that you would like me to come to Milan, and that you are building beautiful castles in the air about me. Oh God, if you knew how much I, too, wish to come before I take any decision. It seems that soon I shall be free to follow my own way. I too am building castles in the air. In any case, on my part I have no difficulty to share these with you in writing and I hope that you, too, will do the same. But meanwhile, my dear Carolina, please do me this charity, pray and get others to pray, that the Lord may enlighten us and smoothen out the difficulties that prevent our coming and, what is more, that we may know and do the Will of the Lord.

My dear little sister-in-law, who, as you may believe, does not know anything about it, out of friendship and affection, told me that if she will have the chance to come to Milan, she would like me to come with her. This Spring her mother promised her to come to Verona. Let us pray in a special way to Mary Most Holy. Perhaps the Lord, besides giving to our family the joy of having such a bride, who is esteemed and adored by everybody, has very different ways to smoothen out the road for me, to quieten me a little, to think of my soul, because, my

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1 The young Jewish girl – was adopted as a spiritual daughter – so it is stated in the deed that was published – of the uncle Marquis Jerome. She, Maria Rosa, was the daughter of Aron Vitta Capretti and Ester Enego. Together with her paternal surname she also assumed the name of Canossa. With the help of Don Libera, Magdalene, was able, with difficulty, to get her into a boarding house of a monastery, so that she may also “be prepared to receive Baptism and the other sacraments.” (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit., pag. 116). She married on 5 February 1804.

2 Her trousseau.

3 Durini’s niece; the daughter of her sister Teresa (Ep. I, lett. 125, n. 2).

4 The postal service.

5 Francesca Castiglioni Canossa
beloved friend, I am rather tired of so many distractions because I see how naughty I am. You see that I talk with great openness and confidence to you, my dear.

If the Lord will grant us the satisfaction of being personally united, I know that you, too, will do the same. But I understand that besides our satisfaction, it would be much better to be able to talk to one another face to face. Embrace Arconati and Viscontina for me. Tell Viscontina that the other day, when the boxes of my sister-in-law came, I received her letter and the very beautiful pictures of the Guardian Angels for Fr. Giambattista and those she also sent for me. Thank her for everything, and tell her that I will write to her as soon as possible. Goodbye, dear, the remainder another time. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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6 Fr. Giambattista Bertolini (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 4).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene’s trip to Milan is always, and only, a possibility, though Durini thinks it will be soon. Many responsibilities still hold Magdalene back in Verona, even though uncle Borgia is deceased. The case of the Poiaghi girl has been solved well, but she cannot find the Baptism certificate, which is urgently needed. A greater spiritual assistance to the youth in Verona is an urgent need, as the youth are getting more and more morally corrupted. This problem makes Magdalene very tense. Yet she finds proper words to comfort Durini who is oppressed by the death of an uncle, by the illness of her husband and of a little nephew, the child of Teresa Arconati.

My beloved Carolina,

Are you perhaps displeased about my silence, my beloved Carolina, as I do not see your letters in the last few ordinary mails? You would have some reason for it although it was unintentional, but you see that I was convinced that you had written to me and that the mail alone was the cause of this delay. I am waiting for that letter in which you speak to me of your castles, and I am also a little impatient and you, perhaps, will be the same about the answer. My dear friend, in your last letter you spoke to me as if I were coming to Milan soon and you always show me your heart, always the same and always so obliging. I, for my part, assure you that besides being very obliged to you, I do not know anything in the world that would be so pleasant to me as making this trip. Let your jealousy rest in peace if this happens, because the many reasons I have to love you would make me impenetrable by any merit and attraction of your worthy friends. But I can only hope for this trip. My dear, I do not see that it will be possible any more than it was in the past. Meanwhile, you already know, the greatest bond I still have is that of my little boy 1. It does not yet seem to me as though this will be resolved so soon. Meanwhile let us continue to pray. Through prayer, God can break a bond as easily as a thousand bonds. Now my uncle2 is looking for a teacher who will come only to teach him. This could release me a little, but very little. I will write to you how these things work out. For a long time I have not replied to you on two points. I have never been able to. One is about the matter of the girl Poiaghi3 whose behaviour, I am glad to hear it, is good and she tries as much as possible to respond to your charity towards her. I regret like you, that you cannot have her Baptism certificate. If you think that I, too, can search for it in our Hospital where her father died, kindly let me know his name and I will ask without showing that I know anything about it. I am also in a similar situation for one of my girls, whose case however, is different because she was found at the corner of a road and there is no way to know who she is. Our Vicar General is of the opinion to baptize her conditionally. Other Religious think in a different way. I will also write to you the outcome of this. I wanted to speak to you also about your new employment in the hospital, but the tiredness I feel today makes me delay to mention it this time. Soon, if it is God’s will, I shall start to visit our hospital. I have not done so for a year and a half, having to take care of my poor uncle and Carlino. Dear Carolina, I do not know if it is the same in Milan. Here we have dreadful cases, of ignorance and malice among girls I do not know whether they are increasing or whether we happen to be discovering them more and more. And I, my dear, who would like to correct the others, am becoming worse every day. Goodbye, meanwhile love, pray and ask prayers for the one who will always be

1 Her little cousin Carlino di Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 6).
2 Marquis Girolamo di Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 6).
3 The case of letter. 91: the poor girl recommended by C. Durini
You see how things have turned out for me, my beloved Carolina. I wrote this letter two days before the departure of the ordinary post to be certain that it was ready at the moment of the departure of the mail for Milan. But having to go early in the morning to my girls, I left the letter on the desk, and so it remained in Verona. My dear friend, the last two lines of yours have left me with a lot of sorrows. The loss of your uncle, which certainly has been very painful for you, and the usual inclination of my dear Carolina to seek reasons to torment herself, as well as the illness of your husband, and your cough! I hope you are not worse than what you tell me. If you have no time or do not feel like writing, let our common friend Viscontina give me news about you so that I can be at peace. I will not forget, I promise you, to recommend you, and ask others to recommend you to the Lord. Have courage. You want to see, my dear, if you are a rare person who torments herself. You want to torment yourself because you think you did not keep company to your uncle as much as you could. Then you yourself confess that he used to go out and, consequently that he did not need you. At least your company was not all that necessary. Instead, you went to the really abandoned in the hospital. Goodbye very dear friend. I embrace you and I am wholeheartedly yours. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

16 March 1804
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Count Durini is still not well and Magdalene writes to her grief-stricken friend, her support of prayer and understanding. Soon she will also send the requested books.

My beloved Carolina,

28 March 1804

I am very sorry, my beloved Carolina, to hear that your husband’s discomfort is continuing and about the great pain it causes you. You have an excellent heart, my dear, and this is what always torments you. To feel the pain does not mean that you are lacking in resignation. Our unhappy life will end when God wants it. Then we shall love the Lord fully and everyone only in Him. But as long as we are here, it is impossible not to feel the pain when people dear to us are suffering. Nevertheless, as much I can, I will not fail to recommend you to God, as you tell me.

Concerning your errand of the two books for that esteemed Religious to whom I beg you to convey my greetings, though I do not know him, tell him to kindly recommend me to the Lord. Regarding the books, therefore, I found that of the “Maxims of St. Francis of Sales”. If it is not urgent, I will send it to you at the first occasion. But I have not yet found the Memoirs1 of Fr. Granata. They want to give either all the works of that priest or nothing at all. I will see if we can find a used copy and only that book. Here there are great preparations for the celebration of the Three Hours2. This year I have the busy gallery, so, after the feasts I will send news to you, my dear, or to our dear Viscontina, whom I heartily embrace. Goodbye, my beloved Carolina. I wish you happy and holy feasts, and I embrace you most affectionately.

Your Magdalene

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1 MEMOIRS of Fr. GRANATA, the work of Granado Giacomo S.J. Teol. (Cadice 1574-Granata 1633). He was a saintly Religious. He taught Philosophy and Theology in Seville and held important responsibilities in the Society of Jesus. He explained St. Thomas Aquinas well in his “Commentary of the Summam Theologiae S. Thomae” (8 vol. - 1623-33). He also wrote a thesis on “De Immaculata B.V. Dei Genitrice Mariae Conceptione (1617) (Cfr. Dizionario ecclesiastico, Utet, Turin 1955, under the guidance of Mons. Mercati and Mons. A. Pelzer).

2 The liturgical functions of Good Friday.
The widow Valenti has come to know, through Marquis Casati, the sorrowful plight of her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren, and has given a sum of money. According to Magdalene, to whom it has been delivered, it should be distributed in a way different from that of the donor, who needs to be advised on this matter.

My beloved Carolina,

8 April (1)804

My dear, here is a special occasion: I am sending you the book of the “Maxims of St. Francis of Sales”¹. I shall wait for another chance, so as to be able to send you also the Memoirs² if I can find it, as I already wrote to you in my last letter, and then I will write to you about its price.

Yesterday, my beloved Carolina, I was happy to receive two of your very precious letters, together with a note the good Marquis Casati wrote to you. I beg you to convey to him my compliments and thanks. How I would like to reply to the many things you mentioned in your letters: I start with the most urgent ones. I have not handed over the money lady Valenti³ sent for her daughter-in-law, because, my dear, I do not know if I explained myself well enough regarding the children. The two girls, who are in one of our boarding houses for the poor, are helped by other people's alms, independently of help from their father and mother. I was asking, therefore, if this money of Mrs. Valenti is all for the daughter-in-law, or if she allows that all or part of it may be given to the girls, who respond very well to the Christian education they are given. But as I wrote again to you, they are in a boarding house where, compared to others, they are safer and better educated than in their own home. But they are in a very miserable boarding house, where they hardly get much to eat, and where they have no other clothing other than what they earn. If their age were in accordance with our Rules, I would have taken them. The first one, who is called Marianna, looks like a grown-up woman. In spite of all this, let this lady do as she thinks. If she wants that I ask the girls’ father to write to the Attorney⁴, it will be convenient then to give some small part to his wife. But we should keep silent about having received anything for the girls, since you already know that, at times, poverty spurs one to do what one would not do if necessity does not require it.

I enclose, my dear, at the same time, a letter for Stampa Soncini⁵. This is a thanksgiving for her from the poor Caterina⁶ in the hospital, for the alms she has sent her. I have missed the occasion to send you this letter. Therefore as the mother-in-law of my sister Maffei,⁷ will go to Milan on her way to Turin, she will send it to you. Do not trouble yourself to visit her, because I do not want you to set aside other things in order to do so. Besides, you would not have time because she does not stop, but continues on her journey to her country. I am telling you this because I know that sometimes, out of your goodness and friendship, you go beyond what is necessary.

I embrace you, my dear, wholeheartedly. Before this letter I hope to be able to send you another one by mail. Goodbye beloved Carolina.

Dearest friend, I am

¹ Ep. I, lett. 6, n. 8
³ Teresa Valenti, grandmother of the two sisters.
⁴ A Magistrate with special duties, in this case, the care of minors.
⁵ Letter thanking Marchioness Stampa Soncini
⁶ A sick woman in the hospital
⁷ Magdalene’s sister, Laura Maffei
Your very affectionate Magdalene
The plan of the Missions failed completely: Fr. De Vecchi was not granted the permission. Magdalene expresses to her friend her disappointment and that of Don Leonardi. Her pain is increased by the fact that an epidemic fever which broke out in her boarding house, has affected all the girls and two teachers. All of them are recovering, except a little girl who as the physician says, is incurable.

My beloved Carolina,

[Verona] 2 May (1803) 1804

What’s happening to you, my beloved Carolina? Our correspondence is interrupted once again. I too am at fault because of my silence, I would not like, however, that yours stems from the same motive. I had something like a hospital in the house of my girls. I have lost one of them. The Lord has taken her to Heaven. The others are almost well now. Two of the three teachers were seriously ill. Both of them got up today. But, indeed, they gave me a lot to do at the time when one little girl was dying and another girl was very sick.

Perhaps the Lord did not want me to serve him, my dear friend, in the matter of the Missions, in spite of what Fr. Pietro and I did. We thought that everything was settled, as I already wrote to you. Instead everything vanished, and the one who first seemed to want them did not want them any more. I cannot tell you the embarrassment of Fr. Pietro, and mine too. On Rev. Fr. Felice De’ Vecchi’s return convey to him my greetings. Tell him that if in any other moment God, out of mercy, wants to open to us a way, we beg him to continue his same good disposition towards Verona, if his other apostolic duties allow him. I already wrote the same thing to him when the matter failed here, but I wish that you, too, my dear, repeat this to him.

I desire very much to have news of you, my beloved Carolina. Keep on praying and ask others to pray for me. My uncle has begun negotiations for a teacher for Carlino, however, only to teach him, for the moment. Who knows that by keeping on praying he does not end up by really taking him on. I have a lot of things to write to you, but I do not have the time. I embrace you wholeheartedly with the most tender affection, and I am

Your Magdalene

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1 MARIA FRANCESCA daughter of Gioachino Bosia, only eight years old, died of consumption, in 23 days, on 29 April 1804 (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit. f.172)

2 Fr. De Vecchi had been invited for the Preaching but he did not obtain the necessary permissions from the Italian Government.

3 Uncle Jerome, the father of Carlino.
The charitable works, both of Durini in Milan and of Magdalene in Verona, are passing through stormy times. There are a lot of objections especially against the Veronese “boarding house”. Magdalene has to ask the competent offices of the Government for help. She writes to Durini, but to convince herself at the same time, that the storms are the necessary foundation of the works that please the Lord.

My beloved Carolina,

[Verona] 20 May 1804

At least a few lines if I cannot do more, my beloved Carolina. We have not written for some time now by the ordinary post. I hope, however, that you are well, and that tomorrow, when aunt Crivelli comes, I will have news about you. I am longing to know the result of the storm against your holy Work. We should say, my dear, that this is the time of stormy weather. I, too, am in such a trouble for my girls, that I have had to turn to the Government. My dear, let us encourage one another. We have a clearer reason to hope that now, as we are facing great obstacles in our work, God will be a little more glorified. Usually immediately after such times, things turn out better. For our peace of mind, tell me how yours was settled, and I will tell you how mine went. I have received the sovereigns, and thank Marquis Casati very much, to whom I beg you to convey my regards, as well as to Mrs. Valenti. Actually I have used a part of what she sent for her daughter-in-law, because she needed it. I do not know how I will use the remainder. Perhaps a little for each person. Goodbye, dear, I am going to bed as it is nearly midnight. An embrace for dear Viscontina.

Goodbye, my dear.

I am all yours, Magdalene

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1 The local administration of the Cisalpines.
2 The money for the Valentis. The “sovereigns” are the Austrian coins.
3 Teresa Valenti, grandmother of the two Valenti sisters.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Verona#1804.05.26

The sum given by the lady Valentì for the unfortunate family of one of her sons, has been and is to be distributed wisely. The case of the Canossa boarding house is happily resolved. The little girl they wanted to take away, by deception and with bad intentions, has been defended by the government and she was allowed to remain in the boarding house. Instead both Countesses Durini and Viscontina are suffering physically. Magdalene is sad about it.

My beloved Carolina,

Let us try, my beloved Carolina, if it is possible to stabilize again our correspondence, as we did in the past. I desire this very much, my dear, also because of the many things I have to tell you. Concerning the “sovereigns”¹, you might already have noticed from my last letter that I have received them. The lady² has allowed me to spend it as I think best. I have done so and, as I wrote to you, I started from the mother, since her husband has gone away from here, we do not know for how long. She is also six months pregnant. He will not delay in coming back. I gave part of it to the girls³, and the remainder I will give where it is most needed, not only, but also what seems more just. You do not speak to me anymore, my dear, of the troubles of your holy work. My troubles seem over, at least in part, for the Government⁴ has decided in my favour. The case was that they wanted to take a girl away from me by deceit. The one who wanted to take her away had no right at all. I feared not only his wanting to do so, but also because of the circumstances he was in. This girl would have been ruined. Thank the Lord that we have overcome the storm and tell me how your storm has turned out.

I received your last very precious letter. Simultaneously I received one from the esteemed Fr. De' Vecchi, who confirms the news you conveyed to me, that is, about his involvement and that of a brother, in giving the Holy Exercises to the staff of the hospital. He also speaks of the great charity of the gentlemen and the noble ladies who assist the patients, even replacing the assistants. Dear Carolina, do not worry about Arconati. Be assured that God will keep her healthier in the hospital than she would be at home, because God wants her there.

You worry me much because of your cough, and I would like you to be freed of it. I also feel for the indisposition of our dear Viscontina. Please inform me about her health. Goodbye very dear friend. Your physicians make me a bit angry, because they do not prescribe to you the Waters of Montartone⁵. Experience here shows how beneficial they are for a cough. Goodbye dear, very dear friend. Remember to God,

your Magdalene

I wanted to speak to you of the Missions, but I will do it at another time. I am going to sleep. Goodbye.

¹ The money for the Valenti family referred to in a previous letter.
² Teresa Valenti, grandmother of the two sisters.
³ The two daughters of Antonio Valenti
⁴ The local Administration of the Cisalpines
⁵ The cure with thermal waters
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini has an inheritance for her institution, but the Government contests it and she suffers because of this. As for herself, Magdalene is surely disposed to give a positive answer to the request of her Milanese friend. But she is not clear yet about the Will of the Lord and hopes that Fr. de Vecchi, whom both of them want to consult, will help her to discern.

My beloved Carolina,

I am writing to you from the countryside. I did not know I had to come here, my dear friend. I believe, however, that I will stay here only for a little while. But before leaving, I was happy to receive your last very precious letter in which you spoke of the inheritance you hope for your holy institution. I too can understand that the Government might misinterpret this inheritance, and I would be sorry if this advantage brings you a double loss. Pray and have others to pray to the Most holy Virgin, dear Carolina, who will mend even this damage. I think, however, that you are too preoccupied about it, and that the damage will not be much. Do me the favour to continue informing me on this matter so as to console me.

Countess Castiglioni¹, her husband and child are with us. They came to Verona eight days ago. They came here yesterday. I am sorry that they will leave us on Thursday. If the process of those from Milan, who are to be beatified would pass through my hands, by what I know, they would be canonized on the very first day. Speaking about Saints, my dear, we have a very extraordinary case in Verona, of which I will speak to you at another time. If you hear condemnations of some case connected with holiness in Verona, trust me, suspend your judgment; because I assure you that you cannot judge whether the case is false just by hearing somebody condemning it. If you do not hear anything about it, do not speak about it either.

Concerning what you ask me, namely if I am free to dispose of my humble person in the future, however, to follow that way on which the will of God may deign to call me, well, the answer is “yes”, when I shall be free. Not yet, however, because of Carlino and some other situations in the family which are connected with him. But if the Lord does not hold anything to the contrary, I shall be free at the latest, when Carlo goes to the boarding house, where his father wants him to go, and perhaps even before that, if his father decides to get a teacher for him. The important thing is to truly know God's Will and where the greatest good can be done. Listen, my beloved Carolina, meanwhile let us pray much, very much, and let us ask others pray as well. Please request those persons whom you know to pray the Divine Mercy through the intercession of Mary, to grant us the necessary lights. Fr. De Vecchi had written to say that he will pass through Verona in autumn to go to the Austrian side to preach the missions. If it is not difficult for you, tell him all the ideas you have. I have spoken to him at length about mine when he came here. I also asked him to get information from the Luigine² of Parma. I know he has already done it. If you like, we shall compare all the possibilities. If the Lord wills, as I hope, in His love He will let me know His Holy will, I, for myself, am indifferent to everything.

I mean, I hope to be so, with God's help, because in all truth, I was never able to extinguish within me the desire to follow the spirit of the Daughters of Charity,³ or something similar⁴. This is enough for now, my dear, dear friend. I still have to speak to you about the Missions. I will do it through another ordinary mail. When you reply, tell me if you are...

¹Countess Eleonora Crivelli Castiglioni, mother of Francesca, the wife of Bonifacio of Canossa
²The region of Verona under the Austrians.
³The Sisters of the Conservatory of Parma (Ep.I, lett. 97, n. 1)
⁴Founded by St. Vincent de Paul who was born in Pony Guascogna in 1585 and died in Paris in 1660.
pleased with my idea of communicating everything to Fr. de' Vecchi, or if you are not. I did it, on my part, when he was in Verona with the consent of the one who is directing me. When we come to a conclusion, I would like them to agree among themselves. Again I repeat to you, my dear, please pray. Love me as I am wholeheartedly

All yours, Magdalene

PS. Take care of your cough, give me news about it. Embrace Viscontina and Arconati and tell me about the health of the former.

\[5\] Fr. Nicola Galvani (Ep.I, lett.47, n.3)
In Verona, an uncommon fact which the Church cannot define quickly whether it belongs to the mystical or to diabolic sphere, becomes public. It complicates the position of three Religious who, unanimously held as extraordinary spiritual gifts those they found in a young lady from a good family, Angiola Raimondi. The Government intervened, at first supporting the work of the Vicar of the Diocese. Then, after the ecclesiastical authorities renounced responsibility regarding the matter, the Government acted on its own. Magdalene fears that if the process is transferred to Milan for greater competence, it can be a blow to the good name of the three Religious, to whom she owes gratitude. Durini should request Marquis Casati to straighten out everything.

My beloved Carolina,

Grezzano, 17 June 1804

I did not think, my dear Carolina, I would write another letter to you from Grezzano, but since my aunt Crivelli returns from Valdagno on Tuesday, and since she has never seen this vacation house of ours, my brother has changed his mind, and I believe we will stop here at least for another week. The Countess Castiglioni who has left here on Friday, will give you news of me. I was pleased to be able to talk a lot about my Carolina, as gladly, you can imagine, as I would have talked to you. When you write, tell me whether you have received another letter of mine, in which I answered your question if I am free to dispose of myself. In the same letter I mentioned also a certain case we have in Verona, which gives the philosophers of our century a lot to talk about. The Lord wants it for His own divine purpose, and I hope for His glory. It has been opposed, denied, and now it has been forwarded to Milan. My dear, I must today warmly recommend this case to you, and also to dear Arconati. I want to tell as much as I am able to explain to you. Then you will see how much it deserves and needs to be treated with the compassion and prudence, the Lord has given both of you. Here we have a young lady who is called Angiola Raimondi, an only daughter and endowed with average intelligence. She had the gift of a deep piety ever as a young girl. I do not know since when, as they tell me, God has communicated to her extraordinary gifts, visible to the Religious who assisted her. I do not know if all these or only some of them are also visible to all the people who are present. The first director of this young girl was Fr. Cristofori, the one of the hospital, well known to you, then Fr. Pietro was called in, and I think that the last one called in was the Archpriest Galvani. As long as the event was known to them only, nobody had the slightest idea about these things. But one day God allowed that only the surgeon, and the physician were present at such an extraordinary event, which however, I heard people say, was nothing but an attempt of the devil to take her away from the world. They related the fact to those they met and in a few days the whole city came to know about it. However, here I am mistaken about this detail: it was only the surgeon who related it. Meanwhile, the thing was sublimated. The three Religious I mentioned above, who already were being looked upon as eccentric persons, thought it better to stop directing the young lady, so that others could test

1 The holiday Villa of the Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 1)
2 The mother of Francesca Castiglioni, wife of Bonifacio (Ep.I, lett. 139 n.1)
3 The Centre of the province of Vicenza, to the right of a stream called Agno.
4 Countess TERESA CASTIGLIONI, nee Castiglioni, wife of the senator Luigi.
5 The lady about whom the story is told. It does not become a major issue, but Magdalene was interested in it and speaks of it in several letters, also because three of the priests she esteemed most were involved in the matter.
6 A priest belonging to the “Brotherhood”.
7 Fr. Pietro Leonardi
8 Archpriest Galvani, her confessor (Ep.I, lett. 47, n.3).
her. In fact, they handed the matter over to Monsignor Vicar\(^9\), who chose three other trustworthy people.

In the meantime, the government had come in, and Monsignor worked together with them. They decided to put her in a monastery, where they left her for some days, and where she had the same gifts as when she was outside. They took her out of the monastery, and Monsignor Vicar was convinced that she should go to Brescia. But she got fatally sick, and since the doctor despaired about her case, Monsignor Vicar and the Government thought of secretly burying her by night in the cathedral. Both were present when they brought her the Viaticum. Soon after receiving the Sacrament, she recovered perfectly, and was able to get up from bed as she did, surprising everybody. Then the government chose two or three other good Religious, and the first three withdrew, either on their own or because they were advised to do so. These last also withdrew shortly after, not having seen anything. I do not know if all three of them, but I know that at least one of them, was persuaded to do so. At this moment the poor Vicar who, in my opinion was too timid, dropped the matter and left it entirely into the hands of the secular government. The Government put the three first Religious on trial and examined them. These priests legally testified to all they could say. The family members were also examined. Meanwhile, the young lady was deprived of religious assistance and the Sacraments. She could neither go out nor see anybody. I do not value this very much because God alone is more than the whole world put together.

But the fact is that information regarding this case has already been sent to Milan, God knows in what way. Soon the case will be transferred there, if it has not been transferred yet.

This is what, my dear Carolina, I would like from you. First of all, read this letter to the very Rev. Fr. De’ Vecchi, because if he hears people talking about this matter, or if your Government involves him directly, or indirectly, he will have been already informed about it and can act as he thinks best before God. Then, I would like that, through Marquis Casati or through some other means, without explaining anything, you try to find out, either from the Minister of Cult or from the Court that corresponds to our Police,\(^{10}\) if the process has been handed over to one or the other authority. If you discover that there is a bad impression or strong motives against the young lady or against those 3 religious who assisted her, try to gently refrain them and calm down the matter. Here, they regarded them as impostors and wanted to have them punished. In fact, I do not know why it should involve the Government so much. Much more so, because the events were not publicized. Now, they are making it even more public than what it was, by trying to hide it and evaluate it, instead of just letting things be as they were.

This young lady’s father and mother are both old. You can imagine, having only this daughter, and with what they have seen, they keep her as a treasure. I do not know why she cannot be left quietly at home, supported by some prudent and holy Religious, who could direct her with necessary caution, without subliming\(^{11}\), and making too much of the matter.

If I were not tired of writing, I would have written to Fr. De’ Vecchi as well. But I am unable to do so. Will you do me the favour I have told you about? Forgive me, my dear, for this trouble. Your friendship has given me the courage to ask you for all these favours. Besides my respect, as you know, for those who have directed her, for family motives I will tell you about at another time, I also have some concern for the girl. But I need your prudence not to expose myself to the Government. Goodbye dear. Speak of the matter to anyone you think best. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

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\(^{9}\) Mons. Gualfardo Ridolfi (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 5).

\(^{10}\) This would correspond in part to the function of the Prefecture today.

\(^{11}\) Attributing a mystical meaning to the facts.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 28 June 1804

Here I am, finally back in Verona, my dear Carolina, in very good health, desiring to hear a lot of news about you, and your holy Work. After coming here, I heard the news that Fr. Pietro came to Milan, perhaps, because of his boys. I do not know if he has spoken to you of the matter\(^1\) I recommended to you in the last ordinary mail\(^2\). Be aware that, if he did not do it, or if you, thinking he already knew I had recommended it to you, he not only does not know that I have written to you about it, but not even that I know about it. Therefore, if you did speak to one another, I beg you to let him speak personally about it first. Then, without showing that you know it, suggest to him steps and ways your prudence thinks the best. If he does not speak about it, please do not mention it. I confess, my dear Carolina, that his great goodness and zeal, in such a delicate business, worry me. Inform also the good Fr. de' Vecchi, because, not knowing the Country, he may take dangerous steps, and his zeal may betray him.

As far as I know, the matter is assigned to the Minister of Cult\(^3\). Forgive me, my dear, for troubling you so much. Be assured that the person concerned will pray especially for you. I wish I could come myself to thank you for so many things. In the last days much was said with aunt Crivelli about this trip. Nevertheless, I still see it as only a remote possibility. I would be very happy if it could be done at least during the coming year. I am also awaiting your answer. If you like my idea you may communicate everything to Fr. de' Vecchi. Please, my dear Carolina, you who love me so much, pray and have prayer offered for me. It seems to me the time is drawing near when we shall be free and I tremble with the fear of not knowing the will of the Lord or the ways of fulfilling it.

Goodbye, my beloved Carolina, remember

Your Magdalene

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\(^1\) The case of Angiolina Raimondi (Ep.I, lett. 140, n. 5)
\(^2\) The postal service
\(^3\) The case of Angiolina Raimondi
Durini’s health worries Magdalene, who would like her suggestion on the curative waters of Mount Ortone to be accepted. But she has to follow the instructions of the Milanese physicians who are not in favour of it. The Raimondi case has been resolved and the sentence, given in Milan, is fair enough. Magdalene is very satisfied even regarding Fr. Leonardi. She is now waiting for Fr. de’ Vecchi. She still does not see God’s Will clearly, while the moment that she will be free to decide is drawing near, quickly.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona 4 August 1804

I cannot deny that I owe you a lot, my dearest friend. But even the mail has something to be blamed for in this matter. I have made my usual rounds, as I do in this season. I mean to say that I have been to Parma, and to Mantua, from where I wrote to you. I also described my daily itinerary, begging you to write to me directly in Mantua with the next two or three ordinary mails, if you have the intention to do me this favour. But I understand that you did not receive this letter also, from the content of your last letter, which I received from Fr. Leonardi. In it you tell me that you have not received any reply to six of your letters. I received some of these much later as I was around. I end this point, as I have to tell you many other things. I assure you of my true desire to go back again to our old method of correspondence because I feel that our friendship, and the affection I have for you, are increasing.

I was quite sorry for the news Fr. Pietro gave me about your health. Your doctors are very obstinate, and are wrong in not allowing you to take the waters of Mount Ortone\(^1\). I feel sorry that it appears as if I am suggesting this so that I may be able to see you. I admit that this would be a consolation for me, but as long as you are well, I would be happy also if you go somewhere else. Enough, we need patience. It is better that I let my anger out by trying to get persons to pray for you. Tell me, at least, how you are, how beneficial was the ‘poultice’\(^2\) to you, but remember, if it is difficult for you to write, I do not want your letters. Send me news about yourself either through our Viscontina or Arconati, and if you have no one to help you, do not write anything, I do not want you to suffer because of this.

I understood well what you wrote to me, how zealously and wisely you have worked for that good young lady\(^3\), as well as the beautiful outcome of the matter. God repay you, my very dear friend, for what you have done for those He loves. I hope that He will make Himself understood even to those who do not accept Him. Meanwhile, it seems to me more prudent to leave the thing in God’s hands and not take any other steps. I, too, am very grateful to you. Fr. Pietro too is very grateful to you, to Arconati and to Fr. Carlo. He was surprised at the holiness of Milan and was very happy about the advantages for his Work, which he hopes to draw from this trip. He has told me about the sentence and other details you have written to me about. Certainly, my dear, you could not have done more than what you did. Once again I thank you for everything. After my return, which was on Monday, I heard that the young lady is allowed to go out, to go for confession wherever she wants, on condition that no Religious goes to her house. If, however, I am not mistaken, it is only the ordinary confessors who are forbidden. But I think it is an order for all priests.

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1 A cure with thermal waters (Ep. I, lett. 70, n. 5)
2 Application of a poultice
3 Angiola Raimondi
I am expecting Fr. Pietro one of these days. Because of my trip I was able to see him only once. I intend to speak to him of Milan, of its institutions, and of the one I love in Milan. I am happy that you have talked to Fr. de' Vecchi. Nothing has been decided so far about him, because, to tell you the truth, I do not do the good work that he believes in. We have also to see how things turn out. What I need more and more every day is prayer. It seems that the moment to make a decision is fast approaching. I desire it very much. But I am also very afraid of making a mistake. It seems that God is preparing things in my family in a way, that will help me. This resolution will also be useful for my house. However I will make a decision only after the arrival of Fr. de' Vecchi. What I ask for more than anything is to pray, and to get others to pray for me.

In the letter that got lost, I thanked you, my dear Carolina, for the books that you sent me from Ciceri. I also begged you to thank dear Viscontina for those that she has sent me. I repeat my thanks again. Please thank our friend for me too. Tell her that I will write to her as soon as possible. My health is excellent. The trip to Parma has been very beneficial. It is true however that I feel some difficulty in writing due to a weakness of the stomach. But now I am a lot better. As a precaution, tomorrow I will begin to take those famous Waters, that have freed me of those strong coughs that I suffered many times every year.

Goodbye, my beloved friend, love me and convey my usual compliments to all. Goodbye, Goodbye.

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini, now, is well enough, but she is always waiting for a reply from Magdalene, who is still uncertain about a future that is still cloudy. A preacher of notable fame, the Filippine Fr. Cesari, during the celebration of the "Three Hours", held in Verona on Good Friday, has, however, pointed out an excellent spiritual guideline: to imitate Jesus, who waited, renouncing for thirty years, his desire to die for us.

My beloved Carolina,

15 August 1804

How happy I am that you are better, my dear friend, and how I hope to hear that you have recovered, and are in perfect calm. Much more than the discomforts of the body, it is the anxiety of the soul that oppresses us. This is all the more because I know that you, my dear, who live in a family, want to appear calm exteriorly. I know this by accident, so I imagine that you suffer twice as much. I want to tell you something which calmed me down regarding these desires for the future which often occupy me too. This year, on Good Friday, as I wrote to you, a saintly Filippine Priest, Fr. Cesari\(^1\), who also explains the doctrine very well, began the celebration of the "Three Hours"\(^2\) with a beautiful sermon. He spoke of the love of Jesus towards us. When he mentioned that His great love made Jesus always long for the cross, he also explained that to fulfill the Father’s will, Jesus sacrificed his own desire to die for us for thirty years, until the moment He accomplished this sacrifice. This reflection was very meaningful for me and I say it again because it helps us to calm down and to wait peacefully for those moments when the Lord is pleased to take us for His service. But I desire, and I am certain that you, my dear, if you like this reflection, will profit from it much more than myself, who, alas, have benefited from it only for a few moments. I will speak rather of future things even this time, I don’t want however, after this preamble, to scandalize you, but I think that the Lord is preparing this way. My uncle\(^3\) is thinking about providing for the little boy. Perhaps, my dear Carolina, I will be free even earlier than I imagined. Do pray always to the Holy Virgin for me. May she bring to completion what she has begun, if this pleases the Lord. I did not fail and will continue as I know to pray to her also for you. Meanwhile, I beg you, be as happy as you can. Greet all those I know. I do not know anything more about the person\(^5\) for whom I troubled you. I think that they are allowing her to go out. Goodbye, my dear, very dear friend. I am and always with true affection.

All yours, Magdalene

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\(^1\) CESARI ANTONIO, a writer, born at Verona in 1760. He was a priest of the local congregation of the Oratory. He dedicated himself to a deep study of the sacred sciences and even more to literature. His humanitarian activities did not prevent him from attending to his duties of Religious life. Rather he can be considered as the restorer of the Oratory of Verona after Napoleon’s suppressions. He died at Ravenna in 1828. Magdalene describes him as ‘a saintly Filippino priest who explains the doctrine very well’. (Cfr. G. Fallani in Enciclopedia Cattolica, vol. III, c. 1349-1350)

\(^2\) The celebration of the Three Hours of prayer on Good Friday.

\(^3\) Jerome of Canossa

\(^4\) Carlino of Canossa

\(^5\) Angiola Raimondi
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Uncle Jerome seems to have decided, indeed, to engage a tutor for Carlino. Thus, the last obstacle to the realization of Magdalene’s plan will soon be resolved.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 23 August 1804

This week, I still do not know anything about my dear Carolina, but I hope to receive some longed-for news of you by tomorrow’s post. I continue to enjoy good health, and to be in need of prayer, as you already know. We are trying to have a Priest for my Carlino. The point is to wait and see whether his father decides to really have the tutor in the house, and that the idea of sending him to a school does not make him decide to have the tutor only for a few hours each day. Let us pray earnestly to our Hope, I mean, to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

I did not forget to convey your regards to Fr. Pietro, who, as I, too, will not fail to pray for you.

I take this chance to enclose a letter for Fr. de' Vecchj, which a holy Religious he knows, sent me, so that you may hand it over safely to him. I thought of asking you for this favour to be sure, and I beg you to hand it over to him.

Goodbye, my dear friend, love me, remember me, and be certain that I am and I will always be

All yours, Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

Verona 22 September 1804

What’s happening to you, my dear friend? Our correspondence is interrupted for many ordinary mails and I am always worried about your condition. If I am allowed, when the Holy Father passes by, you can understand how willingly I will come to Parma, to have the chance I am longing for of seeing you again. But this is a consolation I cannot certainly enjoy along this road. I have no courage to tell you, but you need to lengthen the roads a little more.

According to the world, the Raimondi case is again in trouble. After Fr. Pietro’s return she has gone to live on the Austrian side for some days. She lives alternately on one side and then on the other. When she is on the Austrian side she is assisted by her first three directors and the Religious, who replaces the General Vicar here. Today I have no time, but in the next ordinary post I will write about some details that you will like.

Meanwhile, Fr. Pietro pays his respects to you through me. He would like you, with your usual prudence, to try to find out if our Government has really written against this matter. Furthermore, he told me that if that worthy Religious wants, for greater enlightenment, a sworn and clear report about the matter, he is prepared to give it to him. You understand that I am referring to that worthy Religious you addressed yourself to, and from whom you came to know everything the last time.

Tomorrow I will go to Grezzano. My dear, Fr. Pietro has therefore told me that, since I will be in the countryside till about the middle of October, he begs you to write to him directly if you notice anything. His address will be the grocer’s shop of St. Anthony.

Forgive me dear, if I close this letter so soon. I have a lot of little things to do and I cannot delay any longer. I do not need to recommend this matter to you because I know how keen you are for the glory of God, and because I know how much, my dear, you have done the other time, and because I hope that this young person, when she becomes a saint, will pray for us, too. I forgot to tell you that if there are other appeals against this affair, keep calm, and if you can, inform Fr. Pietro. I end, embracing you in a hurry but heartily, declaring that I am forever

All yours, Magdalene

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1 Pius VII (Ep.I, lett. 146, n. 3).
2 The case of Angela Raimondi
3 In the region of Verona under the Austrians.
4 The countryside villa of the Canossa family (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. l)
5 The old pharmacy of Porta Borsari, where the mail was sorted. It could be the present Gilio Pharmacy. But in spite of investigations, the actual owners and the association of Pharmacists are unable to give exact details regarding its location.
Countess Durini will certainly go to Parma to pay homage to the Holy Father Pius VII, who is on his way to Paris, where Napoleon will be crowned Emperor. It would be a favourable occasion to finally fulfil the dream of both of them to see one another again. But this time Magdalene cannot go. A trip is impossible because her sister-in-law is nearing the end of her first pregnancy and there are other family matters too to be settled.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 23 October (1)804

I returned to Verona, my beloved friend, and before the appointed time because of my sister Orti’s\(^1\) sudden illness, from which, however, she recovered already. I tell you the truth, my dear, I returned, and I hope to resume our regular correspondence, which has been interrupted so many times and for a thousand things. On my part, I will not move from Verona for some time, especially because my sister-in-law\(^2\) is soon to give birth. It will not be possible, for the sake of the family, to leave her alone in this condition, although I cannot assist her as I would if it were another illness. Neither, indeed, would I leave her now, even if I could, because she is such a good person. She loves me, and I, too, love her as if she were my own sister. These circumstances, my dear Carolina, will make my trip to Parma impossible. Even otherwise, it would have been impossible also because of family business. It will certainly deprive me of one of the greatest consolations I can have in the world, which would be to see you again, besides the joy of coming to know dear Arconati personally. What would I not do to change the Holy Father’s\(^3\) itinerary, and to make him take the road to Verona? And when will I have the good fortune of seeing you again? Now I really do not know when that moment to see you again will come. My dear, let us leave it in the hands of Providence.

While I was in the countryside, I received a very precious little letter of yours, in which you mentioned another letter in which, you say, that you have dealt at length about my future plans. This letter is certainly lost, because I did not receive it. I beg you to repeat what you wrote to me in that letter. Things seem to be settling down. Please, do pray for me always. Goodbye, dear, you will be kept informed regarding Fr. Pietro.

I am compelled to end this letter because I have to go to Orti who, as they say, has fever again. Goodbye with love.

Your Magdalene

\(^1\) Her sister Rosa, married to Count Orti (Ep.I, lett. 83, n. 1).
\(^2\) Francesca Castiglioni Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 124, n.3).
\(^3\) POPE PIUS VII: Barnaba Gregorio Chiaramonti, born in 1740 and who died on 20 August 1823 due to a fall in his study. He died before coming to know of the destruction by fire of the Basilica of St. Paul, that took place a few days before his death. He was elected Pope in 1800. He concluded the Concordat of 1801 with Napoleon. One of the consequences of this agreement, in 1805, was the disappearance of ecclesiastical principalities in Germany. The property of religious congregations was confiscated by the State. This happened later in the other States as well. On 2 November he left for Paris for the ceremony of the imperial coronation of Napoleon I (2 December 1804). He re-entered Rome on 16 May 1805. After the suppression of the temporal powers of the popes, proclaimed by Napoleon at Schoenbrunn on 17 May 1808, Pius VII replied by proclaiming a Bull of excommunication against those who ordered or perpetrated violence against the Holy See. Napoleon then ordered the arrest of the Pope, which was carried out by General Radet on the night of 5 July. The Pope was deported first to Valenza, then to Avignon and finally to Savona (15 August). Brought back to Fontainebleau, under imperial pressure, he signed another concordat which was annulled later, in 1815, when he was freed from prison. He finally returned to Rome on 2 June 1815 (Cfr. F Cognasso, in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. IX, pag. 1504 e ss.).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

147 (Verona#1804.11.27)

It is now fifteen days that Magdalene is aunt to a beautiful little girl and, thinking about the happy event, she feels sorry for the precarious health of Arconati’s child. She has a word of comfort for her. Durini has been in Parma and met the Luigine nuns. She liked them and Magdalene is very happy about it.

My beloved Carolina,

27 November (1)804

So you are finally back in Milan, my beloved Carolina and here I am disposed to do what I desire so much, that is, to resume our usual correspondence. I, too, naturally speaking, will not be moving from Verona for a long time. Therefore, I start immediately, with great joy, to entertain myself with you. I am so happy about your trip, and above all, I seem to understand from your letter that it helped you to have some calm. I beg you to keep it up for the sake of your health. I do not doubt at all, my dear, that the Lord is testing the hope of the virtuous and dear Arconati, regarding her little boy. From all that my sister-in-law tells me, it seems to me that God has done a lot for him up to now. On His part, the Lord does everything perfectly. Arconati has therefore nothing to do but to follow the divine will. So there can only be reasons for hope.

Before going on to other things, my dear Carolina, I must tell you that my sister-in-law 1, about fifteen days ago, happily gave birth to a baby girl 2, and that both, mother and child are well.

I thought, according to a letter written to me by our dear Viscontina, that she was your companion on that journey. I am glad that you were pleased with the Luigine 3. On my part, my dear, I do not know if it is because that institution is more similar to my vocation, I feel more at ease with the Luigine than with the Ursulines 4, who, however, are very observant. Believe me, my dear Carolina, that there is no need to mention my name in order to be kindly welcomed everywhere.

It is true that those good people are good to me just because of what people say about me, which is so far from the real facts. If you or our friend, want news about them, just let me know and I will fully serve you. They also gave me a copy of the prayers they teach their girls. Therefore, both of you may make use of these as well.

Know, my dear, that the Lord has inspired my uncle 5 to decide on a tutor 6 for my Carlino. This will permit me to be perfectly free within a short time. Please, redouble your prayers for me, so that God may enlighten me on how to follow what truly pleases Him. There is no greater proof of your friendship than this, because, as you well understand, my beloved Carolina, my eternal salvation depends on this decision of mine.

Your errand for Fr. Pietro surprised me. Do not write to him because he is not here, Rather, I thought you had met him in Milan, where, here they say, he has gone. However, I do not know anything; but he is not in Verona.

Goodbye, very dear friend, I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I will always be

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1 Francesca Castiglioni, the wife of Bonifacio
2 Metilde, who in time, will become a Religious Sister in the convent of the Institute founded by Leopoldina Naudet, the «Sisters of the Holy Family» (Ep.I, lett. 193, n. 5).
3 Sisters of the Conservatory of Parma (Ep.I, lett. 97, n. 1)
4 Sisters founded by St. Angela Merici (Ep. I, lett. 18, n. 4)
5 Marquis Jerome of Canossa.
6 Fr. LEONARDO LEONARDI of Ala. Tutor of the little Marquis Carlo of Canossa and later, also of the young Marquis Luigi, Bonifacio’s son and future Cardinal of Verona.
All yours, Magdalene
Other chances seem to arise, and Durini hopes to see her friend again. But Magdalene, who is not convinced about this, tries to dissuade her.

My beloved Carolina,

15 December (1804)

If I am not very exact as both of us would like, are you prepared, my beloved Carolina, to forgive me until my sister-in-law has recovered? Do not doubt, however, that I will, as much as I can, if not as much as I would desire, sincerely assure you that distance can never decrease my affection. You make me laugh, my dear, with your beautiful imagination of the trip that you think I can make this carnival. Unfortunately, I believe it is as improbable as you think it is imminent. You already know that we have placed this journey in the hands of Divine Providence. Perhaps I am mistaken, but let us live in hope. Dearest Carolina, what you tell me concerning my letter both makes me rejoice and saddens me, namely that what I tell you is beneficial to your soul. I rejoice for it because even though it is only your imagination and dreams, when it can, in some way, make people serve God, it is a cause of happiness. It saddens me because I am afraid that what I write about is more what I would like to do, than what I actually do.

Now we have started another small thing. It was one of your gifts that gave us the idea to start it. I will tell you about it another time, my dear, as I have little time at this moment, so that you may thank the Lord for the good, we hope you will be the cause of, in God’s sight. You can imagine how happy I would be if I could get to know your sister, my dear Carolina. She is not you, but she is a person who is so close to you. Have patience even in this once more, because you tell me that she is in Vicenza.

Goodbye, dear, very dear friend. Love me. My usual compliments and goodbye.

Your Magdalene
Magdalene insists on asking for prayers so that God’s will may be clearly shown. Meanwhile, she announces to her friend the institution, in the house of her girls, of a Company of the Immaculate Conception of Mary Most Holy, that was started by the Theatines. In Verona it may be able to organize a group of young women who, with their elegance, but above all with their modesty, can help to lessen the immorality of fashions. Magdalene also looks for someone who can follow her ideal.

My beloved Carolina,

26 December (1)804

Happy New Year, my dearest friend, because Christmas is already over. A very happy year to you and to all your family, filled with heavenly blessings for all and peace for you, my dear Carolina. I am sure that you too wish me the same. Wish me and obtain for me with your prayer, the recognition and the fulfilment of the Divine Will. Tell Fr. De’ Vecchi all your ideas. I hear that he is coming along this way soon. As the time for taking a decision is approaching, I feel all the more, the need for divine help. I beg you to pray and to ask people to pray for me.

My sister-in-law is improving daily. In the new year I hope to pick up again our usual correspondence. This is the good of which you have been the cause with a gift of yours, my dear, as I mentioned in my last letter. You have sent me, if you remember, among the other books you have favoured me with, the book of the Doctrine of St. Charles. The final part speaks of a Company under the protection of Our Lady, for the formation of teachers of Christian Doctrine, with a very Christian and pious conduct.

Here we do not have this custom. Therefore, we are trying something very similar but for a different aim. We are twelve to fourteen young women, the majority of whom are members of the Company of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. We made a secret promise among ourselves, to dress in keeping with our social status, but always modestly. Know that this company does not involve neither expense, nor any obligation except the injunction to recite the Hail Holy Queen thrice daily. This is a sodality established by the Supreme Pontiffs in the Theatine Congregation. We also wear the little dress with the picture of the Holy Immaculate Conception. I dream of being able to, in this way, to attract some young girls to dress modestly. In this way we will also try to stop a bit of the indecency in fashion. We will meet in the house of my girls. We have just started. I will tell you later how things will turn out. I confess that I also have another aim in mind, that is, to find some companions for my future plans.

The mail is leaving, goodbye, my very dear friend. Love me for I am

Your Magdalene

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1 Francesca Castiglioni Canossa

2 Chronologically, the first Congregation of Regular Clerics, it was founded in Rome in 1524 by St. Cajetan Tiene. It aimed at the reform of the clergy and of Christians through the living of an exemplary priestly life and the exercise of an austere apostolate (Cfr. F. Andreau, in Enciclopedia Catt., vol. XI, pag. 1814, c. 2a). In Verona the Theatines were first at St. Maria della Ghiaia, then they passed on to St. Nicolò and, after the suppression, they did not return.
The plan of Durini and Visconti to have Magdalene as a direct collaborator in Milan, is persuasive. But it gives rise to strong perplexities, and Magdalene turns to Fr. De Vecchi, who, in turn, does not see it as positive. He will approve it only if, in Verona, she cannot carry out what she has planned to do.

My beloved Carolina,

14 January (1)805

Mine are very bad resolutions, my dear Carolina. You have proofs of it when I promise you to be very exact in writing. But I think that when we both believe to be free, new obstacles arise. You have been sick my dear, and two of my sisters were sick. Orti has been sick since I wrote to you, and has not yet recovered, and Serego who has recovered. But let us speak now of Fr. De Vecchi, my dear Carolina and of your letter which I received this morning. To start from the first, I will say that he has arrived after a very good journey. He told me about your project and that of dear Teresa Arconati, but, my dear friend, he would approve it only on condition that I cannot carry out my plan in Verona. Therefore, there is nothing else but to continue praying. I assure you that the difficulties here are not small, and for various circumstances I cannot know my lot until about the end of April. With the divine help, I hope everything will be fine. I tell you that the more I reflect, the more I feel sure that I need God’s help. Most of all I am afraid of my family. Let us then pray and continue praying. I accept wholeheartedly the union in prayer you are suggesting, my dear Carolina, to obtain the Lord’s mercy more easily. Normally, I too am in church between 8 and 9 a.m. I’ll start tomorrow to unite myself with you spiritually, my beloved friend. Together, we will exert a sweet violence on the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I will not fail in keeping you informed about everything. Meanwhile, please tell dear Arconati too about Fr. De’ Vecchi’s resolution for the time being. Do greet her for me and beg her to pray. I do not recommend silence to either of you, as I know how both of you are very prudent. But it is necessary that I be very cautious regarding my home.

I am very pleased with Bigli’s conversation because it will be good for all, especially for you. I think that a little enjoyment will benefit your health, which continually worries me, because, my dear Carolina, these continuous colds are too frequent, and I cannot forgive your physicians, who do not prescribe the Waters for you, when the season is good. I started this letter on the 14th and I am ending it on the 23rd. Goodbye, dear, love me, and believe me forever

All yours, Magdalene

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1 Rosa orti Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 83, n. 1).
2 Eleonora Serego Canossa (Ep.I, lett. 68, n. 3).
3 Teresa Trotti Arconti, sister of Carolina Durini and wife of Count Carlo Arconati.
4 To Durini 14 January 1805. (Ep. 1 pp. 245-246).
5 COUNTESS CLAUDIA BIGLI, nee Clerici (1736-1824). She married Count Vitaliano Bigli. She was a Lady of the Starred Cross, an Order reserved for the ladies of the nobility. The Order began because of a miraculous event in Austria in 1668. A fire had destroyed a part of the imperial palace of Vienna. It abated before a fragment of the true Cross, though its casket was burnt up. The relic belonged to the Empress Eleonora Gonzaga. Pope Clement IX approved this Order with a decree dated 29 July 1669. Before its actual name, the ‘Order of the Cross’, it was called “Society of noble ladies of the Starred Cross”. Later it was called “Cavalieresses of the true Cross”, then “Order of the noble Cross”. From its very foundation, the head of this Austrian Order was a princess of the House of Austria. (Cfr. Diz. Larousse du XXe siècle, Vol. 2°, pag. 595, c. 3a).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

At Easter Magdalene will reveal the decision she is taking. This makes her fear, but at the same time she is full of hope, as the time draws nearer. She therefore begs for much prayer.

My beloved Carolina,

16 February (1)805

In your last letter, my beloved Carolina, you did not tell me anything about your precious health, and this is a defect you ought to correct, because, to tell you the truth, those colds disturb me a lot. My sister Orti recovers a little and then relapses a little, but, thanks to the Lord, the illness is not dangerous, because it is only periodical. It is a long time since Serego has recovered. Regarding my worry, it is because of the affection I have for you, and the detachment that you so reasonably wish for me, it will be necessary that I choose another town, different from Milan, when I want to leave Verona for this purpose, as long as you live there, my beloved friend. Nevertheless, let us hold on, my dear, to whatever God wills. I assure you that I both long for and am afraid of Easter this year. I have made up my mind that I will speak out. I am more and more aware that I need prayer. I am sure you will pray and ask for prayer, because you understand better than I what an important step I am about to take.

Satisfy my curiosity, my dear. Here the news is that the yellow fever has appeared in Nice. I did not ask you if you are afraid of it. I don't fear it at all, but I would like to know if this is true. One of these days, as I hear, you will see Fr. Leonardi, who is on his way back from Paris. Goodbye dear, very dear friend, love me as much as I love you.

Goodbye

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene

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1 Rosa Orti Canossa
2 That returns at intervals.
3 Eleonora Serégo Canossa
TO CAROLINA DURINI

152 (Verona#1805.04.02)

Durini’s sister, the marchioness Teresa Trotti Bentivoglio Arconati, an animator in Milan of so many relief and educational works, died. There is deep mourning in the metropolis and particularly for her husband, Marquis Carlo, who had supported all her charitable aspirations. But it is even more for her sister, the Countess Carolina, who loses in her sister an inspiration and a support. Magdalene shares her sorrow and comforts her.

My beloved Carolina,

2 April (1)805

How many things I would like to tell you, my dearest Carolina, but how much more willingly I would tell them face to face, if I could, and if this would be a comfort to you.

Alas! My dear friend, the Lord wants you to be totally his. For this the reason, I think, He has taken away a person so worthy of your affection. I am speaking in all sincerity. For a very long time I do not remember having felt so deeply the loss of anyone as this time, not even of one of my relatives. I imagine the situation you are in, seeing how many bonds, all aiming at the Divine Glory, are severed. God has done it, my dear. Let us adore His holy and merciful dispositions, with sorrow but also with consolation as well, because of the glory that this holy soul now enjoys, and for the love with which God has disposed this sorrow for you, my dear friend. Yes, dear Carolina, God will take the place of your sister, for the short time you, and I too are separated. Your holy works will go on in the same way, because the Lord Himself will work in them, all the more. Sacrifice your sorrow willingly in the company of Mary Most Holy. In these holy days, try to calm your heart as far as possible with the thought of the happiness that your dear sister is enjoying and will enjoy eternally. You have so many proofs and have no reason at all to doubt. In spite of all this, my dear, I did not fail to provide prayers for her from everyone and for you as well. Fr. Pietro has asked me to tell you a thousand things. He has assured me that he has prayed for you when he came to know about this. I begged him especially to tell Raimondi to pray. The Teacher, too, does not fail to pray during the Holy Sacrifice, but I do not think that she needs those prayers. Yet I recommend him to pray for her in spite of this, since we have to follow the intentions of the Holy Church.

My dearest friend, my pen leaves you but not my heart. If you think I am able to comfort you in any way, command me in all freedom, to do whatever I can. Greet our dear Viscontina for me, to whom I am indebted for the news regarding yourself, and for the trouble she took in writing to me. I will write to her in the next ordinary mail. Goodbye, my dear, very dear Carlina. May the Lord be your strength and consolation. Goodbye, dear. My health is good. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

PS. Do not tire yourself in writing to me. If our dear Luisa can, let her convey to me some news about you. I hope that she has received a letter from me. Again, goodbye.

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1 Teresa Trotti Bentivoglio, married to Count Carlo Arconti. She died on 21 March 1805
2 Spiritual daughter of Fr. Pietro Leonardi
3 Fr. Pietro Rossi.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

153 (Verona#1805.04.21)

The Viscontina too is mourning: her brother-in-law has died. Durini is slowly getting used to her sister’s absence, but her sorrow is always deep. Magdalene tries to comfort both of them with hope. Yet she too is tired and feels a nostalgia for heaven. The great decisions she is about to take, entail effort and fatigue.

My beloved Carolina

21 April 1805

From our Viscontina I hear sufficient news of your health, my beloved friend, and how I wish to boost up your courage.

I know that you have made the Spiritual Exercises this Lent. I hope that these have strengthened and consoled you. However, do not write to me, my dear, because I fear that writing to me might disturb you more. Oh God, dear Carlina, how much happier than we, are those who have left this vale of tears and have reached their Homeland. Here below, we only hear of afflictions. I would like to write, if I can, to our Luisa, who, as I hear, is also mourning for the loss of her brother-in-law. Courage, my dear friend, courage. We, too, by the help of Divine Mercy will arrive at our eternal rest. God gives you a new assurance of this through the affliction He has sent you.

My time for making the big decisions is drawing near, my dear. Remember me. When the things have been fixed, I will write to you. My health is quite good and I feel very well, except that I am saddened by your affliction.

Goodbye, my dear, embrace our friend, if you cannot not write to her.

Goodbye, I embrace you, and I am all yours.

Your Magdalene

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1 The husband of the sister of Luisa Visconti Castelli, Count Filippo Visconti Ciceri, who had married Laura Castelli in 1785. (Cfr. Genealogie delle Famiglie Milanesi, Vol. 2).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene fears that the spiritual suffering of Durini will have a negative effect on her relationships with God. Since true friendship wants "the real good" of the other, or rather a deeper sharing in the divine life, she worries that, if the "felt consolation" is lacking, Durini's interaction with God alone might be lessened. Therefore, she prays for her and makes others pray too. She asks for prayer also for herself, as perhaps she is about to embark on "her way..."

My beloved Carolina,

(no date)

I suppose, my dear, that you have already returned from your trip to Piacenza. I hope you have benefited from it, spiritually, as well as physically. My dear Carolina, how much your last letter consoled me. May God grant you that spirit He wanted from you when He gave you the chance to make this big sacrifice. Do not doubt that what He has not yet given you, He will give you through the intercession of your sister. Not only you but many others who have known her firmly believe her to be in Heaven. Do not doubt, however, that we shall pray for her in every way, and she will pray for us. What makes me suffer regarding you, my dear, forgive me if our friendship encourages me to go further, do you know what is it? It is that you are so disturbed. I would not wish that, as time goes by, when you do not feel so strongly the general detachment and that total abandonment in God which He now gives to you to sustain you, you would be doubly depressed. When you might not have sensible feelings like now, not for lack of knowledge, but for your usual sensitiveness, you might feel troubled, as it might seem to you that you are no longer attached to God alone.

I did not fail to tell the Archpriest Galvani to ask Raimondi to pray for you. Now, she is seriously ill. My dear friend, I recommend you to have courage in everything. Every day we are nearing Heaven and soon we will fully be there. Meanwhile, my dear, if the Lord does not allow new obstacles, I am close to the big moment when I will start on that way, that seems to be for me the way to Heaven. For love's sake, renew, and ask others to renew their prayers for me. When Fr. De Vecchj returns to Milan, I will probably be able to tell you something precise. I know that you have done it in the past, but at present I need prayers even more, so that the Lord may dispose of everything in such a way that I may truly embrace His Divine Will. Goodbye, my dearest friend. I embrace you wholeheartedly. Remember not to strain yourself to write to me. Convey your news to me through our friend, if she can, or through Mrs Cecca whom I kindly beg you to greet. Goodbye, goodbye.

Your very affectionate Magdalene

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1 Fr. Nicola Galvani, Magdalene's confessor (Ep. I, lett. 47, n. 3).
2 Request for the prayers of Angiola Raimondi (Ep. I, lett. 140, n. 5).
3 To begin concretely, the works she planned to do:
   a) "free schools in the House of the Congregation, for poor and abandoned girls”.
   b) “Schools in the parishes... where they would teach reading, writing and Christian Doctrine”.
   c) Service in the “Hospital for the sick”, and “similarly to the sick of the city” (Plan B 7-7 in Ep. II/2, p. 1420-1421).
4 Checca, the housemaid.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina,

I am preparing this letter, my dear, to hand it over to Fr. De Vecchi, who will be passing this way, today. You will get news of me from him, and perhaps also something more. In a short while I will write to you at length about my preoccupations which, together with your dear Magdalene, I beg you to keep close to the Lord in prayer.

Though unworthy, I did not fail to pray especially for you after your last letter. My dear Carolina, please, revive your courage. The Lord will sustain you in your resignation, although I understand that such a situation naturally upsets you, and that such feelings will carry on for a long time. I wish that the thought of heaven and the design of love God has over you, will be your strength and support, at this time of whispers and rumours¹, which oppresses those already afflicted. Dear Carolina, pardon me if I am too straight forward because of my love for you. I see you are resigned, but yet very oppressed.

I hope you have received another letter of mine answering the one you wrote to me before going to Piacenza. Regarding, my dear, the young Boschetti², I have not yet found her relatives, as there are many families here with this name. Ask her to tell you which parish she belongs to and the location of her house. I am cautious in my search not to expose the girl, and this makes it even more difficult for me to find the way. However, as soon as I have found it, my dear, I will gladly try to reconcile her with her relatives.

I beg you, my dear, to hand over to dear Viscontina the parcel of books Fr. De Vecchi will give you. Excuse me for sending it to you instead of sending it directly to her. I have no time to write to her. Embrace her for me; I will write to her with the Thursday ordinary mail. I wanted to send other books to both of you, but I was not able to obtain them in time. I will send them on the first occasion. Goodbye dear, goodbye with all my heart.

Your Magdalene

¹ In expectation of 26 May 1805, the day of the coronation of Napoleon as King of Italy, with an iron crown, at Milan. He had already been crowned as Emperor in Paris on 2 December 1804.
² A girl who had to be reconciled with her parents after a moral lapse.
Fr. De Vecchi has solved her perplexities: Magdalene should follow her vocation, but in Verona. Friendship, that must take into account the reality of the other, will be expressed in more authentic interpersonal relationships by accepting the divine Will, that shows different roads to the two noble ladies. Meanwhile, Durini should try to get more information in order to solve the case of Boschetti.

My beloved Carolina,

2 June 1805

In spite of extensive searching, dear friend, I did not find any trace of the Boschetti family up to now. Kindly ask this poor young lady, my dear, in which parish, close to the Cathedral, she was staying or at least, near to which church close to the Cathedral, she was living. Ask her if the cheese shop of her father was adjoining her house, or if it was located somewhere else. Then I will search again as quickly as possible to find it.

I have sent the two letters to the Parish Priest of Isola della Scala, after adding the warmest recommendations I knew. I expect an answer shortly and soon I will send it to you. Without compliments, my dear friend, in all liberty, command me freely for whatever I can do. May be by this time you have seen Fr. De Vecchi, my dear Carolina. Keep the news to yourself. You may have heard from him what his determination is, namely, that I follow my vocation, but remaining in Verona. In this ordinary post I cannot tell you more. However, do not afflict yourself. Who knows that maybe one day we will meet again; and who knows, I may find insuperable obstacles, that may make us solve things in a different way? Meanwhile pray and ask people to pray much for me. I too will pray for you. Next time I will tell you about my fears. Meanwhile, get others to pray for me. I confess that it would be an indescribable consolation to be near you. The great affection that I have towards you would make me think that I could be of comfort to you for some moments. However, I think God wants to be your only support. Try to amuse yourself as much as you can, because I see you very oppressed.

Goodbye, dear, for love’s sake, do not reflect too much over yourself. God loves you very much. Trust in His unchangeable goodness and be as tranquil as you can. Goodbye, excuse me if my desire to see you cheered up, makes me go too far. Goodbye dear

Your Magdalene

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1 Search for the Boschetti family (Ep.I, lett. 155, n. 2)
2 Search for the house of the girl.
3 Isola della Scala, a località around 32 Km. from Verona. It has a romanic Church dating as far back as 1126, and the ruins of some medieval fortresses. It is along the road to Grezzano, where the imposing Canossa villa stands.
4 The postal service.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

157 (Verona#1805.06.06)

A simple letter accompanying that of the Archpriest of Isola regarding Stovara and a telegraphic request for more information about the case of Boschetti.

My beloved Carolina,

6 June 1805

The mail is leaving in a moment, my dear. I am sending you the answer of the Archpriest of Isola\(^1\), who wrote to me assuring me of his great concern for the good outcome of the matter.

Write to me in greater detail regarding the Boschetti\(^2\) family, as I find no trace of it, though I have searched so much. Pray a lot for me.

Your Magdalene

\(^1\) Letter of the Parish Priest of Isola della Scala (Ep.I, lett. 158, n.3)
\(^2\) She asks for more details regarding the girl (Ep.I, lett. 155, n. 2)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carolina

26 June 1805

Perhaps Durini will soon pass by Verona and Magdalene is thrilled about it. However she is upset because, during the emperor Napoleon's stay in Canossa Palace, she had temporarily lodged in the house of her girls and had told her relatives about the plans she had regarding her vocation. She was faced with a lot of opposition, that will be resolved if she finds a dwelling less unworthy of a Canossa. There is such a house, but there are many obstacles on the way before getting it.

My beloved Carolina

I can almost assure you, my dear, that I will stay in Verona during the whole of next month. Therefore, if you can get me acquainted with the Visconti of Cremona, I will be very pleased, as I hope to be able to learn from her, and I always feel great consolation when I have the chance to meet someone who has a vocation similar to mine.

Regarding the other dear person, who wants to see me when she comes to Verona, and then goes to Mont'Ortone, tell her, my beloved Carlina, that I cannot wait for the moment to embrace her. As I told you, this will be one of my greatest consolations in this world. And why, my dear, hide from me that you are the one passing through Verona? I already understand that it is your affection for me that is also the cause of this silence. You fear that some obstacle may obstruct the trip, and that I will be saddened if it does not come about. Let us hope that all will go well. Meanwhile, my dear Carlina, remember that the time you will spend in Verona, has to be for me. Consequently remember you that I shall expect you here with me. My sister-in-law and my brother have the same desire and they too are certainly expecting you here. Do not find excuses to deprive us of this happiness, and, without compliments, remember that we expect you to live with us. Write to me, my dear, when you hope to arrive, to anticipate the consolation that will bring me.

I have had no reply from Isola. My dear Carolina, I do not think I have written to you that when the Emperor was in Verona, he resided in our house. So I went to live with my girls and remained there for eight days. I took that chance, my dear, to have my family informed about my vocation, which I had mentioned to you already many times, that is, to go and stay with my girls. Once we are together, I want to organise an internal system for myself and for the companions whom the Lord will be pleased to call, and to engage ourselves in external works of charity. You may well imagine and I will relate to you the opposition which I met in my family. However, thanks be to God, after long discussions and disagreements, they agreed to let me go and stay with my girls once I have found a more suitable place and have established the work for them there. I confess my dear, that I do have a suitable place in mind. But there is much talk here about the restrictions of monasteries, so I do not want to take advantage of the situation. Rather, I hope, my dear Carolina, that if you come to know anything about this matter, do let me know it. I sincerely would like them to leave the poor convents in peace. In any case, if it comes to the worst, rather than letting these go into the hands of ungodly people, I think that it would be better that I take one over for a holy cause. I have always such a fear of causing damage to the nuns, that I will never

1 Maria Teresa Majno Visconti (Ep.I, lett. 77, n. 7.)
2 From the Parish Priest of Isola della Scala (Ep.I, lett. 156, n. 3).
3 Napoleon I.
4 The convent of the cloistered nuns of SaintAugustine, in the locality of St. Zeno, dedicated to Saints Joseph and Fidenzius. The nuns had already received the Decree of amalgamation with the Augustinian nuns of Porta San Giorgio and were preparing to leave their Monastery (from the letters of Magdalene of Canossa)
5. Suppression of the Monasteries (Ep.I, lett. 222, n. 4).
ask anyone, except yourself, our Luisa and persons like you. I also want to inform you beforehand about some articles regarding my poor Teresas\textsuperscript{6}, to give you some more trouble, if you have the means, and if you think you can profit by using them.

I am told that the person who could help a lot in this matter is a certain Fr. Giudici\textsuperscript{7}, a Religious in charge of the Ministry of Cult. Of the restrictions we fear, one concerns the Teresas. To do it there would be lesser reasons than for all the others, although I do not even know what reasons the others have. They are unknown to me. The Teresas are the only ones in the whole Kingdom, since there are neither the discalced, nor Carmelites\textsuperscript{8}; theirs is a special Institute. They always had boarders, and they have them even now. There are some who will go away soon. At present they have only five boarders. They have twenty-five choir sisters\textsuperscript{9}, required by the law. They have always been considered by this Government as semi-mendicant. They have a very healthy place, but it is not suitable for other purposes as it is not very big. After all this news I have no courage, however, to openly pray you, if you have any means, to use them, as you think best.

My dear Carlina, I cannot tell you up to what point I am in need of prayers. You may imagine it, there is no need for me to explain. I beg you not to speak of what happened to me except to our common friend Viscontina, as I am sure about her confidentiality. Embrace her for me, and tell her to pray for me. I confess that I do not know yet where my head is, after the past few days. I will tell you everything in detail when I see you.

Goodbye dearest friend, love me and believe wholeheartedly that I am looking forward to the moment I can tell you in person, that I am

All yours, Magdalene

PS. This letter resembles my head.

\textsuperscript{6} Monastery of Verona
\textsuperscript{7} Assessor of the Ministry of Cult
\textsuperscript{8} An almost lay Congregation, without solemn vows and with the ability to possess juridically.
\textsuperscript{9} The so-called Choir Sisters, while the others were employed in internal works
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini’s visit is delayed. Eleonora Canossa Serego is sick and she seems seriously ill. The two Milanese friends insist that Magdalene joins them in the Lombard Metropolis, but she does not feel neither to refuse nor to embrace their ideas. For the time being she only needs much prayer and, in the meantime, more than the solution of her problems, she is concerned with that of the Friars Minor of Isola, whose monastery will be suppressed shortly by the imperial decree. Durini points out the best ways to the person who goes to Milan, to obtain for them the suspension of the decree.

My beloved Carolina,

19 July 1805

Though your letters are dear to me, I received your last letter unwillingly, because I wished to see the person, rather than the paper, and because you do not even want to give me the joy to be with you when you come to Verona. If you have a justified reason for doing this, patience, my dear, as long as we can see each other and be together as much as we can. But if it is because of etiquette, as I fear, I beg you to put it aside, and I sincerely reply that it would be a gift not only for me, but also for my family. Perhaps, I am writing in a confused manner, my dear, as I am in the house of my sister Serego, who is rather seriously ill. My brother-in-law asks me to convey to you his greetings. I thank you infinitely, my dear Carolina, for your concern in taking steps to approach those Ministers in order to get me a place. Thanks to the Lord, until now no place was vacant and Verona will not lose much, as you say. In that case, I will perhaps take advantage of your offers. Concerning the broadening, as you call it, of my ideas, what shall I say? Nothing else, but that I am in God’s hands, that I wish His glory, and that if He will give me all that I am in need of, then I am ready for everything. Well, I will neither dare to accept, nor to refuse your ideas.

I am in extreme need of prayer so that the Lord may show me the way according to His Divine Will. Therefore, I recommend myself to your love and friendship, so that you may pray for me and ask people to pray. I hope to have a decisive answer from Isola soon, and I will send it to you immediately. Do not doubt, my dear, that I will certainly do as much as possible, so that Stovara may be accepted by her brother. Speaking of Isola, I am compelled to give you some more trouble in order to do good to that countryside, if it is possible. In that community, which is almost like half a city, there is a Convent of the Observant Minors which, according to the last decree has to be suppressed and it is a great spiritual blow to those country people, who feel so bad about this suppression. Somebody from the Municipality, in fact, is being sent to Milan to obtain permission that the friars may stay on. I do not know if any of those Religious is accompanying him. Since I have been asked for help, I have taken the liberty, to give them your name, so that you may kindly tell this Official of the Municipality or the Religious what steps they should take. Note that these religious also had a school for the boys of the place; consequently the damage is even greater. Goodbye, dear, very dear friend, I embrace you wholeheartedly. Excuse me for everything. Greet Viscontina a thousand times, who would be so dear to me if she would be my companion. Love me, and pray for me.

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1 Eleonora di Canossa, married to Serégo (Ep.I, lett. 59, n. 3).
2 The girl recommended to the parish priest of Isola della Scala
3 Franciscans, of the branch of the strictest observance.
4 DECREE OF SUPPRESSION. Napoleon I, with a Decree dated 25 April 1805, from Compiègne, had suppressed all the Religious Orders in the Kingdom of Italy, except the hospitaliers and the Sisters of Charity. (Cfr. Bollettino delle leggi del Regno d'Italia, Milano 1810, parte I n. 77).
5 A representative of the local Government sent to Milan, to the Central Government of the Kingdom of Italy.
Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Good news alternates with bad ones: the Franciscan Religious of Isola, without having recourse to other interventions, will not have to leave their convent. The conditions of the Stovara family, according to the answer of the Priest of Isola, are so miserable, that is not possible that the young girl, even if she has spiritually recovered, will be re-accepted by her brothers. The new place for the set up of the “Retreat” is only a mirage. The storm that is about to upset all the convents makes future perspectives uncertain.

My beloved Carolina,

26 July (1)805

I will start by telling you, my dearest friend, that my sister has recovered, and also begins to feel well again. In spite of the physician’s fears and of an apparent serious illness, in four days, thanks to the Lord, the fever has subsided. Knowing your goodness, I start my letter from this point. In my last letter I wondered, rather I thought of giving you some trouble regarding providing subsistence to the Franciscan Religious of Isola. But now those of the place think that they have received the grace for their subsistence. So I thank you also on their behalf, for the good you would have done for them. And I also, dear Carolina, thank you. When will you be coming? Do not raise so many fears, and if you can, do not consider it a lot of difficulty. Dear friend, certainly, I will not go against the Divine Will. However, I would not wish that it is your extreme courteousness that deprives me of this joy. I did not even see the Visconti of Cremona. Write to me something about yourself first, and then also about her.

I had the answer from the Parish Priest of Isola. It is contrary to our desires. I wanted to include it in this letter, but I think, instead, I will tell you about it briefly. He tells me, that the brothers of Stovara do not want to accept her, because one of them is in such a state of poverty that he is sickly and is trying to get into the hospital. The other is a waiter in an inn in another village outside Isola. The Parish priest says that not even this brother can receive her. My dear Carlina, think of another way to find some employment and lodging for this poor girl, suitable for her soul. Write to me and I too, will try some other ways to help her. For example, if, beside her brothers, she has some other relatives where she could be well placed.

Regarding your beloved Magdalene my dear, she is in her usual situation, and she needs much prayer. I am paying attention to the destination of some pious place, that could be vacated according to what they say here. Or if the storm has really subsided, things will be decided soon. It seems to me, my dear, that it is more useful for the work I have in hand, that I wait for some more time, rather than establish ourselves in a place, and afterwards realize that we could have settled down in a better one. Then, if God will gracefully save, as I desire, all the places consecrated to Him, I can peacefully try to buy a place, choosing the one which seems the best, as here we have many of them. Meanwhile, dear, pray for me, that the Lord Himself may plant this work, according to His heart. Goodbye, my dear friend

your Magdalene

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1 Eleonora Serego, younger sister of Magdalene
2 Francescani, del ramo delta più stretta osservanza
3 Maria Teresa Majno Visconti
4 La ragazza di cui Maddalena stava cercando la famiglia
TO CAROLINA DURINI

161 (Verona#1805.09.12)

Threatening clouds are on the political horizon: in Verona new situations of war are feared. Magdalene points this out to Durini, after vague references to other matters of lesser importance.

My beloved Carolina,

12 September (1)805

I may seem negligent to you, my dearest friend, in replying to your most esteemed letter, which I have received from Marquis Casati. But be reassured that it was only the impossibility of writing that produces my silence. I will not spend time giving excuses, being sure that you, knowing how much I love you, are convinced that being unable to write costs me very much. When writing to you I cannot bring myself to use another person to do so. I did not have the fortune to see Casati when he came to Verona. I think I was with my girls. He kindly wrote to me, including your dear letter, and promised to come to see me on his return, which would be on the 18th, but I believe it is impossible that he will return in such a short time. Your health, my dear Carolina, worries me, greatly. Ah! why am I never by your side? And why do your doctors not send you to Mont'Ortone? ¹ Without tiring yourself to write, give me news of yourself through anyone you want, provided I come to know it, but I recommend to you, please be sincere. I do not have courage to ask our friend Luisa, to whom I owe so many replies.

Tell her, however, many things for me. Be assured that we do not forget to pray for you, with our poor prayers. Do pray for us too. I thank you for your concern and for the good person you introduced to me, to deal with the matter regarding my vocation. Things are still as they are. I will take advantage of this. Not being able to write at length, you will come to know the result verbally. You, too, do not worry about me if war breaks out.² This time it afflicts me, as it does everyone who has some sense of humanity and reasoning. But I am not afraid, as at other times, I think it is because I have got accustomed to it. Goodbye, very dear friend. Take care of yourself, but really, start caring for yourself by trying to amuse yourself. I embrace you, and I am wholeheartedly.

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene

¹ Locality for the cure with thermal waters (Ep.I, lett. 70, n. 5.)
² Between the French and the Austrians, and for the reunion of the two parts into which Verona had been divided.
Magdalene fears that Durini’s silence might be due to her health. She is sorry, much more because Marquis Casati, who is becoming the expert and prudent adviser of her works, must have reported to her the anxiety with which Durini waits for news from her. Magdalene has finally exchanged ideas with the Visconti of Cremona, who has already started an Institution similar to the little beginning of Magdalene’s «Retreat». The comparing of notes has helped her a lot. It has also given her an idea, at the same time, of what she is lacking in order to be a real animator.

My beloved Carlina,

27 September (1)805

I was hoping, my beloved friend, to have some news about you, at least after Marquis Casati’s arrival in Milan, having confided to him how much your silence pains me. I confess that I hoped that he would persuade you to give me some news, or to have it sent to me with sincerity. But I fear that you are sick, my dear Carolina, and for fear of afflicting me, you do not want to tell me anything. I assure you, my dear, that in this way you give me a double affliction, because of the great affection I have for you. I beg you as much as I can, if not through others, at least through Mrs Cecca¹ whom I dearly greet, to tell me something about how you are, and as soon as possible.

You might have heard from the same Marquis Casati about my good health and the situation of my affairs. I do not have anything else to say, for the time being. Having taken advantage of your kind suggestion, I have found him willing to help me in my case. He may have told you also that I had the great pleasure of speaking at length with the Visconti of Cremona², who had the goodness also to come and see my girls. She spoke much of her institution and I am even more than ever convinced that to establish everything in a stable way, one must first train those, who in turn will train the others, so to say…

I have greatly admired the goodness and humility of this noble lady. And I thank the one who has given me the opportunity of knowing the one and the other.

Dear Carolina, I embrace you wholeheartedly. Write to me, or get someone to write to me immediately. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

¹ Cecca or Checca, the housemaid.
² Maria Teresa Majno Visconti.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

163 (Verona#1805.10.28)

The feared clash of war between the French and the Austrians really took place on October 18, when General Massena, the commander of the French troops in Italy, tried to force his way through the Adige, at the Bridge of Castelvecchio. The Austrians, for the time being, had resisted and, even if it could be foreseen that the garrisons of the two Veronas would soon have collided, Magdalene reassures her friend that neither she, nor her family nor even her house have suffered because of this. However, she asks, for insistent prayers so that her poor Verona may not suffer any more.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 28 October (1)805

The mail that is about to be despatched allows me only a moment, my dear, to give you some news, which, thanks to the Lord, is excellent. I cannot extend my thanks to you for your concern for me and for my family, as I am in a hurry. I am very grateful to you for it. The situation of our new house is so good, that on the day of the battle, although so near the city, we hardly heard any noise. We did not suffer at all, and our house which is located opposite to the battle, was only slightly damaged. They tell us that both garrisons of the so called two Veronas, will try not to damage the city if they have to attack one another again. My dear, do not worry about me. I am not at all afraid. Only pray and make people to pray for us, that God may bring peace to this city, which, in spite of the great discipline of the troops, is under great pressure. If you can, even this time, try to send news of me to our friend. I embrace you heartily.

Your very obliged and affectionate friend, Magdalene of Canossa

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1 The BATTLE of 18 October 1805: The French General Massena tried to force through to the other side of the Adige, but the Austrians on the other side resisted his advances.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

164 (Verona#1805.11.17)

The Austrian and French garrisons have been fighting against the Canossa Palace, that was in the centre of the warfare, has not suffered serious damage. During the dangerous days, the ladies in the Canossa palace, have been lodging at the «Retreat of the Raminghelli» of Fr. Leonardi and there Magdalene saw the charity of Fr. Pietro, Fr. Steeb and of many other Religious and Priests who, in the military hospitals, were continually assisting the wounded and witnessing a lot of conversions. Despite the precarious situation, Magdalene is physically very well and insists that Durini gets a check up of her own health, because, though she seems to be recovering, she could easily be taking a turn for the worse. Meanwhile, she should pray because the historical situation does not allow her, for the time being, to realize her plans.

My most beloved Carolina,

Verona, 17 November 1805

I have always had news about you from our common friend, my dear Carolina. I am happy to hear that your health is improving day by day, after being in the countryside. I would have preferred that instead of running into winter, we were running into the summer so that you could stay there until you were completely well. I would not like, my dear, that on your return to Milan, to make up for the time you think you have lost, although this is not so, you go back to your occupations with so much activity, as to lose completely the little that you have may gained. Dear friend, do not be so afraid of inactivity, as, indeed, you have no reason to think yourself so. Rather I am afraid that you may deprive yourself of that little bit of health you have, which you have to preserve in order to serve the Lord longer, and for the consolation of your Magdalene. After having spoken of your health, here I am to tell you that mine is excellent; thanks be to God, I had no fears in the battles of these past days. My sister-in-law did not suffer at all and all of us are extremely well. Instead, I am sorry to see that the carrying out of my resolutions have been somewhat held up, because, unless the will of the Lord is clear, in the present circumstances, it would appear more opportune and prudent to wait. Continue, my dear, to pray for me, that I may profit from this delay, to prepare myself for this work, by acquiring all the virtues.

I lack, this being the reason why the Lord does not fulfill my desires. Therefore, for this purpose, I beg of you to have me commended to the Blessed Virgin once again by those good people whom you know, since I am in great need I write at length to you, my dear, sending you this letter through the special occasion of Marquis Casati’s visit. If you are in Milan, convey my greetings to dear Luisa. Otherwise do it when you will see her. I heartily embrace you, my dear friend, and I am forever, My beloved Carolina,

your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Canossa

PS. I never told you that during those battles we lodged in the Boys’ Retreat of Fr. Leonardi. He is always in the Military Hospitals where great and continuous conversions are taking

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1Battles that led to new Napoleonic victories, one of which was that of Caldiero. Following this, the whole city of Verona was taken over by the French. (November 1805) (Cfr., Cipolla, op. cit.).

2 The House of the “Raminghelli”, a work instituted by Fr. Pietro Leonardi.
place. He works together with Fr. Carlo Steeb, some Filippini, the Capuchins, Franciscans and others, beside our priests, who help equally the body and the soul. Fr. Pietro is the head. It seems impossible that he can withstand so much fatigue. Fr. Steeb is happy to see several Austrian schismatics and heretics return to the Holy Church. The first step to take with these people is physical assistance. I imagine that in Milan, they will be well taken care of, in everything, by all of you, because you have a big Hospital. But if you worry about the spiritual assistance, my dear, encourage the Heads of your Holy Institution, and give them the example of Verona. I would like you too to have the merit of the conversion and salvation of so many souls. Here, almost all the officials too are converted. Goodbye again, my dear. This letter was not finished before the departure of Carlotti, so that I am sending it to you by post.

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3 A Priest of the “Brotherhood”, converted from Protestantism (Ep.I, lett. 4, n. 3)
4 Belonging to the Institute of St. Philip Neri (Lett. 5, n. 5)
5 Friars of the Order of St. Francis of Assisi, belonging to the third autonomous family of the Order. It was instituted in the XVI Century.
6 Separated from the Catholic Church
7 Those who follow theories disapproved by the Catholic Church.
8 Magdalene who had first spoken of Marquis Casati, by mistake, now mentions him as Carlotti.
After being silent for a month, Magdalene resumes her correspondence with Durini. The newly wed couple, Prince Eugene Beauharnais and Princess Augusta Amelia of Bavaria, Viceroy and Vice queen of Italy, have been voluntary guests at Canossa Palace. Between banquets and dances, the young Marchioness too had to accept being presented, dressed in state. But she shortened it to «two minutes» and tried to escape from any other invitation. Instead, she came to know some noble ladies as a result of these, who could be useful for the pursuit of her ideal and of the Convents, that are painfully faced with suppression according to the imperial Decree of June 8, 1805.

My beloved Carolina,

22 February 1806

If possible, I want to write to you about many, many things, my dearest Carolina, since it has been a long time that, for lack of physical time I was not able to entertain myself with you. First of all let me say that my health is excellent, and that the weakness of my stomach is much better. Besides, with the lodging of the Princes¹, I have been very busy because my Carlino, who has had an acute illness of the chest that worries me. But he has almost recovered from it. Our Viscontina may have told you that, at the moment, my good sister-in-law is in bed. She gave birth to a baby-girl² last Saturday, and is very well. All this takes my time, my dear. But let us come to ourselves.

You will be given the letter of Fr. Pietro who is still in the countryside, and is slowly recovering from his illness. You have been very well informed about my feathers, but as far as our plans are concerned I knew and I could do nothing. I may have been presented³ for about two minutes, if it is true. After that, to avoid being invited to those dances and festivals, as rumours say, and to other similar meetings, I felt the need to say, or to ask others to say, that my rhythm of life is quite a retired one, and away from the world, a thing that was easily believed, as I presented myself with feathers and with frills, out of my usual way of dressing, but in the same ordinary form of clothing. Therefore, I was not called, nor introduced any more. I tried to see if I could succeed in getting acquainted with the Bavarian Governess ⁴ who, they say, dresses modestly and is also good, but it was not possible. If you have a way to approach that party, it would be the only means I know in Milan. My dear friend, true Christian courage is necessary in your Milanese ladies. The Princess⁵ is fundamentally good, but she is very young, and I feel compassion for her because she is in the midst of such corruption.

To restrain this stream, we need, my dear, to embank it closer to the first source. Another time I will tell you what I think on this point. But if you have the means meanwhile, do not forget the Bavarian⁶ ladies. They are very attached to the Princess, and rightly so. She deserves it, and to have her loved and respected by the people, they would understand and help. The younger of the two was also dressing quite modestly. In Milan they would say that she was very modest. I did not see her, but they told me that she was modest, even by our standards.

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¹ Prince EUGENIO NAPOLEONE BEAUHARNAIS (1781-1824), nominated by his imperial stepfather, in 1805, Vice-regent of Italy. AMALIA AUGUSTA, the vice-queen, was a princess of Bavaria by birth (1788-1851).
² Eleonora di Canossa who died in 1807
³ Part of the ceremonial for the reception of the Sovereigns.
⁴ One of the Ladies of the Court, coming from Bavaria, like the Vice-queen.
⁵ Amalia Augusta.
⁶ The two governesses.
Concerning my affairs, this is what I did, my dear. I wanted to try to keep a Convent in a village opened, since its suppression of it would be the ruin of the youth and the poor sick people, and to present that Memorial I involved Verri\(^7\), according to your advice. I will hear about the outcome later, since she promised to do it in Milan.

I also became acquainted with the Marchioness Litta \(^8\), because one evening I paid her a visit, as she too was lodging in the house. They teased me a lot about the Veronese ladies. But regarding my girls and my attire, I took the chance to ask Litta for the permission to write her a letter, if I needed it. To this question she replied gently to me and with a lot of concern. I, however, asked the question in general, thinking more about the Teresas\(^9\) and not about my girls.

It is up to me now, my dear, to recommend myself to you and to Casati, because without bringing up this idea, you and I should be informed of the moment when we can deal with our Monasteries, before the Decree takes effect, either with Litta, if you think so, or as you and Marquis Casati see best.

Goodbye dear Carlina. I have so many other things to tell you, but I am tired of writing. I will write to you as soon as possible. I do not fail to remember you and dear Luisa in my poor prayers. I embrace her too. Please pray the Holy Sorrowful Virgin for me. Goodbye heartily, I am

All yours, Magdalene

PS. Kindly find out, my dear, if your Salesians\(^10\) are allowed to wear a habit\(^11\) and if they can, at what age and under what conditions they accept a youth, who wishes to be a Salesian.

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\(^7\) MELZI VERRI VINCENZA, one of Durini’s friends from Milan, who with Marquis Arconati and the Canoness, would continue the work of Marchioness Trott Arconati after her death. A Lady of the Association of the Cross. One of the seven ladies in waiting of the Empress Josephine, wife of Napoleon I, during her coronation in the Duomo of Milan as Queen of Italy (20 May 1805). The main Lady-in-waiting was Litta Belgioioso and the Ladies: Porro-Serbelloni, Calmi Ruggeri of Brescia, lambertini of Bologna, Parravicini of Cremona (Cfr. *Storia di Milano*, Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la Storia di Milano, pg. 659).

\(^8\) LITTA, the Lady-in-waiting, was BARBARA VISCONTI ARESE (1759-1833). She was married to Antonio Litta Visconti Arese in 1775. She belonged to the Ladies of the Starred Cross and was First Lady of the Empress, the wife of Napoleon, on the day of her coronation (1808). (Cfr. D.E’. Zanetti, *la Demografia del Patriziato Milanese nei sec. XVII, XVIII, XIX*, with attached genealogy of Franco Arese Lucini, Università di Pavia, 1972, and Lett. 107, n. 9).

\(^9\) Sisters of the Monastery of Verona (Ep.I, lett. 1, n. 3)

\(^10\) Sisters founded by St. Francis of Sales (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 9)

\(^11\) Use of the religious habit
Magdalene has no time to write, but she needs to know if the Rescripts apply also to the territories of the right bank of the Adige, where Magdalene had set her eyes on a place. Would Durini be able, with prudence, to find out about this?

My dear friend,

The mail is about to leave at this moment. I beg you to find out properly if, for the place I would like to get, on the bank of the river Adige, which was already part of the Kingdom of Italy, the Prescriptions\(^1\) are in favour of our rule or not. Do it, my dear, with your usual prudence. I embrace you heartily.

Your Magdalene

(In A.C.R, in the same numerical position, but without any chronological indication, and with a letter attached, there is a list of works that Magdalene of Canossa asks about or has sent to Durini. They deal with Rules of Religious Congregations: those of St. Francis of Sales, of St. Vincent de Paul, of the orphanage of Stella, which could serve as an outline for the work she has in mind).

The first Rules of the Salesians, before St. Francis of Sales erected the Religious Congregation\(^2\)

The Rules of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.\(^3\)
And the Rules of the Stella Orphanage.

My dear friend, I send you a thousand kisses. If you are able to leave, I wish you a happy trip. Remember me, love me, and believe me to be wholeheartedly

Your Magdalene

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1 The imperial Order
2 The Congregation without a cloister (Ep.I, lett. 6, n. 8).
3 Founder of the Sisters of Charity (Ep.I, lett. 139, n. 3.)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

167 (Verona#1806.03.16)

The next publication of the Napoleonic Code, that would apply also to Italy, leaves Magdalene very perplexed. She is worried about the various Religious Convents, that would come under the law of Amalgamation of the Monasteries. But she is also anxious about the house of her girls, that would be affected by the bureaucratic and economic complications. Thus, Magdalene begins with Durini and her other collaborators, that vigilance that allows her to foresee and protect in time, the negative developments of the government impositions.

My beloved Carolina,

16 March (1)806

I thank you, my beloved Carolina, for all the trouble you have undertaken, and for the news you give me. Today I have been at the Teresas¹ who are very grateful, and I have told Nicolini², who, to her deep sorrow, has been appointed Superior again, to pray for you. Soon after receiving your dear letters, I asked her to tell the nuns to offer a general Holy Communion for you. Do not be afraid, my dear Carlina. The Lord will assist you. Cheer up and do not fear so much. The Raimondi³, too, will pray for you. Be calm. Regarding the matters you kindly wrote to me about, here we are in great suspense, because they say that Napoleon’s Code will be out on the first of April, and that this will have some terrible consequences. I still have some hope that, for Italy, many of its articles will be modified. If it comes into force as it did in France, I too would be in trouble regarding the house of my girls and the value of this house. Or, to explain it better, the value on which monastic capitals are based, of which I pay the interest. If you know, my dear, anything definite about the time of the publication of the Code, and if this will affect the Monasteries, do me the favour of giving me some information about it. I will regulate myself accordingly, with regard to my small and poor work, and also for my poor Teresas. Subsequently, I will speak, or I will let the Prefect speak about what you so kindly wrote to me. And thinking again, I also feel that we could involve Litta⁴ in the matter of the Nuns. I believe that she would be the right person, if we have to make an appeal for the house of the girls.

I do not remember if I told you, my dear, that Verri⁵ is involved in presenting a Memorandum so that a Monastery of the Franciscans may be given back, because its absence causes a great spiritual damage to a big place. Since you have the means to do so, you will do me a great charity. Please, can you solicit her on my behalf? I do not know anything about the young lady who wants to become a Salesian. I will trouble you again, in case she makes up her mind. May the Lord bless the words you will say to the Governess.

My dear, if he will show us other means we will try them. Embrace Viscontina for me and tell her that this year, as far as I know, there will not be the function of the Three Hours. Goodbye, my dear, I leave you in the arms of Our Lady of Sorrows who, no doubt, will be your strength and will give you that comfort which, I understand, you are in need of, if you lean on Her. Do pray, and ask people to pray for me. You can imagine that, like you, I too have a great need for prayer. Goodbye, dear, I am wholeheartedly

All yours, Magdalene

¹ A monastery in Verona (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 3.)
² Sister Luigia of the Cross (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 3.)
³ Requesting Raimondi for her prayers
⁴ Teresa Litta Visconti Arese, widow from Adda. (Ep.I, lett. 107, n. 8.)
⁵ Melzi Verri Vincenza
Easter is approaching, but Magdalene, because of her great concern for so many souls, cannot find time to write. Durini, who can be an intermediary, has to know with clarity, the problem that afflicts a whole population. The Minister of Cult was ready to leave at Isola the Friars Minors of the strict Observance, whose Monastery was going to be confiscated, to let the one in Ostiglia continue, even if this one was crumbling down and poverty-stricken. The Religious of Isola, instead, would have had to abandon their convent, because the inhabitants of Ostiglia were not granted the certificate of its being “unfit for use”. Now they, too, are persuaded to do so, and the certificate is ready. Durini should present it to the most influential middleman, so that the matter may be solved as soon as possible.

My beloved friend,

Verona, 2 April (1)806

I have not received any news of you through some ordinary mails, dear friend. I suppose that the reason is that you are at prayer, and I feel happy because I hope that you will also remember me. With all good reasons you will tell me that, in these holy days, it would be better that I pray rather than write. But, my dear, the matter is urgent, and I am forced to disturb you even if it is the day of Easter, since a delay could greatly jeopardize the matter. You already know that I have accepted your kind concern, regarding soliciting Verri in the matter of putting back a convent of Religious, in a village where they have done a lot of good.

Now there is a new development, and with some handling, I believe it will be easier to involve the Minister of Cult in our favour. It is necessary that I tell you the whole thing, so that you may understand me well, my dear Carlina. At the moment when the concentration of the various Monasteries took place as the Decree of last year commanded, for the whole Kingdom, one of the Monasteries of the Minors of strict Observance that was suppressed, was that of Isola della Scala, a village partly under Verona and partly under Mantua. But in the past, it was considered a Veronese village. The same decree permitted another Monastery of the same Minors at Ostiglia, to carry on. This Convent is composed of only a few subjects, is dilapidated, in a bad state, and just for such a motive, ordinarily not suited for living in.

The Municipality of Isola appealed strongly to the Office of Cult in Milan, since the suppression of their Convent would be a notable damage to the country. But since the Decree was already published, the Minister was resolved to satisfy those of Isola della Scala, but, in order to have a valid motive for exemption he wanted to have a proof of what I told you above about the Religious of Ostiglia. The Guardian was very disposed to do it, but the inhabitants of Ostiglia opposed him strongly. Therefore for lack of a certificate the Decree was carried out, and the Convent of Isola was suppressed, and that of Ostiglia remained.

At present, having experienced that the continuance of the other monastery would be better, the Religious of Ostiglia spontaneously sent a petition to the Prefect of Mantua, a copy of which is enclosed here, in which they ask exactly what we had desired. Here is, therefore, my dear, what I would like from you. You will naturally know up to what point Countess Verri can negotiate. If you think it is superfluous to explain all the reasons I mentioned because we

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1 Holy Week.
2 Melzi Verri Vincenza
3 Fr. Giudici
4 The Fusion of several monasteries
5 The Suppression of the convent of the Minors
6 A little town in the river Po in the province of Mantua.
7 The superior.
8 The highest authority of the city that could intervene.
can obtain it without them, please, solicit the matter, and do not use it. If you think otherwise, inform Verri, so that she may approach the Minister, as all the steps in Mantua have already been taken.

Note that Verri does not know anything about the matter of Ostiglia, not even the beginning, since I simply begged her to present the Memorandum so that the Convent of Isola may be returned. I did not tell her anything more because at that time it was superfluous. If you think I should write to Verri, let me know. I have no difficulty in doing that. If you will think it better to involve our Prefect, I will let him know. In short, tell me what you think is the better thing I can do. I do not know how to straighten out this matter since it affects so many souls. Dear Carolina, forgive me. I embrace you with all my heart, and with all my affection, wishing you a happy Easter, goodbye

Your Magdalene
The spiritual state of affairs in Verona is pitiable: many Parishes have been closed down. Others have been restricted. Magdalene is not at peace and writes to Durini, so that she may intervene for the most pressing cases: they are the Franciscans of Isola, the Teresas in Verona and finally, the Parish of St. John in Foro, where her confessor, the Archpriest Galvani, the parish priest, is anxious about an impending suppression. Durini and Marquis Casati can do a lot. They should do as much as they can.

My beloved Carlina,

24 April 1806

I have received two very precious letters of yours, and two also from our dear Visconti. I have also received the French books for Fr. Carlo, who thanks you with all his heart. I too do the same for all the trouble both of you have undertaken. Oh God! My dear friend, what on earth is happening to this poor Verona; the Parishes are being restricted and closed. I hope this will all come to an end soon! I would not have dreamt of seeing so much sorrow in this people. Let us come to ourselves now. We need to pray, my dear, as you say. Let us speak of what remains, and of what we have already spoken about. The Prefectures in Mantua, and Verona are both in favour of the re-establishment of the Convent of Isola. The Convent of Ostiglia has already been suppressed. Only I feel sorry because those Religious have been added on to the Convent of the Graces in Mantua. In spite of all this, let us not lose courage. When the Decree of last year was to be implemented, Giudici was determined and ready to allow the survival of the convent of Isola instead of that of Ostiglia, provided the number of religious remained the same. The Prefecture in Verona does not want to appeal to the Minister for Cult, since it had received an order from the same Minister, during the execution of the first decree, that appeals will not be received anymore. But if the Minister himself will ask for information, that will be the most favourable way. Therefore, my dear, in the next ordinary mail, I will write to Verri. I will send her the Memorandum of the Municipality for the Minister, as it was not possible, though I solicited as much as I could, to take all the steps in Mantua, and in Verona, and also to have the Memorandum. I think it would be good, if you could do me the favour to inform Verri about all this, because dear Carlina, I have no strength in my stomach to write so much. Beg her for me, if, meanwhile, by word, she could approach the Minister, informing him in our favour, so that in this brief interval, there may not be any other appeals from Mantua, and so that no other place may be re-admitted instead of that of Isola. Note that Giudici was well disposed, if those of Ostiglia were willing to let it go.

Giudici passed this way the other day, but the matter was so confidential that nothing was known until after his departure. They assure me that no absolute decision has yet been taken regarding the Monasteries, that is, which ones will remain and which ones will be grouped together. The present Prefect gave me hope about the Teresas, as they are the only institute whose members are considered semi-mendicant. They have the required number, having 21 Choir Sisters, besides the Extern Sisters, the Postulants and the Boarders. I do hope they will not think of joining them to those of Vicenza, of Padua, or of Venice, because they are all from Verona. I warmly recommend them to your charity and dexterity, and to the charity and dexterity of Marquis Casati. You already know that they desire nothing but to live

1 A locality in the province of Verona (Ep.I, lett. 156, n. 3).
2 A locality in the province of Mantua (Ep.I, lett. 168, n. 7).
3 Minister for Cult
4 Melzi Verri Vincenza
in their nest, alone with God alone. If they will allow them to live there, they will carry out their duty, and they will receive it; but they do not ask for anything. When the new Prefect comes I will look for support from him. Meanwhile I recommend them to you. As for Isola we are certain to get support in every way, because the alderman of the Minister for the Cult has been persuaded about it. I had asked dear Viscontina for some suggestions regarding a Monastery in Verona, called St. George\(^5\), which was previously under the Austrians. In fact I wrote to Venice because that convent could be useful for education, for the poor of that parish and to that Church which is a parish. But I already hear a thousand comforting news about it. So I do not bother you for this. Only tell this to dear Viscounti and to Casati, so that in case they hear about it, they too will cooperate. I blush to give you so much trouble, although it means doing some good. Yet I know I am always bothering you. There is still another matter and it is this. In the reduction of the number of parishes, that of St. John in Foro\(^6\) where the Archpriest Galvani is the parish priest, was made an auxiliary church, in order to let it remain. But at present, it seems that they want to suppress it, in order to reopen instead another church that had been suppressed. The Archpriest asks you, with my help, to see if it is possible, in this case, to have his reasons listened to before they suppress it. If the case does not succeed, he will be grateful to you all the same. If it is possible, try to find out if they really want to suppress it. I hope they will reopen the other without jeopardizing this one, if God wills it. Forgive me for everything. I would like to write to you also about myself, but I never find a moment. Goodbye dear, my very dear. Pray for me. I recommend Galvani to you.

Your very affectionate Canossa

\(^5\) CHURCH OF S. GIORGIO IN BRAIDA. It is also called San Giorgio maggiore, in comparison to the smaller Church of San Giorgietto belonging to the Dominicans (Cfr. L. Simeoni, op. cit., pag. 272).

\(^6\) One of the parishes of Verona
Magdalene goes on worrying about the result of the process for keeping the Convent of the Franciscans of Isola and that of the Teresas. But she has to announce to Durini her most immediate concern: her own relatives, who are in the countryside, have granted her permission to stay in Verona, and with her girls. There are still a lot of uncertainties. But «she is starting her ascent». Her friends should help her with prayer.

My beloved Carolina,

[Verona] 28 April (1806)

With this ordinary mail, I am sending the Memorandum of Isola\(^1\) to Verri\(^2\). If you happen to see her, solicit her, I beg you. Know, my dear, that the Commune is busy, and it gets more and busier. This is because something great has happened. I will write to you about it on other occasion. I think it is better not to mention it to Verri. I tell you this, my dear, because amid all the trouble, you have taken for me, you may be happy to see that you are doing something very acceptable to God. We only need to have faith.

Dear Carolina, my family is about to go to the countryside for some months. They allow me to stay on in the city, and also to live with my girls. If the Blessed Virgin will dispose that this comes true, even though they wish me to return home in the evening to sleep, the step is already a good one. The ascent begins. Pray, dear friend, for your Magdalene, who needs strength and virtue, in a word, everything. I will write to you about the outcome of my hopes. May the Lord grant that I benefit from His many divine mercies. Ask dear Viscontina too to pray for me. The Teresas\(^3\) need the help of Milan in order to stay on. I do not recommend them to you, because it is superfluous, I only assure you that they will correspond with you and Casati through the support of their prayers. Goodbye dear.

Your Magdalene

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\(^1\) Isola della Scala, in the province of Verona
\(^2\) Melzi Verri Vincenza
\(^3\) Sisters of a Monastery of Verona
TO CAROLINA DURINI

171 (Verona#1806.05.16)

There are new complications for the Franciscan Monastery of Isola. Durini should ask Lady Verri, who has accepted to be an intermediary, if she has news on the subject. Meanwhile, she should pray for her Magdalene, who is still with her girls.

My beloved Carolina, (16 May 1806)

(The letter has no date, so the date is presumed.)

I hope you have received the other letter of mine, dear friend, together with the Memorandum for my Teresas. Now I must beg you for another favour my dear, which is about asking Verri\(^1\) if she has any consoling news regarding Isola, since that village is afflicted because the Minister of Cult has again ordered to auction that Convent. Note that at the time of these negotiations the Office of State Property in Mantua has put the place to auction, and it has been rented by some particular people of the same island, in order to give it back to the Religious, if they get the favour to return. Now the Minister says that he is not pleased about the renting of the place. I have no answer about the letter I wrote to Verri, not even about the Memorandum I sent her. May be the Minister has done so in order to play for time. Therefore if it is not too much trouble, I beg you to ask her if she has the answer to this matter.

My dearest friend, your Magdalene finds herself in extreme need of prayer. We are now in the novena of the Holy Spirit. My God, how much I need His gifts! You can easily guess which ones I need in a special way. Please pray and get others to pray for me. Goodbye, time is lacking, I am again with my girls. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene

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NB. For the interpretation of this, refer to the preceding letter n. 168.

\(^1\) Melzi Verri Vincenza
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene and all the people of Isola are very happy. Verri has announced that the Decree is ready, by which the Friar Minors will remain in their convent.

(No date. The letter was sent on 22 May 1806).

My dearest Carolina, in the last postal delivery I received a letter from Verri¹. My dear, I have the consolation to tell you that she has kindly informed me that the Decree² has been issued in favour of Isola. I cannot tell you how consoled I feel, and I cannot describe the consolation of those people of the village to whom I have communicated the news. I also thank you for everything, and do not doubt that when the Decree will be published here, I will request those good Religious to pray particularly for you, who have had the biggest influence in this matter. I will write to Verri too. But if you see her, thank her also for me. Goodbye most heartily. Please pray to Mary Most Holy for

Your Magdalene

¹ Melzi Verri Vincenza (Ep.I, lett. 165, n. 7)
² Decree for the reopening of the Franciscan Convent of Isola della Scala
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene has influenza. She writes the first part of the letter. Then she gets a temporary secretary to substitute her, because besides the exchange of news, she wants to thank Durini. Her intervention seems to have also resolved the case of the Teresas. However, she wants to turn to her for another petition: she should present to the Minister a request for Canon Pacetti.

My beloved Carlina, 3 July (1)806

I am writing in this ordinary mail, also to our Viscontina. My dear, you, too, must forgive my delay in writing, which, I assure you, was unintentional. I must answer to a letter of yours from which, if I did not know you, I would have judged that you do not love me anymore. You ask to be excused so many times, while you have done me only a lot of favours. And supposing there was, which I assure you is not so, a deception in your way of description, you make a lot of apologies to your Magdalene. I beg you, my beloved Carlina, please do not use such terms with me. Rather, I thank you for everything, and for your peace I also add that not only from your letter, but here in Verona, and in Isola, I heard reasons contrary to those we had expressed.

I am asking someone else to write, my dear, since I have some fever with a light expulsion, as there is influenza in our country. Today, I have no fever and I am out of bed. But you already know my usual difficulty in writing, and every little thing makes it still more difficult for me to write. I received your greetings and news of yourself from the Missionary Canon Pacetti¹. He will have also given you mine. Before leaving for Venice he left me a letter with an enclosed petition for the Minister of Internal Affairs. As I have had no special occasion to send it, I think it is best I send it to you by mail. Your charity makes any solicitation on this matter superfluous. I suppose that the Canon is determined to give you this trouble, because his companion who was in Milan, was a preacher in the jails, and had no heart to be away from there. My Teresas send you, through me, their heartfelt gratitude in hearing the news spread around here of their financial support. This news seems to be supported by an imperial decree. They will make a general holy communion, for you and for Marquis Casati. If I could tell you how much I am grateful to you for Nicolini, who is now Superior, I would write until tomorrow. Goodbye, dear Carlina. I embrace you wholeheartedly. Remember me.

Your very affectionate Magdalene²

¹ PACETTI Mons. LUIGI PACIFICO (1761-1819), ex-Jesuit and apostolic missionary, direct collaborator of Pius VII, he was also a close collaborator of Magdalene in the working out of her plan, the structuring and the organisation of her Institute. He was the first Superior of the Institute. It was he who asked the Foundress to write her Rules, which he then presented to the Pontiff Pius VII for approval in 1815. To Pacetti goes the credit of having Magdalene write her ‘memoirs’ which give us a greater understanding of her interior life. (Cfr. Stofella, op. cit. pag. 174).
² NB. The signature and the first part of the letter are in Magdalene’s handwriting.
To Carolina Durini

174(Verona#1806.08.17)

The writer is still the provisional secretary of the letter of 3 July. Magdalene only writes the address and signs the letter because she is convalescing from a form of chicken pox. However, she is very grateful to Durini and Marquis Casati, because their various affairs are slowly being resolved.

My beloved Carlina,

Verona, 17 August 1806

Just two lines to tell you that I am very well, my dear Carlina. Somebody else is writing for me, because I know that you want it this way, and because I am still weak, although the inconvenience was not much. I think they call it chicken-pox. However I assure you that I have recovered, and that I feel much better.

Embrace for me dear Viscontina, goodbye; remember to pray for me, and to ask others to pray for me.

I cannot but tell you that I hope to see you in Verona, as you have planned last year. Many compliments to Marquis Casati. My Teresas desire that I renew their thanks to both of them. Goodbye, again, I embrace you heartily and I am

Your Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

175 (Verona#1806.08.31)

Durini has sent to Magdalene a ring of her dear deceased sister Arconati. The young Marchioness is thankful for it, but she assures her that her affection is deep even without any souvenir. She was able to deal at length with Marquis Casati about her problems, especially about what worries Canon Pacetti: the imprisonment of one of his religious brothers. According to Casati’s suggestion, Pacetti is drawing up a Memorandum which, when presented in Milan, might solve even his case.

My beloved Carlina,

31 August (1)806

I was pleased to hear excellent news about you from Marquis Casati, my dear friend, but at the same time, I am confused to see, my dear, that you always want to disturb yourself. The ring is very dear to me for what it represents, and for the one who sends it to me, and because such a holy soul, wore it. Even Monsignor Pacetti related to me many things about her and the very rare divine gifts she possessed.

But if you are sending it so that I may remember you, I confess that I told even Casati, that you could have spared such a gift since you are present to me more than other person.

I warmly thank you for it, but I also remind you to recommend me very much to the portrait on the ring. I, too, will not forget to pray for you. I have perfectly recovered from the slight illness I have had, and, to prove it, I will tell you, that I have made a trip to our mountains, to the famous sanctuary of the Holy Virgin, called Madonna della Corona, and I really enjoyed myself.

I have talked at length about all our business with Casati, to whom I am really very grateful. I have done what you suggested last year, I have asked him his opinion on everything, knowing how good, shrewd and prudent he is. I hope that he will return to Milan passing through this same road of Verona. Then, I will be able to listen better to his suggestions. Perhaps, I will then have to trouble both of you again, or perhaps not. Meanwhile, my dear, recommend me to Mary Most Holy. We have talked also about that Memorandum I sent you, which was handed to me by Canon Pacetti.

He was kind to get information here about the matter, because I did not know anything about it. He told me he has found a case needing assistance. Then he taught me how to draw up a new Memorandum. I am afraid of not knowing how to do it well in the way he told me. Therefore, I will try to follow, but if I will not succeed I will wait for the return of Pacetti. He had told Casati as well to wait for his return. But Casati replied to me that he regrets that in this way a deserving case may have to remain in jail for a longer time.

Hence, my dear, if I ever succeed in doing it, I will have to disturb you again. Every time we have to see each other something or the other happens. Dear Carlina! Is it possible that every year new obstacles have to arise? I, too, was almost on the point of coming to Milan. But even on my part I did not see the thing work out. But now let us not speak of this.

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1 One of the rings of the deceased sister of Durini, the Marchioness Teresa Trotti Arconati.
2 MADONNA DELLA CORONA in the province of Verona, near Caprino. A picturesque Sanctuary, built into a rock protrusion. It is 65 m. high and below it there is a descent of about 400 m. Reachable in two hours by carriage from Verona, it was the original site of a hermitage (1193). It was called the Hermitage of S. Maria di Montebaldo. In the 13th century it came to be called Madonna della Corona. The Sanctuary faces the valley of the Adige (Cfr. L. Simeoni: Verona - Guida storico-artistica della città e Provincia, Ed. Baroni, Verona 1909, p. 403).
3 Magdalene’s director for the foundation of the Institute.
4 A document in which Magdalene repeats the requests she had made verbally and explains all the circumstances that may be useful to support them.
I have heard with inexpressible joy that dear Viscontina, to whom I will write as soon as possible, and to whom I beg you to convey my compliments, comes to start her holy work in your house. I am so glad because it will be a great relief for her, especially because of her bereavement, and I rejoiced because, besides the good you will accomplish, this will be a relief to you as well, and comfort too, if your Milanese girls are like our Veronese ones. Goodbye dear, my very dear friend. I embrace you wholeheartedly and I am full of affection.

Your Magdalene
The Cloistered Nuns of Saint Augustine have already been forced to leave their Monastery of Saints Joseph and Fidenzio in the St. Zeno area. Magdalene, who feared a lot about that eviction, thinks that, rather than allowing the place to be used for profane purposes, it would be better for her to ask for it on lease, as she has already done, from the State Property Office. The place, also because of its vastness and decor, would also resolve the obstacles set by her relatives. But the answer of the State Property Office, for the time being, is negative, unless she wants to purchase it, or succeeds in presenting a certificate attesting the utility of its application from some primary local authority. Magdalene does not delay. She attains valid certificates and begs Durini and Casati to see if her request is sufficiently backed up.

My beloved Carolina,

(No date)

After having received your very precious letter of the 10th, my very dear friend, to which I replied, as you well know, I received, three days ago, a letter from our State Property Office. It tells me that the General Direction of the State Property Office does not think of accepting the appeal, as it is not endorsed and supported by the primary local authority, but asserting that such a Pious place is for charitable purposes. Considering this, soon I will be able to take advantage of the decisions that will be issued regarding the sale of properties available from the State Property Office. I confess that, my dear Carlina, this letter mortified me quite a lot, especially for the reasons I told you about in my last letter, and also for fear of not seeing close at hand, the moment I hope to be able to start to do some good. However, as a consequence of this answer, I asked for a certificate for the utility and existence of my work, and the need of a place to extend it, and how much in need the famous street of St. Zeno is. Then I had to get one from our Capitular Vicar and one from the Municipality of Verona. Then, as consequence of my appeal to the Prefecture, the Secretary, in the absence of the Prefect who is in Milan, attached to my request today to our office of the State Property, a Decree similar to the certificates, the same two certificates to this Office of our State Property Office, which will send them to Milan tomorrow, when I will send you this letter of mine. Now, my dear, what remains is that you do me the favour to solicit the matter over there, seeing that, as nothing is missing now, they may favour the request.

It will not be difficult for you also to investigate the motive for this initial negative answer, because, according to what you wrote to me, some doubts came later. I have also thought, in the absence of our Prefect who is in Milan, to get an informative letter of recommendation to the same Prefect from one of his friends, so that he may favour the matter. I do not know, however, if this letter will arrive on time, before he departs from there. But in any case, the proper papers have departed, and this will be something additional. If you can, write to me, one way or another, especially if I have to take other steps. Goodbye dear. I thank you for everything. My compliments to Marquis Casati. Pray a great deal for me. With my usual hurry and gratitude, I embrace you. Goodbye

Your Magdalene

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1 The Office for the administration of State Property.
2 In favour of public and even private works.
3 One of the poorest quarters at that time.
4 Mons.Gualfardo Ridolfi (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 5).
5 The local administration of Verona, according to the ordinances of Napoleon.
Magdalene is convinced that, as Durini recommends, purchasing the Convent of St. Zeno major would solve every problem, but through the usually trusted person, because she is very tired. She tells her friend about her financial situation which is certainly not enough to incur such a great expenditure.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 13 January 1807

I always have to start with a thousand thanks, my dear friend, for all your care, and for troubling you such a lot.

I would have liked, my dear, to purchase the convent, but the scarcity of my means makes it impossible for me to do so now. You are my friend and I, who can talk to you freely, wish to tell you that though I was with my girls for many days and nights, the affection of my family does not see me yet in any way separated from them. To keep me somehow bound to them, they only give me what we call a little pocket money, except when they go to the countryside, and they welcome me back warmly when I come home. As soon as I have this place, I am in agreement with them that I will go to live there permanently. We have agreed that in such a case they will pass over to me the whole interest of my dowry, which is not a big amount. But it will be about a thousand and four hundred big ducats1, that is equivalent to 76.4 “soldi” of Verona. Then, I think of taking away some amount for my maintenance and, after subtracting the rent, keep the remainder, that will certainly be the greater sum, to form a capital by which I can then purchase the whole thing. You may perhaps laugh at my way of distribution. But, you see, in such a case I hope to be able to get the required sum on loan, then settle the debt in a few years, in the above mentioned way, if the Lord does not send me some companions who have their dowry available at the moment, so as to settle it earlier. Let us keep this affair between you and me. Now I am not able to do anything else but to beg you to solicit the matter regarding the renting of the place in the best possible way. And, since sometimes Divine Providence has been very generous with us, beg Marquis Casati whom I greet in a special manner, that in soliciting the matter, to get information about what step I should take with regard to the purchase. But for this last part, he may take it easy as I do not start right now.

I confess, my dear, that I am longing for the moment to have it, as it seems I can now, since my life now is very unusual, always with suitcases on my shoulders like the soldiers. Meanwhile, beside the tiredness I feel, things can neither be planted nor settled. I have used the secret services of someone else because of my tiredness, not because of my health. Goodbye dear. I embrace you heartily and thanks for everything. Pray and make people pray for me. You can already imagine how much I need it. Goodbye.

Your very affectionate Magdalene

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1 “The Big Ducat” (Cfr. lett. 7, n. 3) was called such in order to distinguish it from the “little ducat” and the ducat of gold or the “zecchino” (Cfr. Molmenti, op. cit. pag. 96).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Since the State Property Office grants payment by instalments, Marquis Bonifacio, has accepted to help his sister in the purchase of the Monastery of St. Zeno. Magdalene is anxious to know which is the best way to go about the business. She ask her friends from Milan for their opinion.

[Verona] 6 February (1)807

My beloved Carlina,

I wrote a letter to you yesterday evening, which seems that of harlequin¹. I am also writing to you a few lines this morning as Marquis Casati has kindly agreed to bring them to you. I do not dwell on telling you about the refusal from the State Property Office of Milan, through the Minister Prina ² about my request to rent the place, because Fr. Conter, a Camaldoli³ priest must have already told you about it. I beg you to hand over this letter of mine to him as soon as possible. If he has not come to you yet, ask Mr. Besana ⁴ who certainly knows where he is lodging. The extreme need of the poor district of St. Zeno compels me to attempt buying that locality, as my brother, now, seems willing to help me in some way and the payment can be made in installments.

I think I have begged you to get information from Fr. Carlo Riva Palazzi⁵, who can ask, as Fr, Pietro told me, that youth in his oratory, if for such payments they accept Bonds, Prescriptions, Vouchers and the like. Please, let me know this as soon as possible. My dear, give me your opinion, as well as that of Casati and of Besana, about the way of making the purchase safely, quickly and with the greatest possible advantage. Forgive me for troubling you so much, my dear friend. If only you know how much your Magdalene needs a bit of peace and quiet to serve the Lord. If you could see my poor district of St. Zeno you would willingly forgive every importunity. Dear Carlina, if that street were not tying me down, I would have been tempted to accept the place you were offering me through Fr. Pietro. Goodbye, my dear. Tiredness spurs me to stop, but I will never finish being grateful and to be forever

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene

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¹ Composed of various parts that do not always fit well.
² PRINA GIUSEPPE (Novara 1766 - Milano 1814) a man of politics and economics, having a high position in the Kingdom of Sardegna. Later he was Finance minister in the Kingdom of Italy. Disliked because of the heavy taxation imposed as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars, he was killed by a furious mob after the fall of Napoleon. (Cfr. Modernissimo diz. ill. De Agostini Vol. 2°-pag. 872-873, col. 3a –1°).
³ Camaldoli, the convent of Camaldola - Avesa depended on that of St. Michael on the island of Murano.
⁴ A commercialist who had dealings with Count Taverna, the brother-in-law of Durini.
⁵ A Milanese priest.
The Marchioness is in a hurry to conclude the contract for the Monastery and begs Durini, also because Marquis Casati is sick, to give her necessary clarifications regarding the different evaluations of the Papers of Prescription between Verona and Milan. She is anxious to realize her vocational plan.

My beloved Carlina,

10 February (1)804

I do not excuse myself for the many troubles I am giving you, my dear Carlina, since your kind expressions forbid me. Only once more I want to tell you that I thank you for everything. Yesterday I received your answer, that of Fr. Conter and the Decree.

Now, my dear, I beg you to get information on the value of the Papers of Prescription in Milan, because here, perhaps, we do not find them enough, and, as they tell me, they will cot more, if we want to buy them here. Kindly try to be informed also, although I think that the Decree explains it, if at Mount Napoleon they will receive it for the whole value, as I think, so that I can promptly take action. Oh, God, dear friend, how consoling is the hope of seeing the moment approaching when I will be able carry out my intention and place myself in some quiet and recollection. Pray to the Lord and make others pray that He may assist me. I am in great need of prayers, so that, when I have my own freedom, I may not abuse His Divine Mercy. I beg you to hand the enclosed letter to Fr. Conter, who will also tell you my reflections on the estimate I would like. My regards to Marquis Casati, and to Mr. Besana. I regret very much that Casati is unwell. I hope that Besana will still help me to conclude this affair. Meanwhile, goodbye my dear friend. I embrace you heartily, and I am

All yours, Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

My beloved Carlina,

15 February (1)807

You will say, my dear, that I did not answer your last very kind letter, in which you repeated the news about how much your goodness wanted to do to attain what I desire, and for which I thank you so much. But I must tell you, dear Carlina, that I have been in the countryside for some time, and that I have been very busy, partly because of the Carnival and partly to prepare the Formalities that have to be submitted together with the other Material¹, if the Lord will be pleased to grant it to me.

I again hear your suggestion, which is similar to my thought, to purchase it (the monastery), but since the Lord does not seem to give me the means, for the time being I cannot embrace it. Here I have received no answer neither from our Government nor from the State Property Office. I think that your Carnival, which is longer than ours, might have delayed perhaps even the procedure of this business. I hope you will write to me when you come to know anything about it. Meanwhile, do me the favour to thank Casati and Besana on my behalf. I also send you my sincere thanks. You tell me to come to Milan to be the Procurator. Dear Carlina I would come there at least to have the joy of seeing you and our Viscontina. But if it is for this business I am more than well supported by all of you. Please, pray a lot for me. Excuse me for everything. I embrace you heartily, and I am indeed

Your Magdalene

¹ Formal Acts with signatures, required by the Law or by common usage. These were deemed necessary in order to guarantee the stability and maintenance of her Work.
Magdalene’s mind alternates between hope and disappointments. When she sees that she is close to the realization of her expectations, the mirage disappears. It seems, however, that Marquis Bonifacio succeeds in helping her. Meanwhile, Durini should also turn to Fr. Conter, a Camaldoli priest, who will explain her economic situation.

My dearest Carlina

28 February (1)807

You will receive this letter, my very dear friend, from the esteemed Fr. Conter, a Camaldoli priest, who comes to Milan for his business. He will do me the favour to tell you orally about my present situation, my dear. Therefore, in this letter I do not dwell on it any longer, but I will do so with the first mail, if by then I will know the estimate they have made of the place.

Dear Carolina, it did not please the Lord to bless your concern\(^1\) as well as that of the two gentlemen who had been so kind to see to my interests, because I am not worthy to begin to serve Him so soon. I shall never be worthy. But perhaps with the prayers of so many good people, who pray for this purpose, God might show me His mercy. Meanwhile if the estimate is reasonable, since now they have laid down, according to the Decree, to demand the payment of only one fifth of the value, my brother is prepared to assist me. Later, I will tell you the rest. Meanwhile, I thank you very much for everything, and I beg you to thank, also, in a special way, those gentlemen who have favoured me. I hope that you and they, will favour me also along the rest of the way.

Goodbye, dear Carlina, pray much for me since I need it greatly.

Father Conter, who will hand you this letter of mine, has given me the errand to beg you – since the news is that in Milan it is easier to get offerings to celebrate Masses – to recommend him in this respect, if there were some. Goodbye, dear, again and heartily

Your Magdalene

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\(^1\) The State Property Office has opposed the refusal of the concession of rent for the House of S. Zeno
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The possibility of renting the Monastery of St. Zeno has completely vanished. The only way is to purchase it. If the poverty of the St. Zeno area did not capture her, Magdalene would have given up. But the call is too strong. So she asks Durini to get information on the various modalities of payment.

My beloved friend,

Another person is writing these two lines for me, as I am short of time and I have to write the attached letter at the same time. So I am getting someone else to write to you. Therefore, I beg you, my dear, to approach the Religious to whom it is addressed, the same person who has brought you one of my letters. If it did not occur to you, ask Bezana ¹ who knows where he is living. I received from Fr. Pietro, who has just returned, your kindest regards. Tomorrow I hope to receive your dear letter. Regarding my business, I have to tell you that the State Property Office has refused to rent us the place and invites me to purchase it definitively. The same Fr. Conter, to whom I address my letter, might have already informed you about the present situation regarding this matter. If, in some way, I have to withdraw, I do not have the heart to abandon such a copious harvest as this of the district of St. Zeno.

What I need to know from you is, whether in these instalments, they would be ready to receive a portion in the form of vouchers. In a hurry, I embrace you dearly, together with Visconti. Recommend me to the Lord and let others recommend me too, because I do not know where my head is. Goodbye.

Your Magdalene²

Verona, 5 March 1807

PS. Ask Don Carlo Riva Palazzi³, if when paying for the places of the State Property Office⁴ they accept a part in Vouchers or Papers. He can ask information from the young person of his oratory. Give me a reply about this as soon as possible.

¹ Bezana: (Ep. I, lett.178, n.4)
² NB. The letter is written by one of her less educated secretaries. Magdalene only signed it and wrote the Postscript.
³ A priest from Milan, (Ep.I, lett. 2 n.13)
⁴ According to the Decree of the sale of State property (cfr. Ep. I, lett.179 n. 2)
Besides Durini, another person, who does not want to be named, advises Magdalene to purchase the Convent. At this point, that is certainly the best choice, but Magdalene is doubtful that if by accepting the granted postponement of the payment, obstacles may arise to block the immediate usage of the place. The Countess should clarify also this doubt.

My beloved Carolina,

29 March (1)807

My very dear friend, I heard from Fr. Conter about the good state of your health, and I received your dear greetings. He handed me the enclosed letter so that I might send it to you. He asked me to renew to you his distinguished regards and thanks for everything, for the Masses offerings you kindly gave him and for the concern you have shown him in getting them. Well, in a word, for everything!

I, too, my dear, thank you for everything, for him and much more for myself, and I cannot but promise you to make my girls pray everyday for you. The same priest informed me regarding the matter and about what the person, who does not want to be named, is convinced of. My dear, as I already wrote to you, I, too, right from the beginning, thought of purchasing the place, if I had the possibility. I hope that the Lord may open the way for me now. I must trouble you to ask you for a new light, which is this. That person advises us to purchase it with money, and to ask for three months to pay the whole sum. I would like to know from him if this will prevent us from entering the premises as soon as the contract is concluded, because I assure you, my dear, I find myself in such anguish, that I long for the moment to change residence for a thousand reasons, but especially for the health of the girls.

According to the law that, at the moment, asks to pay only one-fifth of the value, I think it is possible, without any doubt. But so as to enlighten me, kindly ask him. This is the state of the situation at present. They assure me that soon the place will be valued. Then, I will immediately send in my petition, and I will take advantage of your goodness and of that other person, and I will inform you at once. Goodbye dear, please pray very much to the Most Holy Virgin for me, as I am greatly in need of it. Many compliments to our dear Viscontina. My compliments to Casati. Goodbye, wholeheartedly

Your Magdalene

PS. Excuse me for this beautiful writing, my dear. It was done while I was in the midst of the girls, so much so, that I do not know what I am writing.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini asked for some information, but Magdalene asks for more details.

My beloved friend, I found out from the Marchioness Padovani¹, the information about Soppi that you wish to have, my dear. But she says that it might be true that she has assisted her, but that she does not remember that name, due to the large number of people she has helped. I asked her confessor, who is also mine when I cannot go to Fr. Galvani, to question her. If you could give me more details, we will know something more, either from one side or another. Goodbye dear friend. Best wishes on behalf of Fr. Conter. In order not to miss the mail, I embrace you hurriedly. My heart is filled with gratitude and affection for you.

Your Magdalene

16 April (1807)

¹ One of the Lady benefactors of the Hospital of Mercy. She was not able to identify the patient of the hospital whom she may have assisted, because only her name is mentioned - Soppi.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

185 (Verona#1807.06.20)

Her friends of Milan have done as much as was possible to turn to the Adviser Carlotti and the Marchioness Litta. She informs Durini.

My beloved Carlina,

20 June (1)807

How much trouble, my dear friend, you continually take for me. Up to now the Lord did not fulfill our desires, but that is not the fault of the one who does me these favours. If we could speak to each other, I would tell you who is the one at fault. You should know, but affection does not allow you to think of that. Well, I thank you for everything. But I must again beg you to write to me, immediately, if you have kindly gone to the Adviser Carlotti because by what I wrote to you, you might think that I have written to him, or because you have received a letter addressed to him, which I inserted in yours, written, if I am not mistaken, on the 7th, as I did not know his address. If you did not receive it, kindly write to me at once so that I can send him another one. I also thought of writing to the Grandlady Litta. So now I inform you of everything. Again I thank you, and in a great hurry I embrace you.

Loving wishes to dear Luisa

Your Magdalene

1 Magdalene herself
2 Marquis Alessandro Carlotti
3 Ep. I, lett. 165 n. 8
TO CAROLINA DURINI

A brief letter accompanying one to the Adviser Carlotti.

My dearest friend, after having embraced you and thanked you a thousand times, I want to tell you that I am enclosing an open letter for Carlotti\(^1\). Read it, then seal it, and keep secret what it contains regarding the Government. I do not know his titles, add them. Please pray for your friend. If you have told him that I have written to Litta,\(^2\) tell him that I did so only because of how she presented herself when she was here, and only so that she may remind the Prince\(^3\). But, tell him that I am relying on him, as well as on Carlina, to support this business.

Magdalene

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\(^1\) Marquis Alessandro Carlotti

\(^2\) Ep. I, lett. 165 n. 8

\(^3\) Prince Eugenio Beauharnais (Ep. I, lett. 165 n. 1)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

187 (Verona#1807.07.09)

The Government Secretary of the city of Verona is preparing a report on the work of Magdalene, that will point out how much it can be useful «according to the point of view of the government», but that it is a private work, that will never become public. The Foundress will never accept conditions «of any type». It will also point out that a large place is necessary, but that this request has already been made personally to His Imperial Highness, Napoleon I, not that it be granted as a gift, but at a reasonable price. Since the report will be sent soon, Durini should wait for it. Then she should talk in a friendly way to the Minister of Internal Affairs, Di Breme, avoiding to send an appeal that might have adverse consequences.

My beloved Carolina,

9 July (1)807

I always start and end telling you that I thank you for everything, my dear. Thank the good Marquis Casati for me, for everything. I am also so indebted to him. I did not inform you the other time that the Government Secretary, besides promising to show me his report, also promised me to do it according to what I think, having been really convinced of the reasons mentioned. Therefore, it is supposed that the Report says that this is a private work, which carries out to a large extent the directives of the government, but it is not possible to make it public, because the foundress cannot assume any type of bond or responsibility. What is lacking to this Institution is only a large place, and that they know that this His Imperial Highness has already been asked for this, not as a gift, but to be purchased at a reasonable price, with a Memorandum presented on the occasion of his visit. Therefore, they think it opportune that the Minister should favour the matter, insisting with His Imperial Majesty, so that the aforementioned request be granted as quickly as possible, in order to provide for the good of so many in dire poverty, without expense and disturbance to the Government. In a few days, the Report will be sent. I think, therefore, when you and the other people helping me think it necessary to turn to Breme, it would be better to wait for the Report that I will write immediately. Then, instead of a request, kindly speak to him in a friendly manner and beg him as above. Since I fear that the request may tie me up somehow and that the work, sooner or later, may appear as a public work, rather than doing this, since I am not capable, I might think of coming to you in Milan to entertain the girls with the Air of Mount Baldo.

Goodbye, dear, the mail is leaving. Lots of compliments to Casati.

Tell him to keep calm about his small errand, which has been carried out. Tell him not to hurry and that he may command me freely. Goodbye from my heart. It is unnecessary for me to ask you to bear this up with patience. God will reward you for everything. Pray for me as much as you can, as you do. Another time I will tell you the reason. Goodbye again, pray for me, so that, if God wills, in winter we will move house. My compliments to Carlotti, if you meet him.

I was told I could hope to see you here. Tell me something about it. If God blesses my affair, we might see each other. I will tell you how later. Meanwhile I would like to see you here.

Your Magdalene

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1 Emperor Napoleon I
2 BREME LUIGI GIUSEPPE, Count Arborio of Gattinara (Paris 1754-1828). He was Minister for Internal Affairs in the Kingdom of Italy. Proclaimed by Napoleon in 1805. He worked to eradicate begging and to institute the first schools for free instruction. (Cfr. Gallavresi, Carteggio Confalonieri, Vol. 1° p.38, n.1)
3 Mountain near Verona, the atmosphere of which, according to a popular saying, kept a person in good humour.(Ep.I, lett. 7, n. 1)
Durini is planning a trip to Verona. Magdalene is exultant and is anxious to show everything to her friend, whom she has not seen for seven years. She places her house at the disposal of her guest.

My beloved Carlina,

Verona, 11 August (1)807

You can easily imagine, my very dear Carlina, how great my desire is, as I wait for the moment to embrace you. I confess that I still do not believe it, and that I am counting the days before your arrival. I am so happy at the thought to be able, at least once, to confide in you and to consult you on my ideas; to show you everything. Well, my dear Carlina, come and we will speak of everything. However we have to agree on two things. The first is that you say you are coming for one day only. What a thing to say, after the many years that we are separated. The other is regarding the fact of not lodging with us. If my brother¹ had a bigger place he would like to offer it also to your entourage, but not being able to do this, he begs you again, through me, to come to us, and begs also the Count² your husband, to whom I ask you to extend my compliments. I will explain it all orally my dear. Thanks for everything. Pray a lot for me. You will see the great needs I have with your own eyes. I hope that by the time of your arrival, the business³ will be solved. At that moment I will need prayer more than ever. We will also pray that you may have a safe journey.

Meanwhile, I am looking forward to the moment to embrace you here. I am truly from my heart

your Magdalene

¹ Bonifacio of Canossa, Magdalene’s brother
² Count Carlo Francesco Durini, husband of Carolina Durini
³ The acquisition of the Monastery of Sts. Joseph and Fidenzio
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The business of Magdalene with the State Property Office has failed. She is now trying to go through the ministry. But the Marchioness will be able to talk to the Countess from Milan, because she is waiting eagerly to meet her.

My beloved Carlina,

Do not worry, my dear friend, if I am asking somebody else to write to you for me. This is just to spare me the usual fatigue of writing, as I am a little weak due to a cough I had, and from which I have almost recovered.

I do not know if you have received a letter of mine, addressed to you at Bologna. No doubt I am here to trouble you again. I am very happy, and the idea of seeing you again cheers me up. So much so that I think I cannot speak to you about anything but this, with the agreement that you come with the good disposition to stop here for some time. Except if, by chance it happens to be the moment that His Imperial Highness passes this way, my brother will not allow us to be deprived of the happy occasion to have you with us. If he had a bigger residence he would offer to lodge your entire entourage. But though this is not possible, he cannot give up enjoying your company and that of your husband, the Count, to whom I beg you to convey our regards, especially mine. Today, I had the advantage of seeing the good Marquis Casati. You may well imagine how much we spoke of all of you and of how much I owe you. My work with the State Property Office has failed. Now I am trying to deal with the affair through the Ministry¹. I beg you very much for your prayers. My dear Carlina, I embrace you wholeheartedly. Although I do not have the good fortune of knowing your sister personally, I also beg you to convey my compliments to her and to Count Costanzo. I am disturbing you wherever you go! I remember now that I have been told that you will be asked by Fr. Pertesana, Superior of the Filippini in Venice, to bring with you a small box addressed to me. When it reaches here I will show you what it contains. Excuse me even for this. I embrace you again.

I am truly yours from my heart

My beloved Carlina

Verona, 27 August

PS. My dear Carlina, as I already wrote to you, Count Costanzo² has done some good for my little enterprise, but hiddenly. I remind you of this only because, when you convey to him my compliments, you may show him how obliged I am to him. If you think it is better to keep silent, keep silent.³

Your Magdalene

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¹ She turned directly to the Minister of Finance, Prina Giuseppe. (Ep.I, lett. 178, n.2)
² Count Costanzo Taverna, husband of Paola, the sister of Durini
³ NB. All the postscript is in Magdalene’s handwriting.
Magdalene’s aunt from Mantua, Countess Matilde d’Arco Canossa, is seriously ill and Magdalene goes to visit her. But since it is a chronic disease, she will return shortly to Verona. Durini should inform her of the day of her arrival, so that Magdalene will be there to welcome her.

My beloved Carlina,

This time, my dear Carlina, I will not start this letter thanking you, as I have always done on other occasions. You do not want to lodge with us, and you speak to me of leaving even before telling me of your arrival. Good, very good indeed! Enough, we will settle accounts in Verona. Meanwhile, I beg you to write to me when you will be coming here. Because of the serious, rather irremediable illness of my aunt¹, I must make a trip to Mantua, as she wants to see me before dying. Notice however, my dear, that the illness can be said to be chronic, and my trip will be brief. But since I cannot tell you how much I desire to see you, I beg you to write to me by the next mail, just when you will be coming. This is so that I may make arrangements for myself. Goodbye, dear, I will tell you everything orally. My compliments. A hurried goodbye, but with all my heart.

Verona, 12 September (1)807

Your Magdalene

¹ Matilde di Canossa D’Arco
The Countess has already returned to Milan, but Magdalene has no time to dwell on the joys of the meeting because, though they are all convalescing, her brother, her sister and Carlino were ill. Now the teacher of Bonifacio is sick. There are continuously restricting circumstances that prevent Magdalene from detaching herself immediately from her home, and she is evidently sad about it.

My beloved Carlina,

(No date)

I suppose, my dear friend, that you have reached Milan safely, at least I desire and hope so. I do not want to repeat that you have left us too soon, not to speak of a thing that displeased both of us. Let us hope that it will not be long before we see each other again, either from your part or mine. I am sending you the formula of the Contract known to you, which you may kindly deliver to Casati, with my cordial respects. He should use it in the way we agreed, if the Lord wills that it may be useful to us. I have immediately answered Carlotti through a letter similar to the one I read to you. But I did not send it because my brother thought it was too insipid. Therefore, I wrote another one like that, but more elegant. Let us see what the result will be. My brother is better, but has not yet recovered fully from his fever. My sister too is better. Carlino as well, has no fever. But now the Teacher is sick with an inflammatory rheumatism we do not know about. How many chains keep me shackled my dear, and away from my poor Work. Pray to the Lord to hasten His mercies over me so that He may break all these bonds with one blow. Goodbye, very dear friend, my compliments to your husband. A thousand greetings to dear Viscontina. Accept the compliments of my friends here. Goodbye from my heart and I ask you to pray for

Your Magdalene

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1 For a possible purchase of the Monastery of Saints Joseph and Fidenzio.
2 (Ep. I, Lett. 185 n.2)
3 Bonifacio of Canossa
4 Eleonora Serégo Canossa
5 Her little cousin (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 6).
6 Teacher of Bonface, Don Rossi
7 Count Carlo Durini, husband of Carolina
The Canossa family is on vacation at Grezzano, and Magdalene who is alone in Verona, is thinking of fulfilling her plan: to move permanently into the house lodging her girls, while her people are away. Thus she will not feel the pain of separation, especially from her Carlino. Only Durini should know this at present. She recommends to her at the same time the conclusion of her affair.

My beloved Carlina,

You will immediately be served, my dear, regarding the copies of the book that our common friend desires, and as soon as I have them, I will send them to you on the first occasion. Regarding the medicine, since you have done me this favour, if you have no other chance, send it to me at once by post, because the young girl who is ill, is so serious that she cannot wait. Write to me how much I owe you.

My patients have finally all recovered, and on Tuesday I hope to be alone in Verona. I will write to Father de Vecchi. Since they are in the countryside, I will be free. I assure you, my dear, that I do not have a moment for myself. Kindly express my compliments to Viscontina, and to Casati, to whom, if it is possible without troubling him, I beg you to recommend to him the conclusion of my affair, because the season is advancing, and you have seen all our circumstances and our situation. Goodbye, dear, accept the regards of my friends here. I embrace you with all my heart. Pray for your

25 October (1)807

Magdalene

PS. Tell Marquis Casati that with this ordinary mail I am also writing to Carlotti to solicit him, because if I could move out, while they are in the countryside, I would spare myself the separation. However, I say this only to you. It costs me much, especially with regard to Carlino.

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1 Marquis Alessandro Carlotti (Ep. I, lett. 185, n. I)
Magdalene is sick and gets a secretary to write so that her friend might not worry about her. But there is only news in general.

My beloved Carolina,

I have been ill with fever and cough, but presently it is the cough that is continuously bothering me. Therefore, I am getting someone to write to you these few lines. Be calm, for it is a little indisposition. I am not even in bed. I did not write to you earlier, because I have been to Mantua to visit my aunt\(^1\). I thank you for the medicine. Now I do not need anything else for the sick child. I have the books for dear Viscontina, whom I beg you to greet. I hope that when S.M\(^2\) returns I will be able to send them to you. Meanwhile tell me how much you have spent for me.

Then I too will tell you how much I have spent. I enclose an open packet for Carlotti\(^3\). Please read the content, and tell everything to Casati, with my best regards as well. Pray for me. You see how great my need is. My friend\(^4\) greets you. Embracing you from my heart, I declare myself

3 December (1)807

Your Magdalene

\(^1\) Matilde of Canossa D’Arco (Ep.I, lett. 83, n. 1).
\(^2\) By these initials we cannot distinguish the person she is referring to
\(^3\) Marquis Alessandro Carlotti
\(^4\) Leopoldina Naudet (1773-1834)
The patience of Magdalene for the solution of the possible purchase of the establishment has reached the utmost level. But she does not want to renounce the possession of that place, which is the only acceptable one in the poor zone where she wants to begin her work, and where more than five hundred miserable young girls are waiting to be received by her.

My dearest friend

I include for you, the letter and the reply for Marquis Carlotti¹. I beg you to read it and to let Marquis Casati read it. Then send it to him as you have always kindly done. My dear Carlina, if, by chance, Carlotti thinks that it is better that you speak again to Breme², so that he may really move our Prefect, I recommend myself to your friendship. You have seen, you know how we are, and how we should be. I beg you, as much as I can, to solicit the matter. I confess that I am beginning to lose my patience, but the thought of having to abandon St. Zeno³ keeps me firm. If I lose this locality, there is no other way to settle down in this poor district, as no other accommodation is suitable. It means having to abandon five or six hundred miserable little girls of the kind⁴ you have seen. By and by, I would like to take in all of them.

Goodbye, dear friend, my cough has disappeared. I am very well. I embrace you wholeheartedly. My compliments to our Viscontina. Please pray and get others to pray for your Magdalene and for the settlement of this affair⁵, if it pleases the Lord.

PS. May the Lord grant you a Holy and Happy Feast. May He make you a saint. In the new year may you be His, more and more. I wish you this from my heart.

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¹ Marquis Alessandro Carlotti
² Minister of Internal Affairs
³ The poor district where the Convent of S. Joseph is situated.
⁴ The very poorest children
⁵ The acquisition of the Monastery
From the dates there seem to have been about two months of silence in the correspondence with Durini. But the beginning of the letter makes us think that some letters have gone lost. They might have been short letters like this, in which she declares: “I over-burden you with letters, because they over-burden me with deceits.” Durini and Marquis Casati are still helping her so that she may overcome the serious obstacle that has arisen recently.

My dear Carolina, I over-burden you with letters. Forgive me, but they are burdening me with deceits. Read and get Casati to read the letter I have enclosed. Then send it to the one to whom it is addressed. Dear Carlina, I do not doubt that you will do as much as you can, you and Marquis Casati. But I beg you to pray and tell others to pray as well for this matter so that the Lord may fill me with the strength I need. I confess that I cannot get accustomed to the thought of abandoning so many poor youth, as I will be compelled to do if the matter of the High School is successful. This idea worries me.

Pray for your

Magdalene

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1 The acquisition of the monastery of S.Zeno
Magdalene has received from Marquis Carlotti the announcement that the Decree for the Monastery of St. Joseph has been signed. She thanks her friend from Milan and Marquis Casati, her two very influential intermediaries, and hopes that the work can begin with «a true spirit of interior and exterior charity».

My dear Carlina,

I enclose Carlotti's reply, notifying me that the Decree regarding St. Joseph's has been signed. Thank you for everything dear friend, and I also thank Casati, in a special way, for everything.

Now pray, my dear, that I may not only complete what still remains to be done regarding the establishment, but above all, that the Lord may help us to establish ourselves in it, with a true spirit of interior and exterior charity, as the Work itself demands. Pray that I may really begin to serve the Lord.

And be assured that we will pray for you and for Marquis Casati, whom I greet in a very special way.

(No signature)

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1 Marquis Alessandro Carlotti
The news that had arrived to her unofficially on April 9, is now official. The Prefecture’s confirmation has come. It granted Magdalene the purchase of the Monastery of the Enclosed Nuns in the area of St. Zeno Major, dedicated to the Saints Joseph and Fidenzi. The realization of her charitable plan is about to come true. Meanwhile, Durini should concern herself with another purchase, that she describes.

My beloved friend,

As I again thank you for everything you have done for me, my dearest friend, I am pleased to tell you that today I received from our Prefecture the letter communicating to me that I have been granted the monastery\(^1\). In a few days I intend to move the work over there. Dear Carolina, remember that now I am in a greater need of prayer. Pray for me and ask as many people as possible to pray for me. Be assured that we too will repay you by our prayers, not only out of my affection and also out of duty. I beg you to convey all this also to Marquis Casati, from whom I received a letter the other day, and to whom I did not answer for lack of time. Greet him respectfully for me, thank him again, and assure him of our gratitude before the Lord.

Now from the spiritual I move to the temporal. I think I will make you laugh. I am giving you some trouble, which is worthy of the penance of Holy Week. You, however, can doubly sanctify yourself by bearing it with patience, because I am troubling you and I beg you also to make the choice for it. I have been given the errand to look for a dress of good quality and lovely in appearance. It will be a gift my uncle\(^2\) offers to my sister-in-law\(^3\).

Therefore, you will know of what style it should be, the quality, the designer. The cost could range between twenty and twenty-five zecchini\(^4\). Even if it costs less, buy it and send it to me as soon as possible. Do not, out of courtesy, write to me again to inform me of the price or other things. Do me the favour to buy it, and write to me immediately about how much I owe you. Forgive me for everything. I embrace you wholeheartedly. I did not write to you with my own hand because I am very busy. But I am keeping well. Goodbye

14 April (1)808

Your Magdalene

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1 The official announcement of the Decree for the monastery in the St. Zeno area has come.
2 Marquis Jerome Canossa
3 Francesca Canossa Castiglioni, sister-in-law of Magdalene
4 The old gold coin of Venice, having the same value as that of the ‘fiorino’, that is, a little more than 10 gold lire (Cfr. Miglioroni, op, cit, pag.1632, c.1a).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

198 (Verona#1808.05.19)

It is only twelve days since the dream of Magdalene has been fulfilled. She is in the Monastery of the St. Zeno district and the first Mass has already been celebrated in honour of St. Joseph on his feast day. She is with her girls and with her companions.

The bearers of the letter are the gentlemen Guizzetti, whom Magdalene introduces to Durini as people worthy of being known for their ideals of charity.

Dear friend, I am writing to you on an occasion that presents itself to me. I take advantage of it to send you 20 zecchini1 for the dress, which you have kindly sent me. Please get me another dress costing about 6 ‘zecchini’. It should be good and nice in appearance. I wish to give it as my gift. Excuse my boldness in troubling you again. But your friendship encourages me to do it, and I am sure that you will understand me.

It is only twelve days since I am living in this new place2. On the day of the Feast of St. Joseph 3, Patron of the Monastery, I had the first Mass celebrated. You may well imagine that I have much to do. Finding myself in the heart of this district, the participation of people is very great. Pray the Lord to bless our little work so that through his grace we may bring forth some fruits. I do not add anything more because I am in a hurry. But think of me from my heart as

Verona, 19 May 1808

Your Magdalene

PS. I am sending back to you the remainder of the money from Viscontina, who has sent me too much for the books.

PS. The chance to send you everything has gone as I was not in time. I am sending it to you through Mr. Domenico Guizzetti4, who goes there with his niece, Mrs Teresa, both of them of great piety. They are greatly involved in works of charity, therefore if you think so, show them your works. They will tell you what they have seen at St. Joseph’s5. I will gladly hear news of you from them. I thought of getting them acquainted with you as it is pleasing to know such people when we do good. Let them also meet Dugnani6. I am sending you also the 6 zecchini for the dress. My companions send you their regards. Goodbye.

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1 Ep. I, lett. 197, n. 4
2 In the monastery of Sts. Joseph and Fidenzio
3 The feast is on Saturday of the third week of Easter
4 Benefactors of the Institute at Venice
5 The monastery, her new house
6 Lady Teresa Dugnani, of the nobility of Milan. She was the sister of Fr. Giulio Dugnani.
Magdalene is very happy in her new place and situation. She again thanks the two friends of Milan, Durini and Casati. She reminds Durini of the problem of the Valenti girls, that should be presented to one of their uncles, a Canon of St. Ambrose and proposed again by their grand-mother. The elder girl would gladly serve her as a maid.

My beloved Carolina, I am sorry to hear that even you cannot write anymore. This might be on account of your health, although you speak gloriously about it. How nice it would be if you too could get someone who could write for you. If you tell her, since it means to help a sick person, Viscontina would gladly do it. I have the booklets she asked for and I will send them at the first chance. She might be displeased that I cannot tell her the price. It happened that Fr. Charles Steeb1 came to greet me, and I asked him where these books could be found. You know that he got us the previous set. Instead of a dozen, he brought me two dozens without wanting to tell me the price. He also brought a letter for our common friend. However, do not worry because they cost very little. Therefore do not stop asking me for favours. From now on I will not ask anybody about what you want. I am glad that finally you have received from Guizzetti 2 the money he owed you. I again thank you for everything. This gentleman has not yet returned. On his return, I hope to get news about you. I am more and more contented with my stay 3 here and my situation. I owe you and Marquis Casati so much. I remember both of you frequently, for you have done much, so that I might get this place. All I need now is to pray that I may benefit from this grace.

I am begging you now for the poor Valenti4 girls, so that you may speak about them to the good Marquis Casati. They are still in the boarding house where they were, until providence sends them the possibility to pay the monthly fees. At times it is hard to find the money. But what worries me most is to see them growing in age and attractiveness. I think that if the necessary help is lacking, they will be on the streets since their father and mother cannot afford to support them. I hear that they have a good uncle with a generous heart. This is a certain Canon of Sant'Ambrose, Fr. Benedict Baseri5. If you, or Casati, have the opportunity of speaking to him, describe to him the dangerous state in which the girls are in. See if, in life or in death, he could ensure that they be independent of their father and mother, because you can imagine that in the poverty they are in, they would not be able to help their daughters. If money is sent to them, it would be used, but not for the lodging of the girls. I repeat that really these poor girls deserve to be helped. Also tell Marquis Casati, that when talking to Mrs. Marianna Valenti, he should describe to her the same things in favour of these girls. The eldest, whose name is also Marianna, wishes so much to serve her grandmother as a maid. She is so interesting that I am certain that if her grandmother sees her, she would not let her go. Tell him also that I have finished the money for Mr. Benedict, and if Valenti ever wants to continue assisting him as in the past, it is enough that I be informed. Goodbye, dear friend, compliments to dear Viscontina. Accept the compliments of my companions and believe that with all my affection I am

Verona 13 July 1808

Your Magdalene

1 A Priest, a member of the Brotherhood (Ep.I, lett.4 n.3)
2 Benefactor of the Institute at Venice
3 In the monastery of St. Joseph
4 Granddaughters of Marianna Valenti and daughters of Giacomo (Ep.I, lett. 102 n.5)
5 Canon of St. Ambrose,. He is however Fr. Benedict Bussero and not Baseri (Cfr. “Milano Sacro”, Almanacco 1809)
Magdalene is about to leave Milan, where she has met her friends and has agreed about the carrying out of the charitable work that they would like to accomplish together. It is still early in the morning, but more than the journey, a pitiful case worries her and the request of two people, whom she would like to help.

My dearest friend, I forgot to ask you if you have been given a box of laces\(^1\) for me. I already know that this question is superfluous because you would have told me if you did. But I ask in order to carry out my errand. If subsequently it will be brought to you, I pray you to keep it, and in such a case I also beg you to ask Meda\(^2\) to see what we can do with them, because they are very beautiful. Excuse me for this new inconvenience. Please also tell Julia\(^3\) that I have taken the liberty of sending her three pictures of the Holy Virgin given to me by a poor person to be sold. I always forgot them. If she wants to do the favour to help these poor people, in case she has the chance, she will really be doing something good. But if she does not get a chance, she can send them back to me with ease.

I hear that a guard of honour from Romagna has been condemned to death, if he does not obtain the pardon they are seeking. Entrust him to the charity of all your companions so that he may die as a Christian with the comfort of the Sacraments. I think that, in this case, Billi\(^4\) can help more than the others. Dear friend, I embrace you heartily and I thank you again for your deep friendship, cordiality, and gentleness with me. Goodbye, regards to all, I am very much indebted to you.

Magdalene

\(1\) A box of laces. They belonged to Naudet.

\(2\) GIULIA MEDA, daughter of Giovanni Battista Meda and Maria Notburga, baroness of Bonl.

\(3\) Idem.

\(4\) Bigli or Billi or Biglia, a family originally from Rome, but belonging to the Patrician families of Milan. BIGLIA CONFALONIERI was the grandlady in waiting of the Empress and was the wife of the noble Francesco Clerici (Cfr. Genealogie, Archivio Sola-Busca, Milano).
The Milanese friend’s welcome has been so cordial that the remembrance and gratitude for it continues to linger on in Magdalene. She thanks Durini, but at the same time she asks her to deal with prudence with her brother, Marquis Bonifacio, about a business she mentions in a vague way. In fact a person, who wants to remain anonymous, will help her economically.

My dearest friend,

We arrived safely in Verona yesterday, at three o’clock, after a very good journey, my dearest Carolina. Here I found all my teachers in good health. If you were here together with all the other friends of Milan, I would be fully contented, though I know that would be wrong, because I would not want to take away so much good from your Country. I thank you again, my dear friend, for showing me such goodness. I am and always will be very grateful to you. I wish to hear good news regarding your two patients, about them, and about you as well. This time I will not write more, since I have already written another letter. Kindly convey a thousand wishes to Visconti, Meda¹, and the Canoness. I recommend myself to their prayers. Rest assured of our poor prayers. I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am

Your very affectionate Magdalene

PS. I inform you that my brother, before I left, told me that next week he will come to see you because of my business. I was in trouble. Since I did not want to disclose the person you know about, I said yes. But I think that in this case, if he finds you at home, you should reply that you are waiting for an answer. Meanwhile, speak about it also to Marquis Casati, so as not to expose the other person.

¹ One of her friends from Milan.
Everything has been solved by Durini’s prudence, as Magdalene had requested of her in the previous letter. Now Marquis Casati should intervene again about the Valenti case, but Magdalene is also worried about something else. When, with her friends, she visited the charitable work started in the Porta Tosa Convent, she expressed her admiration, but had no courage to manifest her disapproval regarding the lack of supervision of the girls. Durini should convey her opinion now.

My beloved Carlina,

St. Joseph’s – 19 December (1)808

I am very pleased to hear, my dearest friend, that your patients are getting better. Let us thank the Lord. I, too, am well, in spite of the severe cold, which, up to now, did not bother me, not even with a cough. I did not start what I should have, on the day of the Holy Immaculate Virgin, because my friend thought it better for me to delay up to 2nd January. Tell this to dear Viscontina, and both of you please remember that at that time, I will be in need ever more of your prayer. I too will not miss praying for both of you in particular. I am very grateful to Marquis Casati for favouring me out of his goodness. Thank him and convey to him my compliments. My brother informed me that he came to you, but you told him that you had no Papers. I suppose that you have said so, in order not to disclose the person who is doing me a favour.

I inform you, however, if I have forgotten, that I handed over the Papers to Fr. Pietro, so that he might get someone to copy them. I will hand over a copy to you in case either the person who is doing me a favour or Casati would like to see it. Send the original back to me. I am trying to get information from the person you know. I recommend the matter again to his goodness and to your friendship. I notify you that today, 20 December, I have received 100 Milanese Liras, to be given, if I am not mistaken, to Mrs. Valenti1. Kindly inform Marquis Casati about it. Together with the money I received a letter from Lady Marianna2, who tells me what I should do with them.

I hope that your Holy Works will flourish ever more. Know, my dear, that sometimes the thought comes back and I ponder over them. May the Lord bless them. However, a thought came to my mind regarding the Convent at Porta Tosa 3 which is so beautiful. If you remember, lady Teresina4 told us that she does not follow the girls at recreation, because, I think she said, the girls would feel more controlled. The teacher is present instead, and since she is so good, the girls make her do what they want. I confess that seeing that there is only one teacher with the girls of this kind and with such a number of them, it would be very little supervision, even if the teacher is very attentive. What will happen if even this is lacking, and at a time when they are free, which is the most dangerous. Know that I regret very much for not having said this to the Canoness and to Marquis Arconati, since I only praised the Institute, which is very beautiful and whose Superior I like very much. For my peace, please

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1 Mother of the Valenti sisters
2 The grandmother, Marianna.
3 Convent of PORTA TOSA. Santa Maria della Pietà called «La Guastalla», a boarding house founded by Countess Torelli of Guastalla, for the education of poor girls of the nobility. Attached to it was a boarding house for Spanish Virgins. At another time it was situated near St. Nicolas (Cfr. «Milano Sacro» op. cit., p. 47).
4 The Directress of the Institution for girls, who had her headquarters at the Convent of Porta Tosa.
tell this to her, as something I have been reflecting on, but had no courage to tell. I do not know why. It is not because my opinion should be taken into account. I do it only out of duty, for not having disapproved but praised something which, before the Lord, I think, is not in order.

At the first chance I will send you and our friends the books they wish for. Meanwhile, I recommend myself to the prayers of all of you. My compliments to all, as well as to your husband, your sister-in-law and your aunt. Good-bye, my dear, I thank you again for everything. Accept the greetings of my country teachers. Embracing you with great affection, I am heartily

Your Canossa

PS. If Fr. Pietro is losing his memory, kindly ask him for the Papers ⁵.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

203 (Verona#1809.01.**) 

(No date, but after 3 January 1809)

The central problem of the letter: a bridal dress that Magdalene wants to give as a gift. Durini should search for a very elegant and also modest pattern, in the Lombard capital.

My beloved Carolina,

I received your dear letter on the 3rd instant, my dearest friend. It tells me of the many troubles you all undertook to favour me. I do not have any information yet from Marquis Casati. Since my brother is coming back tomorrow, I hope to hear how things are, and if there is any step I have to take. Meanwhile, I beg you to convey to Marquis Casati as well as to that person who wants to be anonymous, my deepest thanks. You, my dear, accept my most cordial thanks. I cannot do anything else to repay my obligation to you except with the many prayers of my girls.

It is superfluous for me to beg you to help me in completing this matter, since I know how kind you are.

I must trouble you once more. Though it concerns the fashion, it aims, however, to draw a newly-wed bride to agree with our project about cleanliness and modesty, so as to get others to follow the same aim. Kindly provide me, therefore, a beautiful dress without a train, with the fringe at the bottom, broad at the waist, long sleeves, and enough cloth to get some special fashion at the neck\(^1\), without dressing the person like a statue. If there is none in Milan like this, kindly get one without the Florence fringes and similar to the pattern I am enclosing, if it is for the summer season. In case it is only for winter, the cloth should be adapted to the season, since the marriage will take place during the hot season. Provide 18 arms, I say eighteen arms\(^2\), and see to the expenses yourself. If there are fringes, about eight zecchini\(^3\) would do, and if it is another type of cloth, according to its value, but if it is possible round about that price. As for the colour, white should be better, and as for other colours, not pink, neither light, nor deep pink. The cloth should stand out because there is no other cloth in addition to it. Beside this, I am begging you to get a big shawl from Madras\(^4\), elegant. Of any colour you like, as long as it is neither light or deep pink, or yellow or Napoleon colour\(^5\).

I do not remember, but I think that you did not mention receiving the laces\(^6\) I spoke to you about. If they have not been given to you, I beg you to ask a certain Mr. Carlo Barbiellini\(^7\) for them. He lives in Bigli\(^8\) road no. 1272. Inform me when you have them. Please, forgive the many things I trouble you with. Pray for me so that I may take advantage of this time.

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1 Outer garment
2 18 armlengths. The arm was a measure of length, still used by the people. It was equal to about 60 centimetres. (Cfr. M Migliorini, op. cit. pag. 181, c. 2\(^a\)).
3 The old gold coins of Venice.
4 The shawl from Madras. Cloth coming from India was in fashion. Madras is a city along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.
5 Napoleon colour. Green, which was the predominant colour used on 26 May, the day of the coronation of Napoleon as emperor. He came out of his palace in regal garments, with a broad mantle of green velvet, embroidered in gold. All the members of his entourage were also dressed in green as was laid down in the Canon. (Cfr- Barbieri, Diademi, donne e Madonne dell’ottocento, Milano).
6 The laces of Naudet
7 It is difficult to identify this person.
8 The present Via Clerici, where the palace of Biglia o Bigli was, the area of St. Protaso ad Monacos ( Cfr Famiglie notabili milanesi, op. cit.)
You know how much I have to account to God for it. Goodbye, my dearest friend, I embrace you wholeheartedly.

My compliments to your family, to dear Viscontina and to your friends. Please pray for me and get others to pray for me.

Your very affectionate Magdalene
Canossa
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene mentions the most favourable and sure chance to receive what she had asked Durini to buy: the bridal gown and a shawl from Madras.

My beloved Carolina,

22 January (1)809

I reply at once, dear friend, in order not to lose this chance, so that you may hand over what I begged you to provide for me. You may spend four or five zecchini\(^1\) for the shawl, which should be beautiful. Then hand over everything to Mr. Verdari\(^2\), since there is a chance, if it is not yet over. Otherwise you may help me when you have a chance yourself.

I wrote to the Canoness to send me some remedies so as to prevent some of the diseases mentioned by Viscontina. Kindly try to ask if she has any and send it to me, at the same time, but separately from the gown and the shawl mentioned above; I mean in another parcel.

I must beg you to run an errand for me, as well, as I still have to make some gifts in the name of the convent. I would like you to buy for me another big shawl from Madras\(^3\), costing not more than 3 zecchini. My hurry in writing does not allow me time except to embrace you, assuring you that we have been praying for the matter that concerns you so much, and we will continue doing so in earnest. Tell Meda\(^4\) whom I embrace, that I tried to ask at home if they have a chance, but for the moment they have no chance here, enclosed as I am, it is not easy for me to have a chance. I wholeheartedly thank you.

And I am always

Your Magdalene.

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\(^1\) Ancient gold coin from Venice (Ep. I, lett. 197, n. 4, pg. 308).
\(^2\) Pharmacist from the pharmacy of Porta Borsari (Ep. I, lett. 145, n. 6, pg. 239).
\(^3\) Cloth made in India (Ep. I, lett. 203, n. 4, pg. 317).
\(^4\) Giulia Meda, one of the Milanese friends (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pg. 312).
What has been bought by Durini is very good. Magdalene thanks her, but she needs another reply for Fr. Leonardi, who would like to take Monsignor Pacetti too along with him to Milan, for the spiritual Exercises to the servants. The reply should come fast.

My beloved Carolina,

9 February (1)809

I received the dress with the two big shawls, my dearest friend, and I thank you very much for everything. I am trying to find a chance to pay back the money I owe you, and I am very much obliged to you. I am writing in a great hurry, my dear and I cannot tell you everything I would like to. I have been informed that you have asked Fr. Pietro Leonardi to come to Milan to conduct the Spiritual Exercises for domestics. Through me, he wishes to inform you that he accepts your offer and that Monsignor Pacetti1, of whom I have spoken to you, is also willing to come with him. If this is alright with you, please let me know at once. Even if not, please write all the same and let me know, as soon as possible, because neither of them will accept any new assignment of preaching from others, until you have given me a reply. I embrace you wholeheartedly, I thank you, and I am

Your Magdalene
Canossa

PS. If you do not need them for the domestics' retreat, they could come for other Spiritual Exercises, at least the Canon, but a precise reply is needed.
I beg you to write to me about the price of the various items you have kindly sent to me on different occasions.

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1 The first spiritual director of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173 , n. 1, pg. 280)
Besides the retreat for the servants there will be a retreat for the hairdressers. The preaching could be done either by Fr. Leonardi or by Mons. Pacetti, according to what is agreed upon with the organizers in Milan.

My beloved Carolina,

The Abbot Gilio\(^1\) has written to Fr. Pietro, who together with Msgr. Pacetti, will leave for Milan this week. I have been told to tell you, on their behalf, that, because of their other various commitments, if it pleases the Abbot Gilio, they would start the Spiritual Exercises for the hairdressers on the fifth of the month, rather than the sixth. However, only if this can be arranged. They would not have any difficulty if it can be arranged to give the Exercises to the servants at the same time, the servants in the morning and the hairdressers in the evening. Do not be upset dear Carolina, if I tell you that they have other commitments. The Canon assures me that he will take care of them after the Exercises, and that he will come back to Milan anytime that you wish, if there is work to be done. With them I will send you the samples of the works of dear Meda\(^2\), all the books which have been commissioned to me and the money I owe you.

Dear Carolina, pray for me, many greetings from me to all our friends. I also recommend myself to their prayers. Wholeheartedly I truly embrace you, and I am

Your Magdalene

Accept the greetings of my friend here\(^3\), and of all the others. When you kindly write to me, tell me how Luisa d’Agèné, the Prioress of the Stella\(^4\) is. I know she was almost close to her death.

St. Joseph’s;\(^5\) 21 February (1)809

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1 Cannot be identified
2 Giulia Meda, of of the friends from Milan (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pg. 312).
3 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
4 The Almanac of «Milano sacro» Tip. Motta al Malcantone, of those years, mentions Luisa d’Agèné as the Prioress of the Stella Orphanage. (Ep.I, lett. 20, n. 1 , pg. 51).
5 St. Joseph’s, the name Magdalene uses henceforth to indicate the Convent in Verona.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

(No date, between 21 February and 5 March 1809)

Requests of secondary importance, one of them being the laces of Naudet, which have great value and for which she should find a buyer. Of greater interest: Magdalene tries to find another way to buy the Convent of Verona, so as not to have it as a gift.

My dearest Carolina,

To be faster, I write to you through another person, my dear friend. You will get news about me from the one who will hand over this letter to you. I have spoken to the Canon\(^1\) about your hospital as you have told me to. However, I did not go into details, which I leave to you. For the rest I do not add anything. Speak directly to him, since I am in his hands, as you know. I send you the books at this time, if not all of them, at least a part, which you and Viscontina have asked me. You will also find the acts of Faith. I do not remember whether Meda\(^2\) has ordered them. Tell her, whom I embrace wholeheartedly, that she will see also the samples of the English pattern, of both wools. See if she likes them and let me know, so that I may get the work done and then send them to her.

I wish to know if you have received from Mr. Carlo Barbiellini the Venetian laces I asked you about. This matter is important for me. Rather, I beg you to see if it is better to get some of those articles washed, so as to get more money for them. Well, do as you think best. I am sure you will take great care to sell as much as possible. The price was written on top, but since it was lowered a bit, tell me if the above mentioned Barbiellini has informed you about everything. Otherwise write to me and I will send you the prices.

I did not write neither to you, nor to Marquis Casati regarding the affair of my house, because up to now I have had no answer from here. I am resolved to try other ways, rather than to get it as a gift. Meanwhile, I include a signed sheet. In four or five days’ time, when I will have the definite answer, I will give you this trouble as well. If I can include also the money in the parcel, I will do it. Otherwise you will receive it through my brother. My friend greets you and I embrace you with my whole heart and beg you to greet all our friends for me. I assure you of all the prayers you wish.

Your Magdalene\(^3\)

\(^{1}\) Canon Pacetti, the first Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1, pg. 280).
\(^{2}\) Meda Giulia, one of their friends from Milan (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pg. 312).
\(^{3}\) NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s. The letter seems to be written by Leopoldina Naudet.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

A letter accompanying the previous one.

My Dear Carolina, I beg you to hand over the enclosed letter to the addressee, as I do not know his address. My compliments to both Religious\(^1\). I embrace you wholeheartedly, and in a great hurry.

Your Magdalene

St. Joseph’s, 5 March (1)809

\(^1\) Fr. Pietro Leonardi and Canon Pacetti who were preaching in Milan.
Fr. Leonardi and Msgr. Pacetti are engaged in the Spiritual Exercises for the servants and the hairdressers. Magdalene is very pleased and hopes that the fruits may be abundant. While Pacetti is in Milan, Durini can manifest to him her desire to have Magdalene as governess of the Hospital. On his return to Verona, he himself will refer to her his conclusions because, for the time being, she does not see the Will of God clearly.

My beloved Carolina,

I have received your very dear letter, but I beg you to write in another one, the prices of those articles you kindly bought for me. Since I could not hand over the money to the Canon because the parcel was too big, you will receive it through my brother. "I am happy that our two Religious have begun their work. May the Lord bless it with abundant fruit. Please convey my congratulations to Msgr. Pacetti and tell him on my behalf, to write to my brother, if he has some spare time, because my family wishes to have news about him. Dear Carolina, you already see that I do it for the greater good. Tell him also to remember Fusconi of whom he had been reminded already.

With regard to me and your hospital, I put the matter in the Lord's hands. I am ready to do whatever He will dispose, but I think it is a matter that needs much prayer. I, too, will get others to pray, but you pray as well and get others to pray. When the Canon returns, I will hear what has been planned. My friend, who conveys to you her greetings, asks you to convey them also to the Canon on her behalf. I thank you for your care about the Venetian laces. Do the best you can and sell them separately, if you think this will fetch more. And as Mr. Barbiellini told you, lower the prices by 15 per cent of the first price. In the parcel of the books that you say you have given to Viscontina, there was also the small book of Bellarmino's Catechism, and the novena of Jesus the Nazarene for you. Excuse me if the latter is not new, since I did not find any in Verona. On another chance I will send our friend, the books of Thesaurus. I am afraid that the Prioress of Stella is already dead, since you do not give me any news about her. I embrace you wholeheartedly, and with my deep affection, I declare I am all yours.

Verona, St. Joseph’s, 12 March (18)09

Your Magdalene

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1 Canon Pacetti, the first Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1, pg. 280).
2 Fr. Pietro Leonardi and Canon Pacetti
3 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep.I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303)
4 Not identifiable
5 A short Christian Catechism (Rome, 1597).
7 Luisa d’Agènè
General hints regarding some business which had to be solved by Marquis Bonifacio Canossa, Marquis Casati and Count Castiglioni. Another request for Durini’s intervention: Sofia Gagnière, a companion of Leopoldina Naudet, who had entered St. Joseph’s Convent with her, has to receive a cheque from Lyon, which was transferred to Durini. The latter should get it and keep the money for the time being.

My beloved Carolina,

I have received your last letter dated 22 April. Today I cannot reply to it. You do not say anything about whether Casati has paid my debt\(^1\), that is, one part of it, and Count Castiglione the other, as I agreed in this way with the former and with my brother. When you can, please inform me about it. I am begging you to send the enclosed letter to Lyon\(^2\) by post. I have taken the liberty to ask them to address the answer to you. It will contain a cheque. I beg you to get it since it is supposed to be paid to you. Keep the money because, you see that we always have accounts to settle, and it is not always easy for me to pay it back. Let me remind you that in the reply for you, there will be no separate envelope. Open the letter all the same, even though it is addressed to Lady Sofia Gagniere\(^3\).

Dear friend, I am very well and we are all at peace.

I embrace you wholeheartedly and I am all yours

Your very affectionate
Magdalene of Canossa

Verona 30 April 1809

PS. My friend conveys to you her regards.

P.S. The letter you will receive will be addressed not to Mrs. Sofia, but to Mr. Giovanni Battista Verdari\(^4\). Anyway, open it and keep the money.

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\(^1\) To settle the position of the Valenti girls.

\(^2\) One of the companions of Naudet, Sofia Gagnère (V. n. 3) was to receive a cheque for a sum of money from Lyons.

\(^3\) SOFIA GAGNÈRE was born in Lyons. She, together with her two sisters, Adele and Fanny, lost their father while they were still very young. Their mother was condemned to the guillotine in 1793. She was accused of having hidden priests and of having had a Holy Mass celebrated in her home. When she came to know Naudet, she shared with her her aspirations, followed her to Italy, and entered St. Joseph’s Convent with her. In 1816 she left with Naudet to begin a new foundation. She always remained a confidant of Naudet (Cfr. N. Dalle Vedove, Dalla Corte al Chiostro, Tip. Padri Stimmatini, Verona, 1954, I, c. 364-365).

\(^4\) The Pharmacist of Porta Borsari from whose place the Post was sorted. (Ep.I, lett. 145, n. 5)
A person, who is dear to Durini, evidently Fr. Pietro Leonardi, is ill. He asks Magdalene to thank her Milanese friend for all the care she has shown for him. The Countess should convey to the Canoness, information about a lady, who will be very good for directing the work of the Converts in Milan.

My beloved Carolina,

Verona, 25 May 1809
St. Joseph’s

I am very pleased that at last you have been reimbursed. Kindly excuse this delay a result of the affairs which made my brother forget about it. The person you are asking about is in Verona. I have seen him once after his return, but he is in bed with fever. At first it looked serious. But now his illness is improving, and this morning I had even better news.

Yesterday, he sent another of his friends to me, to ask me to convey his thanks to you and the gratitude he feels for all you have done for him. At the same time, he begs you to join the highly esteemed Canon Tosi 1 regarding the affair you know about.

Then, my dear, I am begging you to spare me the time to write to the Canoness 2 . Inform her that somebody whom I greatly esteem, has suggested a lady who could be suitable as superior or head of the Converts 3 . She is in Venice, where for 20 years she has been in charge as Vice—Superior of the Home of the Converts of Venice. It will not be difficult for you to guess who suggested her to me. But what is necessary is that we need a prompt and decisive answer, since she is already requested for in another place. My dearest friend, accept the compliments of my friend in Verona 4 . Pray the Lord for me and believe in my great affection for you. Many greetings to Viscontina, Meda, the Canoness and to all the others.

Your Magdalene of Canossa

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1 Canon LUIGI TOSI, Bishop of Pavia, born at Busto Arsizio on 6.7.1763. He died at Pavia on 13.12.1845. He was educated by the Somaschi priests at Lugano, was a seminarian in Milan and Pavia, and became a Canon and Parish priest of the Basilica of St. Ambrose. In 1823 he was made Bishop of Pavia. A highly educated man, he was the friend of the best writers of his time. He was also the spiritual director of Manzoni, his wife Enrichetta Blondel and his mother Giulia Beccaria (cf. U.Montini, in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol XII, c. 364-365).
2 Countess Teresa Galline of Chabons. Here however she seems to have a wider responsibility, that is, of the Home for the Converts of Milan, planned by Fr. De Vecchi and his collaborators.
3 From a similar Institution in Venice (Ep.I, lett. 54, n. 4-5)
4 Leopoldina Naudet
TO CAROLINA DURIINI

Magdalene points out to Durini the surest means to send to her the remainder of the remainder of the money of the cheque from Lyon and the amount that Marquis Casati, who is the intermediary between the grand-mother Valenti and her grand-daughter, should send her.

My most beloved Carolina

You make me laugh by mentioning that you have been stealing. When doing your accounts, you and Viscontina always find that you have debts, instead of credits. Kindly hand over to Mr. Marzorati the money of the cheque from Lyon. If I am not mistaken, you have handed to him also the dress you have bought for me. Give him also the money, in the name of Mr. Giovanni Battista Verdari of Verona. If Marquis Casati agrees, he may hand over to Marzorati, even that money you say he has to send to me. I presume it is for the Valenti. Send this too in the name of the same Verdari. Convey to him as well as to our Viscontina and to all our friends my distinguished greetings. I embrace you with all my affection, and convey to you also those of my friend in Verona.

Your Magdalene of Canossa

PS. I am waiting for the answer regarding the vice-superior of Venice. Fr. Pietro is better.

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1 The person who carries the mail
2 Money of Sofia Gagnère
3 The Pharmacist of the pharmacy at Porta Borsari in Verona
4 Money for the family of the Valenti sisters.
5 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5 pg. 303).
6 Retreat for Converts in Venice (Ep. I, lett. 211, n. 3, pg. 326).
7 Fr. Pietro Leonardi (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 4, pag. 12).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

( written between 1 June and 26 July 1809)

The State Property Office of Verona insists that the sum for the purchase of the House in the area of St. Zeno Major be handed over. Magdalene has asked to refer to the Minister of Finance in Milan and was told to draw up an appeal. She inserts it in her letter so that Durini may show it to Marquis Casati, who should correct it, if necessary, and then forward it.

My beloved Carolina,

I thank you for the money I have received according to your account, my dearest Carolina. This time I have to trouble you to complete the affair of the house we dealt with, when I was in Milan. But, before anything else, tell me, please, how is our dear Meda? The Canoness wrote to me that she is seriously ill.

You Milanese hurry so much to sanctify yourselves, so much so that when you get sick, you make me tremble. Let us return to business. I am inserting an appeal for His Excellency, the Minister Pensa, as they told me to do here. Note that I have no debts here, regarding the interest of the capital, having paid up everything before sending you the enclosed appeal. Moreover, note that a person known to that minister told me that he is favourable to this kind of work of charity and the same person does not doubt that he will sign it. Besides, note that, being again constantly pressed by our State Property Office for the permit of the capital, I asked for a delay, so as to refer the matter to Milan. I was granted it, but, then, it was done only orally. I was also told to ask for the same thing in writing, as I did, inserting also the request that it be dealt with in Milan, and adding for our Director, the copy of the appeal, which I am including here. The other day, I had to write to Marquis Casati for the Valentí girls. I mentioned to him this appeal I am sending to you and I begged him to involve himself in it, with his usual kindness.

I think that, when I have concluded this, I will have completed my business with the Royal State Property Office. Cordially greet all our friends for me. Recommend me to the Lord, as I am more in need than usual. Full of gratitude and affection, I embrace you with my whole heart.

P.S. If by chance the appeal is not accepted for lack of some legal terms, besides the other troubles I am giving you, kindly get it copied again, as you already have papers signed by me.

Your very affectionate
Magdalene of Canossa

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1 The monastery of St. Joseph
2 Giulia Meda, one of the friends from Milan (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pg. 312).
3 Count GIUSEPPE ANTONIO PENSA, Director General of the State Property Office and of the Forests. He was also member of the Council of Auditors, who, with the Legislative Council composed the COUNCIL OF STATE. He died on 13.10.1812, ‘with all the spiritual assistance of the Church’ as Teresa Confalonieri wrote to her husband in lett. 29 of the «Confalonieri Correspondence », op. cit. pag. 44, n. 3.
4 The two Valentí sisters
5 The Office that deals with the administration of State Property (Ep.I, lett. 176, n.1, pag. 284).
6 Any inexact legal terms or juridical terminology.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Countess Giulia Meda has offered to try to sell some miniatures. The donor is a very virtuous person who needs some clarifications from Durini.

My beloved friend,

The other day I wrote to Meda\(^1\) that I would send back to her the miniatures, that she kindly showed me how to finish. I have this chance, so, my dear, I address them to you so that you can hand them over to her. The person who will give them to you is Mr. Annesio Fusconi\(^2\), a person of great virtue, who is coming to Milan for business. I recommend him to you in case he is in need of your assistance. I embrace you heartily and I declare myself all yours. My friend\(^3\) conveys to you her compliments.

Verona 26 July 1809

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene of Canossa\(^4\)

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\(^1\) Giulia Meda, one of the friends from Milan (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pg. 312).

\(^2\) Not identifiable

\(^3\) Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).

\(^4\) NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s handwriting. The letter must have been written by Leopoldina Naudet.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The procedure for purchasing the Convent of Verona is getting difficult because of the pressure from the State Property Office, that imposes the payment of the sum in three instalments, very close to each other, and without further ado. Magdalene, who has no capital, tries to find a way to solve the problem in the best way possible. She asks, through Durini, also for the help of Senator Carlotti.

My beloved Carolina,

I am sending you the letter for Carlotti. Read it and please add the address, which I do not know. I received a letter from the State Property Office here. It tells me that by order of the Minister of Finance, I should pay in one year, the total amount for the house, in three instalments: the first by the end of next December, the second in April of next year and lastly the third one in September of the same year. Therefore, since I cannot afford to pay any of these, when the Viceroy comes this way, (they say it is probable because of the armistice), I am thinking of presenting the appeal to him myself, so as to get a further extension, that I can fulfil. I do not say anything about this to Carlotti, thinking it is better not to. However, in case, dear Carolina, you think otherwise, burn the letter I have sent for him and on your advice I will write another one.

I owe you many thanks for what you have done for Mr. Annesio Fusconi whom I recommended to you. He wrote to me begging me to thank you also on his behalf. As for me I am not surprised as I know your friendship for me, and I was sure that you would involve yourself for a person I recommend to you. Goodbye, my dear friend. Greet Meda, the Canoness Melzi and Viscontina for me, and believe me from my heart.

My friend conveys to you her greetings.

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene of Canossa

Verona, 3 August 1809

2 Eugenio Beauharnais
3 Person recommended by Durini
4 Giulia Meda, one of the friends from Milan. (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pg. 312).
5 NB – The date at the bottom is 3 July 1809. It is a mistake because Magdalene thanks for a help, requested in the letter dated 26 July 1809. Therefore, the date must be 3 August 1809
Magdalene’s plan was to ask the Viceroy directly for a greater extension of time for the payment, but since the trip of the Prince was postponed, the Marchioness turned her pressing appeal to Carlotti, who rebuked her for not having asked at once for his help.

My beloved Carolina,

I received such a fine letter from Senator Carlotti, rebuking me very gently for not having told him the reply of the Minister. Because the Viceroy’s visit to this side did not come about, and it does not seem to be close at hand, I thought of writing him the letter I have inserted, begging you, as usual, to add the address, as I do not know the titles of Carlotti. I confess that I cannot pay one thousand ducats within 5 months. At the first chance I will send you a knitted jacket. Kindly convey my greetings to Marquis Casati and tell him that I received the 1100 Milanese liras for Valenti, that I will send the receipt at the first occasion, and I will try to write to him at another time. Greet our friends for me and believe me heartily.

My friend greets you. Be of good cheer, good-bye.

Your Magdalene

Verona S. Joseph’s, 17 August 1809
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Through Durini, Magdalene of Canossa sends Marquis Casati the receipt for the money received for the Valenti sisters. She also conveys other news of secondary importance.

My beloved Carolina, I beg you to hand the enclosed letter to Casati. Convey to him my greetings and kindly ask him to hand it over to the lady Valenti. When you see Meda embrace her for me and tell her not to think that I forgot her errand, but that, as much as I tried to search, until now I did not find that wood-cutter she is looking for. However, I will continue searching and I will write to her what I can find. Tell her also, that regarding the flowers I myself did not write to her that it was possible to help her, because Mr. Pinali told me that he would inform her about them himself. With that chance I will send her the finished jackets. I embrace you wholeheartedly. Accept the greetings of my friend and believe me heartily

Your very affectionate Magdalene

Verona 1 October 1809

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1 Grandmother of the two Valenti sisters
2 Giulia Meda, one of her friends from Milan (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pag. 312).
3 A florist from Verona
A year has passed by since Magdalene’s last encounter with Durini. Magdalene remembers it with nostalgia, because she sees no chance, at least in the nearest future, of meeting her again.

My dearest friend,

I enclose a letter to be handed over to the Canoness. I have been asked by the one who wrote it to recommend her to the same. Convey my greetings to her too, and tell her that I heard very good comments about her conduct. I also beg you to tell Casati that I know that Mr. Antonio Valenti\(^1\) has written to his mother\(^2\) and I think that he sent her a receipt, in which there is the summary of all the amount that I have and that I will send to him at the first opportunity. Convey my regards also to him. My dear friend, soon it will be a year since I had the pleasure of seeing you. Remember me to the Lord, since this year I will not be able to embrace you.

Good-bye, dear friend. A thousand greetings to everyone. Accept the regards of my friend\(^3\) here, and believe me heartily

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene of Canossa

Verona 25 October 1809

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1 The brother of Giacomo Valenti, the father of the two Valenti girls
2 Teresa Valenti, also called Marianna
3 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pag. 303).
Magdalene has not received any news from Milan for two months, although she is waiting for urgent answers. The most pressing, which makes her painfully admit her poverty, is that for a long time she has not received any money for the Valenti girls who are in her boarding house. Durini should ask Casati to see to it as soon as possible. She also asks whether there will be any restrictions regarding the number of convents.

My dearest friend,

I want to know whether you have returned from the countryside, my dear Carolina, not knowing whether you are living or dead in Milan. I have sent the jackets to Meda¹. I have written to the Canoness and to Casati. I do not know if the former has received the things I sent her and what has happened to all the rest. I depend on your usual goodness to receive some news. Through this letter I inform you that Marquis Casati wrote to me two months ago that he has some money to be sent to you for the Valenti² daughters and for their father. When he sends it, if you do not have a chance soon, see whether you can send it through Marzorati, if he can send it immediately. Otherwise send it by post. With you, my dear Carolina, I can speak freely. I do not dare do so with others. As you know, when one is at the head of a work of charity, however small it may be, as you may have noted, there are moments when it is not possible to save even a small sum of money. On the other hand, the persons who have to receive it are in such dire need, that you really have to give them something. So I appeal to your friendship and tact. Without disclosing what I have just told you, because I am poor and proud, see if Casati can get the money and then send it to me urgently. Accept the greetings of my friend. Convey mine to all our friends in Milan, particularly to Visconti. Remember me to the Lord. Love me and believe that I am all yours

Verona 5 December 1809

Your Magdalene

P.S. Ask Casati if he knows anything about the clauses for the restrictions of the Monasteries³. I had written to him about this some time back.

¹ Giulia Meda, one of the friends from Milan (Ep. I, lett. 200, n. 2, pag. 312).
² The Valenti sisters
³ RESTRICTIONS OF MONASTERIES. According to the dispositions of the Government, in 1805, many monasteries had been closed down. The Religious were forced to join Convents with a larger number of members, or those that were more involved in charitable works.
Magdalene’s correspondence with her Milan friends is regular. She thanks everybody, especially Marquis Casati. She now reveals a secret to Durini: she has been invited by the two brothers, the Counts Cavanis, to Venice, in order to organize the work they have started for poor girls. Her relatives do not know anything about this yet, but she is making her plans. She therefore begs Durini to tell her if there is any Lady she knows who will be going to that city. She asks her to hand over letters to her for her sister, Paola Taverna.

My dearest friend

I hope you have arrived safely in Milan and that you continue to be in good health. In order to spare myself having to write two letters, for lack of time, I ask you to do me a favour regarding what I want to write. Please tell the Canoness that Ferranti is very happy about the trunk. She will receive a letter from her. On my part too, tell her that I embrace her. Thank her very much for the wool she has sent to me and for the books on the life of your dear sister. I read it with great spiritual advantage. Please tell her also that she had written to me that she would send me two copies, one for me and one for Fr. Pietro. But I found four copies. Ask her if these are all for us, or whether we can pass them around so as to do good to many more people. Then tell Marquis Casati, giving him my compliments, that I have promptly received the money of the Valenti family. Tell him to tell Lady Marianna that I will not fail to do all that is possible for their advantage. Tell him also that when he finds a suitable moment, that he would do a great charity to procure, as they say, an assurance for the dowry of these girls.

What you said you heard from the Canon regarding my going to Venice, if nothing happens, it is going to come about because they wrote to me that they want me there by the end of this month. How nice it would have been if this had happened last month. Then I could have joined you and enjoyed your company. Do not say a word about this to anyone, since my family knows nothing about it yet. Wait for a few more days before talking about it. If you come to know that some lady from Milan has an occasion of going to Venice at this time, send her to me with the excuse of giving her a letter or something else for me. Then, if I have to leave, I could join her, without inconveniencing her, but only for the sake of company, although as you know, I will be taking a companion. I would also be grateful for a letter of recommendation for your sister. This is only because, when one goes to a strange place, it is good to have a few acquaintances there. In this case, it is to come to know the sister of my dear Carolina, to whom I am so attached and to whom I owe so much.

I received your dear letter, when I had already written the greater part of this one. You will be served with the greatest attention. I will also enclose the funeral prayers for the archpriest Balestra.

Accept the greetings of my Friend. Believe me to be with all my affection

Verona 7 April 1810

Your Magdalene

1 Not identifiable.
2 The Biography of the deceased Teresa Trotti Bentivoglio Arconati.
3 Family of the two Valenti sisters
4 Grandmother of the two Valenti sisters
5 Canon Pacetti, the first superior of the Institute (Ep. I, lett. 173, n. 1, pg. 280).
6 PAOLA TROTTI BENTIVOGLIO married to TAVERNA
7 The Archpriest of St. Vitale who died during that time (Ep. I, lett. 69, n. 1, pg. 125).
Magdalene is ready to leave for Venice, but she still must have the consent of Canon Pacetti. All the same, Durini admires her courage, an admiration that Magdalene tries to play down, with documentations that she thinks are very convincing.

My beloved Carolina,

After writing to you my last letter, I thought it necessary to share some of my reflections with the Canon before fixing my departure. Therefore, my dear, I cannot tell you for sure, as long as I do not have a decisive answer. Then, I will write to you with solicitude, and in that meeting I will tell you about what the Canoness wants to know about the cost of the trunk sent by Marzorati. I have one of the books that you asked me to get you. I assure you they will give me the other book before the octave of Easter. I will try my best to get it. Regarding your brother-in-law’s sister passing by, I would not mind if she proceeds to Venice because of the mail, or if she has no place in her carriage. So as not to stop in any inn, I would wish to go directly in my carriage and with the mail, to Venice. So, if she will sleep in Verona for just one night, we could agree on how to meet. But in this uncertainty, if the lady, as I told you, stays for a night, you could give her a letter for me, but wait to tell her anything more until I write to you. You make so many beautiful assumptions, my dear, on my supposed courage and generosity. I assure you, with the confidence of a friend, that when it comes to words, I have plenty. But as to facts, I have neither one nor the other. If I were to tell you that Canon Pacetti has asked me not to go to Venice, it will be because of the lack of what you think I have. If I tell you that I am going, you would imagine that I have what you believe me to have, and that Monsignor has gone ahead with the matter. Since I am only at the beginning, I feel very uncertain, and may have to withdraw. Please, pray for me to the Lord that He may grant me what I need and He may forgive me for the resistance I showed when I should have served Him. My friend conveys to you her regards. Goodbye, my dear, love me and believe me to be,

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE of the COURIERS, DISPATCH-RIDERS and MESSENGERS

ARRIVAL

Tuesday –the courier from the Departments of Adige - Mella - Serio in the morning
from Trieste - Istria – Venice and its State – Germany and the North after midday

DEPARTURE

Every day - the courier for the Department of Agogna and for the French Empire, including Spain, Holland, etc. and the ex Piemonte, excluding Alessandria, Tortona and Voghera at noon

Monday – The dispatch-rider for the Departments of Serio, Mella, Adige, Upper Po, Mincio, Crostolo, Panaro, Reno, Rubicone, lower Po and the Venetian States.

The stage-coach for Como and nearby places at the Angelus

The courier for Piacenza, Parma, Guastalla and Genova

At 7 o’clock in the evening
Your friend,
Magdalene Canossa

Verona April 15, 1810

NB. From a copy of the Trivulziano Archives — Fondo Malvezzi. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s writing.
The departure for Venice has been delayed. Meanwhile, Magdalene of Canossa is apprehensive for her Convent of the 'Terese', because it seems that the decree of suppression of the Monasteries is imminent.

My dearest friend,

Through Mr. Marzorati I am going to send you the two funeral Prayers of archpriest Balestra. I could not send you the other two books you asked for; one, because I have not got it yet, and the other because it is too bulky. I have not taken advantage of the occasion of Marchioness Saporiti’s visit, that you so kindly had procured for me, because of the delay of my journey, which will probably not be before the middle of May. Entrust me much to the Lord during this time of great need. Here I am again to beg you, and also Marquis Casati, to inform me as soon as possible, if the news about the restrictions and suppressions of Monasteries is true. My Terese commend themselves to you and to Casati. Quickly, I embrace you with all my heart and convey to you my friend’s regards.

Your very affectionate
Magdalene Canossa

St. Josesph’s, April 27, 1810

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1 The expedition of the letter spoken of as well as the preceding one.
2 The deceased Archpriest of Santa Maria Antica
3 The sister of Durini’s brother-in-law
4 RESTRICTIONS. They are a consequence of the Napoleonic Agreement signed on 16 July 1801 in Paris by Cardinal Consalvi and Napoleon. By this, the Pontiff acknowledged the definitive confiscation of the ecclesiastic property and accepted the new dimensions of the ecclesiastical areas. Without taking into account the excessive organisational articles which the First Consul imposed on the French clergy, to control teaching in the seminaries, the obligation to follow the French regulations, the authorisation of the government necessary for a cleric going to Rome, or for a papal bull to be published and similar matters. These were immediately rejected by Pius VII. The agreement regulated the religious life of France and the relationships between the Government and the Holy See for a whole century. Napoleon got numerous benefits from the Agreement, but so did Pius VII. (Cfr. F. Moroni, Corso di Storia, S.E.I. Turin, 1959, vol. 3°, pgg.66-68).

The Napoleonic Code was deposited in Verona, 24 March 1810. It would come into effect in April.
2 Sisters of the Monastery in Verona
3 NB. The date and the signature are in Magdalene’s writing. From a photocopy in the Trivulziano Archives — Fondo Malvezzi.
Magdalene is about to leave for Venice. There are too many things she has to arrange for before leaving. Anyway, she wants to announce it to her friend and begs her to pay attention to the matter of Lyons, because she has no recent news about it. In Verona, her friend Naudet will take her place. Durini could write to her if she needs anything.

My beloved Carolina

I am writing at the time of my departure, overwhelmed by affairs as you can imagine. I will be in Venice on Friday evening, God willing. Saturday, being the day that some good work\textsuperscript{1} will be started, please pray for me and get others to pray to the Lord so that everything will turn out well.

I will write to you when I arrive. My friend\textsuperscript{2}, who is taking my place, is going to send you the books at the first opportunity, and I beg you, my dear, if you have any news about the convents, please write directly to my friend, if you permit it, as you have always done, in so many cases, when, out of friendship, you have always helped. My dear friend, I beg you again to let me know if Viscontina, whom I greet now, has received the letter I sent her, asking for information about the matter of Lyons\textsuperscript{3}. I wrote a letter to her, I think more than two months ago. As I have not received any answer, I am afraid she did not receive it, and the matter of Lyons is important to me. Please, let my friend here know about this matter and whether you have received any letter from that city. I beg your pardon, dear Carolina, because I trouble you so much. Your friendship and the trust I have in you, makes me daring. Goodbye, I embrace you. Believe in me wholeheartedly. Please give my greetings to Meda\textsuperscript{4}. Ask her if it would be possible to do something for the flowers there, because now we can do what it was not possible to do last year.

With all my heart

Your very affectionate friend,

Magdalene

Verona, May 8, 1810

PS. Please send the letters to Leopoldina. Address them to “Mr. Giovanni Battista Verdi\textsuperscript{5}, Verona”. Near the seal add these words, “To be delivered intact.”

\textsuperscript{1} She had to give a valid orientation to the work of the CAVANIS ANTON’ANGELO and MARCANTONIO. These two brothers were born in Venice (in 1772 and 1774 respectively). Their parents were Count Giovanni and a certain Basaligo Basadonna. They received a deeply religious education in the family and began their training as magistrates of the Republic. Anthony became secretary of the ducal chancellery, while his brother became an extraordinary notary. Both became priests, the first in 1793, the second in 1806. In the last years of the Republic, they assembled in their home a cenacle of priests and clergymen with whom they discussed philosophy and apologetics. By being with young people and from the experience of their religious demands, they founded for them a Marian Congregation. Later they founded the Schools of Charity for poor boys and, in spite of a thousand difficulties, they turned them into regular schools from the Elementary to the Grammar School, for both the sexes, in two separate branches. They finally founded a Congregation of Priests and Teachers of the Schools of Charity, a much appreciated work even today. Mark Anthony died in 1853 in Venice. Anthony Angelo became blind and died in 1858 (Cfr. L. Berra in Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. III, pag. 1210, c. 2a). Having known Magdalene of Canossa, they asked for her collaboration in the work for the poor young girls, which had been started in 1808.

\textsuperscript{2} Leopoldina Naudet

\textsuperscript{3} Collection of bills of the Gagnère

\textsuperscript{4} Giulia Meda, one of the friends of Milan
NB. A photocopy of the letter at the Fondo Malvezzi of the Trivulziano Archives in Milan.
In Venice, Magdalene is the guest of Lady Loredana Priúli. There she looks after the school of the Boarding House of the Parish of the Holy Spirit, so as to give it a sound orientation. She is trying to complete her work before planning her return to Verona. Meanwhile, she goes to visit Durini’s sister, Countess Paola Taverna.

My beloved Carolina,

I thank you and Marquis Casati for the letters both of you wrote to me, and which I received the other day. I will perhaps take advantage of the charity of Marquis Casati in favour of this Conservatory of the poor Capuchins. Meanwhile, my dear Carolina, I have to trouble you again. Please send me, as soon as possible, a copy of the Catechism that you use to instruct the sick in the hospital. If it is possible, give me a brief description about your work there, as there are some good ladies here who would like to imitate what is being done in Milan, since they know that the Sovereign is in favour of it. But here, it is to be carried out as a private enterprise. My dear Carolina, I think you will be very happy about the fact that both of us can cooperate in this good work, at least with these papers. I am very well. I am staying with a certain Lady Priuli whom I think you might know. I come whenever I can to this Boarding House of the Holy Spirit Parish, where the school started five days ago. When this is stabilized a little better, I will return home, if God permits. I could only go once to visit your sister, who, as you can imagine, welcomed me with such goodness. The considerable distance between our houses and my activities, makes it impossible for me to have the pleasure to see her more often. Sometimes, I felt as if I was with you because, although she does not physically look like you, at times her speech reminds me of you. I am going to see her again as soon as possible.

Do me the charity to pray much to the Lord that I may do well the little I have to do. My best regards to our friends, whom I beg to pray for me. My greetings to Marquis Casati. I embrace you with all my heart. Very truly yours,

Your very affectionate friend,

Magdalene Canossa

Venice, June 3, 1810

1 Franciscan Order for women
2 «The Little Catechism», of Bellarmino
3 Pious Union for the Hospital
4 Priúli Loredana Tron
5 It was along the Zattere, where there was a Convent next to the Church of the Holy Spirit. Magdalene of Canossa was teaching doctrine to the girls in the sacristy of that Church, which at present has been greatly renovated. The present choir is where the old sacristy was. The school instead was an activity of the works of the Cavanis brothers, who had called Magdalene of Canossa to organise the same work at the beginning, and to prepare the teachers who were called «le Donzelle», as they were in the process of becoming a regular institution (Canossian Archives - Venice).
6 Paola Trotti Bentivoglio Taverna, sister of C. Durini
Magdalene has returned to Verona and gives news to Durini about her sister, Paola. She informs her of the rather unsuccessful attempt of the Venetian Ladies to organize visits to the hospital as it is done in Milan. Nevertheless, she asks also for the Rules of the assistance by men, because she is convinced that the goodwill of those gentlemen will make it possible to establish the much needed hospital assistance.

My beloved Carolina,

I am finally back in Verona after a journey, my dear Carolina, and am in very good health. I am pleased to send you very good news of the health of your sister¹, whom I had the pleasure to see before my departure. She troubled herself to come and visit me many times, but she could never find me. I thank you sincerely for the book for the hospital, and for the rules regarding it. Those Venetian ladies wishing to be involved, had a booklet on the matter since a few years ago. Yet the way of supporting the work frightens them. They have decided to set up first a fund and then start visiting the sick in the hospital. They want to follow your way of doing that. Therefore, they have organized a way to form it. I can see very well that it will take a long time but past experiences suggest that this is the best way. To train themselves, they will begin first by visiting the small hospital for elderly ladies. Then, when the funds are settled, they will go to the bigger hospital. I could give you some more details, but I will defer them for next time, because now I am very busy. However, do not think that I have finished troubling you about this business. It seems that truly the Lord wishes to have the same charity done for the poor and sick of Venice, as is being done in Milan. All the more so, since it can be done with a government that encourages it. You have given me the rules for the ladies. Now I beg you to send me those for the men. Please, without hurrying, tell me also how the two Unions are connected, and how they help each other. Please give my regards to our dear Marquis Casati to whom I do not write now, so as not to multiply letters. Please thank him for me because of his charity for the Capuchin Sisters² who have obtained a favourable Decree from Milan. Now they are expecting confirmation from Paris. Then, please tell him to have the kindness to give the money of Valenti³ to Count Alfonso Castiglioni⁴. I embrace you with all my heart. I send you regards from my friend who is very grateful to you because you have willingly accepted the troubles she gives you, and I also thank you for this. I beg to remind you about the matter of Lyons, though it seems superfluous. I send my best regards to your family. Again I declare with all my heart, that I am

Your Magdalene⁵

Verona, 10 July, 1810

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¹ Countess Paola Taverna, sister of C. Durini
² Order of Capuchin Sisters
³ The family of the two Valenti sisters
⁴ The father of Francesca Castiglioni, the wife of Bonifacio of Canossa, brother of Magdalene
⁵ NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s
Magdalene communicates having received the sum of money sent by Marquis Casati and by the Canoness.

My dearest Carolina

Just a few lines to tell you that I have received the money sent to me by Marquis Casati. I am going to write to you a longer letter on the occasion of Lady Teresa Frasconi’s visit.

When you see the Canoness, please give her my regards and also tell her that I have received the money she sent by way of Canon Tosi.

Best regards to our friends. Please pray for me to the Lord, love and trust me

Yours very truly, dearest Carolina,

Magdalene Canossa

Verona, July 10, 1810

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1 The wife of the Venetian aristocrat, Alessandro Frasconi.
2 A Canon in Milan, then in 1823 Bishop of Pavia.
3 NB. A letter with many mistakes – Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
An Augustinian clergyman is going to Milan. Magdalene asks Durini to show him some of the Milanese charitable works so that he may be stimulated to promote them.

My beloved Carolina,

I am taking advantage of the occasion of Lady Teresa Frasconi’s visit, to confirm good news from my side, and to tell you, at the same time, how much I was struck by the piety of this lady. A certain Fr. Michael, who was a very good Augustinian Religious, is coming to Milan with her. He wishes to know about the holy works carried on there. If, without troubling yourself, you could let him see some of them, I think, you will do a double good, by consoling such a good soul and stimulating him to make others do the same. Coming to Milan, he would also ask you to enlighten him on how to obtain a permission he will tell you about. He is already supported on Lady Teresa, but if you know any other suitable way, please do suggest it to him. Please, do forgive my new secretary. I cannot get the one I used to have.

Give my best regards to our friends as well as to your family. Fr. Pietro is back from Venice, where he has done some astonishing good work. Good-bye, dear friend. I embrace you with my heart and beg you to pray for me. Goodbye

Very truly yours, dearest Carolina.

St. Joseph’s, Verona 29 July, 1810

Your very affectionate friend,
Magdalene of Canossa

P.S. Best regards from Leopoldina.

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NB. The letter is poorly written (has many errors).

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1 The wife of the Venetian noble, Alessandro Frasconi
2 One of the members of the suppressed convents
For the matter of Lyons, it is necessary to get the signature of the French Minister. Therefore, Magdalene begs Durini to ensure that the paper is signed by him. She also suggests to her to settle a prisoner who needs much help. She asks her to buy a gift.

My beloved Carolina,

I have received your last letter and what was included. I am going to answer next time about it. Meanwhile, I thank you for your solicitude. I beg you to tell me if I can send you the Letter of Attorney when it is ready, in order to get the French Minister\(^1\) to sign it, as is mentioned in the letter I received. Now I am going to trouble you again in order to beg you to get something for me. I do not know what to tell you. I mean that I have to make a small gift to the wife of a person who did a favour for me. The gift might be something of good taste, no offence to God, and not too costly, at most about two or three zeccini\(^2\). Therefore, I leave it to you.

The person you told me you find it difficult to help, because there are too many others in need, needs a different kind of protection from you, because, as you already know, he has been in prison for one and a half years. Therefore, if you can help him, I commend him to you, although I think it is superfluous to do so. In the same situation is the person you are caring for, through your friends who come to the hospital in Milan. I think you saw her in your sister’s house, the last time. Good-bye, my dearest Carolina. I am in a hurry, I do not have anything else to tell you. My friend\(^3\) conveys her regards to you. Trust me with all your heart as

Your very affectionate friend,
Magdalene Canossa

Verona, 9 August, 1810

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\(^1\) It is still about the cheque which has not been collected yet. It must be countersigned with a signature in France.

\(^2\) Ancient gold coins of Venice (Ep.I, lett. 197, n.4, pg. 308), literally, small gold coins

\(^3\) Leopoldina Naudet  (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
Magdalene explains more clearly about the gift she would like to make to a lady.

My dearest friend,

With great pleasure I have received from Marquis Casati news of you, my dear friend. Regarding the debts that you say you have with me, I think it is a question of your usual scruples, because if we had to make an account, I think I would be in debt to you, rather than you with me. With regard to that piece of jewellery I asked you to procure for me so that I may offer it as a gift to a certain Lady, I think you are right about the fact that everything can stir up vanity, because it is possible to misuse everything. But when it is a question of honest things, and according to one’s status, there is nothing to be said. Therefore, I beg you to do me the favour and procure it for me. As I already told you, the gift should be something of good taste and not too costly. It can be a shawl, fashionable nowadays, or something to wear on the head, as you think best. I am sorry to keep disturbing you always. It is because of your great goodness towards me.

My friend\(^1\) conveys to you her best regards. Please, do the same for me with the good friends of Milan. Good-bye my dear, pray for me to the Lord and trust my sincere friendship.

Your very affectionate friend,

Magdalene of Canossa\(^2\)

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\(^1\) Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).

\(^2\) NB. The letter is very poorly written. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

After many letters written by Magdalene’s more-or-less educated secretaries, which explains the spelling and grammatical mistakes, this is a letter totally written by Magdalene of Canossa herself. Unfortunately it was copied from a typewritten one, because the Canossian House of Florence which owned it, declared that the original had been lost.

Magdalene of Canossa starts this letter with her personal impressions of Sr. Vincenza, but Marquis Casati who is visiting the Convent of St. Joseph, gives her the sad news of the death of Durini’s aunt.

Magdalene consoles her and offers her condolences.

My beloved Carolina,

As you can see, dear Carolina, I have more energy. I am starting to write by myself again. It means that my health is good. Now, I am going to tell you what you wanted to know about Sr. Vincenza1. At the time of my stay in the place where she lives, I went to see her three times. Seeing all the material, it seems we cannot judge differently from what everybody else has judged. With regard to the person, I did not treat her intimately. All the more so because she tried very hard to hide everything that even had I the wish, that I really did not have, as I am just the perfect opposite of what she is, I would not have been able to do so. Moreover, to tell you sincerely, certain sentiments accidentally expressed by her during her speech made me have a great veneration for her.

Just after I had written these few lines, I received a letter from Marquis Casati, who notified me, to my regret, how sad you are, my dear friend, because of your bereavement. It is your pain that makes me sad, since the virtues perfectly practiced by your excellent aunt2 makes me see her death as the beginning of true peace.

I am reminded, my dear Carolina, of a saying by St. Paul: “I have finished the course. I have served you faithfully.” It seems to me it is apt for all she did, and I think she now owns the crown God had prepared for so faithful a bride. Anyway, I will not omit to have Masses celebrated for her, although her soul will perhaps not need them. As for you then, you know my dear, it seems to me that God detaches you slowly from everything, because He wants you to be all for Himself alone. I assure you that although I am sorry to see you afflicted, I am consoled to see how much He loves you. Please, pick up courage and take care of yourself, as much as possible.

I regret to bother you with some small things, even now when you are absorbed in serious thoughts. I beg your pardon for this, but I cannot do otherwise. I would like you to tell me, if you remember, the cost of the wool you sent me last year. My dear friend, I write a little every day to get used to it, little by little. Today I have received your esteemed letter and I thank you for it. Tomorrow, you will see the letter I have interrupted and I myself will hand it over to Fr. Cristofoli 4 and tell him what you conveyed to me.

Accept the best regards from my friend5 here and convey mine to our Visconti. Be sure of our feeble prayers. Please, pray for me too. A thousand greetings to Meda, to the Canoness and to all the others. Love me and believe me to be from my heart,

Your very affectionate friend,
Magdalene Canossa

St. Joseph’s, 18 October 1810

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1 Sr. Vincenza: not identifiable
2 The death of her aunt, a cloistered nun
4 Cristofoli, Fr. Giuseppe: a priest of the “Brotherhood”
5 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
Magdalene begs Durini and Marquis Casati, her most direct and busy collaborators to carry out both duties already mentioned in other letters or of ordinary administration.

My dearest Carolina

Forgive me if I delayed so much in writing to you, after having received what you sent me so promptly, dear Carolina. The many things I have to do sometimes prevent me from carrying out my duty. Therefore, I thank you now, and I assure you that I liked everything. Everything was according to my taste. I beg you to trouble yourself to write to me how much was the cost of the wool you sent me last year, the cost per ounce\(^1\), because perhaps I will ask you to provide me with some, again. Furthermore, please tell me something about the outcome of the Letter of Attorney for Lyons, as it concerns me greatly.

Convey my compliments to Marquis Casati, and tell him that with regard to the letter we agreed upon, I could not do anything yet, as I had no opportunity at all. Cordially greet my good friends for me, and accept the greetings that my friend\(^2\) here conveys to you. Recommend me to the Lord, and believe my sincerity as I heartily, and in full friendship, sign myself
dearest Carolina

Your Magdalene
Canossa\(^3\)

Verona 21 October 1810

Turn the sheet

P.S. I always forget to tell you that Fr. Luigi Medici\(^4\) thanks you a lot for the pictures you sent him, and although the person who brought them, lost them on the way. In spite of this, he expresses to you the same gratitude and thankfulness.

Magdalene

Verona 21 October 1810

\(^1\) Ounce, 1/12 of a pound, which is made up of twelve ounces. The Pound is a measure of weight, which in the metric system would be equal to about 1/3 of a kilogram. (Cfr. Migliorini, op. cit. pag. 926).
\(^2\) Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
\(^3\) NB. Only the signatures are Magdalene’s.
\(^4\) A religious (1771-1847) of the Congregation of St. Philip Neri
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Back in Venice, Magdalene finds the noble ladies fully involved in charitable activity in the hospice for old people, and ready to visit the sick in the big hospital. However, they need books on the Rules of the work in Milan, like those she asked for in her letter dated 10 July, 1810.

My dearest friend,

As I know how much you welcome the news of the good carried out in the hospitals, I am sending you the consoling report that the noble Ladies in Venice are ever more interested in the work they have begun in the hospital. Already nine of them are visiting the hospital. They are planning to go soon to the big hospital, which is the prime objective of their charity. Therefore, they would like to have a dozen books, like those you kindly sent me when I was in Venice. (I think I did not even thank you for this. I do so now). Therefore, I beg you for the favour of sending them to me as soon as possible. When Marquis Casati draws the money from the Valenti family, get from him the amount I owe you. Please do not forget to convey my greetings to him. Greet cordially our good friends for me. I recommend myself much to their prayers and to yours as well. Our friend here greets you. Meanwhile, with all my affection and sincere friendship, I am proud of being, dearest friend,

Your Magdalene
Canossa

Verona, 30 October 1810

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1 The family of the two Valenti sisters
2 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Request for information on the funds and the administration of the same funds by the association of the Christian Doctrine in Milan.

My dearest Carolina

I need a piece of information, my dearest Carolina, but I beg you not to tell anyone about it. I would like you to tell me if, in the setting up of your Christian Doctrine in Milan, there were funds which could be used for the dowry of the girls who frequent the Christian Doctrine, and for little prizes which are given to the same, when they answer questions correctly; if these funds were existing before, if they exist, partly or totally, even now that they belong to the pious work of Christian Doctrine, or if truly they are administered by the Congregation of Charity. Besides disturbing you, I am also soliciting your reply. I hope that your health is good, my dear Carolina. Lots of greetings to our friends. Accept the compliments of Leopoldina¹. I wish that the Lord, in the new year, may complete His work, so that you may be wholly His. I recommend myself to your prayers, I embrace you and declare myself

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Canossa²

St. Joseph’s 25 December (1)810

¹Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
²NB. Magdalene’s autographed letter
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Clarifications because of Durini’s wrong interpretation regarding the delay of a letter.

My beloved Carolina,

You have to forgive me, my dear Carlina. It was not Abbot Bucchetti’s fault. He took the trouble to come to me as soon as he arrived, and delivered to me the money and the book you have sent me, of which I thank you without end. It is my fault. The shortage of time, so as not to miss the ordinary post tomorrow, forces me to embrace you. I again beg you to convey the usual compliments.

Your Magdalene
Canossa

St. Joseph’s - 1.(1).(1)811
Magdalene, because of too many occupations, is compelled to use a secretary again. But she is well. Now, she only asks for a book that will be helpful to instruct the patients on how to receive the Sacraments.

My beloved Carolina

Do not be afraid if again, I get the help of another person to write to you, my dear Carolina. I am very well, but a lot of business prevents me from doing it myself. I am dividing the favours I need between you and Viscontina. What I am asking for now is about the hospital. I would like you to send me, as soon as possible, the title-page of the book you use for instructing the sick over there. Please send a copy to me in Venice. I beg you to convey my usual compliments. I embrace you with all my heart. In a hurry, I declare before God,

dear Carolina, to be

St. Joseph’s, Verona 11 January 1811

Your Magdalene
Canossa
Countess Durini is in Venice at her sister Paola’s home and Magdalene, who returned to Verona, begs her to carry out some errands.

My dearest friend

Do you think, my dear Carolina, that I will not come to trouble you even in Venice? Certainly I do. I hope that you had a very good trip. I assure you that, on Friday, when you left here, I often thought of you because I was afraid that the strong wind which was blowing on that day would be such and even stronger on Saturday, in the lagoon. Here it was less, and I guess it was so even on the water. I also hope that you have found your sister\(^1\) in good health and happy about your sudden visit. Kindly convey my regards to the same, as well as to her husband\(^2\) and yours\(^3\). I must trouble you, taking advantage of your usual goodness. Fr. Lorenzo Piazza\(^4\) will hand you the Baptism Certificate of one of my girls. Please, see to the possible expenses. I will reimburse you when you come. When you go to Mrs Teresa Guizzetti\(^4\), ask her to show you that crystal vase. We will also talk about it too, on your return. Finally, I must ask you if you want to take along those laces I sent to you in Milan, years ago. They will be given to you by dear Mr. Domenico Guizzetti\(^5\). Bring them back to me when you return.

Accept the compliments of Leopoldina\(^6\). Love me, recommend me to the Lord, and believe me, in a hurry, with my whole affection to be

St. Joseph’s, 3 February (1)811

Your Magdalene

Canossa

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1 Paola Trottì Bentivoglio, married to Taverna
2 The Count Costanzo Taverna.
3 The Count Carlo Durini, husband of Carolina
4 A Venetian priest who, when he became acquainted with Magdalene, admired her personal talents, and in particular her organising ability. When she completed her service in the institute of Cavanis, he insisted that Pacetti convince her, as it did happen, to repeat in Venice the experience implemented in Verona. He was the temporary confessor of the first Canossians. He helped the Marchioness in the most crucial moments of the foundation, and was often her secretary. He wrote many letters for her. He died in 1814.
5 A benefactor of the Institute in Venice, like Teresa Guizzetti
TO CAROLINA DURINI

237 (Verona#1811.03.21)

Naudet’s laces are still unsold. They will perhaps be able to sell them by lowering the price agreed upon. Magdalene agrees, because she would like that “her friend over here”, might feel satisfied.

My dearest friend

With great pleasure I received your letters, which are always a sincere witness of the goodness and affection you bear for me, and which I sincerely reciprocate.

I warmly thank you for your concern in selling the laces, for which, as you know, I care much. I noticed the estimate made. Therefore, I reply that so much time has passed by since I had them. I do not remember their exact length. Therefore, I beg you to see if, considering the currently estimated price, we could have about 250 “zecchini”, which is half the sum they estimated earlier. As we cannot get more, you could leave them at the said price. Then, if you see that you cannot sell them even at that price, now or at other times, do what you judge best. The important thing is (and there is no need to recommend it to you as I know your commitment) that you seek for the minimal loss possible.

My brother returned safe and sound. Since he had just an hour and a half, between the time he obtained the license and his departure, he had no time to come to receive your commands. He begs me to convey to you his regards. My friend here does the same.

The people you are looking for are still in solitude. You made me laugh a lot, my dear Carolina, when you told me of the spirit and courage of Saint Catherine1. I have no need to warn the big shots. I need to correct the small ones, that is myself. I am this little one, and a special grace of the Holy Spirit is needed. You can get it for me by your fervent prayers. Goodbye, my dear. Greet our friends for me, and believe my sincerity, as I say that I am, dearest friend,

Verona 21 March 1811

Your Magdalene

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1 St. Catherine of Siena (Siena 1347 - Rome 1380) of the Benincasa family. In 1363, she joined the Third Order of St. Dominic. She devoted herself to prayer and to the works of mercy, and up to 1370 she lived a very ascetic life, for the purification of her soul, ascending toward the perfection of the charity.

She had to suffer a lot both because of a violent defaming campaign, and while taking care of the sick. While Pope Urban V left Italy, an exceptional vision convinced her to leave contemplation, so as to devote herself in the apostolate. Thus she faced an immense task. Besides other feats, she succeeded in bringing back the Pontifical See from Avignon to Rome. Worn out by fatigue, she died on April 29th 1830 in a house near the Minerva. She is buried under major altar of this Church. (Cfr. I. Taurisano in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. 30, pag. 1151 ss).
Magdalene again mentions the laces, a new consent on reduction of the price. Exchange of expressions of solidarity in prayer.

My dearest friend,

I have received the pictures, and I thank you and Viscontina so much for remembering me. Cordially greet her for me. I include a letter of Fr. Pietro¹, who has entrusted me to send you a small Treatise on the Love of God². If you are happy about it, I shall keep it here, until I have read it. Now it is enough for you to know (if you can trust me) that it is very beautiful. As for the laces, dispose of them as you think best. I totally trust you. Manage everything without fear, because I am convinced that, because of your commitment, what you do will do the best.

I am sorry to hear about your husband’s illness. I beg you to convey my regards to him. My friend³, with all cordiality, sends you her regards. Convey my kindest wishes also to our good friends. Recommend me to the Lord, and believe the sincerity by which, filled with friendship, I declare myself,

dearest friend,

Your Magdalene⁴

Verona, 12 May, 1811

¹ Fr. Pietro Leonardi (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 4, pg. 12).
² Work of the same Fr. Pietro Leonardi
³ Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
⁴ Magdalene’s signature
The business of Lyon is settled, but not yet that of the laces. Thanks for the former, and a renewed request for the latter.

My dearest Carolina

I have received your dear letter, or better, the letter of Lyons. I deeply thank you for it. It is a long time we do not write to each other, my dear Carolina. I hope that you, your family and all our friends are in good health. I beg you to greet them for me. I fear that I expressed myself badly last time about the laces. Therefore, I beg you to sell them at whatever price you can get. Accept the compliments and thanks of Leopoldina. Recommend me to the Lord. I embrace you heartily. I am

Your Magdalene Canossa

On the first occasion I will send you the Treatise on the Love of God.

Verona, St. Joseph’s, 23 June 1811

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1 The laces of Naudet
2 Leopoldina Naudet (Ep. I, lett. 193, n. 5, pg. 303).
3 NB. The words at the bottom and the signature are Magdalene’s writing.
4 St. Francis de Sales’ work (Ep. I, lett. 6, n. 8, pg. 18)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The Valenti’s grandmother continues to help her granddaughters through Marquis Casati. Magdalene is grateful to her two Milanese intermediaries. The laces are again mentioned. As long as they are sold, Durini should do what she can.

My dearest Carolina

I take advantage of this occasion of my brother’s journey, to send you the papers of the Treatise\(^1\) of Fr. Pietro\(^2\). Excuse me for not having sent them earlier, because I had no chance at all to do so. Kindly tell good Marquis Casati that I have received the money of the Valenti\(^3\), and that the Lord will reward him for the great amount of good he has done for them. I take comfort, dear friend, that you are in good health and that you remember your Magdalene. Regarding the laces, I imagined your scruples. But I think that you should have more scruples in hesitating to sell them. They will soon be out of fashion, and then we will not know what to do with them anymore. Therefore, my dear, do not bother, and freely sell them. Accept the compliments of my companions, and give my regards to our friends, and believe me with my whole affection, to be

Your Magdalene\(^4\)
Canossa

Verona 20 July

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\(^1\) Treatise of the Love of God
\(^2\) Fr. Pietro Leopardi (Ep. I, lett. 4, n. 4, pg. 12).
\(^3\) The Valenti Sisters
\(^4\) NB. Magdalene’s signature.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The friends from Milan, especially Durini and Visconti, have not given up their dream of having the Marchioness from Verona as a collaborator in the hospital in Milan. But Magdalene expresses her reasons for not accepting their invitation. Meanwhile, she begs them for news about a patient in one of the hospitals of Milan.

My beloved Carolina,

Forgive me, my dear Carolina, if my occupations have not allowed me to answer you through Marquis Arconati¹, whom I was pleased to see, because he is such a good person, and your close relative.

He has spoken to me of your works in Milan, but to tell you the truth, I cannot see how I can reconcile them with ours. I cannot deny, however, that I have your hospital at heart, but, according to my poor way of thinking, there is need for something very sound in order to offer a real and stable help. Besides, I think there is need for much prayer so that the Lord will grant all that is necessary, especially capable persons, who have the spirit and the capability. Though by divine mercy I have the vocation, I sincerely tell you that I do not have neither one nor the other. I do not wish, my dear, to do injustice to my vocation, but even in the works of charity, the Lord calls some for little things and others for greater things.

I will not fail to have my girls pray for this objective. I thank you, also on behalf of Leopoldina for the letter from Lyons², which I have already collected. Then, I beg you to get information, through the same Marquis Arconati, if in the hospital for men, there is a man named Domenico Fascini. He is a native of Venice, coming from Verona and is rather elderly. He may be working as an attendant or is sick. A daughter of the same, who is married here in Verona, would like to have news about him, and I, too, so as to help him if he needs it. They tell me that there is another hospital besides the big one, which is a little away from Milan. If this is true, and he is not in the big hospital, you would do a double charity to ask, if you can, where he is. Accept the compliments of my companions. Convey mine to all our friends. Remember me to the Lord, and believe me, I am forever

Your Magdalene
Canossa

Verona, St.Joseph’s  7 September 1811

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¹ Marquis Carlo Arconati, husband of Teresa, the sister of Durini, who died on 21 March 1805
² The letter authenticated in Paris which was needed for receiving the cheque of Sofia Gagnère
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene begs for the purchase of some wool for her and asks the Canoness for more exact information regarding how to get the certificates for the person she is caring for.

My beloved Carlina

I have not been writing to you for a long time, my dear Carlina, and you will say that I do it to trouble you. It is true. First of all, I tell you that I am well and I hope it is the same with you. Please do me the favour of providing me with two pounds and four ounces\(^1\) of wool, similar to what you have provided me with at other times. After getting it, hand it over to Mr. Marzorati\(^2\), who will send it to Mr. Verdari\(^3\). To pay the cost of the same, you can tell Marquis Casati to hand you part of the sum of money of the Valenti’s\(^4\). Since I am troubling you, I add another request, so as to spare some time. The Canoness wrote to me asking for the Baptism Certificate of Maddalena Sabbioli, as well as the Death Certificates of her father and mother. Therefore, tell her, whom I embrace heartily, that I have sent for these certificates, but they answered me that they want to know the age of the above mentioned Maddalena, and more or less the date of the death of her father and mother. Therefore, she should get information about it, and immediately write to me so that I may have the pleasure of serving her. Accept the regards of Leopoldina. I wish for you, as well as for myself, fullness of happiness for the coming holy feasts. I recommend myself gladly to your prayers and with all my affection I say I am

Beloved Carlina

Your Magdalene \(^5\)

Canossa

Verona St. Joseph’s
5 December 1811

Greet all our friends for me

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\(^1\) Ounce: twelve parts of a pound (Ep.I, lett. 231, n. 1, pg. 349).
\(^2\) The forwarding agent
\(^3\) The pharmacist of the pharmacy of St. Anthony (Ep.I, lett. 145, n. 6, pag. 239).
\(^4\) Money of the Valenti sisters
\(^5\) NB. Only the signature and the greetings added at the end are Magdalene’s writing.
A Lady in Florence deals with a work similar to that of the hospital in Milan. Magdalene sends some books to her Milanese friends. That lady has offered them to her for the spiritual assistance to the dying. They seem to her very useful, especially when, in the absence of priests, ladies who are not sufficiently educated, have to prepare dying people to face the final step.

My beloved Carolina,

I hear that you have returned from the countryside, my dear Carlina, and I hope that you are in good health. I beg your pardon for sending you, who are so clever in hospital visitation, some booklets which have been given to me by a noble lady from Florence, who is also engaged in a work similar to yours. I also enclose a short Catechism for the very seriously ill, which is used in another hospital. I thought it might be useful too. This is why I am sending it. If you are pleased with it, I would like to inform you that in the Hospital where they use this short Catechism for the dying, a bigger one is also used for those who are not seriously ill. I could send even that. If it is superfluous, I will not send it. You understand well, my dear, that they use it when, for lack of priests, whose number is insufficient compared to the number of the sick, the women have to do the instruction. In fact, even though a woman may be able to instruct them, surely just one or a few among the many will get instructed. But, since we cannot expect every woman to instruct, many sick women remain without instruction, and if they die without being instructed, how will they be saved? And if they leave the hospital, they will go away as ignorant as when they came in.

I convey to you the compliments of Lady Leopoldina and embrace you heartily. I do not tell you anything more because I wish to send you this letter when I get a chance, and I do not know when that will be. Embrace dear Visconti. Many greetings to all our friends. If you ever go to Venice for the Carnival, like last year, tell Viscontina that there is no doubt that this spring I will return, since I have here with me, for already three months, two teachers brought to me by Lady Priuli to be prepared for the House of Venice, with the promise that I would take them back when they are ready for such a task.

My dear Carolina, remember to pray for me and ask others to pray to Our Lady of Sorrows, so that the good we do may be real and not just a show. Goodbye, love me, and believe me to be yours

my dear Carlina

St. Joseph’s, Verona 20 December 1811

Your Magdalene

Canossa

PS Lady Leopoldina reminds you about that crystal vase you have seen in Venice. You said you would have brought it to Triulzi.

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1 Priuli Loredana Tron, a benefactress in Venice
2 The Boarding House of the Cavanis brothers
3 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s handwriting.
4 Marchioness TRIULZI. BEATRICE TRIVULZIO (1780-1832) Countess of the Italian Kingdom, daughter of the Duke Alexander Serbelloni and of the duchess Rosina Sinzendorf. She was the wife of the famous book lover G.G. Trivulzio (1774-831). Both husband and wife were at the service of the vice-royal court (Cfr. Gallavresi, op. cit. p. 10, n. 2).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

244 (Verona#1812.01.15)

A simple statement about what Magdalene has received from Milan.

Dear friend,

Through Mr. Marzorati, I have received four sovereigns\(^1\) and the packet of wool. I thank you for everything and I embrace you with my whole heart

my dear Carlina,

15 January - Verona - (1)812

Your friend
Magdalene of Canossa

\(^1\) The «sovereign » was an ancient Austrian coin.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

245 (Verona#1812.03.20)

It is some months that Magdalene has no detailed news of Durini, who has gone to Lyons, from where she had written in a very evasive way. Now she is waiting for a cheque from Lady Valenti, who, through Marquis Casati, has promised to settle the economic position of her first grand-daughter Marianna, who is about to get married.

My dearest friend

It is quite sometime that I have not heard from you, as you did not write to me since I had the pleasure of embracing you here. I did receive a letter which you sent from Lyons. I thank you for it, but I regret that you did not add any news about yourself. Therefore, I am now begging you to give them to me. Besides, kindly let me know if Casati has received a letter of mine three weeks ago, regarding the type of document that lady Marianna¹ has to sign for the marriage of her grand-daughter². The marriage has finally been settled. But until I receive the paper, we cannot sign anything. The bridegroom would like the marriage to be held immediately after Easter.

Therefore, I beg you, dear Carolina, to settle this matter as soon as possible. Convey my regards to your husband. Leopoldina send you her regards, believe me heartily

Your Magdalene ³

of Canossa

Verona, 20 March 1812

P.S. If nothing happens to delay it, I should be going to Venice after the octave of Easter. Therefore, I recommend you to pray.

¹ Grandmother of the Valenti Sisters
² Marianna, the eldest grand-daughter of Lady Valenti, was going to be married.
³ NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s handwriting. The letter has many mistakes.
The year indicated in the date is incorrect. The secretary has written 1811. Instead it should be 1812. In that year and in that month Magdalene returned to Venice for the work of the Cavanis brothers, and is still a guest of the Lady Priuli. She has not been able to see the Countess Paola Taverna and explains the reason for it.

My dearest friend

At last, my dear Carolina, I write to you from Venice, where I am for more than one and a half months now, as you have probably heard from Leopoldina. I do not know how long I will remain here. I could not go to your sister yet because, at this time, I have the Home for the girls at the Convent and I am also really very busy in the Hospital. Some days ago I went to see her, but it happened that, being the Feast of St. Philip, she had an invitation to a dinner. As you know, by being with my poor girls of St. Zeno, I have forgotten all etiquette and I do not know how to behave with the highly educated people any longer. Therefore, I deprived myself for this time, of the pleasure of seeing her. I hope you will do what I asked you when you passed by Verona, that is, that you will carry out and will get others to carry out the business I have spoken to you about. I do not know whether it will succeed or not.

I enclose a letter which was delivered to me for your brother-in-law, Marquis Arconati, to whom I beg you to convey my compliments. Many regards to our friends. I recommend myself warmly to their prayers. Being in a hurry, I am compelled to end this letter. I embrace you from my heart.

Venice 2 June (1)811 (1812?)

Your Magdalene
Canossa

If you write to me, address your letter to Casa Priuli, St. Trovaso

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1 A convent confiscated by the Government. It was the first place where the Cavanis brothers began the Work for poor girls.
2 26 May, feast of St Philip Neri.
3 Marquis Carlo Arconati, husband of C. Durini’s sister (Ep.I, lett.2, n.9, pg. 8).
4 The area where the building of Priuli is situated.
Still in Venice, Magdalene begs Durini to help her to solve the situation of a young lady from Milan, who has been converted, but who cannot be assisted any more by her benefactors. It would be better to settle her in Milan, where though she may not be able to live with her brothers, with their financial help, she may more easily be welcomed in some boarding house.

My dearest Carolina

Since I came to Venice, I have not had the pleasure of having any news from you, my dear Carolina, neither directly nor indirectly. I had gone three times to see your sister\(^1\) from whom I could have some news: the first time I could not reach her as I had to return home because of the rain, the second time I met her on the day of a big banquet as I already wrote to you, and the third time, which was the other day, I found, as they told me, that she was in the countryside. Therefore, it is convenient that you write to me at least one line.

I am still here and they do not talk about my going back to Verona, but I need a lot of prayers for the reason for which I begged people to pray that evening when we met at the home of the two Ferri. Know that I was given an errand which is this. Over here, there is a young lady from Milan, who, for a long time now, has returned to the right path. Until now, she has been assisted by pious people so that she may live without offending God. Now these people cannot afford to maintain her anymore. They are begging me to write to you to find out if there is a chance to place her either in some boarding house, suitable for her, in Milan, or in some similar place. Notice that it is not a matter regarding the hospital. I believe that she is of civil birth and has two brothers working in Milan. Of course, she should not live with them. But perhaps, who knows, they might give her some help. I beg you for an answer also on this point.

I was very happy about this work of the Hospital, only I wish that the number of the associates would be greater. Paolina\(^2\), who is seeing to the Chronicles, conveys her wishes and recommends herself to your prayers. And I, as I beg you to convey my compliments to your husband and to embrace all our friends, full of affection and friendship, declare myself
dearest Carolina

Your Magdalene\(^3\)
Canossa

Venice 20 June 1812

\(^1\) Countess Paola Taverna, sister of C. Durini
\(^2\) Not identifiable
\(^3\) Only the signature is Magdalene’s writing.
Magdalene’s work in Venice began in a most unexpected way. The Marchioness had almost completed by now her organizational help for the Cavanis’ Home for poor girls, when Fr. Lorenzo Piazza expresses the desire of some Venetian gentlemen. They get a house belonging to Lady Priuli on rent. Magdalene, with two companions, begins her work in that quarter of the Crose.

My dearest friend,

I am answering two or three precious letters of yours. First I wish to tell you that I am still in Venice, and that I do not think that I will return so soon. Therefore, my dear friend, I cannot help you now as I will not be able to talk to that Directress of the lyceum. Nevertheless, to help you as much as I can, I wrote to Leopoldina to know if she, in spite of her poor health and the occupations of all the Work, can do what you asked me about. I am sure she will do it better and in a more profitable way. I am waiting for her response, and I will send it to you.

At last, I had the pleasure of seeing your sister from whom I received very good news about yourself. From her I also received your last letter and the one for the Canon, which you enclosed. But know, my dear, that it is about a month that his health being poor, he was strongly solicited by his family to go home. Therefore, tell me what you want me to do with the letter addressed to him.

Now I want to tell you the reason why I am still in Venice. I did the little I could at the boarding house, where Paolina is. Now, she is sorry because we had to separate for the reason I will tell you about. You will remember that we spoke about this when you were in Verona, when you brought to me the letter of Fr. Lorenzo Piazza, for which I asked you to pray much. In fact, I found that he had a project for the Sisters of Charity. To say it in a few words, one of these gentlemen had also planned it. We dealt first with Fr. Lorenzo, then with this gentleman who came to speak to me about it. I was made to see that the Lord wanted me to involve myself for a while, to begin this new work of charity, for which earlier, I desired a monastery. Then, it was thought better to begin it on trial in a private house taken on rent for this purpose. In fact, they found one, where I am now staying for the last eight days, with two other companions. Since I have refused to take any help from the Government, if the Lord wills, we will be able to take in only those who have no need of maintenance. Having decided that each companion should contribute at least 20 ‘soldi’ per day, we could have some excellent companions. Dear Carolina, I am begging you again to pray. Pray and ask as many others as possible to pray, since you know now what it is about. Do not make much about

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1 The Lyceum (High School) was built in the convent of the Dominicans (Ep.I, lett. 195, n. 2).
2 Leopoldina Naudet
3 Paola Trotti Bentivoglio Taverna, sister of di C. Durini
4 Canon Pacetti (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).
5 Place for the work of the Cavanis brother for poor girls (Ep.I, lett. 246, n. 1)
6 A Venetian priest who collaborates with Magdalene for the opening of the house in Venice. (Ep.I, lett. 236, n. 4)
7 The work of Magdalene of Canossa in Venice.
8 The small house still exists, in the area of St. Andrew. It was at the corner of the Church bearing the same name, and was a branch of the parish of the Tolentini, in the quarter of the Crose. It was given free of charge for a year by Lady Priuli.
9 Magdalene of Canossa tried not to depend financially on the Government, in order to be able to act freely.
what I am writing, but inform our friend Viscontina, and also Marquis Casati about it, and tell them both to pray.

Be it known to you that these sisters will not assist sick women in their homes. But they will carry out these three Branches: the Schools of Charity, visits and assistance as needed, in the hospitals, helping in these especially with instruction. The treatment for persons with sores and in need of other simple first-aid, will be done in the house itself, in the section destined for it. I am compelled to end. Later, I will write about the person I spoke to you about. I embrace you wholeheartedly, my usual compliments. I am totally yours

Your Magdalene\textsuperscript{10}

Canossa

Venice, 9 August 1812

\textsuperscript{10} NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s writing. The letter was written by Fr. Lorenzo Piazza, as we can see from his other writings and the greetings he often adds at the end of the letter. He also wrote for Magdalene the following letters: n.239-250-251-254-255-256-258-260. The signature is always Magdalene’s writing.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

In the Venetian «vineyard», workers are needed and the Marchioness Magdalene of Canossa has to extend her stay in Venice, longer than she thought of. The field of work is very vast. She has no time, being engaged in the setting up of the place, but she cannot escape from the requests for help. Her ‘Simon of Cyrene’ will be the Milanese Countess, who has to deal with the documents of a young woman from Piedmonte, who is dying in the hospital in Verona. It would be better if she could get married before dying. Magdalene, who had written to Durini about her situation in the letter of June 20, conveys to her all the necessary details so as to straighten the position of this young person. Marquis Casati could also help her, but his health, at this time, is very precarious.

My dearest Friend,

I hope that you have received from your sister another letter of mine in which I told you, my dear Carolina, the reason why I am still in Venice. This, I think, will also trouble you. Now I am starting to do so. You already know what a hospital is: a place where there are people coming from various countries. In fact, I found a young woman from Piedmonte who needs the papers I will mention below, so that her marriage can be settled. Be aware, my dear, that we are in a hurry because her illness is very serious, and they think that it is better that she settles her marriage before she dies. To inform you about all the Papers I need, I will write them at the end of this letter, because at this moment I do not have all the names needed.

Meanwhile, here I am to speak again about the other matter I have mentioned to you, a long time ago, about a young lady. They wanted her to be accepted in the house of your pious Work, I believe, where Constance is, and you wrote to me that it was not possible. The same person continues living a good life these last few years. Her name is Maria Colomba Dragni. She has a brother or two who are working with the Government. Since the pious person who supported her in the past is unable to do so now, she would like that her brothers assign to her a small sum daily so that she may continue living the good way of life she has begun. If you succeed, my dear Durini, in getting this from her brothers, they could hand it to you, then you could inform me about it. I think it is the surest way. If she cannot be in a boarding place, she could at least carry on being directed by the one who helped her until now. If her brothers agree to assist her, but want her to come to Milan, then kindly inform me regarding the situation of their family so that she may continue to follow the right path. If it is not so, see if her brothers could help her in a boarding place in Milan. Excuse me, my dear, for so many troubles, but you already know that wherever I enter, you, too, are always involved and disturbed by me.

I heard from Leopoldina that Marquis Casati passed by Verona. With great sorrow I also heard that his health is bad. When you write, give me news about him, if any, as well as about our Viscontina, to whom I beg you to convey my kindest regards. Remind her also to recommend me to the Lord. I beg you to do as well. I am very well, and the matter for which I stayed behind is going on well, with God's help, but it progresses very slowly, not because of the work itself, but because, up to now, the number of those who have to work in such a vast field has not increased. I hope, however, that within a few days this, too, will begin.

Here are the papers which are needed for this marriage: the death certificate of her father, whose name was Giovanni Broccardi and the consent of her mother whose name is

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1 Magdalene dwells at length on this case, therefore no other details are needed.
2 Idem
Margherita Cerato, and, if she is dead, the certificate of her death. The Parish church where this young lady was baptized is the Parish of St. Giovanni. Her name is Anna Angela Maria. She was born on 6 January 1790, and baptized on the 7\textsuperscript{th} of the same month. She would like to marry a certain Nicoletto Ferro Mazzoleni, son of the deceased Stephen and of Lorenza Mazzoleni, born and living now in Venice. The mother of the aforesaid Brocciardi lived next to the Church of the Consola. She had another daughter who was living a dissolute life. If her mother is still living, ask her if this Brocciardi, who is in the Hospital here, had been confirmed. Goodbye, dear Durini, I am yours heartily and in a hurry

Venice  12 September 1812

Your Canossa
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Some more clarifications about the two cases, Brocciardi and Dragoni, so as to be able to retrieve the certificates they need. Good news on the work in Venice, but a very painful news regarding Fr. De Vecchi who is seriously ill.

My dearest friend

I thank you, dear Carolina, for what you have done and will do for Brocciardi and for Dragoni\(^1\). To facilitate the finding of the necessary Papers for the former, I insert the exact copy of the Baptism Certificate, which was obtained from the Municipality of Turin. I am keeping the original for any eventuality. The father of this person was a police or rather a soldier under the King of Sardinia\(^2\). He died about 20 years ago. I can tell you nothing more since this young person left Turin when she was only nine years old. I do not recommend promptness to you, knowing how prompt you already are. I was sorry to hear about of the serious illness of Fr. de Vecchi\(^3\). Since this pains me, as I can imagine the consequences of such a misfortune, I did not fail to recommend him to the Lord, although God already knows well how to replace him, if He wants to take him to Himself. It is true that in similar cases, we could always think that God wills it so as to punish the people. Dear Durini, if I do not trouble you, you would do me a great favour in informing me about the matter. Goodbye, dear friend, recommend me to the Lord. Many regards to our other friends. I recommend myself to their prayers. I embrace you heartily.

Here everything is going on well. You know who is writing\(^4\) for me. He begs you to accept his compliments. If you happen to find the Papers of Brocciardi, find out whether she was confirmed.

Your Magdalene
Canossa

Venice, 28 September 1812

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1 The two cases in Lett. 249
2 Carlo Emanuele IV (1751-1819).
3 A Barnabite Religious, founder of the Pious Union for the hospital in Milan (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 5, pag. 56).
4 Fr. Lorenzo Piazza (Ep.I, lett. 236, n. 4, pag. 353).
A sad announcement: Brocciardi died before getting married. Fr. De Vecchi passed away. His demise caused great sorrow to the Milanese noble Ladies, but also to Magdalene. Marquis Casati is still suffering. The Marchioness talks serenely about her forced vacation in Padua, where she was, because the flood had endangered the roads.

My dearest friend

I hasten to inform you about the death of Angela Brocciardi\(^1\) so that you may stop searching for the certificates and I thank you, my dear Carolina\(^3\) for all the trouble you have taken for her. Do not worry if the delay of these Papers has altered the situation of the matter, because, even if we had the papers, we would have met other obstacles to her marriage.

I am deprived of news from you for a long time. I suppose you are in the countryside or are about to go there. I felt very sorry about your big loss regarding Father de' Vecchi\(^2\). The Lord, however, is the one who allowed it. He knows everything better than we do. Tell me how Marquis Arconati, the Canoness and Julia Meda are getting on. I am well and am still in Venice where, I think, I will still be for a few months more. If this year you will come to see your sister\(^3\), in the best season of January, we will see each other here.

When you can, inform me about Marquis Casati's health. How I hope that he may recover. Know that I have been to Padua for about fifteen days. I went there on account of some small affairs and with the intention of stopping no more than four or five days. But the high level of the waters have forced me to stop for two weeks. So you see that I too, have my vacations. Goodbye, dear friend. My compliments to your husband and many greetings to all our friends. I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am full of affection, and friendship. I beg you much to recommend me, and to get people to recommend me to the Lord. Don Lorenzo\(^4\) conveys to you his compliments. Goodbye, dear friend, I am from my heart

Your Magdalene

Canossa

Venice 28 October 1812

P.S. As soon as I wrote this letter, I received your very precious one in which you tell me some things I remind you of in this letter. However, tell me exactly the news of the people I am asking you about above.

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\(^{1}\) The first case, Brocciardi, suspend all research

\(^{2}\) A Barnabite priest from Milan (Ep.I, lett. 22, n. 5).

\(^{3}\) Countess Paola Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini

\(^{4}\) Fr. Piazza Lorenzo collaborated with Magdalene for the House of Venice
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene of Canossa hopes that soon she will see Durini and Visconti in Venice. Meanwhile, she begs her friend to continue to deal with the Dragoni case and mentions the names of her five brothers and their presumed occupation.

My dearest friend

Just a few lines hoping that since I am in Venice this year, I will not be prevented from seeing you. Rather, I hope that, at last, we will be able to stay together for a few days. Not to lose the habit of troubling you, I am sending you the names of the brothers of Colomba Dragoni1, who, as I came to know, is a native of Marignan2. Her father is called Joseph, and her brothers are: Peter Anthony, Francis Anthony, Fermo Anthony, Charles Anthony and finally John Anthony. She doubts about the fact that some of them might have enrolled in the military service and presumes that the others are working.

I do not dwell at length on what I have told you above. Dear friend, Viscontina, whom I beg you to embrace for me, as well as the other friends, should come with you. You should all stay in the house with me, as long as you are in Venice. As for you, my dear Carlina, it is enough that I enjoy your company for a few days. Recommend me to the Lord, and get people to recommend me. You see how much I need Him. I embrace you with all my heart. My compliments to your husband, to your mother-in-law, and to Marquis Casati. Goodbye most heartily. Fr. Lorenzo Piazza3 asks me to convey to you his compliments.

Your Magdalene
Canossa

Venice, 11 January 1813

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1 Information about Dragoni.
2 Marignan, that is, Melegnano, an industrial and agricultural centre on the Lambro, in the Province of Milan
3 Fr. Lorenzo Piazza who functioned as secretary to Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The return from Venice to Verona is done together by Magdalene and her friend Durini. Magdalene has fond memories of it. Now, however, she invites the Countess to take care of two other cases. She asks her to deliver a letter to the bride of Marquis Villani and to beg Marquis Casati to settle in the best way possible, how to pass the dowry over to the young bride Valenti.

My dearest friend,

I immediately reply to your very dear letter, thanking you from the bottom of my heart, also on behalf of Lady Leopoldina, for the letter from Lyons, which they sent to you. I confess that I thought you would have been very busy on your arrival, but I wish to know if the remainder of your journey has been a happy one. Dear friend, I shall always remember the pleasure I felt during our journey; I am planning, not next week, but the following, to return to Venice. However, I will write to you as we have agreed.

I include a letter of one of my girls, who has a sister in Milan, married, as her mother says, to Marquis Villani, and I simply beg you to see that it is delivered to her. I also beg you to tell Marquis Casati to whom please convey my compliments and those of Lady Leopoldina, that the two bridegrooms of the young Valenti girls, realized that the notary expenditure for the dowry is too high. Since they are assured that a legalized and registered receipt would be equally valid, they would like that Lady Marianna, too, be satisfied with it. They are waiting for an answer about it.

I also hope he will reply to the letter you brought to him because, in the five months that I have, I would like to settle the above matter. Know then, that I am a little worried because in the packages you have sent to me there should have been one for Marquis Carlo Sagramoso, but I only found four of them in my carriage, and none of them were addressed to this gentleman. I only found a letter for him. Kindly tell me if I was mistaken, or if you have the parcel.

Goodbye, dear friend. Remember me to the Lord. Embrace all our friends, and tell Julia to do me the favour of thanking her brother-in-law, Marquis D’Adda, for kindly sending me the description of the life of her esteemed sister. Remind our Friend Canonichessa about Fr. Strambi. My regards to your husband. Greet your Cecca. I thank you again for everything, I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am

Your Magdalene of Canossa

Verona St.Joseph’s 3 March 1813

N.B. Only the signature is Magdalene’s

1 The business regarding the cheque of Sofia Gagnère (Lett. 210, n. 3)
2 She must be related to Marquis VILLANI ANTONIO (1743-1823). In 1763 he married LEONOR.A, the eldest daughter of Filippo Doria Visconti and Bianca Maria, who was the daughter of the last descendant of the princely family of the Dukes of Milan, Attendolo Sforza Visconti. Leonora’s sister, Livia, married Massimiliano Stampa, the M (From «Genealogia Famiglie Milanesi » Vol. 2).
3 Grandmother of the Valenti sisters.
4 Marquis CARLO SAGRAMOSO, daughter of Marquis Giovanni who in the newspaper « Giornale della S. Casa della Misericordia del 1792 » (l’ospedale) appears among the donors of the Hospital of Mercy. (From the Archives of the State of Verona)
5 Giulia Meda, one of their friends from Milan
6 Marquis Gerolamo D’Adda Salvaterra had married the sister of Giulia Meda, Marchioness Felicita, who died in May 1810.
7 Fr. ANTONI STRAMBI (1773-1860), ardent collaborator of Fr. Pietro Leonardi
8 Cecca or Checca.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The errands Magdalene conveys to Durini are always many, but she justifies them reminding her that she is an integral part of every activity of hers, done for the glory of the Lord. She asks then, to solve the matter of a person from Macerata, and she begs Marquis Casati to intervene regarding the lease of the House of St. Lucy in Venice.

My dearest friend,

It was not possible for me to write to you before leaving Verona as you wanted and I also wished. So soon after my arrival in Venice I am writing to tell you that, thanks to the Lord, I had a very good journey.

I cannot give you news about your sister yet, that is, tell you that I have seen her, because I have only just arrived, but I assure you of my concern and my desire to serve you, and I will do, as much as possible, what you wish me to do, with my whole heart as if it were you yourself. I do not know why you are so brief in writing. I already suppose, but you have not even told me, that you had a journey. I remind you about the business of that person from Macerata whom you know.

I would like also to ask you to give me an answer about that matter of which I wrote to Marquis Casati. I beg you to greet him. Perhaps he could not reply because of his health, but very little time is left before the rent of the House where we are staying expires and if it is possible, I would like to conclude the other agreement before this one ends.

I really see that I always trouble you over and over again. But you already know that in everything in which the Lord deigned to involve me, you have always cooperated. Many compliments to your husband. My best regards to our friends and to Cecca. I will write to you another time about the answers given regarding my coming to Milan, which is conditional, as I will tell you later in detail. Meanwhile, recommending myself much to your prayers, and begging you to get others to do so too, I convey to you the wishes of Fr. Piazza. I embrace you heartily, and I am forever

Your very affectionate

Canossa

Venice 27 March 1813

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1 The house of St. Andrea in Campo St. Andrea (Lett. 248, n.8)
2 Marquis Francesco Casati, one of the friends of the Milanese group, who became advisor and benefactor of the Institute.
3 Fr. Lorenzo Piazza who acts as secretary
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Good news about Durini’s sister, who instead is often disturbed by tensions with her husband, probably because of their business. Marquis Casati is still not well, yet Magdalene urgently needs his assistance.

My dearest friend

You will perhaps say that I disturb you too soon, my dear Carlina, but since it is something that will give you joy, I do it at once. Lady Maria brought to me those pictures for which I also thank you. She asked me to write to you that she thanks the Lord that they are peaceful. Then I must tell you that I went to see your sister and we have been alone for quite some time. I found her happy and in good health, much better than when you were here. I also saw your brother-in-law who is also very well. I assure you that he treated me with great friendliness. One of these mornings he will come with Carlino. Be assured that I will do as much as I can, according to what you told me. Thank you for your reply that I received today. I will do what you tell me for that person who needs prayer. Please do not forget me in your prayers. I would like to hear that Marquis Casati has recovered. Convey my compliments to him, as well as to your husband. I embrace you heartily, and I am forever

Your Magdalene

Venice 3 April (1)813

PS. I must thank you again. After writing the present letter I received the hundred pictures you have favoured me with and I thank you so much for them. Your sister had given me fifty and I had thanked you for those, thinking they were the ones you had told me about. If it is possible, I would like you to solicit Casati for the reply because there are places here on auction.

1 The trustworthy maid of Countess Paola Tavern, Carolina Durini’s sister.
2 Countess Paola Taverna. Sister of C. Durini
3 NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s hand writing.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Venice prompted in the mind of Magdalene a new charitable plan, that has been suggested to her by a Religious whose name she does not mention. In fact, she describes to her friend how to start a House for convalescents who, once out of the hospital, have no support at all. She begs Durini to provide her with the Rules suitable to a House similar to this, of which she had spoken to her.

My dearest friend,

I think I will make you laugh, my dear Carolina, because you will say that Venice is the city where plans are made. You are right. But the needs here give rise to projects, though we may not know how they will turn out. You know that in the hospital we often find young girls and ladies of good will, but without support whatsoever. On the other hand, since God-fearing families try hard to find Christian ladies capable of serving, a Religious Priest here thinks that it is necessary to build a house for those convalescents who have no support when they leave the hospital. This will enable them to finish their religious instruction and to establish themselves in the Christian way of life. They can also be trained in skills suitable for the work and services they need to be prepared for. This Religious knowing that the air of our Country, or rather of Mount Baldo¹ is glad to hear about projects, he related it to me and I, as you may imagine, although laughingly, approved of what he was saying. I praised the project a lot, because it would be very comforting for those who attend the hospital to see that all the convalescents², who have no lodging, can have it if they want. Instead we, having no means, have to abandon the greater number of those who leave the hospital. I recall that in a town there is a house where young girls are trained to be servants, and I think that this town is either Cremona or Genoa. If it is the former, I would like to beg you, for information about it, if there is such a House, and to get its Rules. The above mentioned religious, then, will adapt them to the circumstances of this Country, and of the work he is thinking about. If it were not Cremona, you might know in which city this House is, since it seems to me that it was you who spoke to me about it. If it is in Genoa, I will ask my sister-in-law³ to provide the Rules for me.

I hope you have received my letter, in which I enclosed a letter also for the good Marquis Casati. If you know something regarding that bargain for which I have troubled Casati, please, tell me, because I need to know it, before the end of the contract for this House where I am. My dear Carlina, remember that my need for prayer is great. Do not forget your friend before the Lord. I assure you I am in special need of prayers.

I cannot give you further news of your sister, as I have not seen her after the last letter I wrote to you. Perhaps, I will see her when I hand over this one to her. Greet all our friends for me. My compliments to your husband and my regards to that respectable person whom you mentioned. Fr. Lorenzo conveys to you his compliments and is pleased to give you good news of the work at St. Catherine’s⁴. I embrace you wholeheartedly. Greet Checca for me, and remember that I am forever

Venice 12 June 1813

Your Canossa⁵

¹ Mount Baldo, meaning a person with a jovial character (Ep.I, lett. 7, n. 1)
² Magdalene’s mind begins to work on a project for Convalescents that she will actualise only in 1825.
³ Francesca Castiglioni Canossa who had a married sister living in Genoa.
⁴ An Institute for convalescents in Verona in 1812. It was in the old monastery of St. Caterina della Ruota near the banks of the river Adige, where the Fort of St. Caterina now stands (Cfr. L. Simeoni, op. cit. p. 183).
⁵ NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
Marquis Casati has passed by Verona to deal with the problem requested by Magdalene. But since the reports of the State Property offices do not tally, the Marchioness needs to clarify the situation. Meanwhile, knowing that the Canonichessa is not well, she tells Durini to inform her of a remedy that could be effective. In the home of the Taverna, in Venice, there are other troubles, and Magdalene assures her friend that she will try to intervene as much as possible, in order to bring serenity.

My dearest friend,

Soon after receiving your letter on 8 July, I heard from Verona that Marquis Casatti had passed by. He also told Leopoldina¹ that Mr. Alessandri’s petition has not yet arrived. Here instead they assure us that the letter has been sent a long time ago, with a favorable information from this Demanio, and that if what was said was the truth, the place is really in disorder. I will look into the matter further Then I think I will do as you suggest, that is, to write to the person who is in Valdagno².

Meanwhile, I thank you for what you have written to me. I am sorry that the letter came so late because I felt bad to give you so much trouble. I tried to send it to you promptly. I am glad to hear that the Canoness has recovered a little. Let me know if she suffered because of her usual trouble, for which I know she had quite a beneficial cure, but she found it hard to get it. If it were that, remind her of the remedy of the bark of the branches of red roses, the green bark, of course, which, after being extracted, is turned into small pills. People take them, two in the morning and two in the evening, but it is necessary to continue taking them.

Embrace her, as well as Julia and Viscontina, for me. It seems that the Lord wants Viscontina totally for Himself. I have received a letter from our dear Fr. de Vecchi³, who is asking me for two country-teachers for the house directed by your excellent brother-in-law, Melzi, and the Canoness. My dear Carlina, I have already written to him how very sorry I am, not to be able to help him. But you have seen how small our number is, and how we are hardly able to cope even with the work here. I beg you also to assure them that it is only the impossibility of helping them that prevents me, and you have been an eye-witness.

I assure you, my dear friend, that even if we were three times our present number, it would not be enough for the needs here. Then, you can see how we cannot give two of them, since we are so few. Assure that respectable person of my miserable prayers for him before God. I will do it as you tell me. Then, he should also do me the favour to pray for me, and to beg the Lord that He may accomplish what I am asking for.

I know that your sister⁴ is well, Maria, too, up to now is going on well. In fact, today I am going to see her, and if possible, I will add some news. Remember, even after, to be at peace about her. I will do whatever I can and according to the circumstances. Do not doubt that I will leave other things aside in order to go frequently to visit her, if there is a need. Goodbye, dear friend. I embrace you wholeheartedly. Recommend me to the Lord.

¹ ALESSANDRI GIUSEPPE, one of the Procurators of Venice. He was born in Venice in 1785, in the district of St. Mark at St. Zulian. He was Courtier of the Ferali 8461, serving it as a civilian, as a consequence of Napoleon’s census of 1812. He had put in petitions to obtain the Monastery of St. Lucy from the State Property Office.
² The Summer Villa of Alessandri, in the province of Vicenza, was in a locality called Valdagno because it was to the right of the torrent Agno.
³ Fr. De Vecchi, brother of Fr. Luigi. He died in 1812. He was asking for help for the work begun by Marchioness Arconati and continued by her husband Count Carlo Arconati, Melzi and the Canoness.
⁴ Countess Paola Taverna.
compliments of Fr. Lorenzo and convey mine to your husband and to your mother-in-law. Love me, goodbye,

Your Canossa

Venice 17 July 1813

PS. I forgot to tell you that Fr. Mark Marinelli, whom you know well, writes to me from Tyrol Trentino where he is preaching, so that I might inform you that a certain Giovanni Battista Valenti of Cagliano in Trentino has just been assigned to the college or District of the Guards of Honour. He is asking you the favour to let him come to you sometimes, just for a quarter of an hour, so that you may remind him of his Christian principles and see that he observes those which he has. I confess that I feel that perhaps you would not like such a thing. But, on the other hand, thinking that it is about doing real good, I also thought that if you do not want to speak to him, you will get some other persons to speak to him. Among these, Canon Tosi came to my mind, but I do not know if this is convenient.

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5 NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s handwriting.
6 Fr. MARCANTONIO MARINELLI, a Priest of St. Philip Neri, born in 1771. The date of his death is unknown.
7 A new case to be helped.
8 Formerly Canon at Milan and then Bishop at Pavia
Countess Paola Taverna was disturbed because her trustworthy maid, Maria Frigerio, was pregnant and not keeping well. Now the maid is better and the Countess is calm. The business Marquis Casati was taking care of, may turn out well provided only if the Holy Virgin will intervene. Canon Mozzi and one of the companions of Verona, Annetta, die. Magdalene is waiting for the Rules of the House for Convalescents, whose institution is in Genoa.

Beloved Carolina

I am answering two dear letters of yours, my dear Carlina, and first of all I will tell you that your sister is well, and as you might already know Maria too is carrying on well. I went to see her, and if the Lord had not granted us the grace that the lady Maria be well, I would have gone more often. But I found it superfluous; nevertheless, as I told you, I went and I will go. You will see, my dear friend, that, little by little, the Lord will console you totally. Forgive me, however, my dear. I would not like that you still get worried because of your sister’s worries. I know how much you try not to do it, but believe me, be calm about everything.

I had the pleasure to meet the good Marquis Casati here. As you know, he came to see his sister. We spoke about my affairs, for which, as he will tell you, I have all the reasons to hope for the best, just because they are at a point that none of us can do anything about it. I hope that the Lord, now, doing things alone, will resolve everything. Please, say for this purpose, some ‘Hail Mary’s so that the Lord may do His most Holy will.

I am very sorry about the demise of Canon Mozzi. Although I did not have the honour of knowing him, you say well, my dear Carlina, that many saints go to Heaven, and we are deprived of so many comforts and helps for our conversion. In truth, it would be comforting for us, too, to go where they go, but we also need to do what they have done. Also our companion in St. Joseph’s, called Annetta, has gone, I hope, to Heaven. She had as she had lived, a holy death. All the same I recommend her to your prayer.

I thank you for what you have done to help Fr. Marinelli, to whom I will explain what you will tell me. We need to have patience, if he has already left. I received from Mrs. Michieli the other letter of yours containing those two holy pictures, for which I thank you. Notice, my dear, the weakness of your friend. But know that with all those crosses you have frightened me, too. I have found Michieli as you have described her, that is, very good.

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1 Paola Trotti Bentivoglio, married to Taverna (Ep.I, lett. 189, n. 2)
2 The maid of Count Taverna.
3 Canon MOZZI LUIGI. Born in Bergamo on 26.5.1746 of the noble family Capitanei of Mozzo. In 1763 he entered the Society of Jesus. When the Society was suppressed in 1773, he returned to his family. He was ordained priest and began a fruitful apostolate. In Bergamo he founded the Company of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Association of Charity and, while living an exemplary and penitential life, he also took care of the sick. He collaborated with the Christian Friendship group of Milan. In Venice he collaborated with the Cavanis Fathers for the education of children. He died at Oreno in 1813, assisted by St. Vincenzo Strambi (Cfr. Casetta, op. cit pag. 73)
4 A companion from Verona.
5 A priest of the Congregation of St. Philip Neri
6 A Lady in Waiting of the Vice Queen, Princess Augusta Amalia of Baviera, wife of Prince Eugenio Beauharnais. She lived in the palace MICHEIL DELLE COLONNE, so called because of the portico that served as a vestibule. Today it is called Palace DONA’ DELLE ROSE. The entrance on land is from Via Vittorio Emanuele - Calle del Duce.
Rather, know that when Her Royal Highness, the Vice Queen\(^7\) was here, that lady told her about this institution and the Princess was pleased with it.

Regarding the Rules of the Establishment of the Servants of Genoa\(^8\), you will do me a great favour to provide them to the one enlightened by the Lord and send them to me. Then, if there is need for further information, I do not correspond with anyone in that city. I know only the youngest sister of my good sister-in-law, who, as you know, married only a few months ago. I do not think it is a matter for a young bride to be involved in, though she is very good. I think that Dugnani\(^9\), who is a great friend of a Genoese lady of great piety, the Balbi,\(^10\) could be able to give you information about it. But it is proper that you yourself speak also to Dugnani, since you know how we had no luck to see her when I was in Milan.

Fr. Lorenzo\(^11\) sends you his compliments. I beg you to convey mine to your husband, as well as my regards to that person whom you know, warmly recommending me to her prayers. When you write to me, tell me how our friend Viscontina is getting on. Wish her for me, as well as all the others. Accept the greetings of my companions, and as I embrace you from the bottom of my heart, I declare myself

Your Friend Canossa\(^12\)

Venice, 7 August, 1813

\(^7\) Amalia Augusta di Baviera
\(^8\) An Institution that worked for convalescents.
\(^9\) Lady TERESA DUGNANI, of a patrician family of Milan and sister of Fr. Giulio.
\(^10\) The mention only of the surname is insufficient to identify the lady from Genoa, whom Magdalene describes as being very virtuous. We could connect it with that noble family from Venice, called Balbi Zani or Baleben and that came to Rialto in 1885. In the Corner Archives of Venice there are many death announcements of the 1800s of ladies who were either descendents or married in the Balbi family. She could be Alba Corner married in 1809 to Rizzardo Balbi.
\(^11\) Fr. Lorenzo Piazza
\(^12\) NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
Marquis Casati’s mediation was so smooth that the business in Venice has overcome the first obstacles. On 9 October 1813, Magdalene and her companions will move from the small house of St. Andrew to the Convent of the ex-Augustinians of St. Lucy, On the eve of the feast of the Maternity of Mary, the Marchioness can think of expanding her work in Venice. She announces this to Durini, to whom, however, she asks to continue to care for the little Brocciardi, whose situation is morally dangerous.

My dearest Friend,

I owe you a lot of thanks, my dear Carolina, for the little books you have sent me, especially for the one on the Crucified Lord. I cannot tell you how dear it is to me and how much I thank you for it. I am very busy, because on Saturday I will be moving to the new house, where, I hope, we will be able to assist many poor people. Please, remember that I count much on your prayers so that God may do what you suppose should be done, that is, that He may implant the Model of that book, the Crucified Lord, in my heart.

Convey my compliments to Marquis Casati, and assure him that we will always remember him in our poor prayers, for all the good he has done to us. Your sister, as you might know, has not been in Venice for some time, but I think she intends to return this autumn. I had the need to take advantage of her goodness, and as you know my pride, you can understand that it was because of the circumstances. Rather, I did not want to trouble her at all, but it was Maria who did it her own way and I am very grateful to her. You see how far I am from having that Model in my heart. Maria recommends that when you write to Paolina calm her down and encourage her. Give her hope though you may not see her. In short, try to write to her at length, and happily.

I must again trouble you for the daughter of Brocciardi, who, since she found a person who takes care of her, will probably be placed in a boarding place, if she can have her baptism certificate. You may imagine that this little girl’s life is worse than being on a road. She was born at Vercelli and is called Giuseppina Maria or Maria Giuseppina, daughter of Angela Brocciardi and Charles Gravina. Her godfather at Baptism was the innkeeper of the great Inn on the Corso. She is about six years old. If you can find her Baptism certificate and send it to me by post, you will do me a great favour. I thank you for the answer you give me about Genoa. We hope, however, that Dugnani will be able to give you more details with the help of Balbi. When you have some information and will be able to write to me, it will be very useful to me. Even if you cannot have minute details, tell me what you know. My companions convey to you their greetings. Be assured that, though poorly, we will not forget to pray for you. Please pray and get others to pray for us too. My usual compliments and respectful regards to the person to whom you brought that holy picture and recommend me very much, but very specially now, to her prayers. I embrace you gladly with my whole heart. Goodbye, and I am with real attachment,

Venice 7 October (1)813

Your Magdalene Canossa

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1 Magdalene’s work that started in the small House at S. Andrea, in the sector of the Croce, is about to be moved on 9 October 1813, to the Convent of the ex-Augustinian monastery of S. Lucia, the Church near the Parish of S. Geremia. The Canossians stayed there for 34 years, that is, until 1847, when on the area of the Convent and the Church of S. Lucia the present Railway Station was built. (A.C.V.).

2 The case of the daughter of Brocciardi

3 The Big Inn at Milano, after the French invasion was called «Hotel de la ville» and was situated along the road Santa Maria dei Servi, which later was named Corso Imperatore and then, as it is called at present, Corso Vittorio Emanuele. The Inn was in front of the Church of San Carlo, at present bearing the civic number 39.

4 Lady Teresa Dugnani, of a Milanese Patrician family; sister of Fr. Giulio.

5 Friend of Dugnani
To an aspirant to religious life, recommended by the Durini, Magdalene advises to offer as a gift a book on Jesus Crucified, so that she might learn from Him how to live life as a self-gift. She also announces that in the new house of «Canal Reggio» a school will be opened for girls, but she is sorry because the small number of her companions cannot cope with so much work.

My dearest Friend,

I received your very dear letter on 6 October. My dear Carolina, I assure you, and ask you to assure that good girl for me, that we will not fail to recommend her to the Lord so that, as you say, God's Will in her may be accomplished. You could, if you have not yet done so, give one of those booklets which I cherish dearly to the girl, so that she can, in the meantime, study the Model she has to imitate. On Saturday we moved into the new house\(^1\) where, in a few weeks, we will open the School for the girls of Canal Reggio. Truly, for all the work we have to do, we need some more companions, but they should be as you say this one is. Remember to pray for me and ask others to recommend me to the Lord.

My compliments to Marquis Casati, to our friends, and of course, to your husband, too. They tell me that your sister will be on vacation for three months. Therefore, I will not be able to see her for a long time. Fr. Lorenzo conveys to you his greetings. I embrace you wholeheartedly, and I am totally attached to you.

Your Canossa

Venice 14 October 1813

\(^1\) Convent of the ex-Augustinians of S. Lucia
In 1814 the reverses of war with Russia and Germany had depleted Napoleon’s power, brought to ruin the Italian Kingdom, and even Verona saw the return of the Austrians. On the morning of 4 February the German troops, led by General Stefanelli were enthusiastically welcomed by the people of Verona. In the meanwhile Venice continued to suffer the blockade imposed by the French. This had grave consequences even on Verona, until in that same year even Venice came under Austrian dominion. Correspondence with Milan was necessarily interrupted because of the political situation and Magdalene can only now ask news of the Countess Durini and her Milanese friends.

My dearest friend

I wish very much to have news of you. My dear Carolina, you cannot imagine how much I care for you. I had news of you from your sister about two months ago, but now I want it from you. Because of your friendship you might have desired to get news of me in the past few months. I am pleased to give you very good news. The Lord granted me the grace to be always very well. Now you should make the trip you did not make this January and provide your sister and your Magdalene the pleasure of embracing you. Tell me, how is our dear Viscontina? our other friends? the good Marquis Casati? your brother-in-law? the family Castiglioni? But first of all, tell me how is your good husband and your whole family? I embrace you, dear friend, with my whole heart. My compliments to everybody and my respectful duties to the Archbishop of Macerata\(^1\). Love me and believe me wholeheartedly to be yours. Write to me immediately, addressing the letter to St. Lucy.\(^2\)

Your dearest friend
Magdalene of Canossa

Venice 4 May 1814

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1 Fr. VINCENZO MARIA STRAMBI. A Passionist Priest. He was elected Bishop of Macerata and Tolentino in 1810. He belonged to the Congregation of the discaled Clerics of the Holy Cross and the Passion of Jesus Christ. Born in Civitavecchia in 1745, he suffered much under the napoleonic regime. He has now been canonised. (Cfr. Archivio Ambrosiano XIV, Antonio Rosmini e il Clero Ambrosiano, a cura di GF. Radice, Milano 1964, pag. 132, n. 134).

2 The new Convent of St. Lucy’s at Venice.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

After resuming her correspondence with Durini, Magdalene comes to know that Durini has been suffering for a long time. She announces to her the death of her last secretary, Fr. Lorenzo Piazza. Magdalene mourns for him and recommends him to the Lord, for his great charity towards her Institute, also through Count Taverna. Countess Carolina too has lost another spiritual support, because Fr. Vincenzo Strambi, being chosen Bishop of Macerata, has left. But he will return soon and has been freed from prison. Pius VII and Fr. Fontana too have been released. No news yet of Canon Pacetti. Magdalene feels much obliged even to Marquis Casati, who must have found her during the blockade in the Convent of St. Lucy, where she and her companions did not suffer much.

My beloved Carolina

At last I have received your dear letter, beloved Carolina, but though it was dear to me, I am sorry to hear that you have suffered from a cold for so long. Tell me if you have taken your Lichen with the china1 and with milk which, as you know, helped you a lot the other time. Here, for such a severe cold, they use, as they tell me, with a lot of benefit, drops of resin of the fir trees. Do what your physician suggests you, because he knows your temperament and your climate as well. You can imagine how much I felt the demise of Fr. Lorenzo2. The Lord wants to crown his charity promptly. Recommend him to the Lord, even though I believe that he prays for us. The Lord has assisted us so much in this Work that I have nothing else to add. Know that I am very grateful also to your sister and to your brother-in-law because the Lord has helped us even through them. Pray, dear friend, so that we may respond to His mercies. I imagined that the holy Bishop of Macerata3 would leave Milan, and I can also imagine your disappointment. But we see from experience that it is really necessary for us to be detached from everything. You have seen how much you suffered for the esteemed Fr. Fontana. Yet God made up for everything. Tell me if he has been liberated together with the Holy Father4, and if he has followed him along in his triumph. I do not have the news from Canon Pacetti5, but I heard that he was in Loreto to preach during Lent. I believe that he did not write to me because I did not write to him after the liberation of Venice6. I did not know where he was. I could not write to him until three days ago. Therefore, I do not know what he thinks. Only this morning I came to know that your sister has returned to Venice. Tomorrow I will go to see her, and I will add a line in this letter. If the post does not permit me to do so in time, I will write again.

The inconveniences of your health should be a greater reason for travelling; in truth, I want to see you, but, at least, I would like to know that you have really recovered. My compliments to your husband. Embrace for me our friends. Also greet Marquis Casati for me, and tell him that it has been a great relief to me to be in this convent at the time of the blockade, and that I will always be very grateful to him.

Goodbye dear friend. I embrace you with all my heart and ask for your prayers. I am and will always be,

yours, dearest friend

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1 According to the treatment of those times.
2 Fr. Lorenzo Piazza who died because of the epidemic.
3 Fr. Maria Vincenzo Strambi, a Passionist Priest
4 Pope Pio VII. (Ep.I, lett.146, n. 3)
5 Mons. Pacetti, the first superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1)
6 The blockade
Venice, St. Lucy’s, 17 May 1814

I found your sister very well and in very good humour.

Your friend
Canossa

7 NB. What is added in pencil is in her handwriting, besides the signature
TO CAROLINA DURINI

263 (Venezia#1814.05.28)

The Marchioness asks Durini to tell a widow, who is an aspirant to the religious life, that she has to learn to seek God alone in everything. Otherwise her vocation will be vain.

My dearest friend,

I enclose a few lines as a reply to the lady Maria. I entrust her to you. Try to form her in self-denial, and above all encourage her to live a true spirit of faith which seeks nothing but God alone in everything. Otherwise she will not be happy in this vocation which, believe me, does not have human relief. If she is happy the Lord may not be so, as it happens with your friend. I have, then, to complain to you because you do not tell me anything about your health, nor about our other friends, about Casati and your brother-in-law; much more because I came to know from your sister that you have suffered much not only for your illness but also for other matters.

You already suffer when you write. Do as I do. I beg some people to do it for me. I confirm the good news about your sister. Cheer up and recommend me to the Lord. I beg you to convey my usual compliments and I embrace you heartily. Full of affection, I declare myself.

Venice 28 May 1814

Your Canossa

PS. I remind you of the Baptism certificate of Maria Giuseppina, daughter of the deceased Angela Brocciardi and of Carlo Gravina, born at Vercelli. During the blockade it was possible to place this little girl in a pious place. But they want her Baptism Certificate.
Despite the delicate historical moment, life is back to the usual rhythm. But Magdalene returns to Verona because of a bereavement: the father of her Carlino, Marquis Girolamo Canossa, died. Nevertheless, she has a lot of good news to give to her Milanese friend: Bishop Strambi has seen Canon Pacetti, who, when he wrote, remembers his friends in Milan. The religious Community in Venice is by now calm because the typhoid fever, that has struck one of the members, has not been fatal, and has not infected the others.

My dearest friend,

I intend to write to you only few words, my beloved Carolina, as I am leaving for Verona. This time, travelling will not be as pleasing as when I travelled with you since the circumstances too are different. I had planned this trip a long time ago but could not make it earlier, for many reasons. Now the Lord allows me to do it at a time when it will cost me much more, for it has pleased Him to take away my uncle\(^1\), father of my Carlino. I beg you to recommend him to the Lord. Remember me too, and tell me how your health is. Surely, you will be totally sanctified by Fr. Fontana\(^2\), who now can add the quality of confessor of the Holy Church to the many qualities he is endowed with. I received the news about the good Bishop of Macerata,\(^3\) who has seen Canon Pacetti\(^4\), and greets you. The Canon, too, conveys his compliments to you and your husband, to whom I beg you to convey also mine. Regarding Maria Ballorello,\(^5\) I do not object much to what you tell me about her attachment to the monastic system, if God continuously stimulates her to involve herself in the works of charity, because, knowing the value of these works she will easily allow herself to be involved, as long as the Spirit comes from God. If you think so, greet her for me. Goodbye, my dear. Your sister is well, it is quite sometime that I do not see her, because one of my companions had been affected by an epidemic fever called typhoid. Thanks be to God she recovered. By His mercy, the disease did not affect any of the rest of us. I embrace you all with my whole heart. When you write to me, address your letters to Verona, where I hope to stop only for about a month.

I embrace you. Goodbye.

Venice, 12 July 1814

Your Magdalene

Canossa

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1 Marquis Girolamo of Canossa – He was the guardian of the orphaned children of his brother Ottavio, and the father of Carlino, who was left without a mother, when Maria Buri died at a very young age.

2 Fr. Francesco Fontana, a Barnabite Priest

3 Fr. Vincenzo Maria Strambi, a Passionist who later became a bishop.

4 Mons. Pacetti, the first superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173 , n.1)

5 An aspirant to religious life who entered in Venice.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini has travelled and has gone also to Loreto. Therefore, the correspondence is at a standstill. But Magdalene hopes to see her friend in Venice soon, for the usual visit to her sister. Meanwhile she conveys her wishes for the new year.

My dearest friend,

It is a long time since I got any news about you. I almost fear that you have forgotten me. As for me, certainly I do not forget you, my dear. Your sister, as you may know, has come back just a few days ago. I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing her again, but I hope to do so tomorrow. They tell me that you have been travelling. Even our dear Viscontina wrote about it. You will be half sanctified by your visit to the Holy House¹, and I hope you will become holy when you will travel to Venice. For me it is certainly a consolation to think that in a month’s time I will embrace you and I hope that you will not deprive your sister of your visit.

I, too, have travelled. But my journey was shorter than yours. I have been to Verona and I returned here by the middle of September. Thank to the Lord, now I am well. I had my usual cough, but I was not confined to bed. Now it has subsided. You can imagine that I have to do as much as I want, as you will see for yourself. How is our good Marquis Casati and all our dear friends? I beg you to embrace them cordially for me. How is the young Ballarella? Greet her for me as well.

Recommend me to the prayers of everyone as I am in dire need. I do not ask you for this because I am sure you will pray. My regards to your husband. Goodbye dear friend. You will find ten of us here. I embrace you with my whole heart and I am full of affection for you,

my dearest friend

Your friend

Canossa²

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 28 December (1)814

P.S. I wish you a very happy year. May the Lord fill you with His Blessings.

¹ The Basilica of Loreto in the province of Ancona (XVI century). According to tradition, the holy house of Nazareth was brought here by angels towards the end of the XIII century.
² NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s. The letter instead was written by Elena Bernardi.
Magdalene meets Durini in Venice, and hopes to see her friend again before she leaves. Unfortunately the demands of Magdalene’s activity are exacting. Therefore she limits herself to send letters to Carolina and to her friends in Milan.

My dearest friend,

I looked forward to see you again, my dear Durini, thinking that I would have a moment to enjoy this pleasure, but today being a feast-day, it was not possible for me. I wish you a very happy journey and embrace you wholeheartedly. I am sending you some letters that I beg you to hand over. Regarding the fashion I sent the letters of Corsini to Leopoldina but I enclose the most important paragraph so that you may show it to the Canoness. It would be very good if we can find a remedy. I enclose the General Plan of the Institute. Please ask the Archpriest Galvani to read it.

I include also the paper on the indulgences which the Ladies of the Hospital want and I beg you to speak on my behalf either to Dugnani or to Castiglioni as you think best.

Goodbye, dear friend. My compliments to your husband, to the Countess and Count Taverna. Greet lady Checca for me. Recommend me to the Lord. I embrace you cordially and I am sincerely, as I convey the greetings of my secretary,

my beloved friend

St. Lucy’s, 5 February (18)15

Your very affectionate

Canossa

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1 CORSINI MARIONI of Roma
2 Plan B8-8 in Ep. II/2, pp. 1422-1425
3 Fr. Nicola Galvani, Magdalene’s confessor (Ep.I, lett. 47, n. 3).
4 Lady Teresa Dugnani, of a patrician Milanese family
5 Countess Eleonora Crivelli Castiglioni, mother of Francesca, the wife of Bonifacio
In Venice, the two friends had agreed on an important plan for Milan. Magdalene would go to the Lombard capital to organise a work similar to that in Verona, and that would also be according to the plans of Carolina. But after careful reflection, the Marchioness feels the duty to clarify the terms of her agreement with her friend: she will accept to go to Milan only if the new work will have the same spirit and system as the one in Verona.

My dearest friend,

Here I am, my dear Carlina, to finally send you a definite answer regarding the matter you proposed to me when I had the pleasure to see you here. Forgive me for not being able to answer earlier. You know the reason. Therefore without further ado let us come to the topic. So, I am very disposed to come, my dear, just because I desire so much to keep the promise I made, I cannot fix definitively to undertake it at the beginning of October. Circumstances could be such that I may have to delay a few months, or perhaps I may also be able to come in October. If you allow me, I will inform you more precisely regarding the time, always making an allowance for special and unforeseen circumstances.

However, after establishing the principles, you see, my dear friend, that it is not because I am not persuaded by and confident in your goodness and friendship, but because as I would not treat others in a less sincere way, I would doubly be mistaken if I do it to you. I need to speak to you about how to carry out the same, doing it out of duty as well as to satisfy my heart.

Truly I cannot deny that the infinite love of the Lord, which you know, till now has deigned that His merciful plans have always succeeded with harmony and intelligence, and to the satisfaction of the persons with whom I have had to deal. I hope that God will give me the grace to lend myself to all that is possible for His service and for the good of people. I would not know how to do it nor could I, if not according to the appropriate spirit and exact system of this Institution which, as you know, is totally for working; but, to do it well, it must follow the established objective. It is not that I am not convinced that one cannot work in another way and in a way better than ours. I only want to say that I cannot provide you my service, unless it is according to the way you already know. I also do not mean to say that every branch of activity embraced by this Institution should start at once. We know that it is convenient to go on little by little, according to the growth the Lord will grant to this new house, if He disposes that the House be open. I want to say that, in the situation in which God has placed me, I can only come to Milan and stay for as much time as is necessary, if it is for a foundation according to our spirit.

Please, pardon me, my dear, for this statement. You already know well that if the Lord had not granted me the grace to tie myself to Him, placing this Work into my hands, though I am very unworthy, and that if I were free as when we first met, I would be of help in every way. Pardon me, I repeat, and consider all this as an act done out of duty which your Magdalene expresses to her good friend. I have very good news regarding your sister. I saw her the other day. I assure you that she cannot be better. My companions present to you their regards, I hope you have been helping me with the letters for the Countess Castiglioni, and you remember the indulgences for the Lady of this Hospital.

Goodbye, dear friend, I embrace you wholeheartedly, more than anything else I beg you to pray and to get others to pray.

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1 Countess Eleonora Crivelli Castiglioni, mother of Francesca, the wife of Bonifacio
My cordial compliments to the Canoness, and my respectful greetings to your family. I am full of affection and friendship for you, my dearest friend.

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 4 March 1815

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa
The answer of 4 March 1815 has been more than categorical, but Durini, sure of Magdalene’s agreement to her modified plans, anticipates another proposal: the Marchioness should hurry her going to Milan to organise the school that the Countess and her collaborators have opened for the poor girls. Magdalene, however, answers negatively, because that activity is part of her charity plan, but only a component of it, not an integral part of it and it is detached from the whole activity. Nevertheless, she asks time for reflection and for suggestions.

My dearest friend,

Forgive me, my dear Carlina, if I have not replied to you up to now, as I was caught up with the desire to serve you and the delight to be together, as well as with the awareness of the circumstances of this House. I wish for nothing except to do the will of God and to see Him glorified. To be truthful, in my opinion, I think that it would not be practicable for me to come for your school, though, humanly speaking, I would do it only for you alone. You see, dear friend, the implementation of this second project could take at least more than four or five months, and I would not take away such a stretch of time from our Institution. For this purpose I am ready to remain in Milan all the reasonable time needed to initiate it, as far as I, wretched as I am, can do, always following the plan traced by Divine Providence. But at this moment I cannot think of getting involved for a stretch of time in a special branch of charity of the Institution which is, at the moment, detached from it. Since you have good reasons, allow me fifteen or twenty days of time to ask for advice, because at the moment I have no one I can turn to, as I told you when you departed from here. However, I not only confirm my first promise, but I think that if I will be advised not to do it, when I will be in Milan for the already established object, it will not be impossible for me to do what I can to help your school.

The other day your sister came to help me. She is starting to worry about the child-birth of Mrs. Maria. You may imagine how much I preached to her. In fact, she went away calm. Soon I will see her again, and I will go more frequently as the time for the birth draws nearer. I thank you for the pictures of Our Lady of Sorrows. Do not speak to me any more of the oil. I am glad it was according to your liking. Rather, forgive me. My compliments to your husband, to the Canoness and our other friends. When you write to me, give me news of Fr. Carlo as I am very interested in what he is doing. Recommend me a great deal to the Lord and to Holy Mary. Goodbye, dear. I embrace you cordially, and I am always, dearest friend.

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 18 March (1) 815

Your very affectionate
Magdalene of Canossa

1 Fr. Carlo Riva Palazzi, a Priest from Milan.
2 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s..
In Milan, Durini wants to hurry up. She is looking for a house to lodge the new centre of Canossian activity. Magdalene lets her know that she is not making any agreement regarding the places, until God’s will is clearly manifested.

My dearest friend

Only a few lines so that you may not think that I am dead or that I have changed my mind. Dear Carolina, I delayed replying to you up to today because I hoped that the person who commands me would return. But since it was impossible for me to speak to him, so as not to lose even this chance of the ordinary postal delivery, let me tell you, that until I make no decision regarding the school, I do not know whether I will be able to let you establish a house because, although my opinion is as I wrote to you, if there is a different judgement about it, I will change at once.

Therefore, early next week I will write to you in a definite way. It is enough for me that you are convinced that I am always disposed to serve you.

On Tuesday, I had the pleasure of paying a long visit to your sister. Among other things I spoke to her of what now is just a dream, that is, about the blockade. She does not want to try, unless she is taken by surprise. We agreed that if anything like that happens, she will come to stay with me at St. Lucy. I tell you this as I know that you will like it. She is very well and your brother-in-law is well too. Maria has some discomfort on account of her physical situation. I have found her in high spirits and good humour, and she is as fast as a little bird. Be at peace about your sister. Pray for your Magdalene and get prayers said so that we may do the Will of God and do it well.

Yours, dearest friend

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 8 April (1)815

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa

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1 Monsignor Pacifico Pacetti, the first Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).
2 Countess Paola Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini
3 They feared another blockade in the city of Venice, while in fact the war situation turned out to be disadvantageous to Napoleon.
4 The maid of the Counts Taverna.
The Marchioness, apologises but replies negatively to Carolina regarding the school, because, engaging herself in the preparation of the companions for this work, would alter the plan of her institution, as there would not be space for the plurality of works, especially for the hospital. She will accept, at the opportune time, the invitation of her friend for a complete work.

My dearest friend,

Forgive me, my dear Carlina, for my delay in replying to you regarding my being able or unable to serve you regarding your school. I already told you how much I have desired to be able to do it. To try to please you in every way, I delayed until now to reply definitively to you. But I am forced to say that it is not possible for me to accept your invitation because of a lot of circumstances and I will tell you some of them.

The first one is that, of course, for a school to be run well, it demands total engagement on the part of the people involved in it; much more if they are only two, as you tell me. You know my occupations, this Institution of charity and my responsibilities. Certainly, if I take the charge of a school, it will be impossible for me to have time, and at the same time the opportunity to form the companions for the object I should come for. The school would engage me totally and take away from me the chance to initiate the companions, whom God will send for all the other branches of charity of our Institution, especially for the hospital.

Furthermore, my dear, starting like this requires double the time and I cannot dispose of my time, since it is not mine but of the Institution which I serve. Going away for a longer stretch of time, at this moment, I would not be able to see to the affairs of this house where I am now. Therefore, forgive me, I repeat, dear Carolina. On my part I renew the promise that I will do it at the appointed time. Please, entrust me and recommend me much to the Lord so that we may receive from His Divine Mercy the grace to pledge ourselves to serve Him and to make Him known and served. Embrace all our good friends for me. I recommend myself to their prayers. Your sister is very well. I saw her on Saturday. Goodbye, love me and believe me. As I embrace you heartily, I declare myself,

my dearest friend

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 19 April (1) 815

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa
The political situation, during the Vienna Congress is very problematic and Magdalene fears that it is not prudent to pay a relevant sum for a house of such enormous size. It is better to have a small apartment, as Durini already foresees, provided that the neighbours are commendable people. After all Magdalene will go soon to Milan, and an agreement will be made for a possible new foundation.

My dearest friend

At last, my dear friend, you will say that it is time I reply to you and you are right. Believe me, you and the answer you expect from me were always in my heart. It was not my fault if I could not reply earlier, except the fact that I did not write to you last Saturday as I wanted to go to visit your sister. I found her in good health, and recovered from the anxiety she has suffered about the happy but premature child-birth of lady Maria. I also found her in good humour. Therefore, you too may be at peace, for you now have reason for being so. Even Maria is very well.

Let us come now to our business. I am inserting a letter, regarding the school. It would be better if you do not show it to anyone so as not to cause too much talk about it, but do as you wish.

Let us speak now of the little house, my dear. I assure you that all this time I have been thinking, and although very unworthy, praying and asking others to pray for this matter that concerns me much. You know the Institute, and see how many things have to be settled so that it may be established as it should. Therefore, listen to what I am saying: you can take for as short time as possible the two rooms you are indicating to me. I will come there with a companion, as we agreed, and being in Milan, we will settle everything with God’s help.

I am already certain that the neighbours you speak to me about are good people. If they were not so, you would not put me in that house. I assure you, dear friend, that the political circumstances, and perhaps some that now we do not know about, may delay the execution of our projects. For this reason, I also desire that the building you choose for me be as small as possible, so that, in any unforeseen event, your burden may be as small as possible.

Listen a little, my dear, to another madness of your Magdalene. If the Lord deigns that the tranquillity we enjoy at the moment may become stable, really ending the war, as all here believe, I have in mind to go to Genoa. Then, I should necessarily pass through Milan. Anyway, I will not stop this time, because I cannot, since the time is limited. But perhaps only by talking about it we will be able to conclude everything, and I will come as I have promised you.

What I am begging you about again is to seek for prayer and also to recommend me very much to the Lord, to Our Lady of Sorrows, and to St. Charles so that God may grant us the grace to see Him served and glorified in this new House, if He wants it so. Goodbye, very dear friend. I embrace you heartily, and I am as I declare myself.

Tell me how Maria Balarella is going on.

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1 Countess Paola Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini
2 The servant of family Taverna
3 Durini is looking for a house to rent in Milan so that Magdalene of Canossa may begin her work.
4 The last battles of the seventh coalition. They ended with the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo (18.6.1815) and his final abdication on 22 June 1815.
5 To meet Cardinal Fontana who was passing by.
6 Cardinal and Archbishop of Milan
7 An aspirant to Religious Life.
My dearest friend
Venice, St. Lucy’s 19 April (1)815

Your Very Affectionate
Magdalene of Canossa
TO CAROLINA DURINI

272 (Venezia#1815.04.28)

The Barnabite Father Francis Fontana, back from prison, is in Genoa and Durini will go to meet him. Magdalene, so as not to find obstacles, agrees secretly with a friend to follow her: she wants to know the famous confessor of the Church.

My dearest friend

I immediately answer you, my dear Carlina, to tell you that, as a matter of fact, I have not fixed an exact time to go to Genoa. But since you desire a lot to see me when you are there, I pray you to promptly tell me when you and your husband have agreed to go.

I would come to Milan with my brother-in-law with whom I would continue the journey. But, as you may imagine, before having the pleasure of lodging with you, if you agree, I would share your carriage. You know how much my brother would like such a thing. You cannot imagine how happy I am at the idea of becoming acquainted with Fr. Fontana¹, and to organise everything for Milan², being and coming after you, as if part of your entourage.

Therefore, I wait for your prompt reply so as to prepare everything with every secrecy, as I do not want that my companions, and the others may come to know it. However, since, as you say very well, everything is uncertain, and Fr. Fontana and his whole company may leave, at any moment, do not bother the least about myself, because I would be very mortified if you deprive yourself of this happy moment in order to wait for me. If you know it in time, write to me. Otherwise tell me as well that it is not possible, so that I may act accordingly. Either after or before going to Genoa, I would stay for three or four days in Milan so as to settle everything regarding our business. Since I have to return to Venice for those reasons I will tell you about if I meet you, the circumstances will not allow me to make the whole trip. So for the time being I will not be able to embrace you.

Goodbye, my dearest friend. I recommend myself to your prayers. You know how great my need is. It is best that Mary Most Holy accomplishes everything herself. Pray to her and get others to pray to her and also to St. Charles³. Goodbye, again my best regards to your husband. Your sister is well. My companions convey to you their greetings.

Dearest friend

Venice, St. Lucy’s 28 April (1)815

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa

¹ Fr. Francis Fontana, a Barnabite. He became Cardinal (Ep. I, lett. 13, n. 1)
² To begin the work of Magdalene of Canossa
³ Cardinal and Archbishop of Milano (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 4)
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene is about to reach the Milanese Countess so as to make the trip to Genoa. She agrees with her about the final plan.

My dearest friend

I leave Venice today, or at the most tomorrow, for Verona, where I will stay until, I think, Thursday. On this day I intend to depart for Milan so that, as we agreed, I may continue the journey in your dear company. I am very grateful to you and the other friends for the room you offer me and I accept it very gladly so as not to be at the inn, during these days of such confusion. My brother-in-law is a man, as you say very well, and he is also a traveller. Therefore, there is no need to worry about him. If you write to me, address your letters to Verona, to the pharmacist, Mr. Verdari at Porta dei Borsari.

During these days, when I will stay in Milan, we will speak of the other business of ours because when I return from Genoa I have to go to Verona and then to Venice, as I cannot keep away for long on account of the affairs of this House at this time. From Verona, I will write to you more precisely about the day of my arrival in Milan.

Goodbye. I embrace you heartily and thank you. Hurriedly I declare myself to be

My dearest friend

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 6 May (1) 815

Your very affectionate friend

Canossa²

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¹The mail was distributed in the pharmacy at Porta Borsari (Ep.I, lett. 145, n. 5).
² NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s writing
Magdalene has anticipated her arrival in Milan and informs Durini through one of her companions, who writes the letter personally and then lets the Marchioness sign it.

Very distinguished Countess

As our friend is unable to write, she has requested me to write on her behalf, to say that she will be leaving Verona tomorrow morning and will arrive in Milan on Sunday. But if you do not see her on that day do not worry.

She will tell you verbally the reason for having anticipated her coming to Milan.

I take this chance, very distinguished Countess, to express my sincere appreciation and consideration and I declare myself

Very distinguished Countess,

Verona 11 May 1815

Your very humble, devoted and grateful Servant

(Canossa)

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NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene of Canossa’s writing.
The letter is all in Magdalene’s handwriting. It is very short because Magdalene easily gets tired when she has to write. She thanks her for the trip to Genoa.

My dearest friend

I arrived safely at Verona at 6 o’clock after a very good journey. My dearest friend, I assure you that I am very well, and that my cold is almost gone. Dear Carlina, I thank you heartily for everything. Thank dear Viscontina for me again. The coachman served me very well. Convey my greetings to your whole family, especially to your husband and my thanks to everybody. I end so as not to lose the chance of the ordinary mail which is about to leave. I end also since I am writing this myself and I can write only for a few moments. I embrace you heartily. Goodbye

31 May Verona (18)15

Your Canossa

Wish all our friends for me. When you write, send me news about the Canoness. My regards to the Parish Priest.  

I will write to you later more calmly.

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NB. The opposite page is torn away but the postal stamp of delivery is legible.

1 The postal service
2 Zoppi Mons. F. MARIA, parish priest of St. Steven in Milan, was the director of the work of Magdalene of Canossa after Pacetti’s death. He was elected Bishop of Massa Carrara. He remained for 10 years. His benevolence towards the Institute never failed; he showed this by choosing the Institute to be his heir, so that the works of charity might extend. He was a doctor in « both laws » (Cfr. C. Tronconi, op. cit. pag. XXVIII).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

276 (Verona#1815.06.10)

The mother-in-law of Durini has a sickness that can be cured following a prescription of the times. Magdalene points that out to her and, among other news, assures her that she is very interested in establishing her work in Milan.

My dearest friend,

This is the first ordinary post, after receiving your very dear letter, my beloved Carolina and here I am taking advantage of it by sending you the recipe of that remedy that the Countess, your worthy mother-in-law¹, wanted. I beg you to convey to her my most distinguished regards and those of my brother-in-law, who never stops praising her and showing her all the respect she really deserves.

Here is the remedy, immediately. Take a stem or a green trunk of red roses. Remove the thorns and the leaves. Then take away diligently the green surface of the bark. Make three small morsels and give them to the patient for three mornings. If the physician does not judge otherwise, continue doing so, for as long as the patient wishes.

Notice that perhaps, at the moment, you will not see a great improvement. But do it, unless the illness is because of an internal wound, for which there is no human remedy.

I have sent a note to Fr. Pietro to whom I had spoken already. From what he told me, I certainly think that he will be pleased to send you the Certificate of Baptism of La Porta because he told me that he has found it.

I have not yet left for Venice, but dear Carolina, I hope to be able to do it in three or four days’ time. I have Milan very much at heart. I pray and have prayers offered to be able to accomplish the Will of God and continue to serve Him as much as I can. I have good news about Venice, something that consoles me for two reasons.

I postponed the letter I was writing because of the uncertainty of the day of my departure and the difficulty to explain myself well in writing. Believe me, dear Carlina, I would say that I almost feel a bit afflicted for not having been able to go to Venice immediately. Imagine, I had to comply with my brother, and go to Grezzano with him where, however, I remained for only a day.

That blessed dispute of Angioletta², that always seems to be on the verge of concluding, keeps me here these days; but whether it is finished or not, I shall leave in a few days’ time.

What I beg you most of all for is prayer. Pray and get others to pray. I feel comforted at the news that the Canoness is better. Embrace her for me, as well as dear Visconti and our other friends. My respects to the Parish Priest, and my regards to your good husband and your family. Do not forget the son of that holy person, that is, of Arconati.

On my return from Milan I found a letter of your sister to whom I replied as you may imagine, as I intend to tell her orally all about our adventures. Many wishes to the one who you call my daughter. I embrace you really heartily. Greet lady Checca also for me. Goodbye.

From my heart I am.

Your Canossa

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¹ Lett. 118, n.1
² It is about a dispute which arose between Angela Guarnieri, a religious who had entered St. Joseph’s Convent in 1812, and her relatives for an inheritance which they contested.
³ Monsignor Francesco Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 275, n. 2).
⁴ Giuseppe Arconti, son of Teresa, the deceased sister of Carolina Durini
Verona St. Joseph’s 10 June 1815

Fr. Pietro has sent you the Baptism Certificate
TO CAROLINA DURINI

277 (Verona#1815.06.17)

Magdalene is held back in Verona because of a financial matter. Therefore, she cannot give a sure answer regarding Milan, more so, because Naudet is deciding to leave St. Joseph’s, but probably, not so soon. Nevertheless, at the end of the letter, after receiving clarifications about when she might be free, Magdalene announces that she will go to Milan and, as she prepares for it, she asks for prayers.

My dearest friend

14 June, Verona

I hope that you have received the Baptism certificate Fr. Leonardi sent to you, and that you have received in my last letter the note or recipe of the remedy you have requested. Seeing this letter of mine, you might feel very unhappy because the date is still of Verona where they want me to stay so as to end, as I hope, the business of Angioletta. You can imagine how the reply from Milan made me sad, as I fear that we will not get the apartment on time, or we are losing the chance of being in the neighbourhood of the Parish Priest, near you and the other friends, as well as near the Hospital. On the other hand, I would not like you to take it, if then I am unable to come. I confess that I am more worried about Verona than about Venice. My friend here, is wavering a lot. However, I think it will be a long time before she can come to any decision.

Therefore, my dear Carlina in case the apartment has to be booked, take it for four or five days, so that you can inform me through the current mail and I will answer soon. If I did not reply to you yet, I could also add the answer before I close this letter. Meanwhile, I beg you for prayer, for charity sake. I assure you that I need it. Fr. Pietro Leonardi, who is present as I close this letter, asks me to greet you. He would like to know if the Baptism certificate of La Porti is alright, as he hopes. He is asking you for information and for the Baptism certificates from Turin.

Embrace all the friends for me. My regards to your whole family. My brother-in-law repeats his thanks to you as well as to everyone. Goodbye, greet those young ladies for me, also Ballarela. I am full of attachment and friendship.

I am adding now the answer I promised you, because I presume that I will be forced to stop here for the whole of next week. Therefore, they advice me, my dear Carlina, to write to you that I will come, as you, out of your goodness, wish. Then, may the Lord grant that my coming may bring about the results you hope for.

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1 Fr. Pietro Leonardi (Lett. 4, n. 4).
2 Angela Guarnieri
3 Monsignor Francesco Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 275, n.2)
4 Naudet is deciding to leave the «Ritiro Canossa».
5 He wants to know if the Certificate he sent is alright.
6 The certificate to be asked for from Turin (Ep. I, lett. 250).
7 An aspirant to religious life.
I entreat you to give me a proof of our friendship by renewing your prayer much more than ever. I beg you especially to have prayers offered up to Mary Most Holy for it is she who has guided this little work up to this point.

Remember me in particular. Request the Parish Priest too for the same thing. Convey my greetings to him as well as to Viscontina and the Canoness. Embrace them for me. Goodbye, dear friend, I am again full of affection for you, dearest friend

Verona, St. Joseph’s 17 June 1815

Your friend
Magdalene of Canossa

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8 NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s writing
Durini has misinterpreted Magdalene’s letter and Magdalene corrects and clarifies what she has said, assuring her that she is not afflicted because Naudet is leaving, because even if help is lacking, Providence will make up for it. She already has two companions whom she will accompany to Milan, where, she is convinced, the work can be fully realized.

My dearest friend,

What do you say, or better, what will you say, my dear Carlina, seeing this letter of mine which I am writing from Verona where I am still trying, if the Lord wills, to settle the affairs of my Angioletta. I think that I cannot go to Venice earlier than the end of the coming week. Besides, what to tell you about your last letter if not that I beseech the Lord that He may fulfil what you desire and hope that I may be exactly as the need requests that I should be, and I am not. Meanwhile, I will tell you that, being held back in Verona, at this time, I had the chance to deal with that young lady whom, I think, I will take to Milan together with my Elena. I must tell you that I am very consoled about her. She is one of those generous spirits whom I need for us. I hope that you will like her a lot. She does not know anything about Milan, but wishes to go away from her country and from her relatives to involve herself totally in the works of charity for the benefit of her neighbours, but, I can see that she cares much for her own sanctification.

From what you say, you had the impression that in my last letter I was worried about my friend over here. Actually, I am not worried, but I was sorry for having to write to you so firmly, because, I could be isolated over here, and compelled to postpone the execution of what I had agreed upon with you and this would be a burden to you. Since I was told to go on, the Lord will do everything. I only beg you to assist me with your prayer. Embrace the Canoness and Viscontina for me.

I, too, to tell you sincerely, first because of the right that the Love of the Lord has given me, with so many proofs of His providence, and then because of the Spirit of Charity that St. Charles left to the people of Milan, do not have the smallest doubt that he will be sending me help. Rather I am convinced that, humanly speaking, in no country better than yours will it be possible to activate all the branches of Charity we wish for, even that for my poor country girls. May the Lord grant us strength and true charity at the same time.

1 Guarnieri Angiola
2 BERNARDI ELENA - born in 1788. She came to Verona in 1814 and became part of the first group that started the foundation at Milan in Via della Signora. She appears as Superior on 10 September 1823, when the Archbishop Cardinal Gaysruck had the solemn Canonical Erection of the Canossian Institute, which was to be shifted to its new site at Via della Chiusa, while the House at Via della Signora still remained open and functional. (In the list of the first Sisters of Milan, which has been declared as an extract from the registers of the Provincial House, it seems that Bernardi came in, like the others, in 1816, while she actually entered Verona in 1814. This chronological discrepancy is evidently because of the fact that the list in Milan regards only the beginnings of the work of the Canossians in that city of Lombardy.
3 Naudet Leopoldina
4 St. Charles Borromeo (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 4).
For this reason, I turn to you again to ask for prayers. When I shall see your sister I will try to drive the storms away, if there are still any, and then I will write to you.

My greetings to your family, especially to your husband. As to the good daughters, whom I call «ours» as a way of understanding, when you have the occasion, remind them always what I have told them, especially to Checchina⁵, that is, always try to strengthen them in their vocation through means of faith. I venerate, as you know, holy souls and Religious like the Capuchins⁶. I recommend myself much to their prayers so that the Lord may enlighten the one who has the right to command me⁷. God ordinarily makes us know His Divine will through His Ministers. However, I hope that the Lord will inspire many persons, perhaps more than in other towns because, I repeat, charity is the spirit of Milan. Greet everyone for me. My regards to the parish priest⁸.

Goodbye, dear Carlina. I embrace you heartily, and declare myself forever.

Yours, my dearest friend

Verona, St. Joseph’s 1 July 1815

Your Canossa⁹

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⁵ TROIANI FRANCESCA, niece of Checca, Francesca Orti, the maid of Durini. She joined the Canossians at Milan in 1817.
⁶ Franciscan female order
⁷ Monsignor Pacetti, first superior of the Institute (Ep. I, lett. 173, n. 1.).
⁸ Monsignor Francesco Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 275, n. 2)
⁹ NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s handwriting.
In the home of Taverna calm has returned again after some disturbances. Magdalene reassures her sister. For the various aspirants to the religious life, who would like to be welcomed in Milan, she recommends her friend not to even mention any imminent date. The political situation and the necessity of a more orderly setup also in Verona, need time. It is good to decide everything with prudence. Meanwhile the aspirants should learn to seek God alone.

My dearest friend,

Finally here I am in Venice and here I am writing to you, my very dear friend. The Lord has given me the grace to bring to conclusion the affair of Angioletta, most of all, something very much needed for her own peace of mind, but also because without concluding these matters, for various reasons, I would be worried twice as much if I have to come to Milan. I still have to settle the last few things, which I hope to finish as early as possible. I have not only stipulated these, but have also set down the conditions for the agreement before leaving. I must answer to two very precious letters of yours. Believe me, dear Carlina, these are the first free moments I have.

Let me start by giving you news of your sister, whom I have always found kind and in good health. It seems that the thunderstorm has gone completely. She did not even speak to me about it. I have seen Mrs Maria separately. Everything is all right with the Count. She was a bit uneasy about your nephew, and for the pain you might feel. But on another occasion, when we were together because your sister wished that I should pay a visit to Priuli, to whose daughter he is married, I found her more at peace even regarding this, because the young Marquis has improved.

You tell me that I would have found a letter of dear Viscontina in Venice. My companions sent it to me to Verona, and it is more than a month that I replied to her. If she has not received it, kindly let me know it and I will write to her again.

Let us turn to ourselves, now. You ask me the list of what is needed to prepare the new House of the Daughters of Charity to honour Our Lady of Sorrows. Since you want it, I will inform you about it another time because I have a lot of letters to attend to. I can assure you that these days, after my return, except the time I am sleeping, which is always long, I have never had a quiet moment.

With regard to telling our plans to those young ladies who desire to devote themselves to the service of the Lord by serving His poor, it seems to me that is better to go on keeping silent about it, because I confess that here I have found the things well prepared by the Lord, and much more than what we deserve comes from the Government, considering the little we have done up to now. But since the general circumstances, that have delayed everything, will need some more time, to make me feel really at peace and to be able to leave everything really

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1 Guarnieri Angiola (Ep. I, lett. 276, n. 3, pg. 408).
2 The conflict between the Counts Taverna, probably because of business
3 The Taverna’s maid.
4 Count Costanzo Taverna.
5 Giuseppe Arconati, whose health was rather weak, nephew of Durini
6 Priuli Loredana Tron, benefactress of the Institute in Venice. (Ep. I, lett. 397, pg. 646)
established here, I think it better to continue to keep silent until we see the time for execution of our projects is closer.

Do not get upset about this, my dear friend. Do not think that I am forgetting Milan. But let us tackle the matter gently for still a little while, so that what I desire may come to a happy conclusion here. That will also serve to our benefit there.

When I will write to you about the furniture, I will also send you the measurement for the beds, that I will take with a cord. I repeat, do not get worried. I confirm what I have told you. I only beg you, not to hurry too much, because if we were forced to postpone it a little, when things are settled I will be better able to tell you what is needed, without needing to make any changes, as perhaps, if the Lord grants me the grace I wish, as I hope, I may have to do so where I am. You will not understand anything, but if you remember what we said when we were together, you will understand something. It is enough for you to know that everything is all right, and I hope it will still get better.

I think that it is not just for the reason I feared, and that as you know, that gave me much anxiety, but for another reason, of which I will write to you, I will need to trouble you with a letter for Fr. Fontana\(^7\), with regard to the same thing. I repeat, then that I will write to you everything. Meanwhile I beg you, take care of those good daughters and exhort them always to seek God alone.

When I have a free moment, I will reply to Checchina\(^8\) who I greet cordially together with my dear Teresina\(^9\) and also all the others. Be assured that I will be as quick as possible. I was very sorry about the accident of poor Fr. Carlo\(^10\). I beg you to continue to inform me about him. I recommended him to the prayers of some holy persons. Give me news also of your nephew and of the Canoness, whom I beg you to embrace as well as the other friends, especially Viscontina and Somaglia\(^11\).

My compliments to your family. I recommend you for the sake of charity and friendship, to ask others to recommend me to Mary Most Holy as much as you can, as I need it more and more. My regards to the Parish Priest\(^12\). I embrace you wholeheartedly, full of attachment and friendship for you,

dear friend

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 1 August 1815

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene Canossa\(^13\)

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7 Fr. Francesco Fontana, a Barnabite priest, then a Cardinal (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1)
8 Trion Francesca, niece of the maid of Durini
9 SPASCIANI TERESA, born at Brescia in 1773. She died at Milan in 1843. At the age of 26 she entered the Monastery of the Salesians of Brescia, that was just being founded. But because of a serious illness she had to return to her family, and was forced to remain there for another 17 years. In 1816 she was admitted among the aspirants of Verona. She was then sent to Milan by the Foundress, as the 4th Sister for this foundation. A few years later she was sent to Venice as Superior. In 1826 she was elected Superior at Milan. At the end of her term, she served as Vice Superior and then coordinator of the Christian Doctrine classes. (After Venice she was Superior at Bergamo. After each term of superiorship, she would be elected Vice Superior). Margherita Rosmini writes about her to her brother: «She is always equanimous, has a very humble opinion of herself ...an immeasurable charity, ..... always ready to be the first one to serve even when she is not asked, whenever she sees a companion who needs her help. She willingly accepts suffering... she treats her body as if it were a donkey. ». (Verona, 12 agosto 1827, A. C. M. )
10 Following this accident, Fr Carlo Palazzi will soon die.
11 Countess SOMAGLIA MADDALENA, sister of Count Giacomo Mellerio and wife of Count GIAN LUCA della Somaglia Cavalli.
12 Mons. Francesco Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 275, n 2.)
13 NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s writing.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

280 (Venice#1815.09.09)

There is pressure especially from Durini and Visconti, so that Magdalene may decide to begin her work in Milan. But the Marchioness once more declares that she has the Lombard city very much at heart and is already preparing good subjects, but there are still a lot of reasons preventing her from taking an immediate solution: the Government keeps her in suspense regarding the place in Verona; the one who has to replace her as Superior is seriously sick. Nevertheless she sends a list of things she will need to furnish the house. It is a simple guide and it is not necessary that everything be ready.

My dearest friend

I insert, or if the paper will permit me, I will add, below, the note you wish for, my dear friend. But allow me to tell you not only the reason for my delay, but even what compels me to send you this note. That is, that you do not hurry about spending money, because you know how worried I am when I see that I am troubling people who have so many other good things to do. Do not think that I am indifferent about Milan. Sincerely I am not so. Rather I assure you that I do not easily see a better place than Milan to establish the real foundation of the Work. Believe me, I think that with that young person whom I accepted in Verona in view of Milan, and another I have at hand here in Venice, according to my weak judgement, I think I am preparing persons, you will happy about. I believe that I am not worthy that the Lord puts such persons into my hands.

I want you to know that for the affairs, here, as well in Verona, I prepare myself to be free to come to you again, but everything, rather a lot of it, does not depend on me. Especially the decisions of our Government about the place where we are living in, keep me in suspense. As you already know, the administration of such a vast Empire does not facilitate a speedy conclusion of matters, especially as these are so insignificant for them. And you see my impossibility to move from here, before leaving my companions well settled and serene.

Besides this the Lord deigns to try us by the fact that one of the two Superiors, who has to be here in my place, seems to have a fatal chronic illness. Therefore, you realize that it is not that I do not care to come. It is not because I am not convinced that there will be work to do. But for all these circumstances and for many others, I fear they will always delay something which, for Divine Mercy and seeing that it is the will of the Lord, I also desire very much. And it pains me to think that, meanwhile, you will keep spending without seeing the result of your expenses with that promptness that I too would like.

After having explained to you all these reasons and having fully justified myself with you and with good friend Visconti, I am adding the note you desired, my dear Carlina, also after reflecting on it a little more. First of all remember that this is just to serve you, giving you a norm. But it is not necessary to have all that is listed, because, as you know, even here we do not have yet the small table in our room, as we never had the opportunity of having them made. Therefore, get what you think is more necessary, without taking the trouble of getting everything.

I received with great pleasure the letter of good Celestina and will reply as soon as

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1 Magdalene of Canossa is always anxious about the economic situation of the two houses of Verona and Venice.
2 She has to replace Naudet as Superior of Verona, and at Venice, she has to elect the Superior for the first time. However, one of the two chosen ones is struck by a serious disease.
3 They are aspirants to religious life.
possible, as well as to that of Checchina⁴. To tell you the truth I too think that the former can be a good doorkeeper. I recommend to you my good Teresina⁵. Greet her warmly together with Marietta⁶ and all the others. I am so happy to hear that the Canoness has recovered. Many regards to her from me and many to my good Visconti too.

My dear friend, make people pray a lot and pray for your Magdalene. Believe me, I am in a period in which I need a lot of prayer.

Accept the regards of my companions. As I embrace you heartily, I recommend myself again to your prayers. Full of attachment, I declare myself.

dear friend

Your very affectionate friend

Canossa

Venice, St. Lucy’s, 9 September 1815

PS. For greater clarity I have differentiated the various rooms.

Note about the furniture:

For the room for common Prayer:
A picture of Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross, either a framed canvas, or a statue, or a paper picture and a bench where to kneel.
In the sleeping room:
A bed, a small table of ordinary wood with a drawer and without a key.
A chair made of ordinary straw, a wooden support for an earthen basin, similar to that of the Capuchins. A small holy water carrier hung to the bed and a picture of Our Lady of Sorrows, only of simple paper.
For the work room:
An ordinary cupboard, a big table and a few chairs of ordinary straw.
For the refectory:
A table and similar chairs of straw:
Kitchen:
A copper utensil⁷, a tin strainer for making ‘polenta’. Bowls, plates, jugs, small bowls for drinking, all made of ordinary clay like those of the Capuchin Sisters, the cutlery, the fork and the iron knife with wooden handles or fully made of iron, and wooden spoons, a table, a kitchen cupboard and two buckets.

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⁴ Idem
⁵ Idem
⁶ Aspirants to religious life
⁷ A copper vessel, broad bottomed with a handle and a long spout, like a kettle. Made of copper, or wrought iron or aluminium, used for heating water or carrying hot water.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The Marchioness owes Durini a lot of answers, but she doesn't send them all because the mail is too expensive. Though this is insignificant for the Milanese ladies, she cannot afford unnecessary expenses. She consoles the Countess for the death of Fr. Carlo Palazzi and assures her of her prayers.

My dearest friend

You will say that I owe you a lot of replies, my dear Carlina, and you are right. I will reply to all, one by one; I feel sorry to send you all of them together because of the expense of the mail. These accounts, actually, do not concern you, who do not mind about these things, but I do think this way. It seems that the Lord visits our good Canoness very often, being very holy.

Believe me that I have your Hospital very much at heart, although I am good for nothing. If you think that by going to the new Missions that will start at St. Francis of the Vineyard on Saturday I can work the miracle you say, I will go there everyday. But since my miracles are of another type, because, according to the common opinion some sick people died on my account, and some whose eyes were sickly nearly lost their eyesight. Therefore, I turn to others for miracles and I pray you and all the good daughters who desire to dedicate themselves to the service of the poor, to unite yourselves with me in the novena which I hope to do in honour of St. Charles, so that he may obtain from the Lord the divine blessing for the work in Milan, and also, regarding the moment to start it and the fulfilment of the Divine Will. As for yourself, I hope that, besides praying, you will be convinced that I am much concerned about Milan. I have this house as much at heart, though it has not started yet, as that of Verona, that God started first of all.

Do not brood over the death of Fr. Carlo, because he will do more in heaven than he did in this world, and if it is God’s work, God will know how to bring it to conclusion. However, you are right. It is necessary to redouble your courage and to always keep your eyes fixed on the motto that God alone is the one who builds the house, and guards the city. So we do not need to fear. Everything will turn out well.

Fr. Leonardi is one of the missionaries. I will inform him about the death of Fr. Carlo so that he may recommend him to the Lord. Your sister might have witnessed a real miracle worked by Mary Most Holy on behalf of the bride Sagromoso, a friend of your sister, who, in her last child-birth suffered pain in the joints. I hear that she recovered in a moment, on the day of the Rosary as she was in front of the altar of Mary Most Holy at Polo. I cannot tell you more than this. My sick companion is better. We will see also what the Lord will do about this. Goodbye, dear. Embrace our friends and those who would like to become our companions, especially my Teresina.

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1 An old monastic church, no more existing
2 Fr. Carlo Palazzi.
3 Countess MASSIMILLA GAVARDI MOSCARDO PINDEMONTE, wife of the Marquis Sagramoso and sister-in-law of the Countess Marianna Sagramoso (Cfr. Libro della Santa Casa della Misericordia del 1792, where the Marquis Sagramoso is listed as one of the “solventi in danaro” (Ep.I, lett. 253, n. 4).
4 Altar of MARIA SANTISSIMA at POLO. A Church of ancient origin – perhaps one of the first five that were built around that of St. James. It has a Gothic door of the XV century and contains the works of Tintoretto, Palma the younger, Veronese and Tiepolo.
5 Teresa Spasciani, superior of Venice
6 Teresa Spasciani (‘Lett. 279, n. 9).
This time I include a short reply for the Canoness. Later, I will write to everybody and to all the others. Goodbye dear. I recommend myself to the prayers of all of you, especially during the novena of St. Charles. My regards to your husband and your family. Goodbye, dear friend. I am and I will always be.

Saint Lucy’s 15 October (1)815

Your Magdalene

7 NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s writing
Attached to the letter dated 15 October 1815.

To the official notification, that could be shown to everybody, there follows this letter, written in a style of freedom and friendship. Magdalene of Canossa’s advisers have given her the approval for Milan and she will certainly go, but does not fix the date yet. Instead, she gives directives on how to rent or purchase and furnish the house.

My dearest friend

I include these few lines that I freely write to you, my dear Carlina, attached to the answer that should be shown and which I am sending to you. You already understand that I was told to accept the matter. I did not specify the time because I am not sure I shall be able to come at the beginning of October.

You have done very well to suggest that I send you an open letter since, sincerely, I would not come for other matters. To you I say not to worry about choosing one house or another, or if the Church is far or near, because our vocation is not to seek these little conveniences but the Glory of God and the good of the poor.

If it were possible, it would be better that the lodging place is not very far from the hospital, since we have to go often, but let us look for what is essential and really good, and if it is also far from that, we will be more on the move. According to my experience, were I to do it, I would not take any house for more than one year, as it will be on trial any way.

Know that the person who wrote to me that I could come, also tells me that if we could have a house in Milan like that of Verona, we could have it. I tell you this not because you should do it now, but only so that you may know it, because you have spoken to me about it. What I care most is that you do not worry. You will see that if the Lord wants this matter, little by little everything will be settled, since this is a grace that the Lord has granted me with regard to the work and to my weakness that, in the end, everybody will become our friends.

Having spoken to me of this in the presence of your sister, I thought it best to tell her something secretly. She appreciated it a lot, and recommended me to give you an answer that may help you. I spoke to you about it in the other letter because one can understand less from this letter. But I confirm that you should be calm, that she is well and that everything is all right. Know that I find her much better in every way.

Convey many kindest regards and compliments to the Canoness, and to our friends. I beg again for prayer because, if this matter has to bring about some good, we should expect that the troubles will not be few. Remember to express my greetings to Marshal Bellegarde. I embrace you heartily, and I am full of affection, goodbye. I especially ask you to pray to Our Lady of Sorrows. Goodbye

Your Very Affectionate
Canossa

1 BELLEGARDE HEINRICH JESEPH, count of Dresda (b. Dresda 1756 - d. Vienna 1845), an Austrian General and and statesman. He fought against Napoleon. He became the first Governor of the Lombardo-Veneto (1815-16)


2 NB. Only the signature is in Magdalene’s handwriting.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini should already know, through her sister Paola, that the Sovereign, Francis I, Emperor of Austria, under whose jurisdiction was the Lombardy-Veneto Kingdom, had been to visit the institution of Magdalene of Canossa. He was very pleased with the work and had agreed to the requests of the Marchioness. In fact he had given her the monastery of Saint Lucy’s. He had taken the institute under his protection, allowing its free expansion. Finally, he was convinced of the necessity that the religious should have a uniform dress. The Empress Maria Ludovica of Este accompanied him. She had agreed with the admiration of the Emperor and had suggested the necessity to establish that work also in Milan. Now Magdalene begs Durini to find a convent in Milan similar to that in Venice and to ask Francis I to get it as a gift. Meanwhile, Magdalene asks the Milanese lady to deal with a compassionate case regarding Antonia Sberna, a young girl whose family has extreme need to solve its economic situation.

My dearest friend

I was pleased to see your sister again. On that day I found her in good humour, because she was waiting for the return of Count Costanzo\(^1\) from Padua. In fact he arrived on that day, and I am assured that she is getting better every day. Your sister\(^2\) might have already given you a detailed description of the visit made by the august Sovereign\(^3\) to this monastery, therefore I do not repeat it. I only add, in case you have not received yet the letter she wanted to send you for the occasion, that he, besides giving me the premises, also took the Institute under his protection, consenting, with pleasure and clemency, that I may spread it as much as I wish, and agreeing, even encouraging me to have everyone dressed uniformly. You can imagine how glad I am, seeing that he deigns to accept this little token of the homage we give him, and which even more now we will openly give, of serving the poor who are the object of his great love and compassion. The Countess Paulina\(^4\) might have told you how I was honoured to be at the feet of our angelic Empress\(^5\), who asked me if we are not thinking of starting this institution even in Milan, which, she thought, was needed. I replied in the affirmative, and told her that I had been with you months ago, and had agreed to take an apartment from which I would experiment what the Lord wants. Then, she spoke a lot about you, your sister, the Marquis Argonatti\(^6\), and asked information about each one of them. She added that when she will see you, she will speak to you about me. She showed great concern indeed, also for Milan and that she would like to see one of our houses established here. She was also pleased to say that if I come to Milan, I should go to visit her. I think that St. Charles has obtained this new interest, which makes known to us the will of God more and more.

When you see her, do the best you can. If also in Milan there is a place we could acquire without harming the real owners, and with due enquiry and permissions, I believe that it would be granted gladly to us by our Sovereign.

Excuse me. This letter is written by various secretaries.

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1 Count Costanzo Taverna, husband of Paola, the sister of Durini
2 It is Paola Trotti, who married Count Taverna. They live in Venice.
3 FRANCIS I, Emperor of Austria. He was born in Florence in 1768 and died in Vienna in 1835. In 1804 he assumed the title of Emperor, but in 1806 he was forced by Napoleon to renounce the regal title of the Holy Roman Empire that he had assumed in 1792. During the Congress of Vienna, with the help of Metternich, he reacquired Lombardy, Veneto, Istria and Dalmazia.
4 Countess Paola Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini.
5 MARIA LUDOVICA D’ESTE, who died at the Canossa Palace on 7.4.1816.
6 Marquis Carlo Arconti, husband of Teresa, the deceased sister of Carolina Durini.
Now I need to beg you for an act of charity regarding a young girl in our Hospital. Perhaps you have received her paper from your sister. As I have no original copy before me, since I gave it to lady Maria to copy it and then send it to you, I could make a mistake about the name. You will see it on the paper.

Perhaps you have no knowledge about it at Crema, or at Lodi. At this moment I do not remember from which of these two towns you can be enlightened in this regard. In such a case, kindly beg the Canoness or Marquis Casati on my behalf. Here is the matter. In the hospital there is a sixteen-year-old beautiful girl, daughter of a certain Antonia Sberna, who has a brother called Paul Sberna, who sells edible items. The paper I sent to you is a statement by which a certain Mr. Mollendi also of Crema, declares that he is a debtor of a sum he says he has received from Anthony Sberna. In this paper he also explains how he is going to reimburse it. He also commits himself to pay an amount to the mother for life, and to her daughter for foodstuffs, if I am not mistaken.

The above mentioned Mr. Mollendi died, but he was full of debts. His mother prepared a paper through a proxy for a certain Mr. Baldini, also of Crema, about whom, let us keep this for ourselves (from a certain source), I think we should find out whether or not he is still in charge of it anymore. When Mollendi died, perhaps since he had no heirs, or really because he did not want to assume the inheritance, a commissioner was appointed to administer the existing funds. Meanwhile, neither his mother, nor his daughter received even a penny. What concerns me most is his daughter, because I do not even know his mother. Much more because since this young person as I told you is very attractive, and full of life. Till now she is like an angel, and she begins to get tired of being in the hospital. When she leaves, since she cannot go to her mother because of certain situations, she will be exposed to a serious danger. Therefore, do me this charity. Try to find out or get someone to find out. If possible try to get, everything or part of it, or at least something. That would be really very good.

I had written half this letter when I received your precious one, to which I answer here. I thank you, my dear Carlina, for your congratulations. You made me laugh by telling me that the little house is ready. I cannot serve you much as I would like to. Then if I came now, I would not be able to stay as long as I desire. I forgot to tell you, for your information, that after having begged Her Majesty the Empress to take this Institute under her protection, she replied to me in all goodness: “In name no, but I will do it out of concern and from my heart. Be assured of this”. And she said it again.

Therefore if, having all this information, you find any suitable place, always with the instructions mentioned above and without prejudice of the owners, I certainly believe that if you ask for it, or you tell someone to ask for it, you will surely get it; always acting in a simple manner, involving also Marshal Bellegarde, because, when asking the Sovereign for help, I always like to have the agreement of the one in command in the Country. Or you can beg the Lady Sovereign, or something which you will get more easily, beg her for a word of recommendation to His Majesty the emperor, and then telling her to ask him, be sure that he will give it to you. You already have so many excellent means, starting with Marquis Casati, Count Mellerio, and then those whom I do not even know.

I end this very long letter of mine asking you to spare your excuses for the parcel you say you have sent me, I do not know what it is and beg of you to renew and ask others to renew prayers for me and for this Institution. I would really like it to succeed from every point of view, according to the Divine Will and for the divine service.

7 The housemaid of the Tavernas.
8 The new case of Sberna.
9 In Via della Signora at Milan, which would welcome the first Canossians
10 The Austrian General who was a guest at the Canossa Palace at Verona (Ep.I, lett. 282, n. 1).
11 Count Giacomo Mellerio, benefactor of the House of Milan
My regards to your family, and to the Parish Priest. Many greetings to our aspirants. Truly and heartily, full of friendship I declare myself your friend. Embrace for me Visconti, the Canoness and our other friends.

My dear friend,

Saint Lucy’s, Venice 11 November (18)15

Your Canossa

PS. Tell me if when the Court come to Milan, you think it necessary that I send those laces of Leopoldina to be sold. Tell me freely if you do not agree.

(Attachment)

The Procurator who acts on behalf of Molendi is called Meazza, I do not remember his name. The Procurator I have chosen lives in Lodi. He is Doctor Nicola Baldini. He has the authentic paper as well as the very important notification made at the time the registry of mortgages was transferred from Crema to Lodi and other important papers regarding unsettled accounts for three years before Molendi died. From those papers we may know how much credit I and my daughter have:

The attachment is written, but not signed by Sberna’s mother

The following description is attached to the previous letter, perhaps for greater clarity, but there is no connection and it has no signature.

When His Majesty entered, I thanked him for deigning to visit our place for the poor. And he replied thanking me for the good that he believed I was doing. He added that the Public Administration could not shoulder everything. I requested him to enter into the room where I usually receive people and he replied: ‘Do with me all that you wish to do’. I led him to that room, gave him an idea of this Institute and pleaded with him to grant me the two premises including the vegetable garden enclosed in these. I also asked him to take the Institute under his protection, allowing me to expand it as much as I am able to. I took him round the school, and to see the rest of the convent where he spoke about everything with such appreciation and kindness that it is difficult to explain. Before he left, I asked him if he thought that we should be uniformly dressed and he advised me to do it so as to avoid problems. He repeated twice that when he comes to Verona, he will come to see St. Joseph’s. I forgot to say that after presenting to him an idea about our Institute, I gave him a Memorandum containing more or less what I had asked him orally. He not only accepted it, but since our very good Mayor offered his help, he put it directly into his bag.

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12 Mons. Francesco Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 275, n. 2).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

It seems that, for the House in Venice, everything is solved by the gift and the sovereign approval, but some complications occur. Some persons in the Government, availing themselves of the dispositions of peace issued in Paris, want to sell the convent of Saint Lucy’s and are preparing an informative report that shows how the Canossian work is harmful to the State. The Governor of the Venetian Province, the Count of Góes, is kind to the institute and has already been informed by Magdalene of Canossa. He points out to her the procedure to be followed. In Milan, Durini, Somaglia, Casati and Count Mellerio have to approach the Sovereigns to show them the urgency of the imperial Decree of donation for Venice. Only in this way – they must understand – will Magdalene of Canossa be able to go to Milan to implement the charitable work they deem necessary.

My dearest friend

I owe you an answer, my dear Carlina. I think it will surprise you after all the Sovereign\(^1\), out of his goodness, granted me. I confess that I was amazed to see that the matters of this Institute were settling so peacefully. I thought that just seeing myself so useless for the divine judgement, not even the devil would oppose me, and even now I am convinced that it will not be a serious thing. However, my dear friend, I need your friendly cooperation and activity as well as that of our common friend Somaglia\(^2\). I need that both of you have concern for the work of the Lord, which is going to be hit in such a way that it may be certainly destroyed here and consequently in Verona, preventing it as a consequence also in Milan. It is true that the world is big and the good Lord of these countries is also the Lord of all the earth, and for me every place is suitable, but since He has put me here, I have the duty to uphold truth against falsehood.

I have been told by a friend to try to obtain in Milan, as secretly as possible, the Decree confirming the gift donated to me orally by His Majesty, because in this Government\(^3\), some persons would like to take over the convent, because the peace treaty of Paris\(^4\) bears articles according to which the ecclesiastical goods have to be used for paying the debts of the State.

They have also written a report on this work showing that this work is not only useless, but also harmful to the public welfare, because by accepting the poor into our schools and educating them, there will consequently be no more washerwomen and street sweepers. In short, the poor will not perform such ordinary chores any more.

The other day, having confided the matter to your sister, I just had to laugh a lot about these accusations. She, whose heart you know, was moved to tears. I related it to her as you may imagine. Knowing her confidentiality, I asked for her advice.

What preoccupies me most is that, having begged our excellent Governor,\(^5\) who is incapable of similar actions, but who is not surrounded by people who think like him, at times

\(^1\) Francis I, emperor of Austria

\(^2\) Countess Somaglia Maddalena, sister of Count Giacomo Mellerio

\(^3\) The local administration.

\(^4\) THE PEACE TREATY OF PARIS. Signed in 1815, after the event of the Hundred days of Napoleon. It confirmed the treaty of 1814, that was annulled when Napoleon returned.

\(^5\) Count Goes, Governor of the Venetian Province. The ‘M. C. C. Codice Cicogna 2844 E.A. Cicogna, Diario ms. p. 2006’, 15 July 1814, says: «He is the best person who lives under the skies, but he is as cold as a statue. He seems incapable of movement or initiative in many things, and lets the blind deal with the cunning and the prudent at their own will and pleasure.» (He was called the ‘chalk’ Count).
things not granted by him happen. Having, therefore, begged him for the Decree confirming
the gift granted to me by the Sovereign so that I may show it to the Property Office in
Verona, which had asked for the rent of the garden of St. Joseph’s, he replied that I send to
him a small appeal in which, as this matter is pending, I asked to be exempted from paying
the rent.

Then, I myself went to the Governor bringing along the appeal in which I said that, in
consequence of the gift granted to me by the Sovereign, I begged His Excellency to inform
the Directors of the Property Office (of Venice) not to ask me for the rent, as I was waiting
for the revered Decree. He welcomed me with his usual goodness, but speaking on the matter
he also told me that, since the matter was pending, I should write to him. I replied: ‘Your
Excellency, why pending? After the word of the Sovereign of which your Excellency was a
witness?’ But, he said there are formalities, and it is worthwhile that the thing comes from the
Courtly Chamber in Vienna. Since the formalities are really alright, I answered, and as such
it is taken, and I have the Emperor's word for it..... I presented the appeal I had brought. He
read and reread it saying that it was alright, and that he would have written to the Property
office. He told me a thousand beautiful things which I cannot repeat to you. How indebted I
am to this good gentleman.

However, you may understand from this that, knowing what I have mentioned above, all
this cannot keep me fully calm. I am advised also by your sister to beg you, as you
communicate everything to our friend Somaglia, to beg her to recommend the matter to the
Count, her brother. Since the Lady Sovereign has shown to me such a desire that this
Institute be established in Milan, see if he judges it opportune that if you speak to the same,
you could express your idea of planting a House of the same Institute in Milan. And since you
also think that I should come, add that I cannot move until I have the Decree. If you think so,
speak directly to the emperor. I also add that, according to me, it would be a damage for this
House, and for that of Verona if I were to come to Milan now. Yet if it were really necessary
I would make myself available.

The Count Mellerio could perhaps recommend the matter in Vienna. Well, I recommend
myself to you. Advise me and kindly assist me. Meanwhile, here I try as much as I can to
befriend those who are contrary to me. The Lord will do what I myself cannot do. I also beg
you to assist me with your prayer so that God may grant me the spirit of fortitude which I
need greatly.

Nearly all my companions are unwell. Angioletta from Verona, has measles. I am
keeping sufficiently well. Some days ago they drew blood from me, but except for some
cough and weakness I go on well. Do not think that I have finished troubling you. Let us
move to another topic. I would like an act of charity greater than this: that is, that you write to
Fr. Fontana about the said affair and tell him that, if possible, through a Dominican
Religious, he will receive the Papers which were the cause of my great anxiety in Piacenza.
He should read them out of love for the Lord, and speak about them to His Holiness. You
already know what the Holy Father has promised me about the formal approval.

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6 One of the Organs of the Austrian Government, with duties more or less like the present Ministry of Finance.
7 Count Giacomo Mellerio, benefactor of the Institute in Milan.
8 Francis I, Emperor of Austria.
9 Angioletta Guarnieri.
10 Fr. Francesco Fontana, Barnabite Priest, later a Cardinal (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
You also know that I would like to avoid the Congregation of Bishops\(^ {11} \). That Dominican Religious will tell you orally how secretly we should go about all this. If you think it better to send it directly to him without going around, I believe it will be better, and the chances will not be lacking. Only, I beg you to write to me. My dear friend, assure Fr. Fontana that we will pray for him not knowing how to show him our gratitude in any other way. I am waiting for your suggestions. Note that if you speak to one or the other Sovereign, it would be necessary not to mention the opposition in Venice, which could also have changed in the mean time, but only of your opinion. I beg of you again to pray for me. My regards to Somaglia, and to all our friends, I embrace you heartily, and I declare myself that I am

12 January Saint Lucy’s - (18)16

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Canossa Daughter of
Charity, Servant of the Poor

PS. The Empress will not take up direct commitments, but if Count Mellerio thinks it opportune, it would suffice that he begs the Sovereign to solicit the issuing of the Decree. Then, if one or the other speaks with the Emperor, show him how useful this Institute could be and add the need to solicit this decree so that, after settling everything in the two existing houses, I may come to Milan.

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\(^ {11} \) One of the fifteen Congregations established by Sixtus V on 22 January 1588, by which the Cardinals did not deal with the major affairs of the Church and State any more. Instead they fulfilled a bureaucratic role within their own Congregation. This Congregation dealt in particular with the consultations of the Bishops and other prelates. With the constitution «Regimi ecclesiae» of Paul VI (1969) the name of this Congregation was changed to «Congregation for Bishops»
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Verona is waiting for the imperial Sovereigns and Magdalene informs Durini about it. Therefore, it is not yet possible to fix dates for her arrival in Milan.

Dear friend

Just a line to tell you that I have received the letter of our dear friend Somaglia, and I am very grateful to both of you. I cannot answer you definitively today, but I will do it with the first ordinary mail, because, having to depend, I cannot decide on the spot. Besides, since a certain situation has changed to the advantage of the house, perhaps it will be necessary to change our mind regarding the present trip. I will write to you in detail. Here they say that they are waiting for the Sovereign\(^1\) to come soon, and they wait also for her Majesty the Empress. But about Venice, the bombshells\(^2\) are not lacking. If it were not for the circumstances I mentioned above, I would see it impossible to go to Fusina\(^3\) for fifteen days. Well, I thank you for everything and from my heart, hoping that the Lord will make up for me. I embrace you in sincere friendship. The same to Somaglia and the Canoness. My respectful regards to the Provost\(^4\), whom I also thank.

Yours, my dearest friend

Saint Lucy’s 27 January (1)816

P.S. If it is possible, tell me about the other business Somaglia is talking about, because she thinks that it would be better that I come to a decision.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa
Daughter of Charity

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\(^1\) Francis I, Emperor of Austria (Ep.I, lett. 283, n. 2).
\(^2\) Clever and fantastic stories fabricated against Magdalene’s Work
\(^3\) Fusina, a small centre in the province of Venice, near the mainland. Before the railroad was constructed which led to Padua, it was a much frequented area mid way between Padua and Venice (Cfr. Amati in Diz. Corografico, op. cit. Vol. 3°).

The Tavernas had some property there.
\(^4\) Mons. Francesco Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 275, n. 2).
Magdalene is worried about the localities, but she would like to get the formal approval as soon as possible from the Supreme Pontiff for her work. Therefore, she sends Durini a detailed report from the beginning of the Institute up to 1814. The Countess should personally deliver it to Fr. Fontana so that he may read it, correct it and present it to the Pope, avoiding the Congregation of Bishops. Regarding the evil schemes of the Veronese Property Office, Magdalene begs the friends of Milan to wait, because the Governor Goës might not like their intervention.

My dearest friend

Before the departure of Cardinal Litta \(^1\) I was not able to send you that informative Paper for the Right Reverend Fr. Fontana\(^2\) because, having no time available, I could not fill it. I send it to you now, my dear Carlina, if you think you can hand it to him at the first chance. Regarding what you wrote to me, I thought best to inform him totally, but as briefly as possible about the matter. I thank you, as best as I can, for this favour, which, as you know, I consider more than everything. For greater clarity and to make it easier, I addressed it to you as a letter. You will tell me then what you think about it. I hope that you may have some other sure chance for Rome. Meanwhile we will pray for you, and that the Lord may bless everything. We come to the other matter now. I have consulted people therefore, as I wrote to you that I would have done. But the change of a situation favourable to the institute, as I told you, did not convince them about this trip.

Here is the matter as it is. I already told you in the letter in which I informed you about what they were plotting against us, that while you kindly work for me in Milan, I would try to make friends with our adversaries. I was advised, without making the matter clearly known, to let our good Governor\(^3\) know how I had understood or I have come to know that in the Government there is some opposition against us.

The person who spoke to him is very wary. He told me that to his surprise, such things were not unknown to him. With a lot of firmness, rather with a noble act of indignation he replied: “How can the Marchioness fear for an Institution wanted by His Majesty and which enjoys his protection and mine? Tell the Marchioness not to fear any opposition at all, and that everything will go on according to her desires.”

They tell me, therefore, as it is true, that the whole acceptance and goodness of the Sovereign for this Institute and for me, both the one and the other, are quite unknown to him. This was only the result of the information and concern of our Governor, that any step I would take would not allow me to follow the usual procedure. An example is the letters for the appointment of the Bishop, which, although they are signed by the Sovereign, they were not sent to the named Prelates, until they came from the Courtly Chamber in Vienna. Therefore if I were to take any step, this would upset the Governor and do real damage to the Institute.

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1 Cardinal Litta Lorenzo - born at Milan on 23.2.1756, died at Monte Flavio in Sabina on 1.5.1820. He was ordained a priest in 1789. Nominated titular Archbishop of Tebe in 1793, he was nuncio in Poland in difficult times. After the third partition of Poland he tried in vain to get the approval of full religious freedom to the Polish Catholics. In 1801 he was made a Cardinal by Pius VII and deported to France in 1809 with the same Pius VII (Cfr. G. Furlani, in *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, Vol. VII, pag. 1425).

2 Fr. Francesco Fontana, a Barnabite Priest and later a Cardinal (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).

3 Count Goës (Ep.I, lett. 284, n. 4).

4 Francis I, Emperor of Austria (Ep.I, lett. 283, n. 2).
Rather, if I do not actually have the Decree at that moment, they tell me that, being in Verona during the arrival of the emperor, since he has told me such things for which I cannot dispense myself from being in St. Joseph’s, from what I hear, he will lodge in my house. They tell me to wait up to that time not to displease the Governor. You will say: then why did you give so much trouble to me and to Somaglia? But this step was taken later, and the suggestion came as a consequence of that. In any case I will always take advantage of the friendship of both of you. I am certain it will not cool down on account of this change. If I can stop here now, I am pleased also for the House in Milan, because if I were to come now, I would not be able to stop, as you see well. To end here what will come about as a consequence of the Decree, but also because an Ecclesiastical Superior is coming, as you may know, also for this it is necessary that I take all the necessary steps to make the institute known to him. And these affairs would bring about a greater delay for Milan.

Notwithstanding this, I am asking prayers and I had a seven-day prayer to Our Lady of Sorrows begun by my dear companions. I hope that she will obtain for me the grace to do the will of God and what is best for the Institute.

Yesterday I met your sister. It’s a long time I find her in good humour and in good state. She is busy in making me acquainted with the Adviser Mr. Farina. She supposes that this too can be beneficial for the House. I cannot hide that I am a bit afflicted for fear that you and dear Somaglia are displeased because I don't follow your suggestions and that the Provost too must feel upset. But dear Carlina, you see the fault lies with the change of circumstances. You can imagine how much I would have liked to embrace you both, together with my Canoness. Pray to the Lord for me and make people pray to Him. I also assure you of my most cordial attachment and of my most sincere gratitude. I beg you to embrace our friends for me. Meanwhile, I remain hopeful to embrace you. My health is good as usual, and my companions are all better.

Yours, dear friend

Saint Lucy’s, Venice 30 January (18)16

Affectionately
Magdalene Canossa
Daughter of Charity Servant of the Poor

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5 Countess Somaglia Maddalena, sister of Mellerio (Ep.I, lett. 279, 11).
6 According to the Canon Law, he would come to inspect the new Work.
7 At Venice, the Ecclesiastical Counsellor of the Government, was a Priest named Farina. He was out at the service of the Austrian Empire, that was not much in favour of Magdalene’s Work.
2 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
30.1.1816

My dearest friend,

Be ready, my dear Carolina, to give me the greatest proof of your love and friendship, and I will thank you with all my heart before the Lord, not knowing any better way on my part. Allow me to present here before your eyes an idea, or better, let me remind you of what you know already regarding the set-up of this Institute and its current needs so that it may be easier for you to help me with regard to the Most Reverend Fr. Fontana\textsuperscript{2}.

You know, my dear friend, how, for many years, the Lord has given me the grace of a vocation for the service of the poor, and how I have always wanted to serve them by setting up an Institution of Charity, according to the spirit of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, Sisters of the poor\textsuperscript{3}. It is also known how, after I had discussed it with Monsignor Luigi Pacifico Pacetti,\textsuperscript{4} he requested the wishes of the Holy Father\textsuperscript{5}, the Pope, who found the idea highly favourable. However he was not convinced of certain practical points which the Holy Father considered unsuitable for Italy. Hence we have made it our task to exclude everything that, enlightened by him, is deemed inappropriate, retaining, however, the name of the Institution which was no problem for him, and which was actually the only name that was tolerated, in fact accepted, in these bitter circumstances and hard times of ours. You will also remember how, because of the first reunion of the nuns, the monasteries of St. Joseph and Fidenzio in Verona\textsuperscript{6} remained vacant; and since I was unable to overcome the extreme aversion of dealing with the Crown Land Office, I was assured by my director\textsuperscript{7}, that the Holy Father would be pleased if I tried to acquire the aforesaid Monastery, since they would have used it in the same way as they did the others.

With your help, I was able to, but you know what difficulties we went through, as the vegetable garden was supposed to be used as the High School’s\textsuperscript{8} Botanical Gardens. Furthermore with the help of the Viceroy\textsuperscript{9} we managed to work out a decent contract for it. There I brought the first root of the Institute, that is, those few companions that the Lord had given me. They had been living in a little house and I could obtain from my family the permission to join them. In this Monastery, then, God started the Institute. For various reasons it was not yet established or organized completely as the Daughters of Charity now, since we had not begun visiting hospitals. We did, however, have the school of charity, the Doctrine classes in the parish and assistance in Christian education in that most crowded and wretched

\textsuperscript{1} NB. It is the Report that Magdalene refers to in Letter 286.
\textsuperscript{2} Fr. Francesco Fontana, Barnabite Priest and later Cardinal (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
\textsuperscript{3} According to the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul (Ep.I, lett. 24, n. 9).
\textsuperscript{4} First Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).
\textsuperscript{5} Pius VII (Ep.I, lett. 146, n. 3).
\textsuperscript{6} First foundation of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 37, n. 4).
\textsuperscript{7} Monsignor Pacetti.
\textsuperscript{8} Botanical Gardens for the High School. Land with exotic and local plants cultivated for academic use. These were attached to classical Schools, which Napoleon favoured.
\textsuperscript{9} Eugenio Beauharnais
Parish, where the need was great. We were already, however, carrying out the same works, though the people did not notice it. After staying there for two years I was called to Venice, to help the most worthy religious, the Cavanis brothers, to establish a school of charity there. There I met Canon Pacetti who commanded me to promote at the same time a group of ladies who would assist the sick in hospital, in moments of spiritual crisis, in imitation of the Union of Charity of Milan. The Lord was pleased to bless my efforts there, although at present, the number is still small. I returned to St. Joseph’s in Verona after 2 months. After another 2 years, I was recalled to Venice for the above named Institution. But I was drawn more and more towards the Daughters of Charity. The same Canon commanded me to follow the wishes of some people who also wanted the Institute, although I was the first among them to say that I did not want ties or remuneration. On their part they had also excluded, under other pretexts, all that I knew was not according to the Holy Father’s wishes.

Thus God began this house as well. It was the first to carry out the 3 Branches of Charity. For this reason it was considered as the first in the Institute. We were together in this rented house without experiencing any difficulty from the Government, both here and in Verona, and without wishing to receive anything from them. In the meantime, we grew in number, and I could foresee, on the one hand, the difficulty of establishing a regular way of life in such conditions, outside a Monastery, and, on the other, the city threatened by the Blockade, which prevailed. With your help and that of Marquis Casati, I managed to rent the suppressed Monastery of St. Lucy also because I knew all too well what war was like and I wanted some place where my companions and I could close ourselves in before the Blockade began. Nothing, however, would have been worth your efforts and those of Casati, if Our Lady, by a special grace, had not completed the task, because the deed of sale of the Monastery was already granted and sanctioned from Milan, between the Crown Land Office and some other unfortunate persons. These had planned to speculate in this and other properties, meaning to demolish the buildings and sell the material as many others have done. It is true that I owed them a reimbursement of a sum of money to get them to withdraw their plans, but this was not so important if the grace from Our Lady had not been openly evident. After moving to this Monastery, the Institute established itself there on the vigil of the Feast of the Maternity of Our Lady, from 1813 until today.

After some time, by Divine Grace, the holy and Supreme Pontiff returned to the Holy See. Thus Canon Pacetti was able to inform the Holy Father of all that had happened since he passed through Loreto. I had the greatest consolation I have ever received since then, about the Institute when, through the same Canon, the Holy Father was pleased to approve the whole project, assuring me in this way, of the Divine Will. The Reverend Canon ordered me then, to lay out the Rules as I did, submitting them to our Holy Pontiff with the aim of obtaining a formal approval of the Institute and its Rules.

The serious political strife then going on made it impossible for me to keep up a regular correspondence with the Rev. Canon. So, last May, I went to Milan to go with you on a trip to Genoa to meet Very Rev. Fr. Fontana who, through your good services, would help me to go over the Rules and to grant me an audience with the Holy Father, to whom I wished to express my unconditional dependence and my most humble requests to this end. However, we were unable to carry out our trip, as he had unexpectedly left Genoa. I had to be content to see the Holy Father briefly with you, only when he was on his way through Piacenza. In those brief moments I was able to tell him that I was the Canossa of the Daughters of Charity of whom Canon Pacetti had spoken. He was kind enough to attend to me immediately.

“If you wish to receive the formal approval, send in your request when we are in Rome.” I understood nothing else because of the state of confusion and agitation I was in.

10 Anton’ Angelo and Marcantonio (Ep.I, lett. 223, n. 1).
10 Siege of the French at Venice (Ep.I, lett. 262. N. 8).
However, I could add this “Most Holy Father, I have written the Rules as Rev. Canon has
directed me. Allow me to send them to the Canon for correction and to present them for me.”

Hearing me speak of the Rules, he replied: “Send them to Rome, send them to Rome,
and we will see.”

I told him of the two Monasteries, that we lived in, and that morning he signed to me
not to bother about that. After lunch though, seeing me so distressed, you persuaded me to
return and ask once more about the two above mentioned monasteries. The Holy Father said,
“If the nuns do not return, then stay there, just stay there. But if they return, then it does not
belong to you.” I asked again if I could obtain the approval from our Government.

He told me to go ahead and present it as a project.

After my return from Milan and Verona, I put all the Rules in order and with clarity.
But I was not sure what to determine as I had to deal with the Government about the 2
Monasteries. In my confusion I had forgotten to tell the Holy Father, who had asked me about
the Institute, the number of the Nuns that were staying in the said Monasteries. If I am not
mistaken there were 9 of them at St. Lucy. These left the Monastery when the Order was
suppressed. Now, I am told, there are seven still living... The same number survives also of
those from Verona, although there were more of them in that Monastery. There was one
Monastery still unsold of that Order. As for our staying here, if there were other alienated
Monasteries I did not know, besides, even if all the Religious (different Orders) were to
return, I did not see it probable that there would be more than one Monastery in each city.
You have to note also that before speaking with the Holy Father, thinking of doing well and
according to his will, I had taken some steps towards staying where we were. After my return
here, I saw that some existing Monasteries were being used for other purposes. Therefore, not
knowing what to do I took counsel also, in this case, of the most learned Religious and
persons who had given signs of great loyalty to the Holy See in the past events, This I did
because I wished to act in full conformity with what the Holy Father had told me, In the
circumstances and, unfortunately seeing the improbability that the Religious Orders would be
restored, I was told I could go ahead and ask for the place, and that I could add that my
request was on condition that granting me the Monastery was not detrimental to the Nuns.
Therefore I spoke of it to our Governor,12 telling him that I required the Convent under this
condition, that if it caused hurt to the Nuns there, I would not ask for it. Noticing that there
was no such likelihood, I also asked to be assured of the appro

12 Count Goës (Ep.I, lett. 284, n. 5).
13 Ecclesiastical Counsellor LYSTAL, the priest who was part of the Government of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Veneto.
allowing me to spread it wherever I could. It seemed also that, after having settled everybody, some other places were still left over in the islands and he would give them to us to help the poor. Finally, I asked the Sovereign how he saw it if we all dressed alike. He advised me to do it, thanking me for the little good that he thinks we are doing and showing me his great pleasure. What concerns me now, my dear Carolina, is that you be kind enough to tell all this to the Venerable Fr. Fontana, asking him to do me the charity, for love of the Lord, to convey all this to the Supreme Pontiff. For my own peace of mind I need to know whether I have been deviating in anything from his will.

I do hope that I have not acted rashly but you know that, at times, the love for the Institute could carry me away. I don’t remember anything specific, but only fear that I may have said some extra words with regard to St. Joseph’s. I would, perhaps regard it as having it already, humanly speaking, with a kind of contract. For St. Lucy’s I haven’t the least worry. To sum up, I just wish to be in peace with the blessing of the Holy Father, to quieten me on any hasty or thoughtless step I may have taken. Rather than displeasing the Lord, I would prefer to return home and return, or better, give up the two monasteries.

Another kindness that you could obtain for me from Rev. Fr. Fontana, is to hand him the book of Rules that, with all my heart, I wish to submit to the Will of the Holy Father. I would prefer that he does not pass them on to the Congregation of Bishops, but keeps them with himself. If the Lord should inspire the Holy Father to approve them together with the Institute, then I prefer them to remain only with His Holiness and himself. The present situation seems to call for this and to be even more cautious. If there is no occasion to send them safely to me, ask them to send everything to you instead.

Notice also that with the Rules there should be a loose sheet with the General Plan of the Institute. It is something that, when looking at my weakness and poverty, it makes me blush, but looking at the Divine Omnipotence, which normally magnifies Itself through the most unworthy instruments, looking also at the grace of vocation and reflecting on the actual needs of our neighbours, it seems suitable to the present times. I wanted to bring even this Plan to Genoa, so as to talk it over with you before presenting it to the Most Reverend Fr. Fontana. If he accepts doing me the charity I ask him for, he can use the Plan as he pleases.

Also, in another loose sheet, there are the various ways which, according to my poor enlightenment I judged the most suitable for this Institute. I would not be able to make up my mind on any of them if I do not know exactly the opinion of His Holiness, to which I submit entirely.

I do not know whether you remember that here in Venice we are twelve in number. In Verona we are seven, plus four or five are asking to enter presently. We do not count those from Milan yet, because it is convenient that they should know the Institute better first, but on the other hand, we cannot leave them out.

My dear Carolina, this letter will seem to you a general confession. Your friendship will bear up with me, even in this. Reassure the most Venerable Fr. Fontana that, if it pleases the Lord to establish this poor Institute, we will have, as we always do for the Holy Father, an unforgettable memory of him before the Lord and that he will be partaker of the little good we are doing and hope to do with the Divine Grace. I embrace you with all my heart and I am forever full of attachment to and friendship for you.

Your most obliged and most affectionate friend,

Magdalene of Canossa, Daughter of Charity, Servant of the Poor

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14 One of the Pontifical Congregations established by Sixtus V on 22 January 1588 that deals with ecclesial matters. (Ep.I, lett. 284, n. 12).
The Governor of the Venetian province, Count Goës, is in Milan. Durini probably does not know him, but it would be good if she can show him the relationship existing between Venice and Milan regarding the case of Magdalene of Canossa. Until the first one is cleared, even the other one cannot be solved. He, who is «so good and a Christian» can help a lot. Magdalene asks Carolina to show «the papers» to Fr. Fontana and informs her that on Friday of Passion Week, she and her companions will dress in a similar way. It might be the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, for which they are preparing.

My dearest friend

I cannot explain, my dear Carlina, how obliged I am to you. Only the Lord can repay you for the good you have done and you do for this small work which is His. Also thank Somaglia¹ for me once again. Be prepared, I am certain about it, to assist me when another meeting will be held. Regarding your Pious Union², let us hope that the Lord may help the supporters to recover their health again. On the other hand, be assured that I tell you in all sincerity that my concern for Milan is growing daily, because, from what you write, I understand that, with divine help, we will be able to help to do real good in a stable manner.

In this church of Saint Lucy’s³ we have a picture of St. Charles, whom, although unworthy, I do not fail to pray to so that we may hasten the accomplishment of our plans. However, you see the need to have things established here. Neither would they allow me to depart without doing this. I too would not be calm about it, as you may imagine. Our good Governor⁴ is still in Milan. Therefore, I cannot actually settle anything until he returns. You do not know him. But if you ever see him and you feel like telling him that you wish that I should come to Milan, as he already knows about it, tell him that I cannot move until the matter is settled here. Kindly solicit him to do so. He is such a good person and a good Christian. If he knows that he can help in doing good, if he can, he does it. Anyway, on my part, be assured that now Milan is in my heart nearly as much as it is in yours.

I have sent you the informative Paper so that you may send it also to the respectable person to whom you have kindly written. That Dominican Priest will bring him the Papers I had with me last summer when I came to visit you, and he will explain to him orally some things related to the Paper I have sent you. If, because of any complications, the Dominican should not be able to bring to him those Papers which I have made into a book, they will be presented to the person by someone else who, at the moment, I cannot mention yet. But when he knows the matter they are dealing with and has the Paper I have sent you, I hope that he will be able to help in the same way.

Next Friday, the seven Fridays in honour of Our Lady of Sorrows will begin. If, as I hope, I can prepare the habits, on this solemnity we shall all dress alike, as the Sovereign desires. Mary most Holy became the Mother of Charity at the foot of the Cross, so since we need a great spirit of charity, I have chosen such a day although, since we are not religious, our clothing is rather secular.

¹ Countess Maddalena Somaglia, sister of Count Mellerio (Ep.I, lett. 279, n. 12).
² Pious Union of the Hospitalers in Milan (Ep.I, lett. 10, n. 4).
³ The new foundation in Venice (Ep.I, lett. 259, n. 1).
⁴ Count Goës (Ep.I, lett. 284, n. 5)
I am telling you this so that you may assist me on these Fridays with your prayer. I thank you for the case of Sberna. Soon I will write to you about it, as I have to consult a lawyer first. Embrace all the friends for me, and particularly Somaglia, Visconti and the Canoness. Full of affection and gratitude, I heartily embrace you.

My dearest friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s 10 February 1816

Your friend Canossa
Daughter of Charity

5 The case of Sberna (Ep.I, lett.283)
6 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

After three years, Magdalene of Canossa, sees Monsignor Pacetti again. She clarifies the reason why the book of the Rules had a development different from what was previously established. Therefore, it is better to wait rather than to send the Papers to Fr. Fontana.

My dearest friend

Venice 28 February (1)816

I am very grateful to you for your letter, your concern, and your friendship. Know that finally after more than three years, as you already know, I was able to speak to the one who directs me. Since my letters were brought to him about two months after I had written them, he did not understand what I wrote. Therefore, without my knowledge and not knowing what I was doing with you, he sent the book to Somaglia so that, to my great sorrow, I am compelled to beg you not to send to your Director the Paper I have sent you. Keep it, and when I will have the pleasure of embracing you, I will relate to you everything. Please ignore my previous recommendation.

I thank you and I am certain of your concern for me when you meet our good Empress. One day or another, I am thinking of going to Verona to see her. I take it as a duty, but I also love her because she is such a good person. At the same time, if I can also have the happy chance of seeing you again it would be great. Your sister and I have planned to make the trip together. She thought that it would be more comfortable for you to come to Verona rather than to Venice.

However, I know well that you cannot do whatever you want. All the same think about it. Yesterday your sister wrote to me that your husband will perhaps follow the Sovereign to Verona. If this will happen and you cannot come, I will see that he takes care of himself as much as possible. When he returns to Milan, I will see that he has that oil. In short, if you cannot come, be at peace and I will try, as much as I can, to see that he is cared for. I confirm my promises to you. Know that the person both of us met, and to whom you sent me and Somaglia after lunch, is happy with what you desire.

Be assured that I always have your interests at heart. These are also mine, but still we need to be patient. Embrace our friends and pray a lot to Mary Most Holy for me. My compliments to your husband, your family and the Provost. I say this with all my heart. Canon Pacetti who is preaching here in Lent, reveres you and begs you to let him know when you have found out that milliner who has taken the money.

Your Canossa

Daughter of Charity

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1 Mons. Pacetti (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).
2 Countess Maddalena Somaglia, sister of Count Mellerio (Ep.I, lett. 279, n. 12).
3 Cardinal Fontana (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
4 Francis I.
5 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Maria Ludovica of Este, wife of the emperor Francis, is a guest in the Canossa Palace and is forced to be in bed on account of a rather serious illness. The emperor has to visit the institute at St. Joseph’s, but he is anxiously waiting to see how the illness develops. Magdalene meets him in the house of her brother Bonifacio. It seems that he paid the announced visit on the next day, 2 April.

My dearest friend

Since the good niece of our Viscontina gives me an opportune chance, I write to you these few lines from Verona, my dear Carlina, to tell you that I am still following the fatal circumstances of the illness of our good Empress¹, whose health, although it has improved a great deal, does not allow us yet to be assured about her full recovery.

To a large extent on account of this, our Sovereign², who was willing to visit us, has not yet come to see us. I was told a few moments ago that the visit will be tomorrow. I saw him in my brother’s home where he repeated what he had kindly told me in Venice. He added that his desire is that the Institute of the Daughters of the Charity be established in Italy and that we may grow in number. Then, I told him of our dealings regarding Milan. He told me that he would be very pleased if we could establish one of our houses in Milan. Tomorrow, if he will come, as I hope, we will speak more about it. I left your sister in good health, but very willing to come to Verona with me.

She was kind to write to me. I assure you that I am very grateful for her goodness and care. When you write to her, please, thank her for me. I did not hear anything about you dear friend, for a long time. Believe me, I will never forget Milan. I will try to come as soon as possible. But I need to be assured about the decree regarding what the Sovereign has given me as a gift, so as to move from here peacefully. Remember me to Our Lady of Sorrows.

I have seen that young girl whom I accepted this summer for Milan. Since she lost her mother at this time, she will also have some small inheritance. I am happy about her and I hope that you also will like her. Now in Venice there are twelve companions, and this time I will take two along with me, but I am not certain yet. Goodbye, my dear friend. Keep me as your friend and remember your Magdalene. My compliments to your family, and to those who wish to come with me.

Goodbye again I am,

Your friend Magdalene³
Canossa
Daughter of Charity

Verona Saint Joseph’s, 1 April 1816

You may know that the Canon⁴ is in Venice, and the Lord keeps me in Verona. I would like to see him also about the Papers you know. I hope for everything from Mary and recommend myself to her in everything.

¹ The Empress Maria Ludovica d’Este.
² Francis I, Emperor of Austria (Ep.I, lett. 283, n. 2).
³ NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
⁴ Canon Pacetti (Lett. 173, n. 1).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

291 (Venezia#1816.04.29)

The Empress is dead and Magdalene feels her demise strongly. Then she expresses her gratitude to Durini’s sister and brother-in-law, Count Taverna, who have helped her to solve, at least partly, the obstacles set by the State Property Office. Now she has to present the «Papers» in a systematic manner, clarify the postal misdirection, to equip them with letters of recommendation, whose address however, should not be evident. The postal censorship could cause some trouble. Finally, below the letter, a laconic announcement: in July Magdalene will go to Milan to begin the much longed-for work.

My dearest friend

You might have received another letter of mine from Verona, my dear Carlina. After that, the great loss¹ took place, but not to sadden ourselves again, I will not speak to you about it.

I am writing to you from Venice where I arrived on Friday, after a very good journey. I was pleased to see your sister and your brother-in-law the next day. They are keeping very well. I cannot tell you how concerned she is for this Institute. She really helped us very much to overcome the obstacles the devil brought up against us. Thanks to the Lord and to Our Lady of Sorrow, presently everything has taken the right path, but please help me with your prayers.

I am here again to trouble you regarding the Papers which you kindly entrusted to His Eminence Cardinal Fontana. You already know what I confided to you about it. The fact is that, having been able to speak personally with the one who is directing me and to remedy the trouble caused by the postal delivery, I ask you the favour to drop a line again to the said Cardinal². Msgr. Sinibaldi³, President of the Ecclesiastical Academy, will present before the Cardinal the Papers that have been left with him. This is because the Dominican I was in touch with, as I wrote to you, has left Rome.

I am well aware that because of your friendship and the charity of that illustrious person, a new recommendation is unnecessary. Nevertheless, if you think so, send me a line addressed to him, in which, if he does not know about the trouble caused by the mail, tell him simply about it. Also say that those Papers are the ones you requested him for me. Dispatch this letter through a private contact to Mr. Giovanni Baptista Verdari, the pharmacist at Porta Borsari⁴. However enclose the letter of the Cardinal inside this, in an envelope addressed to Monsignor Canon Pacetti⁵, who on Wednesday leaves for Verona, where he stops to preach the holy Missions. In that encounter the above-mentioned Rev. Canon Pacetti too will write a few lines to the said Cardinal, simply to say a few words about those Papers. I believe, he will tell him about what he has agreed with the Holy Father about them. If you think you can tell him in your letter about the good he does through the Missions, to let him know it, you will do me a big favour. The other informative Paper I had sent you is not needed, for the time being. This letter is sufficient. In a private way, it will go to Bologna, then to its destination, that is, into the hands of Monsignor Sinibaldi, who will hand it to His Eminence, together with the Papers. He will send it to the Cardinal, by and by. In case the Cardinal finds any

¹ The wife of the Emperor of Austria, Maria Ludovica d'Este (Ep.I, lett. 283, n. 4).
² Cardinal Fontana (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
³ Cardinal Sinibaldi Giovanni Giacomo, Born in Rome in 1773 and consecrated priest in 1796. In 1821 he was Vice Mayor of the city of Rome, where he was consecrated Bishop in 1822.
⁴ The grocer of the Pharmacy at Porta Borsari that handled the post.
⁵ First Superior of the Institute
difficulty while examining them, Mons. Sinibaldi will inform me about it and ask for modifications, so that the work may be done with less trouble. If you did not write this the other time, I do not remember it because of my lack of memory, please recommend to the Cardinal to keep the matter and also the approval of the Holy Father\textsuperscript{6}, if the Lord wills so, as I hope, as confidential as possible. This is because, although the Sovereign has confirmed to me the gift he has granted me, also in Verona, and has expressed with cordial terms his desire regarding the establishment, increase and expansion of the institute, however, since not everybody knows about this, I feel that it is safer to keep silent about it.

I already requested this in case the approval is sent to you or to me in a private way. Monsignor Sinibaldi, too, will be informed about using the same caution if he has to ask me for anything. My dear Carlina, forgive me this new trouble. I am sure that Our Lady of Sorrows will repay you, because this is the greatest good you can grant to us. Here we are dealing with the very life and future of the Institute.

My health is very good, and since I am in Venice I have recovered from the great setback I suffered at the death of the Lady Sovereign. Be assured that I will never forget Milan. But pray a lot for me. Goodbye, dear Carlina. Many regards to our friends. My greetings to your husband. I embrace you heartily and I am forever your dear friend.

Venice, Saint Lucy’s 29 April 1816

PS. God willing, I have decided to come to Milan in July, for our work.

Magdalene of Canossa\textsuperscript{7}
Daughter of Charity

\textsuperscript{6} Pius VII
\textsuperscript{7} NB. Only the address and the signature are Magdalene’s handwriting.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

In a very brief letter, Magdalene authorizes Durini to send her the longed-for answer through the Countess Paola Taverna. With a post-script she confirms her going to Milan, if no obstacles arise.

My dearest friend

In the letter I wrote to you on 28 April, I begged you that if you had an opportunity you could send me the answer to Verona. Now, I beg you that if you have had no chance to send it, do so as usual through your sister. My health is sufficiently good. Kindly recommend me much to the Lord because I need it. I assure you too of my poor prayers. Greet our friends for me. My regards to your husband. I am so attached and obliged to you. In a great hurry, I affectionately declare myself

Your dear friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s 4 May 1816

PS. I confirm what I have said about my coming, so long as the Lord does not put new obstacles in my way. Entrust me and ask others to entrust me to Mary Most Holy during this month which is hers.

Your Magdalene¹
Canossa Daughter of Charity

¹ NB. The postscript and signature are Magdalene’s
TO CAROLINA DURINI

In Venice, a very virtuous companion had died in May. Magdalene suffers because of that loss. But she realizes that Durini’s sorrow is deeper. Marquis Carlo Arconati Visconti, husband of Carolina’s sister, has passed away. He was called «the father of the poor» because he carried on the work begun by his wife Teresa Arconati, with Fr. Felice De Vecchi. He leaves behind a seventeen year-old son, the young Marquis Giuseppe. Magdalene, who understands the sorrow of her friend, tries to comfort her with words of faith.

My dearest friend

The Lord has visited both of us, my dear Carolina. But He has visited you in a way more painful than mine. I am sure that you have said: Blessed be the Name of the Lord. But I am not very convinced of your courage, and I care so that your health may not be affected. I am not asking for letters from you, knowing that you have many other occupations at this time. But give me news of you either through dear Viscontina, or our friend the Canoness, or even Mrs Checca. I am also satisfied if you inform me through any other person provided I hear from you. Tell me something about our good Canoness, who will surely console you.

Believe me, my dear Carlina, as for yourself, I would have wished to arrive in Milan today to keep you a little company. But it is better to let a few more weeks pass by.

What I beg you to do is not to increase your cross through reflection that you can reserve for other moments. Please, forgive me if out of attachment and friendship, I add that God is faithful and powerful in His promises. Consequently His mercy is certain for those who are merciful. Therefore you have no reason to worry not even for your Beppino if you look at God, who on account of his parents, will bless their son. The other day I was with your sister two hours to keep her company. I was happy to see how she picks up courage. Only she wishes so much to get news about you.

I wanted to write to our Canoness today. But I see that this is impossible because among the many affairs that have to be seen to as a consequence of the loss of a companion of mine, whom you do not know and whom the Lord has taken to Himself, and on the other hand, my hurry to come to Milan, I lack material time. Do embrace her for me. I thank you so much for the letter you kindly wrote to me. I sent the other letter of yours to the Canon to whom it was addressed. Goodbye, my dear Carlina. I entrust myself a great deal to your prayers. My regards to the Provost. Many greetings to your family and friends. Love me and believe me all yours

Dearest friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s 9 June 1816

Your very affectionate friend Magdalene of Canossa Daughter of Charity

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1 Marquis Carlo Arconati, the widower of Teresa Trotti Bentivoglio has died. He leaves behind his son Giuseppe (Beppino). Carolina Durini, his sister-in-law is inconsolable.
2 Arconti Giuseppe, the orphaned nephew of Carolina Durini
3 Canon Pacetti
4 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The mourning in the house of Durini, Taverna and Arconti, is still felt very much. But the Lord helps them in their sorrow. The young Marquis Giuseppe shows his maturity. Sorrow seems to mould him well. Magdalene follows all of them with her prayer and tries to hasten her arrival in Milan.

My beloved Carlina

I am very much obliged to you, my dear Carlina, for your letter because, to tell you the truth, I was very worried about you. I thank the Lord if your health has not suffered. if the matter is as you tell me. But I cannot believe you much about this.

Believe me, for your sake I would have flown to Milan at once. But be assured also that I am trying to settle everything quickly. I am trying to gain as much time as possible. I too realize that since the Lord wants the house of Milan, in these circumstances it is better to act as quickly as possible. Your sister¹, thanks to the Lord, is feeling much better than I thought. You see how God helps. That person from Milan does not understand this much. Because of her goodness she is displeased that I leave. But since she too has to leave, I do not know when, perhaps next month she has to go to Padova, she is already contented. Now she will be happier still on account of you.

I will write to you in a more precise manner as soon as possible. Meanwhile, embrace the Canoness and our other friends. All of you please pray for me to Mary Most Holy as you know that I need her for everything. Concerning good Beppino², I am happy to see how he takes his desolation. Do not be afraid, dear Carlina. The Lord does everything well. I hope that you will have many more consolations regarding this good young man, as, in God’s mercy and through Mary’s intercession, I always had from my Carlino³. Goodbye, dear friend. My regards to your family and to the Parish Priest. Love me. Good-bye

Venice, Saint Lucy’s’s 10 June (18)16

Your Canossa Daughter of Charity

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¹ Paola Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini
² Giuseppe Arconati (Ep.I, lett. 125, n. 2).
³ Carlino Canossa, the orphaned son of uncle Jerome.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene has left Venice and, temporarily, is in Verona, waiting for Durini to notify her regarding the day most suitable to her to welcome her in Milan.

My dearest friend

Here I am. I have left Venice already, my dear Carlina, and I can say that finally I am half way to Milan. Last night I reached Verona after a comfortable trip that the Lord graciously granted me. On my part and because of the business I have here, God willing I will be able to leave for Milan in ten or twelve days time. Knowing that you are busy, I will not move from here until you answer me if such a time is convenient to you. Tell me when you wish or, rather, when you will be able to accommodate me.

Tell me the time that is most convenient and I will arrange the day of my departure and the companions who will come with me. Kindly answer me soon so that I will be able to make the necessary arrangements. I am entirely at your disposal after these few days. I left your sister in good health. She wanted me to promise that I would return soon to Venice and she gave me some errands for you. I will tell you everything on my arrival, but the main one is that of converting you. Embrace all our friends for me. I beg you and them to pray as much as you can because I need your prayers desperately. As I embrace you with my heart I want to express my sincere attachment to you. When you send me the answer put down my address as well, but send it to Mr. Verderi, the grocer at Porta dei Borsari.

I am dearest friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s 29 June 1816

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Canossa Daughter of Charity

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1 Magdalene does not seem to note that her secretary has written Venice and not Verona.
2 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene’s last message from Verona, before she leaves for Milan. She will bring along three companions. During the trip she will stop at Caravaggio to implore the help of the Virgin Mary on the new foundation. However, she cannot tell the exact day of her arrival because, if her brother Bonifacio accompanies her, she may have to postpone it by a few days.

My dearest friend

At last, God willing, on Tuesday I will leave for Milan. I will bring along three companions. Of them you know only Elena. I will stay one night, and another at Caravaggio. In the morning I will visit Our Holy Mother and entrust to her the business you already know about and on account of which I am making this trip. I hope to be in Milan on Friday and I will stop as we have agreed. If you do not see me on Friday, do not worry because it might be that my brother comes along too. In that case I may come a day or two later. Entrust me to the Lord and express my regards to your husband and to our friends. Beg them to pray to the Lord for us. I embrace you heartily and leave you. Good-bye, my dear, soon I will embrace you.

Yours, my dearest friend

Verona, Saint Joseph’s 11 July 1816

Your Canossa
Daughter of Charity

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1 Even on the original letter there is a blank space
2 Famous sanctuary of Our Lady in the province of Bergamo.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

297 (Grezzano#1816.11.02)

Elena Bernardi, the superior of the small group of sisters in Milan, received the news of Magdalene’s return to Verona and must have conveyed it to Durini. But Magdalene too wants to inform her about the kind assistance of the coachman, Mr. Pierino Porta and other news, among which that of Naudet emerges, even though mentioned only in passing. She has not yet gone to the other house, but she is about to move.

My dearest friend

My Elena1 will give you news of me, my dear Durini, but I am not happy, until I give them again to you. My trip was excellent and very comfortable because, having left at 6 o’clock, I reached Caravaggio2 at 7. I left for Brescia at 8 o’clock in the morning and arrived at 8 o’clock in the evening. Finally having left before or around 5 o’clock in morning, I peacefully reached Verona around 7 o’clock in the evening 3. You cannot imagine how useful the gift you gave me has been. In the carriage we were able to have coffee and chocolate. Another time, I shall think of making soup, since while travelling I have the time if I take the whole day, thus doing it with comfort.

On my arrival, I found the carriage waiting to take me to Grezzano from where I am writing this letter to you. On Monday I think, I will return to Verona because it is but right to put that crazy person in place4. The coachman, Mr. Pierino5 will tell you every thing in detail about our trips. Never, without blaming anybody, did I have greater help than this time, from this very good man.

Tell this also to our dear Canoness so that she may thank Fr. Pietro again. I was sorry to leave immediately for the countryside, especially for his sake, fearing that he may not be served as I would like, as there is neither my family, nor my sister here to give him a lodging.

I have given errands and orders to everybody at St. Joseph’s 6 so that he may be served as well as possible. I handed him, on the evening I arrived, the parcel and the letters for your sister, who, some tell me, did not arrive from Brescia yet. I am not sure of this because I had already left. I told my Cristina7 to get a note from the Teacher Trevisani8, and to deliver it, as we have agreed. I hope that the next time you write to me, you will tell me also if that Religious we had been waiting for, came as he had written to you, on Monday morning. I do not speak to you of the distance that divides us as that is superfluous. I only assure you that on my part I will surely try to hurry things as much as possible. Assist me with your prayer.

Embrace for me our two friends Visconti and the Canoness, as well as dear Somaglia. My compliments to everyone in your family. I express to you my Carlino’s regards, and embracing you very affectionately I declare. You have treated me so badly that it seems to me strange not to see you. Enough, I thank you for everything: love me and believe me

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1 Elena Bernardi, Superior of the House of Milan (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 2).
2 Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin in the province of Bergamo
3 So from Caravaggio to Brescia the journey took 12 hours, and from Brescia to Verona 14 hours.
4 Her humorous way of speaking about herself
5 PIERINO PORTA, the coachman.
6 The religious community at Verona
7 CRISTINA PILOTTI (1794-1835), Canossian Sister and Magdalene’s secretary for many of her letters. After Magdalene’s death, Cristina was directress of the Institute, but only for a few months because of her untimely death on 5.12.1835
8 Fr. LUIGI TREVISANI (1741-1821) professor of the Rectory in the Seminary of Verona from 1772 to 1790. He was then appointed Prefect of Studies until his death.
My dearest friend

Grezzano 2 November 1816

Your Canossa Daughter of Charity

Turn over leaf

On Monday evening I arrived in Verona, where I found out that not only Mr. Pietro had left, but also your sister. I had sent someone to her the following morning. I was disappointed not to see her at all. As they tell me, you will receive Trevisani’s letter from Mr. Porta. When you write tell me something about our companions. Leopoldina has not yet moved to the other House. I think she will do so in a few days’ time.

I assure you in all sincerity that my health is very good. I will give you more news of myself later, more at length. Entrust me to Mary Most Holy.

Love me and believe me.

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9 NB. This letter, written by Cristina Pilotti, has only the signature and address in Magdalene’s handwriting.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Some unclear references and not easy to understand. However, what Magdalene cares for most is to express to Durini her feelings: of joy because Elena Bernardi does well and organizes with wisdom; of sorrow, because her other companions do not enjoy good health. She would like to return soon to Milan, but does not know who to assign as superior of the community in Verona, since Naudet has left St. Joseph’s together with her sisters. Another worry for her is how the Sisters should behave in the hospital, which, due to its enormity does not always permit them to be united, at least in twos during the visit. For this reason, she attaches an «Addition to the second Rule of the Rules for the hospital». This should be shown to Fr. Fontana so that he may either approve or annul it.

My dearest friend

I am much obliged to you also for your trip to Monza. I have no doubt that everything will go on very well. This morning I wrote by ordinary mail to Mr. Pacifico who not to lose his usual custom, left for Mantua the day after my arrival at Grezzano. I do not know if, being busy with his usual business, he will be able to write a rather long letter. At this time he is extremely busy with his occupations. I wrote to him to immediately refer to you so as to do things faster. I am consoled to hear that you are happy about my Elena. I hope that, through our Holy Mother's intercession, the Lord will help her to do even better.

I feel sorry for the poor health of the others, much more so because I did not expect it. Here they told me that they were all well. I hope that they will recover soon. Do not be afraid that I may forget Milan. I may need to do this some times, since I have it too much at heart. Pray that the Lord may give me a Superior for Verona. I need this very much. This is the only way to speed up my return to Milan. My regards to your family. Embrace all our friends for me. Love me and remember me. I heartily embrace you. Goodbye.

Turn over leaf

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

Saint Joseph’s Verona, 12 November 1816,

You might remember when we said that our Rule did not allow us to help as much as possible in the Hospital of Milan, as we could not go two by two.

Since you have the chance, I thought of correcting it or adding to the Rule of the Hospital that prescribes this, what seemed to me necessary. It is written badly because I did it in a hurry and late; it is almost ten o’clock. If you intend to write to Fontana convey to him my respects. Let him know that in assisting in the hospital in Milan I found some difficulty due to its enormous size. Not to neglect a Rule or to avoid being unable to help as the need requires, I would make the addition to the mentioned rule, that I have shown you.

If he thinks that it is better not to speak of it now, or is not convinced of the need, let it be as if I have not said anything. Also if presenting these reflections to the Congregation of the Bishops may block the process, tell him not to speak about it. I entrust everything to him. Forgive me also for this. See that my Teresa makes a copy of the Rule. I could not finish my

1 Not identifiable
2 Villa of the Canossa Family
3 Elena Bernardi, superior of the House of Milan
4 Cardinal Francesco Fontana
5 Congregation entrusted with examining the Rule
lunch. This has never happened after my return to Verona. But my health is very good. It was only on account of some trouble. Again I am

**ADDITION TO THE SECOND RULE OF THE RULES OF THE HOSPITAL**

**SECOND RULE**

When the Ministra\(^6\) and her companion return home, the former will give an account of the visit. If the Superior thinks it better, both of them will tell her about their visit and the needs they have discovered. Accordingly, the Superior will choose the number of Sisters the circumstances of the Hospitals of the various cities and of the institute will allow. She will take into account their respective ability, the gifts the Divine Mercy has deigned to grant the Sisters, and also their age and other circumstances that are left to the prudence of the Superior. The following day, or on the day established for this purpose, these Sisters will go to the hospital, where they will be in twos, so that they do not lose sight of one another. They should not be more than two beds away from each other.

If because of the largeness of the wards of the Hospital or because of the multiple needs of the patients, it would not be possible to cater to all their needs, staying very united, they should not however separate themselves from the same ward or line of beds, so that one is always within sight of the other. They can then go to visit the other line of beds in the ward, etc. etc.

(At the bottom of the page, as usual and without stamps, Magdalene adds in pencil)

If you send me that copy I will be very happy to read it.

\(^6\) The Sister in charge
TO CAROLINA DURINI

299 (Verona#1816.11.19)

The layout of the Rules, as it was presented, has been judged less positively by some members of the Congregation of Bishops and Durini writes to Magdalene about this. Magdalene is not surprised. She only refers to the opinion of the one who had to correct it. He had not found anything to change in it. Anyway, they will see how things turn out. Now instead, she is keen to know what happened to the Memorandum, submitted to the archduke Ranieri by Mr. Maineri of Lodi.

My dearest friend

Verona, 19 November 1816

As I know your heart, I cannot refrain from answering you immediately, at the risk of annoying or disturbing you. First of all I am always very obliged to you for everything, and I start by telling you that you made me laugh with your “read with attention”.

Let me assure you that by the Divine Mercy, I do not miss anything in your dear letters, not even the news. I am not surprised that they found some things wrong. Rather I am very surprised about those they found good. I confess that I found it extraordinary when I was told that the Papers were alright. I wrote down the few things that came to my mind and I wrote them only after a few years of experience in this vocation, without any particular skill and knowledge, and also without much peace around me. I then sent everything to the person whom you know, for him to read and correct. This person thought it best not to add even a comma. Rather he wanted to leave untouched even the spelling mistakes made by the one who transcribed them. Therefore you see that the matter does not surprise me at all.

I am very calm, and I hope that I will be very happy at whatever the Lord allows. Only I add that I place my hopes in Mary Most Holy, to whom this matter belongs in every way. Through her I am sure that the result of this Work will be as much as God wants, in order to be glorified by it. I am very grateful to you for encouraging me, I beg you to continue helping me to pick up courage by your constant prayers for me.

The one whom you know, that is Mr. Pacifico¹, who lived at the Zueva, has received a very different reply from the brother of your director, who bears the name of the family of our friend, a penitent of our Parish Priest, who often goes to visit Mother Rampina². Well, do not worry and do not afflict yourself for my sake. Even if I wanted to, I have no time to do anything about it. Let us entrust everything into the hands of God and the heart of Mary. Except for doing what is necessary and praying, let us not think about it any more.

I am consoled to hear from the Parish Priest about the good work that the companions are doing. When they do well and serve well for the glory of God and for the good of the poor, I am abundantly compensated in everything.

You might know that now they are about to make me pay. I am taking all the steps to prevent it and I hope they will allow me some more time. In order not to stop troubling you, I would like you to try to ask Countess Eleonora Castiglioni³ or through Marquis Casati, whom I beg you to greet for me, what answer she has received from Lodi, from Mr. Maineri about the Memorandum⁴ he presented to the archduke⁵.

¹-² persons not identifiable
³ The wife of Count Alfonso Castiglioni, mother of Francesca who is the wife of Bonifacio of Canossa
⁴ The written report of what was asked for orally.
⁵ RANIERI, ARCHDUKE of LORENA-ASBURGO (Florence 1783 - Bolzano 1853). Viceroy of Lombardo-Veneto (1818-1848) he was always under the control of Metternich. Following the uprising in Milan (1848) he abandoned the city, renouncing all his powers and position. (Cfr. De Agostini, op. cit. p. 892, c. 2a).
If the Prince has again shown his concern, what is the situation now? However, in spite
of my preoccupations, which are bigger because of my imagination, rather than the reality,
and in the midst of all my occupations I assure you with all sincerity that I am very well. I do
not know if it is the native air, but I feel a greater appetite than usual. Well it is a lot of time
that I have not been so well as at this time, here in Verona. Only I have no time. This is why I
am troubling you about Castiglioni, so that I need not write her another letter.

Embrace our friends for me. My regards to the Parish Priest. Greetings to your family.
Much obliged to you and full of attachment and friendship, with a sincere heart I embrace
you and declare myself

Your Very affectionate Magdalene
Daughter of the Charity.
Durini has received comforting news about the Rules shown to Fr. Fontana and conveys them to Magdalene who is very grateful and waits for further developments.

My dearest friend

I am very obliged to you, my dear Carlina for your solicitude in giving me the comforting news you have received. You can imagine how very welcome that news is for me. Were the business my own, I would consider it as done and certainly well done, and I would be very happy. But since it is Our Lady’s, it seems impossible to me that She would not wish what in fact the Congregation wishes. I see the difficulty, but for the One who is nearly almighty, there are no difficulties. Let us see what She really wants.

Meanwhile, I thank you heartily. I will ask for prayers to Mary Most Holy for your Director and for you. Present to him my most distinguished regards and thanks. Do it for me, because as you know I do not have anymore that gentleness and politeness. But I am truly sincerely grateful and I will always be thankful for both of you before the Lord, now and always. The whole institute will do the same, in whatever way the Lord will be pleased to expand it. I keep on feeling very well. I have not forgotten Milan. But I am very busy. I do not know anything about our other temporal affairs, but I hope it is for the reason mentioned above. I embrace you heartily. My usual compliments and regards. Good-bye from my heart. Accept the greetings of Cristina too.

I am most obliged to you
Your affectionate friend Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

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1 Cardinal Fontana
2 Cristina Pilotti, secretary for many letters including this one. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Some letters from Durini have reached Veron together with the accompanying letter written by her for the “Papers” she sent to Fr. Fontana. Magdalene is confused about it because the presentation goes beyond reality. She clarifies interpretations that are not entirely exact and also thanks her for not inserting the “Addition to the Rules of the hospital”: it is better this way. She announces at the same time the serious illness of a companion, struck by the epidemic that is spreading in Verona.

My dearest friend

I received various dear letters of yours and, as usual, I will always repeat that I am very obliged to you for everything. I read with great care the informative paper you have sent to your Director to whom I will also be always grateful. To tell you the truth, this paper confused me very much, as I see that it says things more desirable than real, especially regarding me. Do not think that I tell you this as a usual compliment, but, speaking plainly, I would not have let certain things go if I had read it before leaving for Milan. The Lord will bear with the good faith of the one who has done it. I feel unhappy to enchant the people only with my words.

At the end of the same letter, I read, if I am not mistaken, that Mattei, besides Fr. dal Buono, and Fr. Michael, an Augustinian, know about the bargain. Note that both of these latter may say that they have seen it, but the first knew something about it at the beginning. I said that he was acquainted with the Provincial of the Capuchin Fathers, but broadly speaking. He did not know much about the matter.

I appreciate your suggestion not to send the addition which I have already sent to you, and I do not know why you are so full of compliments with me in telling me these things. The Lord is visiting us here with an epidemic illness, the smallpox. He sent it to your Rosa, the one who was in Brisa. This morning she was administered the Holy Viaticum. This evening, as I write, she is struggling. But we hope that she will recover. She was never in the hospital, nor in any other place where she might have got this sickness, but our Country is full of it. Do not worry about me as I have already had this disease, and also Cristina. Entrust us to the Lord that He may grant us fortitude and that we may do His Holy will in everything.

I am so pleased that you are happy about the companions, especially Elena. It comforts me a lot to hear that you do some little things in the Lord’s service. Goodbye, dear friend. My usual compliments and regards also to the Parish Priest. Accept those of my companions and believe me, as embracing you heartily, I declare to be

my dearest friend

St. Joseph’s, November 1816

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

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1 Religious Priests whom Magdalene consulted for the drawing up of the Rules.
2 Idem
3 Idem
4 Idem
5 One of the novices from Milan who lived in Via Brisa.
6 One of the streets in Old Milan, off Corso Magenta and towards Piazza Borromeo.
7 Elena Bernardi, Superior of the House of Milan (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 1).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

302 (Verona#1816.12.05)

The young religious, who lived in Milan, in Brisa Street, and had been introduced by Durini, died, a victim of the epidemic fever. Magdalene gives the sad announcement and is worried also because for her untimely death. She has not been able to inform her uncle, Mr. Stella, on time, not even of her illness.

Dearest friend

The Lord is pleased to visit us, my dear friend, and I am in need to trouble you, that is, that you may send to Rosa’s uncle the enclosed letter.

I do not write to my Elena not to give her, all of a sudden, the news of the death of my Rosa, who tonight, like a saint, passed from this valley of tears to the celestial country. Since the disease became unexpectedly severe, I could not write to her uncle in time. So I write to him with the date of yesterday so as to prepare him with the news of the illness to that of her death.

Do not bother about me. Only pray that God may give me strength. Goodbye, dear. Forgive the grumbling of my Cristina, who extends to you her greetings. My usual compliments. Dear Canoness will be able to direct you to where Mr. Stella lives. Goodbye heartily.

St Joseph’s, 5 December 1816

Your Canossa Daughter of Charity

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1 Rosa, a young novice presented by Durini
2 Elena Bernardi, Superior of the House of Milan
3 The uncle of the novice who lived in Via Brisa
4 NB. The letter is written by Cristina Pilotti. It is signed by Magdalene.
A few lines, written in a hurry, because Magdalene is undergoing a “deep storm, one which she never experienced”. Leopoldina Naudet and her companions have left the convent of St. Joseph. On 9 November 1816, they began the institute that later would be called "Sisters of the Holy Family". The agreements had been made a long time ago. But the case of Cristina Scalfo, a companion of Magdalene who, approved by the confessor, Fr. Gaspare Bertoni, left St. Joseph’s to follow Naudet, was open, and caused tension. Scalfo had been much appreciated by the Marchioness who, in one of her wills in 1810, had established her as the third among her three heirs. It was painful for her to give her consent. The letter to Durini however only makes mention of this.

My dear friend,

Just a few lines because I am very full of troubles. My health continues to be good. Your letter made me happy and I laughed at your castles in the air. Let God do as He pleases. Be assured that I am filled with concern for Milan. I am grateful for your concern and that of the Milanese regarding this.

The Reverend Abbot Pacifico is giving some sermons in Chiari until the Christmas Festivities. At the moment I have no meetings, but I will inform you as soon as I have one because you can see how necessary it is to get that piece of furniture. I wrote before the Abbot Pacifico left the village where he was, so that, as Chiari is so much closer to Milan, he might come. He replied that, if possible, he will come, but he doubts it, because his schedule in those days is very tight.

I beg you to ask for prayers to Mary most Holy for us because we are in a storm as deep as never before. Do not speak about it with anybody. Only ask for prayers and do not worry at all because you will see that Mary Most Holy will settle everything. I hope that these will be the last attempts of hell. I am very well, full of laughter. I heartily embrace you in a hurry. Goodbye.

Your Canossa
Daughter Of Charity

St. Joseph’s, 20 December 1816

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1 The large suburb of the province of Brescia.

2 Regarding Cristina Scalfo who wanted to – and eventually did – follow Naudet in her new foundation.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

304 (Verona#1816.12.28)

A religious priest has to go to Milan for a few days and begs Durini to find a proper lodging for him. Magdalene conveys her condolences for the death of the Parish Priest of Durini’s parish and asks for information about the work of the deceased Fr. Carlo Palazzi for a reason she does not mention. Instead, she mentions the storm that seems to be lessening, and hopes that it does not last for a long time.

My dear friend

I could not write to you in the last ordinary mail as I desired, due to my occupations, but my Elena¹ might have told you already that Fr. Pacifico wrote that he will make a trip of one day to Milan, and that in such a case he would turn to you so that you may take him to a lodging place he asked me to find for him.

As soon as I came to know about this, I thought of Mr. Canevese where Fr. Pietro is also lodging. Since it is for one or two nights, it would be more comfortable if the place is not so far. Therefore, I wrote to my Elena to inform you about it, in case you would like to speak to him regarding the letter and the affairs, and I imagined that you could make him talk to the Parish Priest. I do not know if this is possible or if he will be able to make it because I know that he is busy. If this happens, I will be hally to hear the result of your encounters. I heard with great sorrow from my Elena of the loss you had of the excellent Parish Priest Mascheraro.² I imagine how much you felt it. It seems that the Lord punishes us when he takes away these persons, but, well, He does everything well, and you, pick up courage. However, I would like you to tell me or through Elena, what will happen to the oratory of the deceased Fr. Carlo Palazzi³. You should know that I am not asking about it for fun, but because I do not forget your concern also for the boys. You will say that I am worthy to leave for St. Servolo⁴ but let the air of Montebaldo⁵ do it. Believe me that I am worthy to leave for St. Servolo but let the air of Montebaldo do it. Believe me that I am asking you this for reasons of my own.

I wrote to you that I was caught in the worst storm I have ever experienced, but that I trusted in Mary Most Holy through it all. She has indeed deigned to smooth things out and my hope is that She will fulfil everything for her glory and that it will not take very long to settle down. I beg you to go on praying for me and for all of us. I am happy regarding all that you write about Checchina⁶, and I think that, on the one hand, she would be useful here. In the meantime, let us carry on a little longer and we will pray to the Lord to make it known to us what He wishes for this good young girl.

I embrace you heartily and beg you to extend my greetings to your family, and to embrace our friends. My greetings to the Parish Priest, full of friendship and of attachment. I convey to you the regards of my Cristina. From my heart I say

Yours, my dearest friend

¹ Elena Bernardi, Superior of Milan (Ep.I, lett.278, n.1)
² Parish Priest of St. Babila and therefore of the Parish of Carolina Durini. In 1807, he is mentioned in « MILANO SACRO » Almanacco per l'anno... dedicato a tutto il Clero milanese, Milano , Tip. Motta al Malecantone, as the Canon of St. Teol. di Gius Canonico Teologo Cancelliere (col. 16, pag. 40). In 1815 he was Parish Priest of St. Giorgio al Palazzo in Via Torino.
³ A priest from Milan
⁴ A house for mental patients in Venice.
⁵ Cheerfulness (Ep. I, lett. 7, n. 1).
⁶ The niece of the housemaid of Durini, an aspirant for the religious life.
When you write to me inform me about your sister⁷, who kindly wrote to me before leaving Verona where, as you know, I did not have the pleasure to see her. Then, I answered her in Venice.

Now I do not know anything more, not even of the Count, her husband. Goodbye, thank Mary Most Holy for me

St. Joseph’s, 28 December 1816

Your Canossa
Daughter of Charity

⁷ Countess Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini
Milan is asking for help because some companions of Bernardi are sick. Angela Simeoni in particular needs care, and Magdalene asks to send her to Verona to undergo special cures. However, she cannot promise any help, because at St. Joseph’s Rizzini Arcangela is dying and Bonomi Orsola is suffering a lot for a long time. She has been called to Venice by the Patriarch, but knows how to keep her usual serenity.

Beginning of January 1817

My beloved friend

Elena wrote to me already what you, my beloved Carlina, say about my dear companions. You are right, the Lord always deigns to support me as Superior when He permits to send us some afflictions. It is necessary that I know everything if I have to settle and foresee things. Therefore I reply to her in this ordinary mail, telling her how to manage herself because, my dear friend, I think it is good that nothing should be decided for the House in Milan unless the Parish Priest is consulted.

I only feel sorry not to be able to send anyone from here to substitute Angela¹, much more because I have Arcangela² dying in Venice and Orsola is sick for a long time. Therefore, I should think of adding some instead of taking any away. By the end of this month, I will receive three or four of them, and after they are trained for sometime, either I will send them or will take along those I can. I beg you, my dear Carlina, pick up courage and these crosses of ours should not discourage you, nor take away your concern for our Institute. Forgive me, my dear, if I tell you this. Rather, you are really the one who is able to encourage me. But on the other hand, since I see how the Lord assists us, even if all my companions die and only one would be left for the house, I would still not lose courage. I have no right at all to fear. I think that I will have to go very soon to Venice, where I am called by the Patriarch³. You may also imagine how much this trip makes me uneasy⁴. But I thank the Lord because I hope that its outcome will be very good. So much so that I wrote that I will leave, at the latest, on Friday. I will come back as soon as possible. I wrote to Elena⁵ also about our Angela. If you think of sending her soon, I will find a substitute for her in everything. But I entrust her to your care so that she may have a safe trip. Pray and ask others to pray for me to the Lord. Be assured that I am fortunate because I never lose the air of Montebaldo, that is, that I go on and will always go on laughing. I feel consoled that the Parish Priest is better. I have no time to tell you more. Perhaps, it will be more convenient to you to let me have the treasure you are keeping with your sister in Venice. Do as you think best, as long as it is safe. Good-bye. In a hurry

Your Magdalene⁶
Daughter of Charity

¹ ANGELA SIMEONI who was a member of the first group during the foundation in Milan.
² RIZZINI ARCANGELA died at the beginning of January 1816.
³ FRANCESCO MARIA MILESI (Patriarch from 1815 to 1819). He was born in Venice in 1774 and, besides the nine years he lived at Vigevano as Bishop from 1807 to 1816, he spent the whole of his life at Venice, involving himself actively and maturely in the life of his city. (Filippuzzi, op. cit. pag. 7). In December 1815, the emperor of Austria, Francis I, proposed him as Patriarch of Venice. Pius VII nominated him during the consistory of 23 September 1816. The Austrian government officials knew him during their first occupation of Venice from 1798 to 1805. In the following years, he behaved well: he would not have been forgiven any mistake or false step, as in the case of Mons. Peruzzi. He was 72 years old when, in 1816, he entered Venice privately. The entry was made solemn on 2 March 1817. Right from the first week, the government wanted him as president of the Commission for public charities, institutions of the state which were proposed for the benefit of the poor in Venice and to resolve the painful problem of beggars. He shouldered this responsibility until his death.
⁴ Magdalene to Durini, at the beginning of January 1817, Ep. 1, p. 467.
⁵ Elena Bernardi, Superior of Milan (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 2).
⁶ NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s. The date of the postal stamp cannot be deciphered because the whole page is damaged. The letter contains many mistakes.
Pressed by so many worries, Magdalene asks Durini the reason for Bernardi’s silence. She does not write directly to her not to afflict her too much. In fact, Rizzini died and Ghezzi Maria Francesca is seriously ill. The meeting with the Patriarch of Venice brings hope to her.

My dearest friend

I hurriedly write you these few lines, my dear friend, thanking you for your letter and the packet you have kindly sent to me. I cannot tell you anything about it because, for lack of time and not to miss today's mail, I could not ask if your sister has received it. I will do so with the first ordinary mail. These few lines are to tell you that on Saturday I arrived safely in Venice, thanks to the Lord. I must tell you that I really feel worried not to receive any word from my Elena. I do not write to her this time because, not knowing how she is, I do not want to convey to her bitter news all of a sudden. My dear Carolina, the Lord has sent me the Cross. I found Arcangela dead. Francesca Maria has received the viaticum because of a heart attack that brought on a paralysis. By the grace of God she is improving daily. Regarding Francesca Maria you can refrain from informing the companions about her. Elena will already be disposed to receive news of Arcangela, because it was such a long illness. I met the Patriarch. To tell you everything in one word, I hope for much good, through the intercession of the Holy Mary. You may imagine how busy I am. I sincerely assure you that the Lord is supporting me in His mercy and that I am getting on sufficiently well. I was unable to see your sister yet, as I go out only when necessity requires. But soon I will take this pleasure. I know that all are well. I will write at length another time.

When you write, tell me how the Canoness is. I embrace her together with my companions. I hope to return to Verona during the first week of next month. Tell Elena to drop me at least a few lines. I beg you to tell me sincerely how our companions are, as I will feel more peaceful when I know things clearly. I embrace you heartily. I beg of you to assist me and ask others to assist me with prayers. My regards to the Parish Priest. In the bond of friendship.

for you my dearest friend

Venice, Saint Lucy’s
15 January (18)17

Your Canossa
Daughter of Charity

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1 Bernardi Elena, Superior at Milan (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 2).
2 Rizzini Arcangela, who died in Venice
3 GHEZZI FRANCESCA MARIA, ex superior of the suppressed Monastery of the Dimesse of Murano. She joined the Canossians in Venice on 26.4.1812. She died in 1818, after having been Superior of the House of St. Lucy in Venice from 1813 to 1817. Magdalene met her in 1813 while at S. Andrea, she was going to the Church of the Tolentini (Cfr. Benelli - op. pag. XII).
4 Patriarch Francesco Maria Milesi
5 NB – Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
The parcel of books which Durini has sent to Magdalene through the common mail might fall into the hands of the censorship board. They contain Catechism books. Since this could have been dangerous, the Marchioness thanks God because the parcel reached her directly. She has excellent news about Francesca Maria, but has not received any news from Elena, yet. However, at the bottom of the letter her “grumpy secretary” as Cristina Pilotti defines herself, adds that a letter has arrived from Bernardi, who feels unwell. The Parish Priest should be asked to suspend the Sunday assistance for a few Sundays.

My dearest friend

Yesterday, by the grace of God, I received from your sister the parcel you have kindly sent to me. As it was sent by coach, nearly, by mistake, I say, it did not fall into the hands of the censor that must check all the books. It was a book that all can see, as it is a book on the Doctrine. But it came directly to me. I am so grateful to you that I do not know how to express it. I really felt such a great sense of gratitude that I have not experienced for a long time. When I return to Verona I will send you back the report of your physician, which I liked very much.

I do not know what to think, but I imagine it is the fault of the mail, as I have not yet received any letter from my Elena.¹

Remember that I trust that you will not hide anything from me. You know that in this way you keep me much calmer. My Francesca Maria continues to improve every day, and all of us hope that she will recover, if not completely, at least sufficiently well to continue to assist me. If nothing special happens, it is my intention to return to Verona during the first week of February. Concerning our business I keep handling them as much as I can and I think that everything is prepared well.

Yesterday, I managed to be with your sister for almost two hours. She was in a good mood, and with the Count who is keeping very well. As you can imagine, we spoke so much of you and because I had asked her if she had news about you. I took a long time to assure her that I did not know anything contrary, regarding your health. I found her in good shape and better nourished than usual. I have a bit of a cold, but it is nothing. I take good care of myself. I sincerely assure you that I am very well. Embrace the Canoness, Visconti, Somaglia² and our other friends of the hospital. My regards to your family and to the Provost. Accept the greetings of my companions. Entrust me as well as Francesca Maria³ to Mary Most Holy and get others too to pray for us. Love me and believe me to be

my dear friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s 18 January (18)17

Your Canossa ⁴
Daughter of Charity

PS. As soon as I wrote the present letter I received a letter from dear Elena in which I hear that though she is up, she still has a bad cold. I am afraid that on Sundays, with so many girls, she may work too much. Do me the favour, in case

¹ Bernardi Elena, Superior at Milan (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 2).
² Countess Somaglia Maddalena, sister of Count Mellerio
³ Ghezzi Francesca Maria, Superior at Venice
⁴ NB. Written by Cristina Pilotti, and signed by Magdalene
you see that she continues to be unwell, to beg the Parish Priest to allow her to
rest for two or three Sundays, and let the girls stay at home.
Excuse, the grumpy Secretary Cristina, who kisses your hand.
Durini is very worried about her husband’s health, but Magdalene reassures her, since that illness does not have serious consequences. Magdalene is very happy about Francesca Trioni (Checchina), who has joined the convent. She is the niece of Francesca Orti (Checca), the maid of the Milanese Countess. After the agreement on the outfit and the furniture of the young postulant, Magdalene begs her friend to ask Marquis Casati again to intervene in the Sberna case.

My dear friend

With your usual goodness you have forgiven me for not being able to write to you earlier. I am very grateful to you for your great charity and goodness in caring for my Elena and for the other dear companions of mine, as well as for your concern in providing me with news. I assure you, my dear Carolina, that because of the multiplicity of occupations on the one hand, and the lack of a secretary on the other, I fail to attend to certain duties many times. I am sorry about this. From your last precious letter, I understand that you are in a very bad mood. I imagine that you are worried about your husband, and then on account of your anxiety. Know that I would like to be close to you at this moment in order to scold you a little for one thing and the other. Thank God, you know what your husband’s illness is. It is a sickness that does not prevent him from becoming very old. Please, cheer up, and let me know at least how Elena is at present.

I have heard from my Elena and from the Parish Priest about Checchina\(^1\) who not only has entered but is also doing well. We have always had reason to hope for the best because of the good foundation of the girl. Let us thank the Lord. Later we shall see what God wills: whether or not to transfer her to another house. Regarding what you write about the furniture, if it is really her aunt who gives it and not you, Elena should write me a small note, and I will reply with the first ordinary mail. I will also send her a note about the linen. But if you are the one who is providing everything, I speak to you in a straight forward manner. I would almost get angry, if you ask for it. In the note I sent to Elena, if there is anything that her aunt does not have and you will give it to her, before giving the note to the aunt, cancel out those things. You have given us such a lot. There is no need that you give things even for Chechina.

I left your sister in an excellent state on my departure from Venice, I hope she will continue to be well. Our business in general is going on well. My brother-in-law Orti\(^2\) will come to Milan in fifteen days’ time. Since he will come to meet you, you will receive detailed news about me orally As for Chechina be assured of all my concern. You can imagine that I will do so also out of respect for you. I beg you to recommend to Elena not to work too hard. She has a big heart, but it cannot stand the strain of too much work. I have seen that so many times. Then, it is better that all of them do little, so that they may last longer, rather than do a lot for a short time and then be unable to work. Many regards to your family. Take care of yourself. Embrace all our friends and think of me as full of attachment to you.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Daughter of Charity \(^3\)

Turn overleaf

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\(^1\) The aspirant who is about to enter the convent
\(^2\) The husband of Rosa Canossa, Magdalene’s sister.
\(^3\) NB. The letter was written by G. Terragnoli and is full of mistakes. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
To spare me a letter, kindly convey my compliments to Marquis Casati. Tell him that Sterna, or I think it is, Sberna⁴, because my memory fails me, entrusts herself warmly to his charity. She has not been able to obtain anything, neither for herself, nor for her daughter, who, however, is in a safe place. Ask him also to kindly inquire how this matter is going on at Crema. It is always supported by Capradoni. If as they say in Venice, it will take a long time, they may get some food allowances for the mother and for the daughter, by turning to, I think, the Golden Report, as Sberna told me. I do not know how much she knows about it. I only know that she is very hungry. First of all I wish to know it myself, because I agreed with the said mother Sberna, that she will get for me a paper by proxy, regarding what is due to her daughter. I fear that if we do not do it in this way, everything will be finished up, and the girl will end up on a road. At the same time, as much as I can, I would like also to help her mother, who is in need of everything.

That young man who wishes to become a Capuchin, comes to me every moment to see if there is anything in writing for him. He would also go to be a priest, but he would like to know exactly whether the reply is yes or no. My health is good. Again I embrace you

Verona, St. Joseph’s, 4 March 1817

Your Magdalene

⁴ The Case of Sberna (Ep.I, lett.283).
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The Milanese countess is more and more desolate, both because her husband is still unwell and because of the death of Marquis Calcagnini, in Bologna. He is the husband of her sister-in-law Maria, who is now in Durini’s home in Milan, with her son. Magdalene tries to comfort her at this time as well. She assures her that she is far away from Milan because the affairs in Verona are always pending. She also begs her friend to forward her request to Count Mellerio, Great Chancellor of Italy at the Court of Vienna, as he should be going to the Austrian Capital within a few days. He should let them know the utility of the institute and ask the Court Assembly to send the Decree she is waiting for so as not to compel her to pay the rent for St. Joseph’s. In Milan, however, there are many problems to be solved: Bernardi’s health, that worries her more and more, and the settling in a new house, beyond the parish of Saint Stephen, against the wishes of the Parish Priest. On the other hand in Verona there are two other very serious problems: to find a Superior who would substitute Naudet, and a confessor who would substitute Fr. Gaspare Bertoni, who refuses to remain.

My dearest friend,

I was going to write to you, my dear friend, as I knew that you were downcast and afflicted because your husband continues to be unwell and because of the loss of your brother-in-law Calcagnini\(^1\), whose wife and son were in your home, when I received your much appreciated letter dated 5 instant. My dear Carlina, remember what you proposed for this current year. The Lord treats you as a strong soul as He lets you share in His cross. You say nothing to me, and this makes me think that you are indeed in great pain and you are trying to hide it from me. It seems to me that you should not do this, because you know how I love you. True, it is just because of this that you do so. But even though I feel your own afflictions, still I feel much more the desire for your own sanctification. Therefore, I would like to know in all sincerity, how you are faring spiritually and how your husband is keeping. Be certain that, wretched as I am, I will not fail to assist you with my prayers.

If you cannot write at length, do it briefly, but tell me something about yourself. Take care of yourself. I beg you to eat especially in the morning. If I were there I would make you eat something, so that you may serve the Lord longer. I would make you feel remorse if you do not try to keep yourself up.

Now, I come to answer your dear letter in which it seems that you suppose that I have forgotten Milan. I assure you in all sincerity that I am afraid that I am too concerned about that House. As for my Elena then, I cannot hide that, from the way she writes, I can understand the poor state of health she is in. I preach and continually write knowing well, from my experience during the years she was with me, that these troubles come because of her weak chest. I understand that if she goes on like this, some serious sickness is bound to come about. I would not like to lose her for Milan and for the Institute. I really feel worried and sad about her. On the other hand I did not want to write to you that I am really still harassed because of the business of the premises. Our Lady alone stands by me. I have not paid anything as yet. She is arranging matters in such a way that hopefully, nothing will ever have to be paid.

\(^1\) ERCOLE CALCAGNINI, Chamberlain of the Duke of Parma. He lost the feuds in 1797. In 1817 he died, hailed by all as a wise and honest man, a philanthropist. He had married Maria, the daughter of Count Giacomo Durini. They had two sons: Francesco (1789) and Tommaso Guido. Francesco was the Assistant to the Counsel of State of the Kingdom of Italy. When the Italian Kingdom was suppressed, he returned to Ferrara, that had been restored to Pope Pius VII. He was nominated Knight of the Order of Christ and Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great. He married Silvia, daughter of Marquis Antonio Maffei of Verona and Laura Canossa. (Cfr. Litta, *Famiglie celebri d’Italia*). (lett.34, n.5)
However, the last conclusions, which are the main ones, are still to be completed, and lately an immediate order of the emperor came from Vienna so that he may be informed about us. I do not know if this question has been asked by the Governor. But I was questioned by a letter that came from the Delegation in Venice. I repeat I cannot doubt even a moment about the mercy of Mary because She is assisting and defending us. But if it will take about two months as usual, to get a fresh reply, which I suppose will be decisive, as long as you do not see any danger for Elena’s health, I think it is best for me to remain here. Meanwhile I am trying to provide this House with a confessor and a Superior, because the one we had does not want to take care of us since I am here. You can see what a good chief I am! On the other hand, I cannot leave the House as it is now.

Now, concerning the house that you say would be suitable, but that the Parish priest feels sorry about because it is outside his Parish. As for me you know that I see your charity as well as his. Speaking to you with my sincerity, I also see that my coming would help us to come to a decision. But to make the necessary discernment, it seems to me that I would have to stop for a sufficient time, without going to and fro as I have done up to now. If I would come now, I would have to return almost immediately. I repeat, my dear Durini, I entrust Elena to your care as much as possible. Try to relieve her as much as you can. See that she has some days off, and some hours of quiet every day. Otherwise, I think we shall lose her. When I come, I will be able to stay, now that the weakness of my chest has passed. But I would not be able to bear even a fourth part of the daily work that Elena is doing, besides the duty of forming the companions, and taking care, at least by letter, of the other two Houses. I will be able to do very little. If the Lord keeps Elena in good health, when He wants me to come, with His help, I could in five or six months do in Milan what I could not do here in two years.

Therefore, I entrust myself to you, but tell me also how you are. A thought came to my mind, do with it as you think best. I hear that Count Mellerio is going to Vienna. I think, according to the circumstances we are in, that he would help the Institute very well by affirming the little good he is doing in Milan, and helping in what is essential, as we are dealing with the existence of the Institute. If you agree, talk about it to our friend Somaglia as you think best. You may hear also from the Parish Priest. I hear that some young girls would like to come. I am sure that the Lord will keep them faithful to their vocation if it is a true one.

Be assured that I say all this not because I do not care for Milan. Rather I hope that you will see that I care for it much more than you think. I think of so many possibilities about it that this makes me feel more and more worthy of being a native of Montebaldo. I write to you my difficulties starting from here, because through the mercy of the Lord and His Holy Mother, I do not feel oppressed. Yet I am surrounded by anxiety which however is sweetened as I see how the Lord deigns to make Himself served by the companions here and in Venice and, as you tell me, by those in Milan.

I entrust myself earnestly to your prayers. My regards to your family. I embrace you heartily as I declare my sincere affection for you. Greet all our dear friends for me. Cordial wishes to Mrs Checca and our good Serafina who told me, through Elena, that she remembers our agreement for Heaven.

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

8 April (1817), Saint Joseph’s

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2 The Confessor was Fr. Gaspare Bertoni
3 The Superior was Leopoldina Naudet
4 Count Giacomo Mellerio, benefactor of the House of Milan
5 Countess Maddalena Somaglia, sister of Count G. Mellerio
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene is not indifferent to the many requests to go to Milan, but the Superior of Verona and the Parish Priest of Saint Stephen agree that it is more opportune than she makes her trip after the conclusion of the matters in Verona, or as soon as their solution is at hand.

My dearest friend

If your Magdalene could be reduced to a grain of sand, you would find her inside this letter, because, my dear friend, for your sake and for all the others, I would be very happy to be able to make a trip and to see all of you again. But as you say well, it is necessary to love and carry out most of all what is most beautiful, that is, the will of God more than anything else. Therefore let us resign ourselves to have this happiness a little later, as soon as the affairs of Verona are over. You see, my dear, the parish Priest as well as the one who directs me feel and justly think that there is no need for me to come to Milan now. It would take time away that might delay the business here. As a consequence it will prolong the time for a stable setting up of things there. The companion I will take along is ready and I will leave her there. When I come there I will do as much as I can for Chechina whom I will take along on my return. Meanwhile, dear Carlina, let us both pray. If it is true that, as you say, I should make a quick visit, God will enlighten the one who directs me and I will be very happy to come, especially for you. Tell Elena to continue informing me about the news of your good mother-in-law. I am interested because I am really fond of her. I assure you that I will pray a lot for her. Forgive me, my dear friend. I am in a hurry. Many regards to your family and my Visconti, to the Canoness, to Somaglia. Goodbye. Heartily yours.

Saint Joseph’s, 17 May 1817

Magdalene daughter of Charity

Your very affectionate friend

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1 The Arcipriest Galvani, director of Maddalena di Canossa in Verona
2 Trioni Francesca, niece of the housemaid of Durini (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 5).
3 Countess Marianna Durini (Ep.I, lett. 118, n. 1).
4 Countess Maddalena Somaglia, sister of Count G. Mellerio
5 NB. The signature and address are in Magdalene’s handwriting.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene has ties of a sincere friendship with the Canoness Melzi and Luisa Visconti and does not want it broken because of an interpretation that is perhaps not too exact, of a recommendation she had been asked for in favour of a widow whose disordered and complex life has reduced her to misery. Her decisions do not agree with what Melzi would have liked. Melzi writes to her resentfully. Magdalene tries to clear everything with Durini so that she may help her to dissipate the clouds.

My dearest friend

Before going to the subject for which I am writing, my dear Carolina, I wish to ask you news of your mother-in-law\(^1\) whose good health I desire, if it pleases the Lord. Being able to speak freely with you, my dear friend and being certain not only of your concern for us but even of your prudence, I feel it necessary to speak of a matter which in reality is nothing. But the devil, being very reckless, could use it to disturb the union and harmony that has always existed between the dear Canoness and me. Know then, that our good friend Visconti had recommended to me through my Elena, a widow from Verona. She had asked me to try to trace her relatives. Elena told me nothing more in her letter. In another letter she mentioned her by calling her the dear Visconti’s Widow, adding that they were waiting anxiously for news of her arrival. In fact, she did arrive, if I am not mistaken, about 15 days ago.

This woman presented to me her recommendation letter. After reading it, I made her understand that I had been asked only to search for her relatives. At this she wept desperately adding that she knew she would not be helped by me, she would not have come to Verona. Then she said that she wished to confide something that she had not manifested to anyone except to her confessor. I replied that being a woman I could not hear the confessions of anyone. In short, she told me that she was really born in Vicenza and had married a man also from Vicenza. But as a young woman, she had met another man from Verona, whom she named, who had come to Vicenza because of some business. On returning home, she ran away from her husband, seeing that he did not want her anymore because she had taken refuge with her father. She made the mad resolution of going away with this other man from Verona. They came to Verona where, believing her to be his real wife his family had received her and she had two sons, baptized with his name. When his relatives came to know what had happened, they did not want her anymore in the house. Then the couple went to Brescia and to Milan where they lived as husband and wife before the eyes of everyone, until the man’s death. After this she went to serve in various houses successively, until lately she was in Bertoli’s house at St. Damiano\(^2\), from where she had to leave for just reasons.

After all this account, I felt very embarrassed, as you may well imagine, for I understood that of all places Verona was the city least convenient for her. I did not have the courage to leave her on the road, at least not until she was able to see a better way and until I had consulted with and asked the opinion of my friend Visconti who had recommended her; first of all, out of respect for the Lord, who I did not want offended because of me, then for my good friend, to whom as to you, I am so grateful for all she does for us. I then gave her money to pay for her journey. I gave her a bed and kept her a whole day in a room at St. Joseph’s in my Stella’s company. The following day I found her a lodging with a good widow. The family of that unhappy man is well-known to me. I also knew his Parish Priest who is now dead, as well as his father. This man was known to be wayward and has a very bad re-

\(^1\) Countess Marianna Durini (Ep.I, lett. 118, n. 1).

\(^2\) The street between Corso Venezia and Corso Monforte.
putation. Seeing all this, I thought it impossible to find a family here, or better still, an employer for this woman. I also felt that it was neither prudent nor advisable to employ her otherwise. Subsequently I learnt from her that the Countess Veri Melzi was trying to find her an employer and that her aim in returning to Milan was because she had to pay a debt of 40 lire to her hotel-keeper. This debt seemed to be the main reason for her departure from Milan. I felt that by helping her to pay this debt it was better to send her back. I was afraid I might displease my dear Visconti by sending this woman back, without first informing her of the real situation. I did not want to write all this to Elena so I only wrote that her relatives are dead, and that I feared I had to send her away.

I received a reply from Elena, containing a note from the good Canoness who asked me why I had done more good than I had been told to do. She said that this woman, being a native of Verona should earn her bread here, that she had given some money to Elena to be passed on to her, and having given her this money that the woman should be sent away as soon as possible. Elena did not want dear Visconti to know anything about this, since being so good, she could be pained at my having taken all this trouble. Even Fr. Pietro thought that it would be money thrown away to have her sent to Milan. He too felt that Elena should not say anything to our friend. I do not condemn the Canoness who will have her reasons. Only I cannot resolve to do what she tells me without the consent of my good Visconti who recommended the woman to me. Not to compromise my Elena, nor to displease my friend the Canoness, I refrained from writing to Visconti and instead thought of replying to the Canoness. I include this letter here, asking you to read it and assure our friend of my desire to serve her as she wishes. I also ask you with your usual prudence not to let the Canoness know that you have been informed. I request you to let me know her will, if the Canoness talks to you naturally about it and of her own accord. If the Canoness does not talk to you about it, then ignore it. You would be doing it only because of your attachment to me! Should she tell you her will, leave the carrying out of it to me, with the greatest caution and secrecy, without displeasing our friend the Canoness. Pardon me this trouble, dear Carolina, but knowing how much you too desire the perfect union and full agreement between the pious union and our miserable Institute, I make use even in this of your goodness. I await your reply.

After you have read the letter to the Canoness, give it to Elena to be handed over to her. The Canon continues to preach here. It seems that the Lord has been appeased after the prayers in common, for all the sicknesses have vanished and the climate has improved greatly. I present to you his greetings as well as those of the Dean Galvani. I am always filled with the desire of coming to embrace you and am doing my best to beg you to have prayers offered that the Lord give me a Superior so that I may remain with you in peace. Good-bye, dearest friend. My usual respects. Love and believe me to be truly yours. Assure the good Visconti that it was just a little inconvenience since the woman is in fact, very reasonable, content with everything, willing to work, in short, she is so quiet, as if she were not even present. Good bye!

Yours Magdalene

St. Joseph’s, 10 June, 1817

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3 Melzi Verri Vincenza from Milan, one of the friends of Durini (Ep.I, lett. 165, n. 7).
4 NB. The letter is full of mistakes but is faithful to the text. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
Durini is sorry for having troubled Magdalene by recommending the case of the widow, presented to her by the Canoness. Magdalene however, excuses her for everything and reassures her that there are no ill feelings not even with the Canoness.

My dear Carolina

I could not write to you immediately, my dear friend, due to a lot of occupations especially in these days, in which the Canon ¹ is preaching at St. Zeno², and we have the girls to instruct, etc. I wrote to our good Elena to tell you not to worry, as I understand from your dear letter that you are sad, because you always say that you do things badly. Well, you thought that by doing as you did, you were doing good. So be calm and do not think any more about this matter. Only in case you have someone to send to Verona, some women or girls, write first and let us seek for a place first, otherwise there will always be the risk that they be stranded on the road. I do not speak about you, my dear Carlina, but about our good friend the Canoness, because at times there are such cases that it is neither possible, nor convenient that they stay in their own country without causing scandals and sins. Forgive me, my dear, if I still speak to you about this woman. When I wrote to you my other letter, I wrote also to the Count Abbot Nuttoni, a missionary in Vicenza, in order to try to unite her again to her husband. As I had no time to copy it, I include his reply to me. You will see from it that, as our good friend says, it was not possible to send her not even to Vicenza.

Meanwhile, I am sending her to listen to the divine word in St. Zeno. In order to get the indulgence, she needs to make her confession again to the Canon. I will see what I can do for her, as less evil. As for you, be at peace. Only, as I told you already, I beg my dear friend the Canoness to write to me before sending anybody, as I have no heart to expose a woman like this to her destiny, although I am fully aware that the Canoness may have had very good reasons for doing so. Therefore, let us not speak anymore about this matter. Embrace the Canoness and dear Visconti for me. Certainly, I will always be a friend of all of you, and because our temperaments also are so similar, that it will always be so. I feel sorry to hear that you are inconvenienced again. Convey my regards to the excellent Fr. Pietro. Thank him for everything and recommend me much to his prayers. I am worried, my dear friend, about this new illness of my dear Elena. To tell you the truth, these frequent illnesses since she came to Milan, make me apprehensive.

The Lord is pleased that I should not move from here now. You speak to me of a visit, but I would like to be able to stop for sometime when I come to Milan. If it is only a visit, it would not be difficult to arrange for one. Enough, recommend me to Mary Most Holy and on my behalf, get Elena to take care of herself. I am very glad to hear that your dear mother-in-law³ has improved. You say that her condition was declared chronic. But you can already see that we will all be chronic if we live for eighty years. If you write to your sister, greet her for me. My usual regards and compliments also to our friend Somaglia. I embrace you heartily and declare myself forever.

St. Joseph’s, 2 July 1817

Your Magdalene

¹ Canon Pacetti, the first Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).
² The Church of St. Zeno.
³ Countess Marianna Durini (Ep.I, lett. 118, n. 1).
Daughter of Charity

VERONA

(The usual address follows)

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4 NB. Only the address and the signature are Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Countess Carolina is momentarily in Padua with her husband, her sister Paola and her brother-in-law, Count Taverna. She is lodging with them at Aquila d’Oro. Madgdalene conveys to her some news which, on the whole, is good, because even Bernardi, who has been taken care of in Verona and Recoaro, is getting better. She will go to Milan for the novena of Our Lady of Sorrows.

My dearest friend

I delayed sending you news, my dear Carolina, only because it was impossible for me to do it. Yet, I am glad to be able to give better news than what you might expect or imagine.

First of all I tell you that my Elena, who conveys to you her regards, is getting better day by day. For fifteen days I could do without a physician and, through my simple and refreshing remedies she was able to stand the medication of the waters. Before this, however, I had a consultation with the physician Zoppi¹, because our physician was sick. As for the cure I replaced the doctor and we concluded that there is no aneurysm² at all and that Elena has no organic disease, but that she is excessively weakened because of the hard work she has put in. We have concluded that she should take the waters of Recoaro³ with great care and that, as the cure goes on, she should regulate her work. Therefore, last Tuesday, she started the treatment of the waters and since then everything is going on very well. Her appetite and sleep are improving, and she is daily strengthened. So as soon as the medication is completed I hope to return her to you like last year, when I took her to Milan. It seems to me that you will be happy about this news, but not so happy since I cannot yet talk about her return, or about my trip.

Therefore, here is what I have to say about this matter. I inquired from the worthy Parish Priest and I came to know that Teresa⁴ is doing very well. He writes to me these words, saying that the Lord is leading them all and that there is no need for me to hurry up in bringing back Elena to Milan, or even that I come there myself, provided I bring her back in time for the novena of Our Lady of Sorrows⁵. He also tells me that the companions are happy about Teresa. The latter, in her last letter says that the number of girls is always increasing and that the Lord sends some people because of whom the Parish Priest and our friends, the Canoness and Visconti, are very busy. You understand me, it is about conversions taking place. The good Visconti is also taking care of the girls so that, my dear Durini, be calm and be assured that I am very concerned about Milan and that I have already resolved to come there myself with Elena. But I can stop only for ten or twelve days as I cannot leave this house without a head. I hope that in this way, you too will be happy, my dear friend, that is, your charity and concern for all of us of which I am and will be very grateful. Provided nothing else happens, I would like to leave for Milan by the middle of the coming month, so that there is enough time for Elena to complete her cure.

I hope that you, too, are in good health, and that the company of your dear sister to whom I beg you to convey my most cordial and distinguished regards, will make you feel

¹ Doctor Giovanni Battista Zoppi (Ep.I, lett. 125, n. 3)
² Dilatation of blood vessels, usually the arteries, which sometimes burst as a consequence.
³ Thermal waters of Recoaro (Vicenza), a tourist centre and for curative purposes in the Upper Valley of the river Agno (m. 445 s.m.), between the Lessini mountains. The waters contain iron and carbons.
⁴ Teresa Spasciani who substituted Elena Bernardi while she was temporarily at Recoaro for treatment.
⁵ The Feast is on 15 September
⁶ The Counts Durini were at Padua with the Counts Taverna. They were staying at a Hotel at Aquila d'oro.
even better. Embrace her too for me. Tell Mrs. Chicca that her Chechina is doing very well. She is happy and is keeping very good health. Greet her for me, as well as Mrs. Maria, also on behalf of Elena.

Monsignor Canon\(^7\) is in Venice. I think he arrived there on Monday. Before leaving, he told me to write to you that he wished to stop in Padua to see you. But as that was doubtful, he asked me to convey to you his compliments. Many regards to your dear husband, and to the dear Count, your brother-in-law. Goodbye, dearest friend. Recommend me to St. Anthony\(^8\). Love me and believe me to be, my dearest Carlina

St. Joseph’s, 22 August 1817

Your Magdalene\(^9\)
Daughter of Charity

\(^7\) Mons. Pacetti, the first Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).

\(^8\) The SAINT in whose honour the people of Padua have erected a magnificent Basilica. He was a Franciscan, a famous preacher and doctor of the Church. He is called St. Anthony of Padua where he died. But he was born at Lisbon (Portugal) around 1195, of a noble family. He had first entered the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. He then moved on to the monastery of the Holy Cross in Coimbra, where he studied theology and dialectics, becoming an expert in Sacred Scriptures. After the martyrdom of some Franciscans in Marocco, he entered the Order of the Friars Minor and asked to be sent out to preach in that very region. He had to return due to ill health and dedicated himself to a very active life in leading his confreres, in teaching and preaching. In doing so he travelled a lot in Italy and Southern France. When he fell seriously ill, he asked to be taken back to Padua, but died on the way at Arcella. He was canonized by Gregory IX in 1232, only 11 months after his death. (Cfr. Pratesi in Enciclopedia cattolica, Vol. 1\(^o\), pag. 1548 ss.)

\(^9\) NB. Only the address and signature are Magdalene’s.
NOTE.

In the progressive enumeration of the letters, the copy of a typed letter was inserted. This replaced an authentic letter which was lost, as the same typed letter reported at the bottom. However, when the transcription took place, the authentic letter was found. The number of this letter is 337 and bears the date 1 October 1823, while the typed letter was dated 1 November 1817 and misinterpreted the contents with inaccurate interpretations. However, since the numbering of the letters and the references of the explanatory notes were by now completed, it was felt opportune not to alter the progressive enumeration, but to replace the missing letter with the present clarification.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini returned to Milan and Magdalene of Canossa to Verona. The latter promises to tell her a lot of things soon. For the moment, she limits herself to tell her to ask Marquis Casati to intervene again in the case of Valenti.

My dearest friend

I was unable to serve you through the last ordinary mail, as I had not yet obtained the paper you wished for. It arrived only yesterday. To make the parcel smaller, you will find it in the previous half sheet. I am well and hope to embrace you soon. I do not say much, because I will tell you everything orally which the shortness of time prevents me from telling you in writing. Not only to save a letter, but also because I do not dare to inconvenience our dear Marquis Casati, I beg you to convey my compliments to him. Please tell him that, having talked several times to Lady Marianna Valenti, during this last stay of mine in Milan, now as a consequence of these talks with her, I beg him to kindly solicit the drawing up of the will by the same. If it is possible, ask him to arrange with her that although Anthony, her son is also a beneficiary, he may not be nominated as administrator of the faculty.

I embrace you wholeheartedly. Marquis Casati will understand what I want to say even though I lack the time to explain. Goodbye, my dear. I want to have the pleasure of embracing you. Goodbye. Entrust me again and again to the Lord.

Dearest friend

St. Joseph’s, Verona 26 November 1817

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

1 The grandmother of the two Valenti girls.
2 The father of the two Valenti girls (Ep.I, lett. 102, n. 5).
3 NB. This letter was written by Teresa Spasciani. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene is in Verona. Durini instead is in Venice, a guest with her husband, of the Counts Taverna. When Carolina passed through Verona, the Marchioness could not visit her because she was feeling feverish. Now Magdalene is better, but she is still facing a lot of difficulty in resolving the problem in Venice. The authorities there do not want to ratify the gift that the emperor had granted to her orally.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

Seeing, my dear Carlina, that both of us, at every moment, are trying to make a trip and never seem to move, I have written to our dear Mr. Alessandri to go and visit you for me. Now that I hear that you have settled down, I come with this letter of mine to greet you and to tell you that I have a paper given by the Canon\textsuperscript{1} to be handed over to you when we meet one another. I do not know if you have given him any errand or if he is just writing to you out of his kindness. Cardinal Fontana\textsuperscript{2} conveys to you his greetings. He is eagerly waiting to see Count Costanzo, your brother-in-law, when you decide to go to greet him. However, if you think that it is better not to tell him, do what you think best.

When you were in Verona, to tell you the truth, I felt quite mortified for not being able to come and embrace you. I did not want to tell you then, because, knowing your friendship, I feared I would upset you, for no reason. On that day I had a little fever. I could stand on my feet, but had no strength to walk along the road. Now I feel better, because on the last day of carnival I had a blood letting, so as not to have to fast during Lent. As I write I am sitting up and truly feel well. I had a cough and greatly needed to make this usual medication, that helps me greatly.

I am giving you good news regarding Milan, that is, that they work a great deal for the sake of God’s mercy. You might already know that we are facing a big storm on account of the gift His Majesty\textsuperscript{3} granted to me. I felt so tired with such a lot of writing, that when everything will be over, to pay my damages for doing the right things, other two places are not enough. I think that these two blood lettings too are due to all the work they make me do. Let’s have patience, provided they give me the due compensations. I know that, by and by, you are getting to know the companions in St. Lucy’s\textsuperscript{4} and I thank you for that. I kindly ask you to take care also of my dear Francesca Maria\textsuperscript{5}. Encourage her and make her happy. But for this you need the air of Montebaldo. I am not going to talk about my coming to Venice, since the Lord wishes me to live as a pilgrim, that is, always uncertain about where I stay and where I go.

At the moment, I do not see the possibility of coming so soon, as I still need to regain my strength. I am getting old. After each blood letting, I feel the need to rest, more than when I was younger.

I beg you to convey my special and cordial compliments to your sister. My regards to your husband and brother-in-law. Tell Mrs. Checca, whom I greet, as well as Mrs. Maria, that our Checchina is well and is doing very well in the school. I embrace you heartily. I entrust myself a great deal to your prayers. Goodbye, love me and believe me

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\textsuperscript{1} Canon Pacetti, the first Superior of the Institute (Ep.I, lett. 173, n. 1).
\textsuperscript{2} Cardinal Francesco Fontana, of the Barnabite Congregation (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1).
\textsuperscript{3} The gift of the Monasteries of St. Joseph at Verona and St. Lucy at Venice. The State Property Office is putting a lot of obstacles in approving these.
\textsuperscript{4} Visit to the monastery of St. Lucy.
\textsuperscript{5} Francesca Maria Grezzi, Superior of the House of Venice.
Your dearest friend

Verona St. Joseph’s, 5 February 1818

PS. Know that I have stolen, and you not only have to pardon me for the theft, but also for repeating the theft I have committed. When I was in Venice last year, I was commissioned by Lady Teresa Zaponi⁶ to ask Fr. Giulian Cottulo for some pictures of Our Lady of Sorrows for her. He gave them to me so that I might give them to her. Here, everybody fell in love with those pictures. As a matter of fact, Lady Teresa did not get any of them. I gave some away to a few people, and I still have some of them with me. But I would like to keep them. Therefore, I beg you to ask him on my behalf, if he allows me to keep them, to donate to me those I have given away and to send others for Lady Teresa, all for the sake of Our Lady.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Daughter of Charity⁷

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⁶ A friend in Venice.
⁷ NB. Letter written by Teresa Spasciani. The signature and the postscript are in Magdalene’s handwriting.
From Verona, Magdalene, who is forty-four years old, attributes to her «old age» the slow recovery of her body, deprived of strength, so that, even if she sees the need for it, she cannot reach the friend in Venice, nor solve the problem of the house of St. Lucy. By now, she is convinced that, if the Holy Virgin does not intervene, she may have to give up the work in Venice, because, despite the Emperor’s donation, the Government is laying down conditions that are too heavy to bear and are unacceptable. Nevertheless, she does not feel defeated. Meanwhile, she is happy about the activities in Milan.

V.G. M. My dearest friend

You see how beautiful spirits meet each other. We have met each other in writing. So when I received your letter, you received mine. You have dealt excellently with the esteemed Director of the Property Office. I, too, know that he is a gentleman and is ready to help us as much as he can. However, I was very surprised by the fact that after two very open declarations made to our Royal Delegation in Verona, by order of the General Government of Venice they have presented to me the sovereign resolution dated 16 October, and added to it conditions that are impossible for me to accept, for Verona and for Venice. Regarding the latter, they declared to our Delegate that it was I who had had recourse to the Emperor. So they say that I must declare when the gift was granted. So also, if the conditions cannot be modified as I have asked, I will be forced to renounce the gift. In spite of these answers we should continue to work as if I had accepted their conditions.

I write to you, my dear friend, to tell you not to worry about these things. They are trifles. But I really do not yet feel well enough to make a trip. Be calm, as I am already on my feet. If I were twenty years younger, I would be back to health by now. But being old, my strength has not yet returned and the cough has not ceased completely. I am not yet able to go out and my brother does not want to hear me even talk about moving out now. On Sunday I wrote to Mr. Alessandri begging him to send me a copy of the papers he had sent to St. Lucy’s. Meanwhile I could answer them from here. However, I do not give up the intention of coming to Venice. Rather, believe me, my heart is divided between this house and that. I rather conclude that when there is need, I will not pay much attention to my health, also because the Lord has always assisted me and I am very sure that, in His mercy, He will do it this time too. Only I would like to see if I can handle the matter regarding Venice in spite of being here, until I will be able to conclude it definitively. You see, my dear friend, unless His Majesty or the Government reduces the conditions attached to the sovereign gift, it will be necessary for me to renounce the gift itself. Therefore, being unable because of my health, the way things are going, and a useless waste of time, I would like to wait for the Emperor’s answer, so as to make one trip only. If the answer is favourable, I will take along with me my Teresa and leave her there to help Francesca Maria, and perhaps some others. I would stop there for a few months to settle everything, so that then I may think of the other houses in peace. If the case is unfavourable, I will come to renounce what is being denied to me, while they make a show that they want to give it to me.

1 Count Giacomo Antonio Pensa
2 Headquarters of the Veneto Region.
3 Francis I
4 One of the two Procurators of Venice (Ep.I, lett. 257, n. 1).
5 Teresa Spasciani (Lett. 279, n. 9)
6 Ghezzi Francesca Maria, Superior at Venice (Ep.I, lett. 306, n. 3).
As for my health, according to my opinion, I will be able to come in eight days’ time. But if necessity does not require it, I wait for the other reasons I have told you about.

Meanwhile, recommend me to the Lord as I really need it. Do not think, my dear Carlina, that because of what they do to me, I lose my desire to laugh; it is already a great fortune to be from the country of Montebaldo.

I cannot hide from you that the trust my companions have in Mary confirms me in my hope that She will ensure a happy ending, though I do not know what that will be. Pray and have others to pray for us to this dear Mother of ours.

Convey my compliments to your sister, your husband, and your brother-in-law. I give you good news about the house in Milan. This carnival they were very busy. Before they came to the last few evenings, Elena wrote to me that on one feast day, they had a hundred and seventy girls, and on another evening, ninety girls. They expect an even greater number by the end of carnival. All the other works too are abundantly blessed by the Lord. To show you how rich I am, I always write to you with the help of two secretaries. The second one and also the first one are well known to you. They express to you their greetings. Goodbye, dear Carolina. Write to me, love me and believe me cordially, as I thank you for everything and declare myself

Your dear friend

St. Joseph’s, 10 February 1818

PS. The writer entrusts herself warmly to your prayers. Due to my many occupations it is impossible for me to write again today to Mr. Alessandri. Kindly call for him or beg the good Mr. Giuseppe, whom I greet together with Mrs. Maria and Mrs. Checcha, to tell Mr. Alessandri, on my behalf, to send me, through the current mail, the exact copy of the signed papers sent to me by the Government, so that I may reply or see what to do about them. As I told you, as soon as I have recovered a little, if it is necessary, I will come.

Your very devoted and very affectionate friend
Magdalene Daughter of Charity

St. Joseph’s, 10 February 1818

7 Teresa Spasciani and Cristina Pilotti.
8 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s. The letter is written by two secretaries: Teresa Spasciani and Cristina Pilotti.
Metilde Giarola, one of the first companions of Magdalene, who had joined her in Verona, is at the point of death, and for no reason will Magdalene leave her before seeing an improvement, or the end. Therefore, even if in Venice her presence is urgent, she will not leave now. Durini should replace her, presenting the situation to the ecclesiastical Councillor Farina, even though he is not very favourable to the Institute. The letter ends with the announcement of a great improvement in the sick person.

V.M.G. My dearest friend

Being in a hurry, I write only a few lines, my dear Carlina, although through the Sunday ordinary mail, I have written to the good Mr. Alessandrī, from whom I received a letter, soon after I had posted mine. In that letter he told me, also on your behalf, that my going to Venice was necessary. In truth, I would have made my decision about coming, immediately after I received his reply, leaving to God the care of my health. But it pleases the Lord to visit me with a still bigger cross, and this is the illness of one of my first companions. She has received the Holy Viaticum scarcely half an hour ago. You will understand that I have no heart to leave her for any reason, much more so because, only yesterday she said that she was so happy that I had not left for Venice, so that I could assist her in the hour of her death.

Perhaps the Lord will not allow this. But I cannot decide on anything until I see the outcome of her sickness. Up to now only her chest is affected. The illness, however, is very serious. It is better, therefore, that I leave all the affairs doubly in God’s hand, because they are always His affairs, and He does everything always. So He will do even the tiny part that it seemed He wanted me to do.

I entrust myself to your friendship for what you can do for me, also to help the Councillor Farina to understand my situation. I beg you to assist me a great deal with your prayer, and also pray for my dear companion. Goodbye, my respectful compliments to your sister, your husband and your brother-in-law. I embrace you cordially and I declare myself forever

Your dear friend

Verona St. Joseph’s, 16 February 1818

Today is the 17th, the day on which the mail leaves. I am happy to tell you of the notable improvement of my companion. But since the diseases of the chest are so deceiving, we cannot be fully sure of anything. Meanwhile however, things seem to be going on well.

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

VERONA

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1 One of the two Procurators of Magdalene in Venice (Ep.I, lett. 257, n. 1).
2 NB. The letter is written by Teresa Spasciani, and signed by Magdalene of Canossa.
The Counts Durini are still in Venice to help their brother-in-law to settle his affairs. Magdalene is sorry not to be able to meet her friend. She is not well, but assures Durini that it is nothing to worry about. In Milan there are a lot of aspirants to religious life, even though someone is dissuading them, because the Institute does not have a stable dwelling yet.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

I was just reflecting, my dearest Carolina, on how the immense charity of the good Lord continues to deprive me ever more of the opportunity to live with the persons who interest me most. When I was in Milan you saw that, for one motive or another, you were always forced to be far away from me. Now that you are stopping in Venice for a while, I am forced to stay here.

We shall stay together in paradise, where, however, it seems to me that neither you nor I are quite in the disposition to go just now. You might, perhaps, have heard from the good Mr. Alessandri that I had decided to leave for Venice last Tuesday. But my cough forced me instead, to be in bed. They made me two more blood lettings. I am better now. Two days ago I got up, but I feel very weak. I cannot even think of moving from here, because you know that when the cough comes to visit me, it does not leave me in a hurry. However, do not worry. I sincerely assure you that these are my usual ailments, that are not worth a cent. I have no fever. In short, I will recover soon and within a short time I will be quite fit again. Meanwhile, I beg you, although I already know that it is superfluous to say so, to convey, if you think so, my regards to the Councillor Farina. Tell him everything I should tell him and would have told him if I had come, recommending our affairs at these moments to him.

I had started writing another letter to you, but I could not end it, since I was in bed. In that letter I said how your dear husband arrived here safely. He was so kind as to send me his servant Giovannino to see if I wanted anything from Milan, and to give me news about you. I heard from Giovannino with consolation about your sister. But I am sorry that I will not see her any longer when I come to Venice, because of the reasons for your long stay there.

I sent recommendations to your husband to take care of himself. My impertinence came to the point to make him promise to pray a lot if he does not want his famous horses to die. You may imagine how much he must have laughed. Before his coming I wrote to you two letters, the last of which to answer your dear letter. Giovannino made me think that you have not received them because I might have mistaken the address. This time I will address it as he has shown me. I heard with great sorrow about the illness of Mrs. Checca. I hope that by now she has recovered. Lots of wishes to your dear sister and to the Count, your brother-in-law.

Greet Mrs. Checca, Mrs. Maria and her husband too. Our affairs in Milan are going on very well, thanks to the Lord. The two older Spinelli sisters are asking to join us. I accepted Fluvia for here, and Laura for Milan, but now the Provost writes to me, that they have to get over some difficulties in their family. There are two other persons proposed by Fr. Moltini of the Holy Sepulchre, but “Homo sine pecunia immago mortis”. The Lord is already opening a way for them.

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1 One of the two Procurators of Magdalene in Venice (Ep.I, lett. 257, n. 1).
2 The Ecclesiastical Councillor of the Government at Venice (Ep.I, lett. 286, n. 8).
3 Count Carlo Durini.
4 Read ‘Fulvia’.
How much time they make me waste in writing, thinking, travelling and also hoping on. However, if it is the Lord's pleasure that we may put an end to the Government's procedure for those blessed premises which already belong to my Madonna, they would be doing the right thing to leave them to us. I sort of guess from the letter of the Provost, who is very prudent indeed, that, to people who do not know how things stand, it appears to be an obstacle to direct girls who want to join an Institute with premises that are not yet fully established. Not even this should worry you, because Our Lady herself will provide.

If you go to St. Lucy’s, assure them that my illness is nothing, and that I am already getting up. Recommend us much to our Blessed Lady. Teresa, my secretary, conveys to you her regards. I embrace you heartily and declare my sincere friendship,

my dearest friend

Verona, St. Joseph’s, 5 March 1818

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

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5 NB. Letter written by Teresa Spasciani, and signed by Magdalene of Canossa.
The Marchioness is about to meet Count Somaglia who can help her to solve the problem of St. Lucy. Since, however, the lawyer Giuseppe Alessandri, her attorney, has already been contacted, she begs Durini to speak prudently about it, so as to show that the intervention of the Count is a coincidence. There are already many enemies and they are always ready to strike. Therefore it is better not to lose the friends we have.

Do not be upset, my dear friend, when you cannot answer me. I was sorry only because I was not sure whether you had received my letters or not. Therefore, I continue to tell you the good news of my health, although I have not recovered fully. The cough is diminishing day by day, and my strength is coming back, but very slowly. Be at peace. I am taking good care of myself.

The news of St. Lucy’s which you gave me, consoled me a lot. When you visit (the sisters) assure them that it is my intention to come to Venice as soon as possible. When you leave, I beg you to inform me, with just a line, as I absolutely wish to see you when you pass by. I have to confide to you something for which I need your assistance. In my recent anxiety regarding the two premises, I wrote several times to our friend Somaglia. I also sent her the respective papers, the proposals, as well as the answers, so that she might show them to her brother. He was also working for the Provost, and you know his concern for us. He replied that I should continue to take my time, and that when he returned to his destination, he would do as much as possible. The lady also added that I should prepare all the papers as I am doing, so that she might hand them to him as he passes by, because the good Giovannina and lady Antonietta want to come to see me.

Elena wrote to me that his departure is fixed either for tomorrow or Tuesday. He comes to Venice on a flying visit, without his daughter. Here I will do as much as I can, and I am consoled by the fact that when I will speak to him, it will be Wednesday, the feast of Mary Most Holy, who does everything.

However, I will not be able to tell him everything regarding Venice. Therefore, I shall write in this last ordinary mail to Mr. Joseph Alessandri, to whom I do not mention the appointment made with Somaglia, about the papers I am preparing, nor the reason for preparing them. Let him only think that I know this gentleman, that I engaged him for us, and similar things, that perhaps I will see him; that I wrote to him to come to visit you when he passes by, so that you may arrange that he meets him and tells him how our matters in Venice are. Say that because I cannot know everything in detail, and because the circumstances are always changing, and because Francesca Maria is ill and the good Mr. Alessandri busy, he writes to me often. But it is impossible for him to write everything.

You see that it is necessary to speak to him without attracting too much notice, because our enemies are not asleep. Well, it is not difficult to deal with people. We are allowed to approach them whenever it is necessary. If he stops in Venice, he will come to see you. Do the best you can. If you think of asking him for a word of recommendation, you may do so.

1 Maddalena Somaglia, sister of Count G. Mellerio (Ep.I, lett. 279, 11).
2 Count Giacomo Mellerio, benefactor of the Institute in Milan
3 The daughter of Count Mellerio.
4 One of the two procurators of Magdalene in Venice.(Ep.I, lett. 257, n.1).
5 Superior of the House of Venice.
Not to miss the mail, I end this letter, begging you to extend my regards to your sister and
your brother-in-law, and to your husband, if he has come home. Full of attachment, I embrace
you and I declare myself, dearest friend,

Verona St. Joseph’s, March 1818

Your friend
Magdalene,⁶
Daughter of Charity

⁶ NB. Letter written by Teresa Spasciani and signed by Magdalene.
From Verona, Magdalene informs Durini that she had been to Milan on a flying visit, for reasons that she will explain when she meets her in person. She is serene but does not want her Milanese friend who is at Venice at the moment, to inform her Sisters about this.

My dearest friend,

On Wednesday I returned from Milan. If you have not told my Companions at Saint Lucy’s’s about this brief trip, do not say anything about it to them, because, as you can imagine, I made it solely out of necessity. I will tell you everything. Be calm, there are no troubles. Rather I hope that you will be very happy about my Companions. I embrace you heartily, I am waiting for you and I will tell you all the rest orally. Goodbye. Pray for me

Yours, my dearest friend

Verona, St. Joseph’s 10 April 1818

Magdalene¹
Daughter of Charity

¹ NB. The letter is written by Teresa Spasciani. The signature and address are in Magdalene’s handwriting.
Mr. Joseph Alessandri, «The king of gentlemen», as the Marchioness calls him, is about to go to Milan, to which city Durini too has returned. He will inform her about how the affairs of the Institute are going on.

V.G.M. My very dear friend

Because of many occupations, I could not do anything about the papers you have sent to me to Verona, but I hope I can help you here through the gentlemen Cavanis¹. I have seen your sister. Her health is perfect, and she is very peaceful, in my opinion because she is here, knowing that here her affairs are going on well. Mr. Joseph Alessandri² will inform you about our affairs regarding the Institute. I wish that this king of gentlemen be introduced to our dear Visconti. Extend my greetings to your husband and my cordial compliments to our friends. I entrust myself to your prayers. Teresa conveys to you her greetings. Love me, and believe me forever

Venice, Saint Lucy’s, 15 June 1818

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene Daughter of Charity³

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¹ The two brothers Marcantonio and Antonangelo
² One of the two Procurators of Magdalene at Venice.
³ NB. Written by Teresa Spasciani and signed by Magdalene
It is impossible to answer positively to the requests of Durini and the members of the community in Milan. In fact, they ask for new helpers but Magdalene, who has no Sisters available and has to think about the three houses now functioning full time, answers that they should work with prudence, do as much as they can and wait for God’s time, much more so because Elena Bernardi begins to experience another physical exhaustion. In the meantime, another problem arises that can jeopardize the survival of the work of Magdalene. The imperial Decree of 17 May 1818 ordered the restoration of the really useful religious corporations and the evacuation of all the confiscated places, that were not already sold. Countess Taverna however, had managed to get the information that the institute of Saint Lucy’s was enlisted by the Decree as one that is useful to humanity, and therefore Magdalene can continue with her plan peacefully.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

Although from Mr. Joseph Alessandri you might have already received in detail, the news that, out of goodness you asked me, nevertheless, having to reply to two of your letters, I am happy to write to you. My dear Carolina, you are afraid to worry me, but be at peace. You are not doing it for this, since you can imagine how much affection I have for my companions and what concern I feel for all our houses. But when it is about something really impossible, I do not worry, because it is useless to do so. My dear friend, God does not give me more vocations to increase the number in our houses. All the three houses need help and all three are asking for reinforcement. I can only tell them to ask the Lord for it for the hearts of all creatures are in His hands. Meanwhile, it is better that you do not take up burdens you cannot shoulder. Let us work according to the strength which Divine Providence gives us; and work with prudence without rendering ourselves incapacitated, due to too many occupations and fatigue, so that we may continue to do the little we can embrace.

In this ordinary post I am also writing to Elena as well as to Mincola, and I tell them the same things. I warmly beg you to keep Mincola and Angiola calm, helping them to see that now is the time to do what we can, and that in no House that we have started can we see the Institute established, until God gives us the personnel, and smoothen out the difficult circumstances. Well, make them understand that principles are principles. Let them be quiet and wait for God’s time.

You have been here, my dear Carlina, and you know the state of this House well, and how much it also needs subjects. Therefore, we cannot take away any one from here. Indeed, I would give them some, if I had them. In Verona I have only novices, and the three most prepared ones are also necessary for that house, which, up to now has no superior, and has the Novitiate of our little Institute. You know that Angela and Matilde, because of their age and health, cannot be moved. I am always moving around, but I did not yet get the miracle of bi-location from St. Anthony. Pray to him and ask him for this, because, if I were able, I wish to be in all our houses at the same time.

I left this letter up to this point in order to go to see your sister again. I found her very well and in good humour. I sincerely assure you that I find her very much more at peace. She recognizes the grace of the Lord with regard to the matter of Besana. In short I was very

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1 Two companions of the community of Milan who wanted help to increase the work there.
2 Angela Simeoni and Matilde Giarola
3 A trader dealing with Count Taverna, the brother-in-law of Durini. (Ep.I, lett. 178, n. 3)
happy about it and you, too, thank the Lord, because you have reason to do so. Continue to pray that she may unite herself ever more only to God.

I wrote to you so many things about my tranquillity and after returning home I received a letter from our worthy Provost, that tempted me to get anxious myself. He writes to me about a new illness of Elena, and I understand that it is not a small one as she needs to come to take the waters in Verona, and consequently the necessity that I come to Milan.

I do not know what to do, what decision to take. A Decree has arrived here, of which I have been informed this morning by your sister who, with goodness and friendship as usual, inquired also about us.

This Decree demands the re-establishment of the Religious Orders and commands the Ecclesiastical Superiors to choose those more useful to humanity. It commands also that all the vacant premises which have not been sold, be made available for this purpose. Your sister asked if, because of it, they intended to take away from me the Monastery of St. Lucy. They said no, but rather that we were contemplated in the Decree. To tell you the truth, it seems to me that, for the good of the whole Institute, this is not the right time to leave Venice. But my heart is divided and I do not know what to decide.

At once I asked to begin a novena to Saint Lucy’s, and we shall pray to our Blessed Lady too. I beg of you to assist me with your own prayer by praying yourself and by asking others to pray to her. I will write to you later on what decision I will take. These noble Ladies were also thinking of making the Spiritual Exercises. Well, I hope in Mary Most Holy and I cannot tell you anything else, but I recommend to you our companions and I beg you to pray. I thank you cordially for everything and I embrace you. Teresa conveys to you her greetings. I assure you of my most constant affection and ask you to convey my usual compliments.

Yours, dearest friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s, 26 June 1818

Your Canossa
Daughter of Charity

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4 DECREES OF SPALATRO (17 May 1818) in force of which many of the religious Orders and Corporations suppressed by Napoleon were reinstated.
Another deeply sorrowful mourning in the houses of the Trotti sisters: the death of Count Costanzo Taverna. Magdalene writes to Durini that she is assisting the widow with great concern and understanding, so necessary in similar circumstances. Countess Paola is going through her mourning with full acceptance of the Divine Will, therefore, Carolina should certainly undertake her winter trip, of a few months, to Naples and, on the way back, to Rome.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

I have not written to you up to now, my dear friend, but now I am doing it, being afraid that you are anxious, and that the relief that your trip would have given you is embittered in the midst of so many new things, and also because of your nature. Even your sister wishes that I write to you, to give you news of her, so that you may not be worried about her. To tell you everything in detail, after the Lord called her husband through a holy death, to Himself, the following day she came to Venice. I came to know about it the same evening. The following morning I went to her, where I stayed with her until evening, and I had lunch with her. Today I did the same and I will do so tomorrow as well. I assure you that the Lord gives her an admirable calm, although she deeply feels the loss. I assure you as well, that she looks at the event from the true perspective, that is from the hands of God, and every action of hers, related to this, shows that she has really an upright, generous and cordial character. Her health is good. The first night she slept little, as is natural, but she passed last night well, and I hope that she will pull herself up more and more. I do not speak about the Will of your brother-in-law as I am not informed about it, much more so because neither your sister, nor you, nor I are interested in that, knowing that she will always continue to be a great lady.

What consoled me most of all are the particular mercies showered by the Lord on the deceased, during his illness; his resignation, patience and presence of mind. The good Frigerio family were very concerned that he should have the assistance of the Church up to the last moment. I mention Frigerio, because, in these last moments, they tried to hide from your sister whatever they could. You already know the rest, and you should believe that she did everything that was needed to keep him up spiritually and temporally. But God wanted him for Himself.

He always invoked my Madonna. The Filippino Priest Fr.Giovanni Maria who was his confessor slept in his house. When he died, the priest said that he has gone to Heaven.

As for me, although I hope for this, I am of the opinion that we keep on praying for him, because, my dear Carolina, Heaven is such a great thing. Now I have an expectation regarding your friendship and it is that I want you to be at peace about your sister. I could not help her as long as she was in Padua, but now that she is here, be assured that I will do as much as I can.

You see that I also tried to stay for lunch with her. I do not call it an effort because I have no inclination to be with your sister, but I say it with regard to my Vocation and my duties. Therefore I want to say it, pointing out to you this little detail, that, in these circumstances I think with great peace of mind, that I differ from my usual system so as to serve your sister, who treats me with an openness similar to the goodness with which you treat

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1 The Countess Paola Trotti Taverna, sister of Carolina
2 The deceased Count Costanzo Taverna, brother in law of Carolina
3 Francesco Frigerio, procurator of Count Taverna.
me; and also so that you too may be at peace. I would almost dare to say, as if you were here. And really if you do not do it, it means that you do not trust your friend.

With regard to what your sister will decide about herself, for the future, no one knows about it, and I keep telling her that she should not think about it now, but that she should only care to be perfectly calm. I feared that you would shorten your trip on account of this. I promised her to write to you about it, therefore be calm about everything, and take your rest. My compliments to the excellent Count and many greetings to dear Mrs. Checca. Give her good news about our Checchina in everything.

Elena writes that Rachelina is a real angel, happy like the others beyond measure.

Now I add good news about my own health, and also about our affairs which, however, are not finished yet, because the final answer from Vienna has not yet come. Well Mary Most Holy will do things in such a way that everything will end beautifully.

What I beg of you so much is to ask for prayers from as many good souls as you can find; for instance Monsignor Menocchio, Bishop of Macerata, to whom I beg you to convey my regards, and also to the very eminent Fontana, Father Camillo del Buono, the Superior or rather the Abbess of Ischia, in short those good people whom you know. Goodbye, my dear Carolina. Have a happy trip to Naples. Keep far away from the Vesuvius. Love me, and believe me cordially

Yours, dear friend

Venice, Saint Lucy’s, 7 January 1819.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa Daughter of Charity

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4 The niece of Checca.
5 A novice who had just entered the Institute.
6 MENOCCHI, O BARTOLOMEO (Venerabile), an Augustinian Priest, born at Carmagnola in 1741. He died in Rome in 1823. He taught Philosophy in his Order. Later he dedicated himself to preaching, especially in Piceno. He edified everybody with the example of his sanctity, often obtaining miraculous cures. He was Auxiliary Bishop of Reggio in 1796. In 1800 Pius VII called him to Rome as confessor and in charge of the sacristy. The Cause for his beatification was introduced in 1881 (Cfr. Perini in "Bibl. Augustiniana" da "Diz. ecclesiastico II" pag. 938, c. 2a).
7 Cardinal Francesco Fontana, Barnabite (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1.)
8 Fr. CAMILLO DEL BUONO. An Oratorian Priest who was allowed to be with Pope PIUS VII during his imprisonment in Savona.
9 SUPERIOR and, ABBESS of ISCHIA. The Superior of the Monastery of the Regular Tertiaries in Ischia, which was a comune of the Roman territory and a district of Viterbo.
10 NB. Written by Teresa Spasciani, and signed by Magdalene.
Magdalene’s letter reaches Durini at Naples, where she is staying, after leaving Rome on the 10th or 11th of January. She brings good news about the widow Countess Taverna and assures her that everything is going on well in Venice.

My dearest friend

Perhaps I am giving you trouble and boredom, my dear Carlina, having written to you even last week. But since your sister heard that you would be leaving Rome either on the 10th or 11th and consequently fearing that you have not received the letter I wrote to you, I am writing to you even today, to Naples, always fearing, forgive my sincerity, that you may be anxious about your sister and may spoil that little relief you can have on your trip. Since I know that you find it difficult to write, it does not matter if you do not reply. It is enough for me to know from your sister that you have received my letters, that you are well, and that you remember me. Even yesterday I had lunch with your sister. I sincerely assure you that she is in very good health, and, as much as circumstances allow her, she is really peaceful. She has started meeting the people she knows more closely, that is the Filippini Fathers, Castiglioni, Saccardo, Novello, Bonacina. There is also Count Vitali¹, her nephew who keeps her good company.

Yesterday Mr. Brioso came from Milan, whom your sister too wished to meet, and the good Frigerio², in order to settle their business. For this reason I remained with her for lunch, because the Countess felt a bit sad to know that he was here for this matter. But then everything went on very well, and she behaved very well. Then she told me, that even this is done peacefully. Be calm about everything and do not worry yourself for no reason at all. Mr. Joseph³ is not keeping too well but it is just a bit of constipation due to tiredness and the season. I think that today he will get up. Maria, although she is very busy like her husband, is very well, so too Rosina⁴ and all the others. I repeat what I told you in my previous letter. Be at peace as if you were present here, and do not doubt. I will not omit to go there as much as I can, and to send someone or to return to her, at every sign that shows that she is in need of something.

Goodbye, my dearest friend. Elena writes to me that your Rachelina has an outstanding spirit of prayer. Cecchina, too, is well and behaves admirably.

I recommend you to be very cautious when you visit Naples. Hold on to Checca, as I know that the people of Naples walk in a hurry, like those of Verona. Perhaps, since you like our ways, you might also like to stay in Naples.

Kindly convey my compliments to the Count. Many greetings to lady Checca. Recommend me to Mary Most Holy. I embrace you heartily, and I am and will always be.

Yours, my dearest friend

Venice Saint Lucy’s, 16 January 1819

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene Canossa ⁵

¹ Count VITALI GAETANO, married Rosa Pozzati in 1799. They had a son, Michele Mauro in 1808. They were of the nobility from Comacchio.
² The procurator of the Tavernas
³ Joseph, husband of Maria.
⁴ The housemaid Rosina, another of the servants.
⁵ NB. The letter is written by Teresa Spasciani, and signed by Magdalene.
Daughter of Charity
Durini, her husband and her entourage, among which there is also Checca, the maid, have returned to Rome. Magdalene reassures her that her sister Paola is recovering after the hard blow. However, she also needs to ask Durini for a big favour. She should inform Cardinal Fontana about her meeting in Venice with the Emperor Francis I, so that he may speak to the Supreme Pontiff about it. The Sovereign had told her that, just three days before he had signed her request, had admired her “plan” and declared that, from the part of the government, everything was settled. Then he had congratulated her because the work was also flourishing in Milan. At this point, Magdalene of Canossa had asked for the gift of a convent even in that city. The answer of the emperor had been uncertain because he was not sure whether there were monasteries available, although he would be in favour of it. If the Pope will be informed about this, then when Francis I will visit him and deal with the matters of Milan, the Pope could give more pertinent answers.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

It is quite sometime that I have been thinking of writing to you, my good friend, to reassure you more and more about your sister. But you give me a new motivation through your dear little letter. I again assure you that your sister is going on well. It is not that she is indifferent to her loss, but her calmness and peace, and the company of the few people she meets, with whom she is full of confidence, help her to go on well. Therefore, be calm with regard to this. I would only like that she moves about a little bit more, that she may go out, and breathe some fresh air. This morning she told me that she will go to Fusino¹ and then make a trip to Mira².

However, do not show that I have told you this. I already preach on my part, and I hope it will bear some fruit. If you speak to her about it, do it in such a way that she does not realize that I have written to you. Now that the beautiful season is coming she starts making projects, and I hope that she will fulfil them at least partly. Now I go there less because there is no need to do so. But I do go, and if there is the least need, be assured that I will leave everything in order to keep her company. Therefore do not be worried about this matter.

Regarding yourself, my dear Carolina, I got detailed news from your sister. Indeed, my heart could not rejoice at all, yet because I desire your sanctification, I felt comforted though I understood that God is consoling you only by giving you the cross. However, I hope you will satisfy the main object of your journey. At the same time, I think the Lord asks that you offer to Him every human satisfaction.

Now I want to tell you something about your Magdalene. You tell me that you did not see that person in Loreto³. It was so because he did not receive the letter announcing your arrival. May be you know that I was prevented even from writing to him. Let us bless the Lord for everything. Of course, God alone is sufficient and infinitely much more than I need. But I need a new favour from you. To beg you for it I need first to make you acquainted with our affairs. After your departure I remained in Venice waiting for a final reply from Vienna, that is, of the

¹ Fusina, a little centre in the province of Venice
² Mira - (Venice) is an industrial Centre on Naviglio di Brenta. It has many rich patrician villas and palaces of the XVI, XVII and XVIII centuries. The Tavernas had a villa there.
³ Loreto, in the province of Ancona (Lett.265, n.1)
signed papers as a consequence of a favourable vote, rather than the questions of the Prelates of the cities where we have our Houses, so that the Institute may be approved as such formally.

As for Milan, however, although you know how strong the request of the Archbishop was, I do not send in this, nor the papers, as I want to wait for the formal answer from the Venetian Kingdom. His Imperial Majesty came here before any answer arrived. I introduced myself to him and I was welcomed with his usual clemency. He told me that he had read our plan, and found it very beautiful, and that he had signed our papers three days ago, and had passed them on to the Government, which, he believed, would quickly process them. He had signed them here so as not to send them to Vienna, and said that everything was settled regarding us.

He asked me if our number had increased much. I answered that some had entered, but others had no courage to so until they first saw the Decree of His Majesty. Then he replied that for us everything was already settled. Then he told me “I was glad to hear that they have called you also to Milan”. I answered that it was true, and that over there our house was very small, and that His Majesty could give us a place even there. Do not get angry, my dear Carlina, you know why I have asked him that, and how also our Archbishop asked for it. More so if a person from the Government was presented to me by the Holy Spirit and to the Parish Priest. It is for this reason that I spoke like that. The Sovereign, as clemently as usual, replied that he did not know if one was available, but if so, he would give it to me. Finally, he asked me if I always stayed in Venice, and having told him that I stay a while in each town, and that after completing the work here I would do the same in Verona and, later, in Milan, he kindly replied that we will see each other again either in one or the other town.

Despite all this I think that some more time is needed to complete the work in Venice and Verona, as the procedure needs to be completed, and usually it does not take a short time. Then I will go to Milan, which I certainly do not neglect even from here, and where I am convinced that we will get the establishment from the Holy Spirit.

After relating to you all this, here is what I am kindly asking you for, my dear friend. I would like that when you greet the very eminent Cardinal Fontana for me, you communicate to him all this, and beg him to inform our Holy Father on my behalf, as I believe it is very necessary that he should know about everything, because if our Sovereign comes in Rome and they speak about this least Institute, everything must be known and clear to him. All of my poor person, all of the Institute, and all that belongs to me and is dependent on me, are at his disposal, at his slightest wish.

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4 At Verona the Bishop LIRUTI INNOCENZO O.S.B., born at Villafremma (Friuli) in 1741. At the age of sixteen he entered the Benedictine Abbey of St. Giustina at Padua. He had a keen and refined intelligence, very efficient in making investigations, and very courageous and tenacious in bringing them to a conclusion. He was elected Bishop of Verona in 1807 and was consecrated in Milan on 27 December together with Mons. Ridolfi. His work was eminently pastoral and one of restoration: among these was the re-establishing and introduction of religious congregations. He died in Verona on 27.8.1827 (Cfr. Brescia, Orazioni funebri, Verona 1866).

At Venice the Patriarch was Milesi Francesco Maria (Ep.I, lett. 305, n. 3).

At Milan Archbishop GAYSRUCK KARL GAETAN. A Cardinal, he was born at Klangerfurt in Carinzia in the year 1769. He died at Milan in 1846. He was ordained priest in 1797, bishop at Derby and coadjutor Bishop of Passavia. Francis I entrusted to him the Diocese of Linz, until in 1816 he chose him as Archbishop of Milan. He was canonically installed in 1818, and made Cardinal by Leo XII in 1824. As Archbishop of Milan he governed his vast Diocese with great ability. Her had most at heart the education of the young clergy (Cfr. S. Furlani in Enciclopedia Cattolica, Vol. V. pag. 1970).

5 Emperor Francis I.

6 One of the suppressed monasteries.

7 Completion of the procedures

8 Cardinal Francesco Fontana, Barnabite (Ep.I, lett. 13, n. 1)

9 Pius VII.
Your friendship will not deny me this favour. When you will kiss the Holy Father’s feet, please do it for me, too. I give you good news about the house of Milan, where, too, they work a lot, as, thanks to the Lord, this is done everywhere, so that in all the three house we do not know how to reach out to all that has to be done.

Entrust me to our Lord and to our most Holy Mother. I hope you will see to it that everybody invokes Her since she is the one who will put right everything for the whole world. Accept Theresa’s greetings. Convey my compliments to the Count, and wish lady Checca for me. Goodbye, dear friend, remember always

Your most affectionate friend, Magdalene Canossa
Daughter of Charity

Venice Saint Lucy’s, 26 March 1819

P.S. For my peace of mind and so that I may make my plans, kindly give me a reply as soon as you receive this letter.

10 NB. Written by Teresa Spasciani and signed by Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The two sisters, the Countesses Durini and Taverna, are in Verona but the widow Paola(Taverna) has no peace. Now she feels the demise of her husband, almost with greater intensity, though various months have passed by, and Carolina suffers because of this. Magdalene tries to console her.

My dearest friend

I finally answer your two dear letters, my good friend. To tell you the truth I am very sorry for the situation your sister is in. I tell you, for your comfort and mine, that she was so last June, but at the end of July I saw her changed. With this I want to say that we hope to see her calm again.

From what my Teresa¹ wrote to me lately, it seemed that Mrs. Maria² had gone away, or she was going to leave Venice from time to time. I would like your sister to understand, that because of the type of illness she suffered from, she cannot expect her to be in perfect health until the next spring. I do not know whether it is better that you tell her, as I do not know if we could help her, or whether it will worry her more. I assure you that, humanly speaking I am very sorry not to be in Verona now, as much for you as for her. Be assured that, though I am miserable, I will not stop praying our dear Mother Mary for both of you.

I thank you gratefully for the 2000 Lire that you offer me. I accept them not for the aspirant from Mariano³ for whom the Lord has already provided, but for one of the postulants who has a good vocation and a good spirit but lacks financial means. We have three of these. Our other affairs have to wait for after the holidays. They are all at a standstill.

I thank you for the parcel you have so kindly sent to me. It made me think that Mrs. Maria must have come to Verona. Our dear friend Visconti wishes to know, like me, when you will be back in Milan, because when you write you never mention about your return. All the companions convey their regards to you. I beg you to convey my distinguished greeting to your sister and your husband. Goodbye, my dear friend, greet Mrs. Checca for me. Greet her also on behalf of Checchina. I embrace you heartily, I am forever dearest friend,

Milan 23 October (18)19

Your most affectionate and grateful
friend Magdalene of Canossa ⁴
Daughter of Charity

¹ Teresa Spasciani (Ep.I, lett. 279, n. 9).
² The maid of countess Paola Taverna, sister of Carolina Durini
³ An aspirant to the religious life from Mariano, a suburb of Dalmine in the province of Bergamo.
⁴ NB. Written by Teresa Spasciani and signed by Magdalene.
The last letter is dated October 23. The lack of correspondence, in a rather long stretch of time, may be due to the fact that some of these letters are lost. Magdalene however begins her letter by excusing herself for delaying to send some receipts. So it is probable that she really had not written either because she did not have “a moment” free, as she declares, or because the two friends were both in Milan.

At this moment she needs to write, because she wants to know from Durini the response of the physician regarding the health of a companion. If the diagnosis is really an epileptic disease, though unwillingly, she will have to send her back to her family.

V.G. M.   My dearest friend

You can imagine how your letters are so welcomed by me, my dear friend. Forgive me if I delayed a lot in sending you the receipts. Believe me, I have not a moment to spare.

I hear, my dear Carolina, that the Lord is visiting our house of Milan. On the one hand I feel sorry for Angelina¹, that is for her, and on the other for dear Margherita², because we are losing an angel. All the same, if the trouble with this excellent girl is what Vandoni³ says, then she is not suitable for us. I know you have been so kind as to take her with Elena to see Dr. Locatelli⁴. Kindly tell me what he thinks about it, not because I do not believe my good companion, but because I feel that questioning her in detail will only afflict her the more. Today she writes to me if I would take her to Verona. This comes from her charity and goodness.

If it were any other disease, even if it could be communicated to others, being in a big house, I would have no difficulty to try her out. But epilepsy⁵? Because of our many young people and me, too, though I am not against any disease, my weakness is that I cannot bear to see this, after having seen a poor sick person in the hospital in Venice. She died because of this disease. I wish therefore to hear the honest opinion of Locatelli to decide whether Elena should dismiss her. If you are afraid to write, request our common and very prudent friend Visconti, whom I beg you to embrace for me. You will have heard from my Elena the new graces obtained by Mary for this least Institute. Now I am waiting for them for Milan and Bergamo too. We know well that we can never be without the cross. As long as we see the Lord and His holy Mother glorified, all the rest is nothing because it is indispensable for the exile we are living in here below.

My Stella is still alive⁶, but she cannot speak a word. Please, recommend her to the Lord so that He may grant her fortitude. She is very resigned.

My Carlino⁷ has returned from Rome as good as he was when he went there. And my brother is very happy. He had written to him before he left that city, and had asked him to go

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¹ One of the novices sent away from the Institute because she was suffering from epilepsy.
² A relative of Angelina.
³ Specialist in diseases of the nerves. The doctor VANDONI was murdered in 1851 because he had denounced one of his colleagues, Dr. Ciceri, who owned and distributed the credit cards for loans in the time of Giuseppe Mazzini. As a result even the patriot Antonio Sciesa was shot. (Cfr. La Patria. op. cit. 1 pag. 191).
⁴ LOCATELLI, another specialist of those times.
⁵ EPILEPSY, an illness that causes intermittent convulsions of varying frequency, accompanied by spells of unconsciousness.
⁶ Stella Cacciatori, the maid in the Canossa Palace when Magdalene was a young girl. (Ep.I, lett. 2, n. 1).
⁷ Carlino Canossa, the little cousin entrusted to Magdalene and to whom she was very attached. (Ep.I, lett. 8, n. 6).
and pay my respects on my behalf to your Director. He also said to thank him for the letter, by which he honoured me, as I let you know. But he did not receive this letter. Therefore, if you have the chance to write to him, kindly thank him for me, and if you do not have it, please tell Father Mantegazza to do it when he writes to him, as I do not dare to write again to thank him. However if you think that I should do it, let me know. My problem is that I am afraid to take too much liberty, and to trouble him.

My compliments to your sister and to the Count, your husband. I have many other things to tell you, but time does not allow me to do it. I embrace you heartily and I am with my deep cordial attachment dearest friend

Your Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

St, Joseph’s, 3 June 1820

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8 Cardinal Fontana, at one time confessor to Durini (,Lett. 15, n. 1).
9 Fr. CARLO GIUSEPPE MAINTEGAZZA, Provincial of the Barnabites, whose General had been Fr. Fontana.
10 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s. The letter is written by Cristina Pilotti
TO CAROLINA DURINI

329 (Bergamo#1820.08.14)

The Marquis of Azeglio has pointed out to her cousin, Countess Durini, the need of a foundation in Turin of the work of Magdalene. Magdalene declares herself ready, quite happy and gives the first hints.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

I have received a dear letter from you from which I realise that you were still at Fabrica on the 10th and I now suppose that you have already returned to Milan. So I hasten to reply to you, my dear friend. Therefore, today I shall write to Elena so that she may immediately start having a copy of the Rule made for the good Marquis of Azeglio. Meanwhile, you can write to him. With regard to how much the maintenance of a Novice can cost, you already know that it is a Lira of Italy per day. Because of the distance, the small personal expenses which the family usually pays for the Novices, are met by the House. When he sends this one, or such young people to Milan, I shall take them to Verona for the Novitiate. As for the other queries I will answer you as soon as possible, as I cannot do it on the spot. Do me the favour to show the Parish Priest the paragraph of the Marquis I mentioned, much more so because now they speak to me again about Indra. Here I am quite well and am waiting for the moment to embrace you. Goodbye, my dear friend. I cannot tell you more since I am compelled to finish this letter so as not to miss the clearance of the mail.

Yours, dearest friend

Bergamo, 14 August 1820, Borgo Santa Catterina N. 122.

P.S. You already know that the Novices should bring along a few items of furniture and linen, for the time they are in the novitiate.

Your friend Magdalene
Daughter of Charity

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1 Where the villa of Durini was situated.
2 MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO, alias Massimo Taparelli d'Azeglio (Turin 1798-1866) politician, writer and painter. As a moderate liberal he wrote several famous booklets: « Degli ultimi casi di Romagna » (1846) «I lutti di Lombardia». After the defeat of Novara, he became president of the Council and succeeded in making peace with Austria, in spite of opposition from the parliament. He had the honour of inviting Cavour to be part of his Ministry. He handed over the presidency to him in 1852. His historical novels are noteworthy as also his incomplete autobiography “I miei ricordi”. His paintings are of the Romantic style. (Cfr. Dizionario del Risorgimento Nazionale).
3 The lira was the unit of money in the whole of Europe, with some variations in various cities. (Lett. 216, n. 5).
4 Magdalene writes 'Indra', but the word is 'Intra', an industrial and climatic centre on the western shores of Lago Maggiore in the province of Novara, which from 1939 formed, together with Pallanza, the little town of Verbania. They requested for a Canossian foundation there.
5 NB. Letter written by Cristina Pilotti and only signed by Magdalene.
The negotiations for the foundation in Turin continue and Magdalene, more in detail than in the preceding letter, points out what is necessary so that the foundation may take place.

V.G. M. My dearest friend

I delayed up to now to reply to every article of your very precious letter, my dear friend, because I wished to be able to answer adequately and with security to the paragraph of the very worthy Marquis of Azeglio\(^1\). Here, therefore, is my answer: I beg you kindly to show it to him and to express my greetings to him as well. Tell him that I would be prepared to move to Turin\(^2\) to establish a new house there at his request as soon as everything necessary has been provided for and if he has well founded hopes of procuring aspirants with real vocations to join those I would bring with me. To speed things up, I would like him to send me to Milan not one, but two novices whom I would later take to the novitiate in Verona.

Concerning what could be needed for the foundation, I have no knowledge of the Country, nor of their way of living. So I do not know what to say positively. I need your friendship and your charity for the Institute to make up for my inexperience.

You know that I do not care for wealth, power, nor extras, but since I have had to use up the small means, that Divine Providence has given me in a special way, I cannot refuse the offer of the necessary provisions. I would say, therefore, that the place needs to be furnished with furniture suitable to our poverty, as you already did out of charity. Then, until the house has a subsistence fund through the dowry of the novices, I would say that one Lira of Italy per person per day is needed. It will decrease for each novice that has a dowry, until little by little, the maintenance benevolently administered to us comes to an end. If, by chance, the cost of living in Turin is dearer than in Milan, for the first time it could be necessary to get a small provision of the basic necessities.

My dear friend, you know already how I am against speaking of interest. I would like you to kindly show this paragraph also to the Parish Priest and to hear what he feels about it, and agree with him to do what is best. The time of the novitiate is three years, but this does not mean that the novices from Piedmonte that he sends me, have to stay all this time in Verona. They would stay only until everything is ready in Turin, where I would then take them. Meanwhile, with the next ordinary mail, I will send to you the Plan of the Institute\(^3\). Today I will write to Elena, so that as soon as Mr. Brambilla\(^4\) has written the System for the country girls\(^5\) and that of the Exercises of the noble Ladies\(^6\), she may immediately hand them to you so that you may send them to the mentioned Marquis. He can have a copy made of the remainder.

My dear friend, more and more I can see that the Lord has allowed our friendship so that you may assist me in the spread of the Institute. May it be the will of God that you assist me with your prayers even to go to heaven.

Goodbye, my dear friend. I expect to see you in Bergamo. In the mean while I embrace you with all my heart.

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1. A politician and writer.
2. The then Capital of the State of Savoia. Read Turin.
3. Plan of the Institute (Ep. II/2, pp. 1401-1498)
4. The person who made the Copies of the official documents of Magdalene of Canossa.
5. Plan for the work of the country teachers.
6. Plan for the work of the annual Exercises for the ladies of the nobility.
Yours, dearest friend
Bergamo 25 August 1820

Your most affectionate friend
Magdalene Daughter of Charity

If they send me two Novices, fewer Sisters would be necessary for Turin.

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7 NB. Written from Bergamo. The signature, postscript and address are in Magdalene’s handwriting.
Magdalene wants Marquis D’Azeglio to understand clearly the aim of the Institute, therefore she is concerned that Durini should show him, not only the Rule of the five Branches of the works of Charity, but also the internal rules and the “Plan” so that he may have a “complete picture of the Institute.”

My dearest friend,

I had prepared a packet of papers to be given to Fr. Pietro’s\(^1\) sisters, but for some reason they left today instead of tomorrow as they had told me. My effort was in vain and so I am just rushing to send you these few lines so that you can give a quick reply to your cousin, the Marquis\(^2\). You will find enclosed the major part of the plan for the Institute. This is similar to or, rather it is the same one that I presented to the Bishops and that they then showed to the King in order to obtain the approval of the foundation of the Institute. In the meantime please get it copied. If Elena too has a copy of it (as I think she has) get her to add to what I am sending, the projects of the Daughters of Charity. In case Elena does not have the other part I will send it to you by the Friday post. In the meantime get her to give you the second book of the Rules as soon as it is copied. It contains the five Branches\(^3\) of Charity embraced by the Institute, but does not have the appendix. You may also send this to the Marquis. I will write to you later with regard to the first book of the Rules. It contains the internal Rules and I think you should have that too, but as a reserve, because it is being used. Do not send the first book which Elena has had copied, until I write to you. Send him the Plan too, so that he can have a complete picture of the Institute and point out that, as he will see, the Institute does not need a fixed endowment. The maintenance which is necessary at the moment, should, I think, be left to him to decide as long as it is a total of one Italian lira\(^4\) per day. The novices you will send me will have their dowry, and will not need to be maintained. So this would only be necessary in this case, that is for the companions I will take there. It will eventually cease to be necessary with their death or their departure, once the house is completely established. Ask the provost what he thinks about the Plan, and decide with him whether it should be sent or not.

I am really tired of writing, especially since I have done it in vain. So I will finish this in a hurry, embracing you with all my heart and assuring you that I am always

Yours, my dearest friend.

Your most affectionate friend
Magdalene  Daughter of Charity\(^5\)

Bergamo, 28 August 1820

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\(^1\) Fr. Pietro Leopardi (Ep.I, lett.4, n.4)

\(^2\) Massimo d’Azeglio  (Ep.I, lett.329, n.2)

\(^3\) Lett. 154, n.3  A.C.R. Doc. B 18

\(^4\) Lett.216, n.5

\(^5\) NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
From Bergamo Magdalene again writes to insist on the clarification of how a foundation should be set up, even with regard to the economic side, given the fact that, once the initial difficulties have been overcome, the House should be maintained with the dowries of the members. She also gives indications with regard to the number of members for a community. They should be presented by the person who requests the foundation and should be allowed to go to Verona from where, after a period of formation, they would return to the foundation.

My dearest friend,

What a head I have, my dear Carolina! However, this time I have to praise my poor memory because with this excuse I have the pleasure of spending some time with you. I am truly grateful, my dear friend, for all the trouble you take for me. I am also very much obliged to the Count1 for all his patience. What a figure we must have cut yesterday among those people! And, by the way, I have to confess to you that someone then called me a “witch” at the door of the Cathedral. The fact that I was able to enjoy your company has put me in an even better mood than usual. Anyway, let us get to the more serious business that I have come to bother you with in this letter. I forgot to ask you a favor. When you send the papers to the good Marquis D’Azeglio3, please write that I entrust to his prudence and discretion the exact copy of everything. For reasons, which I will tell him later, if God permits that the things go ahead, I request that the papers do not leave his hands. In addition to this let me tell you what came to my mind this morning. I reflected on the paragraph of the letter that you wrote to the said Marquis, and which according to my wishes our Provost4 dictated. I am wondering if it is better to let the negotiations continue as we said or, since we are coming towards a conclusion, should we not explain more clearly about the number of members necessary for an important foundation like Turin. We should also explain about their maintenance, since it does not seem to me to be possible to start with fewer than six members, in order that they may then leave it well established and with hope in the Lord for future growth. This would also seem to me to be a good reason for not delaying the foundation when the two from Piedmont arrive for, as you know, I do not have four Sisters that I can take away from the existing houses without substituting them. On the other hand it might be less of a burden for the Marquis if he could find a few more members from Piedmont who are provided for. If it turns out that he cannot find them (since it might be difficult for someone to offer herself if she has not seen the Institute in activity), I think it would be necessary for me to know how many members he can assure maintenance. Then once things are decided I could accept some candidates that I already have available here. They have a vocation and are also capable and really excellent people, but they do not have a dowry.

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1 Count Carlo, husband of Carolina
2 The ‘Duomo‘ of Milan, the main Church in the city. It is a large and complex structure in the Gothic style. In its present form it was built by Mengoni (1865-1877), the same architect who built the Gallery Vittorio Emanuele and the North and South Gates which are the traditional meeting places of the people of Milan. The Cathedral is in the form of a Latin cross with five naves, the largest and most imposing of which is the central one, that ends with the chancel in the apse, around and behind which is a wide corridor. There are 40 external buttresses and 52 internal piers supporting the arches.4440 statues adorn the Duomo inside and outside, the work of centuries of famous architects and artists. Begun in 1389 it has been continually worked upon even until the present times.
3 Marquis Azeglio (Ep.I, lett.329, n.2)
4 Mons. Zoppi (Ep. I, lett.275, n.2)
I would ask you to please decide this matter between yourself and the Provost. I will be happy with whatever you decide. Be sure that I have no problem writing to Mr. Albertini who is such a good person, because I know how difficult it is for you to do it. If you have not received the Provost’s paragraph because he has such a lot to do, I can make an exact copy from his original, which I have kept.

“The foundation of a House of this Institute requires a locality large enough and with sufficient places for the various offices of the Institute. It needs to be provided with the necessary furniture, which generally speaking should consist of a bed, two chairs and a small table for each of the rooms of the Daughters of Charity. It would also need some cupboards for the wardrobe, some utensils, kitchen and refectory tables, school benches, chairs and tables and an altar, benches and altar furnishings for the chapel. Everything should be simple and poor. The financial support and dowries mentioned above could gradually diminish as the House builds up funds for its own livelihood. However, this should be based on the principal that, if the cost of living there is notably higher than here the foundress of the House should find a small supply of basic necessities, ready for use there. This should also be used for the maintenance of the members she takes there with her, during their stay. Her charity makes her willing to transfer some Sisters there, to found and start off the new house as long as the necessary things are provided for and there is a well-founded hope of getting other members with solid vocations to join the members she will take with her. In order to facilitate matters I would ask that if possible Your Ladyship would send two of them here. She could then take them to stay in Verona for a short period of novitiate, until the preparations for the new foundation are complete.”

This is the paragraph. I do not have time to write any more. I embrace you with all my heart. I am your affectionate friend,

Magdalene Daughter of Charity

(Undated)
The Countess Durini had made arrangements for some of her inheritance to be given to the Institute of Milan, as long as the benefactor’s wishes were respected. The Marchioness, who admits to being more and more physically tired, assures her that she will observe the clause fully, as will those who come after her. She thanks her friend for her generosity and also thanks her because Sylvia Maffei, (Laura’s daughter and Magdalene’s niece) who has married Count Durini’s nephew, Count Calcagnini, has been welcomed into her new family with great kindness. Meanwhile the Milanese Countess (Durini) is trying to help with the problem of a petition to the Emperor from Mr. Alessandri who is very worried about his son.

My dearest friend,

Please forgive me, my good friend, for not having been able to write the replies I owed you to your two letters. Our Elena will have already told you how very busy I am and that even when I do have some free time I am tired out by my cough. Actually I can tell you that in the last three days I have felt much better. As you well know it is nothing to fuss about because I always have this cough, handy in a little box ready to do my bidding and it always turns out to be nothing at all, just as it will again any day now. From the precious letter written in your own handwriting, I can understand your kind readiness to help the Institute and I am sure that no one could doubt that it is for the Milan house. As long as I am alive I would certainly not do anything against your wishes, and as I trust in Our Blessed Lady, I am sure that those who come after me will not go against those wishes either. They would not be capable of acting against your will which is my will, too. I thank you warmly for everything. May God bless you in this world and in the next for this donation.

It gave me great pleasure to hear how sympathetic and kind you, the Lady Marchioness Calcagnini and the others have been towards our Silvia. I was very happy to meet her and her husband, the Marquis. I spoke to them about that matter and they told me what they have recently decided with his mother. They said that they plan to return to Milan at the beginning of January to stay for six months and they also told me about the magnificent gift of the combs that you had mentioned to me. As far as Silvia is concerned I can say in all sincerity that she has a duty and good reason to give such a gift. She always speaks of her mother-in-law as if she were her own mother. Not only does she show real affection for her but she also seems to be very happy to be in her company. I can also tell you, with the same straightforwardness, that I think the carnival at Fusignano would be better for this young couple than that of Milan, but I leave it to them and I console myself with the fact that the ladies and gentlemen (nobility) of Milan are very good people.

Because of some business matters I have had two letters, one after the other, from the good Mr. Alessandri. He is extremely concerned because he has had no reply about his son, Cipro. He is especially concerned because he received the following paragraph from Modena. If I have time I will copy it here for you, and if not I will send you the original which he sent me. I would take it as a great kindness if Mr. Albertini would be good enough to make

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1 Marchioness MARIA CALCAGNINI DURINI, sister of Count Carlo Durini and therefore sister-in-law of Carolina.
2 SILVIA MAFFEI, daughter of Laura Maffei and Marquis Antonio. She married Francesco Calcagnini who lived in the palace of Schifanoja at Ferrara. He was the son of the sister of Count Carlo Durini.
3 Fusignano, commune in provincia di Ravenna in Romagna, sul fiume Senio, famoso per i suoi divertimenti nel periodo di carnevale.
4 One of the two procurators of Magdalene in Venice (Ep.I, lett.257, n.1)
5 The business regarding his wine in Cyprus (Cfr. MdC to Bernardi, 1.2.1822, Ep.III-1, p. 485)
some more enquiries of Lady Aragona⁶ about this matter. Please give him my most cordial regards.

Rachelina is very well and she seems to be beginning to enjoy life here in her new, very peaceful home. I cannot deny that she is a very timid person, but she is very goodhearted.

If you manage to include in your plans for this autumn the trip to Bergamo that you mentioned to me, you would give great joy to me and to all my companions. As you requested I have asked the Reverend Provost to show you the Decree from the Bishop⁷, in which you have had a great part. I thank you heartily for this. If you meet the Venerable Fr. Mantegazza⁸ please mention this matter and thank him again for me.

Goodbye, my dear Carolina. We are in the seven days of prayer prior to the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. Please remember me in your prayers as I remember you. Please give my best regards to the Count. My companions send you their regards.

With a heartfelt embrace and my most sincere love to you, my dear friend.

P.S. Here is the paragraph: I have copied the reply I received from my friend:

“After a number of investigations and a lot of research the petition of Giuseppe Alessandri of Venice has been found in the Secretariat (Venice Department) with the reference number 2288. The decree has already been issued and the petition is on His Majesty’s desk awaiting his signature. As far as we can ascertain the situation looks hopeful and we will be informed as soon as the said petition is signed.

Bergamo, Holy Cross’ 12 September 1821

Your most affectionate friend
Magdalene, Daughter of Charity⁹

⁶ VITTORIA, daughter of Marquis Gherardini. Her first marriage was with Marquis Alessandro Gerolamo Visconti who died in 1812. She then married the Viscount of Aragona. (Cfr.Litta, op.cit. Genealogia Visconti).
⁷ Archbishop G. Gaysruck (Ep.I, lett.326, n.4)
⁸ (Ep. I, lett.328, n.9)
⁹ NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
This is a simple request for a necessary and urgent meeting in which Magdalene asks the Countess Durini to see her. But also asks that she answers with straightforwardness and "without standing on ceremony." It is probable that this meeting was about coming to a negative conclusion (as eventually happened) with regard to the project of the foundation of a house in Turin.

V.G.M  My dearest friend,¹

Taking advantage of your goodness and friendship, my dear friend, I am going to tell you that I need to talk with you. You see how free I feel with you and I hope you will treat me in the same way. Please tell me honestly whether it would be easier for you if I were to come there and if so when you would be at home and free to see me. However if it is more convenient for you, please do come and see me here. I know this sounds a bit reckless but I should add that I would like to come this week if possible. You can gather from this that I really need to speak with you soon. Do not think I have finished. As if this is not enough, I still have another request. I dare to flatter myself and expect that you will reply with straightforwardness and without standing on ceremony.

In the meantime I send you a heartfelt embrace and assure you of my sincere respect and most lasting friendship.

¹ N.B. Written by Magdalene, but undated and unsigned.
Magdalene excuses Durini who is “angry” with her because, due to one of her many illnesses, she cannot go to Milan.

My dear friend,

If all the judgments you make about your poor friend were not excusable because they come from holy thoughts and are quite unfounded, the whole Easter Season would not suffice to absolve you and you would have to wait for the next Jubilee (Year).

I received a letter from our dear Teresa this evening from which I sense that you are angry as much as anything because you think I am resigned to the fact that the Lord does not want me to come to Milan. On top of this (to add to this) you are afraid that I am becoming schismatic because I love Our Blessed lady to much. Enough of this! I will absolve you of everything, by reason of our longstanding and close friendship and so I shall reply to you.

First of all, having had a cough many times I know that apprehension makes it worse. It is true that this is one of the most violent but it is definitely wearing itself out. I cannot say that I am really well yet but I believe this is due, in great part, to the many tasks I have in hand. I would really need to double the amount of work I do in order to put everything straight and be able to leave in peace.

I commend myself to your prayers and you can be certain of my poor prayers too.

With equal esteem and love and with great respect I declare myself

Yours, my dearest friend

Your very affectionate friend

Magdalene of Canossa

N.B. Since we do not have the original letter and because this is a typescript copy neither the place of issue or the signature can be traced. The date is also missing.
Magdalene is in Venice and should return to Verona, however she has been urgently called to Bergamo where one of her companions, Adeodata Mazzi, is ill. The illness is getting worse and she needs to be taken to Verona immediately. Magdalene, who has to go to Rimini in a month’s time, is overburdened with work but she still needs to meet with Countess Durini, so she suggests that they meet at Bergamo and then go their separate ways from there.

My dearest friend

I am going to start bombarding you with notes and letters, my dear friend. This time I am going to bother you with something that is only an illusion, that is to say, an idea that came into my head and which even I will probably find impossible to put into practice. Anyway I don’t even know if the superior of Verona¹ would understand it. Anyway I will tell you about it, for what it is worth, and ask you to send your reply right away to Verona, where, God willing, I hope to be on Saturday. God wishes to visit me with suffering, through the ever-worsening illness of Deodata of Bergamo². I had her consult our doctor there because I am not at all convinced about moving her. When I return we shall decide with the Superior and the doctor what should be done. I can tell you that I grow quite cold at the thought of how much work I still have to do in this short time of one month before I have to go to Rimini. Enough of this! It occurred to me that, if I should decide to go to Bergamo to take Deodata (to Verona) it would take five days. I would need two days to go, one day there and two days to return. If it is convenient for you to take a trip to Bergamo you could come with Mrs. Checca and stay with us. If I find this can be arranged I will write and let you know the precise date. This would mean that, instead of sending you letters I could come and we could talk about everything directly and make our plans. We could spend the day together and then you could depart for Milan and I for Verona. Don’t worry if you cannot manage this because I may not be able to, either. If it is not possible for one or the other of us, or for both of us, we can always make up for it by letters, instead. In the meantime I ask you again to pray for me and to get others to remember me to the Lord in their prayers. I send you my best wishes, together with those of Cristina who sends her respects to the Count. Please give my regards to Mrs. Cicca³. I embrace you with equal esteem and affection and leave you in the Heart Of Our Blessed Mother.

Your most affectionate friend

Magdalene of Canossa Daughter of Charity⁴

¹ Don Galvani (Ep.I, lett. 47 n. 3)
² Mazzi Adeodata, a member of the Community of Bergamo. She entered the Institute in Verona in 1812.
³ It refers to Mrs. Checca, the Countess Durini’s maid
⁴ NB.: No date; the letter was certainly written in Venice. Only the signature is Magdalene’s
Though it has very little detail this letter gives news of a very important event in the history of the Institute. In Milan some of the religious who were part of the first community of Via Della Signora have moved, with other reinforcements, to begin a new centre of activity in the Parish of San Lorenzo.

My dearest friend,

You will have heard from our dear Visconti that we arrived happily and moved house on Thursday. Although we are not really settled yet because the restructuring still has to be completed, we are, nevertheless very content and happy to be able to breathe freely in such a spacious property. Thank you for all you have done, my dear friend, and also for the letters you sent. Please do not take any notice of those small matters the sisters of San Giuseppe have sent you. Their affection makes them a little imprudent. Do you know, my dear Carolina, that there is a lady who lives here with us who would like to take my Cristina to see you in order to finalize the plans. Of course they would go in her carriage and would not cause you any inconvenience. My friend Matilde will tell you all about it and you can feel quite free to give her your answer if this is, in any way, inconvenient for you. Accept greetings from the good Canoness who has been suffering from pain again. However she has no more pain now and was able to get up yesterday. My friendship with her is closer than ever. Best wishes to your sisters and to your husband. Greet Mrs. Checca for me and tell her that my Checcina is well and very happy. She and all the others send their compliments and respects.

With a heartfelt embrace I am, as always,

Your Canossa, Daughter of Charity

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1 The new House was close by S. Michele alla Chiusa in the Parish of S. Lorenzo. It was the Cistercians’ old hospice. It belonged to various owners, until in 1823, a Pious Society, whose members were Count Mellerio and Marquis Casati, bought it for more than 145 thousand Milanese lire. The contract was signed on 23 July 1823. Count Mellerio, himself paid L. 100 thousand. The building, with a large garden, was transferred to be a property of the Institute. - Most probably the name S. Michele alla Chiusa comes from a nearby Church called S. Michele, which was demolished in 1930. Bascapè and Mezzanotte, in Milano nell'arte e nella storia, a cura di Bestetti, 1948, state that the place was called 'della Chiusa' because, close by, the torrents Vettabia, Nirone', Seveso and Vetra joined into one.

2 In the House of Verona

3 Cristina Pilotti

4 Metilde Bonioli, one of the first companions.

5 NB. Letter written by Elena Bernardi and signed by Magdalene.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

As usual Magdalene and the Countess Durini are concerned with a difficult family problem which could put the morals of a young woman at risk. Magdalene tells her friend what the Provost, Father Zoppi, thinks about the matter. She also announces a great joy: some members of the community of Via della Signora, in Milan, have moved to the new Convent of San Michele alla Chiusa, an old Cistercian convent, and so have become part of the parish of San Lorenzo.

V. G.e M. My dearest friend,

I spoke with the Provost about our problem, yesterday evening and here is his advice. He believes that, once we are sure that the mother is capable of taking care of the daughter, and that the brother is also alright, it would be good, and actually very advisable that the daughter should go with her mother, at least for a while to see how it goes. He was quite decisive about this and believes it is our duty to make this attempt. However, as you rightly suggested we should get Father Depredini to keep a watch over the situation in the future and be kind enough to inform me if any dangers or problems arise. With regard to the brother you should be aware that the Provost’s main concern when I told him your plans, was not about where he would sleep, but most of all that the girl should not be in any danger.

My dear Friend, today, God willing, I will be in the great Parish of Santo Stefano. I am so sorry that you are going away when I arrive and that just when I dare to hope to see you more often you go further away. Oh well! I suppose I must just be patient and I will certainly be very happy if your going away will help to improve your health.

I embrace you with all my heart and ask for your prayers. Goodbye and have a safe journey

Yours, my dearest friend

My best wishes to the Count

29 November 1824

Your most affectionate friend
Magdalene Daughter of Charity

The Marchioness of Canossa
to Madame Countess Carolina Durini

S.P.M

1 It is about the moral protection of a girl. We cannot add any detail because it is clear that letters written from 1 October 1823 to the date of this letter, 29 November 1824, are missing. They could have helped to clarify the matter.

2 St. Steven’s Parish was in Via della Signora where the first Canossian Community in Milan was started. Magdalene, however, wrote St. Steven instead of St. Laurence. In fact the letter refers to the parish of the new Canossian House in Via Chiusa, as we may read in the previous letter.

3 NB. Only the signature is Magdalene’s.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

The handwritten draft of a letter sent by Magdalene to Rome where the Countess Durini is making her annual visit. She has been advised by Cardinal Zurla not to concern herself any longer with the project of a foundation at Coriano where the situation is complex and not to be recommended. The Marchioness will certainly follow his advice and in the meantime she is busy in Milan, not only with the course of Spiritual Exercises for the ladies but also with the coming election of the superior.

My dearest friend

I am very happy to come to you there (with this letter). Though it is not as soon as I would have liked it is as soon as I could. I cannot express how grateful I am for all your concern and care for me. I thank you with all my heart and ask you to continue your kindness also by remembering me to Our Blessed Lady at all the shrines you visit, as you have done up till now. In my poor way I will repay you by visiting our little church. If you are still in Rome on the Feast of St. Agnes and if you visit her tomb, please remember me in a special way.

Now I must tell you that I have been honored to receive a letter from his Eminence (Cardinal) Zurla in which he kindly replies to the letter he had from you, as well as to that other one of last September. I sent you a copy of that and you thought it might have been the cause of trouble but in actual fact there was no problem. In his letter His Eminence said more or less what you had already told me, but not quite so directly. He also advised me that it is not the right moment and that I should not refuse the Coriano project but avoid it for the moment and concentrate on the new foundations in this area. With regard to that other matter, so long desired by me, he says that he will keep the books with him and that, perhaps, in time he can settle it. I desire nothing else than God’s will and His glory. He knows all my motives for making the request, as you have told him even if you were unable to tell him some of them. As soon as you have the opportunity please reassure him that I leave everything in the loving Heart of Our Most Holy Mother Mary and I hope she will bless the father, the daughters and this, her least Institute.

With regard to your recommendations about Milan be assured, my dear friend, that I will do my very best. On the other hand I have to confess that the more time passes the more I feel my own need of God in order to do what has to be done in an edifying and agreeable way. I will keep my promise about the (Spiritual) Exercises for the ladies. Please don’t worry about it in the least because I will see to it all, and besides, you already know how exact and accurate our mutual friend Visconti. She herself has already written to me about it.

As you can see I am very busy here, since we have just had the election of the new superior of this house on Thursday 1st of December. The choice fell on the good Angelina who you know so well and Beatrice was elected vice superior. Now I am trying as best I can to settle all the other duties. My friend Matilda edifies everyone in the house. I really should not be so bold as to bother you who are in the midst of so many important things, with all these trifling matters. But you see, I am so certain of your concern for us that I talk about things that, although very small in themselves, are important to you.

Best wishes to your excellent husband the Count, and please do me the favor to give my respects to Mrs. Cecca.

I embrace you with much love the most sincere friendship and I declare my unwavering respect.

Verona, 11 December 1825
Countess Durini, with her husband, as in 1819, is travelling all over Italy. She is presently in Naples, but while staying in Rome, she had sent her friend a papal blessing. In thanking her for this, Magdalene tells her about the possibility of a foundation in the Papal City as this had been suggested to her, but as something rather far in the future. However, Magdalene thinks it necessary to indicate now how the foundation should be organized in that particular city, so far from Verona, hence posing even more serious problems for the novitiate.

My dearest friend,

See what it means, my dear Carolina, to have friends who travel! One ends up sending letters all over the world! This is the first time I write to Naples and I write not only to reply to your very welcome letter of December 24th, which I received on January 1st, but also because I am very concerned to know whether you had a good journey to Naples. As you know, I have no experience of that route but I have heard that it can be a rather dangerous journey. I don’t know whether the secretary who was working for you in Rome is still with you. If he isn’t, it would be enough if you just send me a few words such as: “I’m well, I had a good journey and will be staying in Naples for one or two months” that’s all.

I really do not know how to thank you, my dear friend, for your constant care for me and for all the trouble you take to help us. May God reward you for everything. We shall certainly not forget to pray for you and for your husband, the Count, because I know of no other way to show my gratitude. I was very much encouraged and consoled by the blessing you obtained from the Holy Father, and my companions too were very happy.

My dear Carolina, you seem to think that I knew that the Count had had an audience with His Holiness, but from whom on earth would I have heard this, since I have no correspondence from Rome except from you when you are there? As you know I write only very rarely to the Cardinal, the Pope’s Vicar¹ and, I didn’t do it after replying his last letter, as I have told you this last December.

Knowing how very important it would be for our poor little Institute to obtain what I desire. I have, as I wrote before, entrusted the whole matter to the heart of our Most Holy Loving Mother Mary. After receiving your letter of the 24th of last month, I sent you the plans for our foundation in Rome. You couldn’t have answered better on my behalf. The Cardinal also mentioned it in his last letter to me, though as something rather far in the future, and I replied telling him that I am always ready to obey the Holy Father’s wishes and those of the Cardinal himself. However, it seems that the Lord wants to continue to use you to help us in the spreading of the Institute, so when you return to Rome I will take advantage of the kindness you always show me. I shall tell you what I have in mind for this foundation because I think it is actually better that you, rather than I, speak about this and, besides, being

¹ Cardinal Zurla Placido, the Pope’s Vicar.
² LEO XII, the Pope ANNIBALE SERMATTEI della GENGAP. He was born in the castle of the Genga on August 22nd, 1760, and died in Rome on February 10th, 1829. Was ordained priest in 1783, was made Bishop of Tiro and carried out many a Nuncio’s functions. In 1820 became the Vicar of Rome. He openly manifested his opposition to the politics of Consalvi who had already attracted the hostility of many Cardinals. His election as a Pontiff (28.09.1823) was not very easy, but he soon knew how to give a proper address (sway) to the life of the Church. (Da F. Fonzo, Enciclopedia Cattolica, p. 1157., c.1° e 2°)
able to speak directly to those concerned, you are in a better position to negotiate. I cannot
tell you how much I feel obliged to Father Giulio Dugnani. I recalled that when Mgr Zoppi came back from Rome I overheard how he was meant to pursue the concentration of the Monasteries, of a very limited number in those of their Order, but (actually consisting) of a greater number. If the matter did not materialize we won’t talk about it, but if it did actualize, I think that the Holy Father could easily assign us one of those Monasteries in all freedom. I’d wish it as far as it is possible, neither will I be in a hurry were it feasible to have it not far from some capitals, thinking that of these in Rome there must be many. As for the furnishing of the rooms, let it be known that we only need poor and cheap items. In relation to the young ladies, whom you wisely propose that they would send them to us here for the novitiate, according to the custom we have for the foundations close to some of our House, this is what I think. You already know that if the House is established, the novices joining us, would bring what is needed for them, but I wouldn’t propose without due counsel. Because of the great distance, I don’t think it right that they should send Roman girls here. The uncertainty of the issue, makes me very unhappy.

Everything considered, the difficulty of the matter shows me that, when the locality would be fixed and the foundation established, it is better that a maintenance for a small number of subjects would be assigned, and that I would receive them here and educate them. Regarding Rome, I wish that the burden of their maintenance would take place, when I would bring them to Rome to establish the foundation. However, if the Holy Father would desire that the foundation would be hastened, I would leave here the subjects to be formed, and would bring with me those already formed. In the meantime, it would be very good that, if there were willing young girls, well provided for, and endowed with our vocation, that they could be prepared, without any engagement. I deem it too important that nobody would join us, who, because she doesn’t know our Institute in advance, would after regret the step taken.

Do take it as necessary that this deal would be made by you with your usual prudence. Besides all this, in spite of the distraction you signal you have, assist me with your prayer, and as you are in Naples, I would like to signal to you a place of great prayer, if it withheld past vicissitudes. This is the Sacred Hermitage of Virgins of Our Holy Immaculate Mary, instituted by the Venerable Orsola Benincasa. If you do have a chance to get to such a holy place, do pray for you and also for me. Those holy virgins were assisted by the Teatine Religion and annexed to the hermitage there was a monastery of Teatine Virgins, and they registered a little scapular of Mary Immaculate.

From Naples let’s come back to Milan; The parish priest writes to me that the third week in Lent the Exercises of the noble Ladies will take place, therefore infallibly he wants me there for the Glory of God and also to please you, so be at ease. May the Lord grant that all be well. Farewell, my dear friend. I thank you again for everything. My compliments to your husband, the Count, together with my thanks. Do wish Mrs. Checca. Accept the

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3 DUGNANI Don GIULIO, a Milanese patrician placed on the list of the clergy by F. Radice in «Antonio Rosmini e il clero Ambrosiano», Milano, 1964, p. 118.
4 ZOPPI Mgr. Francesco Maria, parish priest of St. Stephen in Milan, was the director of the works of M. of Canossa after the death of Pacetti. He was elected Bishop of Massa Carrara, where he spent ten years. His benevolence towards the Institute never failed; as a matter of fact, he named the Institute his own heir to allow the extension of the works of Charity. He was a Doctor of “both laws” (Cfr. C. Tronconi, Note sullo sviluppo dell’Istituto Canossiano in Milano, Opera Inedita, p. XXVIII)
5 Foundress of the Teatine Congregation (Naples 1547-1618), or Congregation of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, its hermitage situated in the solitude of Monte S. Elmo near Naples.
6 Chronologically before the Congregation of the Regular Clerics; was founded in Rome in 1524 by S. Gaetano Thiene and aimed at reforming the clergy and the Christian people through a very exemplary priestly life and the exercise of an austere apostolate (Cfr. F. Andreau, in Enciclopedia Catt., vol XI, p. 1814, c.2a)
7 Scapular; a little sign or image worn around the neck.
greetings of my companions, the compliments of Father Francesco. Adieu from my heart, I remain with my constant bond of friendship

N.B. Autographic rough copy, with various corrections and with concepts somewhat incomplete

..
Durini’s letter, though brief, reassures Magdalene who, while her friend is still in Naples, heard that the Vesuvius is erupting. However there was no harm done to the travellers. Magdalene lingers on giving news about Milan. More important, she announces that she has received the Imperial Decree of the donation of the Convent of St. Francis in Trent.

V.G. M.  My dearest friend¹

I come to meet you in Rome with these two lines, my dear friend, where I don't doubt, you have returned happily for a while. I thank you for the two lines you kindly sent me from Naples. They brought me great consolation, because a person who doesn't know or think how much is my affection for you, told me that there has been an eruption of the volcano Vesuvius, and as a proof she added, that there was an earthquake here, which this same person experienced. To tell you the truth, ordinarily, I am able to feel an earthquake in a particular way, and even if I am asleep, I wake up. But this time I did not feel it. Your short letter, therefore was doubly dear to me.

I was amused to hear about the miracles, you tell me that are wanted in Naples. This would embarrass me, as I do not work any other miracle that those of Mount Baldo.

If the people of Naples themselves work the miracles, then it is alright. On your return, you will relate to me everything. Meanwhile, I finally have the pleasure of telling you that, after a lot of difficulties, everything is settled about the Spiritual Exercises in Milan. Seeing that the matter was being held up, I offered myself to go over there to get it going.

I wrote to the Parish Priest, who did all he could for them.

He did not write to me yet about the conclusion, but our Elena tells me that Fr. Malerbe and Fr. Milani will be the preachers and that they will begin during the fourth week in Lent. God willing, I intend to go there in the third week. May God assist us so that these spiritual Exercises may be fruitful for His glory.

I must tell you, my dear friend, a thing which I am sure will bring you great joy. During these days, I have been privately informed from Trent that the Sovereign Decree, with which His Majesty² deigns to donate to me the premises of St. Francis³, has arrived. I am waiting for the official notice of such a Decree from this Imperial Government. Before the convent can be inhabited, many months will pass, because it needs to be repaired.

When you have the chance to meet His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar⁴ convey to him my humble respects and kindly communicate this matter to him. I too will have the honour of writing to him for this purpose.

Verona, St. Joseph’s, 1 February 1826

My heartfelt greetings to the Count your husband, and to all the Milanese gentlemen we know, if they are still there, especially to the Dugnani⁵. I end with my best wishes.

¹ NB. Letter written by Magdalene, but not signed.
² Francis I.
³ The Convent of St. Francis was a monastery of the Friars Minor. After the suppression, it was used by the military. Those Religious did not want to return to take possession of it because it was in a dilapidated condition.
⁴ Cardinal Zurla (Ep.I, lett. 339, n.2)
⁵ Fr. Giulio Dugnani (Ep.I, lett.177, n.2 and lett.340, n.3)
Durini is going back to the North of Italy. In the meantime, the two friends had written to each other, but their letters crossed. Magdalene still mentions a possible foundation in Rome and announces that she is going to Trent with Margherita Rosmini, who, on the evening of 16th February, will wear the religious habit. Since the official announcement of the imperial donation has arrived, she will go to Trent with Margherita to see what is needed for the foundation.

My dearest friend

16 February 1826

Our letters crossed, my dear friend, since yesterday morning I sent a letter to the post-office for you and yesterday evening I received the dear letter you wrote to me from Rome in the month of February, but without a date. Therefore, I try to answer you promptly, but without knowing if my letter will still find you there. To tell you the truth, I would do very gladly without that cough of yours that seems to follow mine. I thought that the fine air of Rome would spare me this compliment.

Therefore, if you are still there, I would be very happy if you can inform Fr. Giulio Dugnani¹ about the matter, because, as I have always said, I am always at the disposal of the Holy Father, not only in principle but also as far as method is concerned. If I ever allowed myself to express an opinion it was only because I thought that, following the way proposed by me, his order could be executed with greater facility.

If, before leaving, you have the chance to see His Eminence Zurla again, kindly wish him on my behalf and beg him to continue his paternal protection on the Institute. Tomorrow, God willing, I will leave for Trent so as to be back on Saturday. I shall go to Milan next week. I will pray for you. Do pray for me too because I am in great need.

You can tell the Prelate about our Elena² and make him understand that our Superiors want our houses to carry out the Rules fully. So they wish to change the Superiors even here. However, the Parish priest is not convinced that this should take place this time. Therefore, the more time we have to pray, the better will be the outcome.

I beg you to convey him my greetings when you meet His Eminence Zurla. Today I shall write to him too. You are travelling and I, too, am travelling. On Monday, God willing, I will leave for Trent³ with my dear Rosmini⁴ who will take the habit⁵ this evening. Know that

¹ Fr. Giulio Dugnani, belonging to a patrician family from Milan
² Elena Bernardi having finished her term as Superior, should be changed according to the Rules. But the Parish Priest, Mons. Zoppi, does not agree to this. (Ep.I, lett. 278, n. 1).
³ The Foundation at Trent that took place on 21st June 1828 in the ex-Convent of the Friars Minor in the periphery of the city (now named Piazza Venezia). The Convent with its big Church and orchard, was acquired from the State Property Office by Margherita Rosmini, who was appointed as its first superior (A.C.T.).
⁴ The sister of Antonio Rosmini, ROSMINI-SERBATI MARGHERITA (Gioseffa), was born at Rovereto on 11.9.1794, of a noble family. She entered the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity at Verona on 2.10.1824. After her novitiate she was elected superior of the House of Trent (1828), of which Magdalene considered her the foundress. She died at Verona on 15.6.1833. « An ardent soul, a noble and generous spirit, very intelligent and with big and tender heart, she shared Magdalene's great love for the poor, her deep humility and the ideals of a life dedicated to works of charity ». The letters exchanged by them from 1821 to 1824 when Margherita Rosmini was not yet a Religious but had come to know about the spirit of the new institution, are of great interest. (Cfr. Benelli, op. cit. pag. XIII).
⁵ The Religious Habit.
His Majesty⁶, our August Sovereign, has deigned to donate to me the said monastery. Now I go only for a visit to see the place myself and to decide on all the measures necessary for the repair of the house and for everything else."

I hope to be back on Saturday. Then, next week, God willing, I shall go to Bergamo via Milan. Goodbye, my very dear friend. It will be so good to see you.

Don't doubt about my poor prayers. Pray for me too. Greetings to the Count your husband, to Dugnani and the other persons from Milan whom we know. Wish Mrs. Cecca for me. Have a good journey. Goodbye, I truly declare that I am and will always be.

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NB. A rough copy, without a signature.

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⁶ Francis I.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

For the first time Magdalene writes from Trent to Durini and tells her how the function of the canonical erection took place. It was held by the Prince Bishop with the same method followed in Milan. Now Margherita Rosmini should send a gift to a «respectable person», that is, the reproduction in gold and ivory of the medal, that she and her companions wear around the neck. Since only in Milan an artist can be found who can make a true jewel, Durini is entrusted to take charge of it and send the various estimates to Magdalene.

V.G. M. My dearest friend

This is the first time I write to you from Trent, my dear friend. Since, out of your goodness and friendship, you have always been troubled for all the Houses of the Daughters of Charity, thus, as soon as this one is established I must come to trouble you for this one too. First, however, I want to tell you that I am in good health, thanks to the Lord. We are in a pleasant and beautiful convent which, like the Church, is called the Convent of Our Lady of Sorrows. Last Saturday, the solemn canonical erection took place. The Prince Bishop followed the same method as the one used in Milan. He too blessed the veils and medals as His Eminence did.

He also gave us a beautiful homily. He celebrated Mass and gave us Communion. After the Te Deum, he concluded the celebration with a solemn pastoral blessing.

There were eight companions, together with me at the celebration. These will start the foundation here.

First of all I beg you to entrust us to the Lord that we may accomplish something good. Remember me above all, since the heavy weight of responsibilities is increasing, and I am becoming hunch-back.

Let us come to the trouble I am going to give you. My good friend and companion, Rosmini, wishes to have a souvenir made for a very pious and respectable person. Due to the circumstances, I advised her to give him a gold tableau with the image of Our Lady of Sorrows on ivory, a coloured copy of the one we have. I think that on the other side of the medal there could be the picture of the Heart of Mary pierced by the sword, but crowned with roses and lilies, and surrounded with splendour. Neither here, nor in Verona is there any painter who does similar paintings. Therefore, I thought of asking you if you could kindly try to get information if in Milan there would be such a person. If you find someone, kindly ask the companions for an image of our tableau, and explain your intention to some helpful person, so as to ask this painter what would be the expense, and let me know it with your usual gentleness and promptness. You understand well that it is necessary that the picture should be beautiful. Rather nothing than something common. However, try to ask how much only the picture of Mary Most Holy would cost, if there should be a great difference in prices. For the other side (of the medal) we could decide in another way.

I hope that your health continues to be good, and also that of the Count your husband. I beg you to convey to him my regards, together with those of my grumbling secretary, Cristina, who also conveys to you her greetings. Greet Lady Cecca for me. Embracing you heartily, full of friendship and attachment to you, I am and will always be

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1 Mons. FRANCESCO SAVERIO LUSCHIN, from the region of Carinzia. He was provincial councillor of Tyrol, which had its headquarters at Innsbruck.
2 Margherita Rosmini, Superior at Trent.
3 An oval-shaped medal like the one that Magdalene had chosen as part of the Habit of the Institute. It bore the image of the Sorrowful Virgin and was worn around the neck.
Yours, my dearest friend

Trent 28 June 1828

When you see the Parish Priest, convey to him our regards, and ask him to pray for us.

Your most obliged friend
Magdalene of Canossa
Daughter of Charity

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4 NB. Letter written by Cristina Pilotti and signed by Magdalene.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Rosmini is ready to pay for the medal according to the estimate sent from Milan, as Magdalene had asked for in her letter dated June 28. Meanwhile, Magdalene is getting ready to leave for Rimini by the middle of September. She asks for prayers and describes her meeting with a holy Religious who had foreseen a good future for the nephew of Durini, the son of the deceased Marquises Arconati.

V.G. M. My dearest friend,

Your goodness does not surprise me as I have continuous proofs of it, but it redoubles my sense of gratitude.

I had already prepared the answer to your pleasant letter. But the card that our good Teresa has sent, and that I received this morning, made me decide to hold back the letter I prepared and to write another, in order not to create confusion. Therefore, as I thank you warmly, I wish to tell you that our friend Rosmini¹ is very happy to pay five luigi² to the painter, who, I am already sure, will make something really beautiful. As for the material, what concerns me most is that it should be elegant and proper, not like ours that seem to be like boxes. Regarding the type of material, I would say, to give you a clear idea, that it will be for a Prelate. As you know, in similar cases, the elegance is more important than the value of the material. I beg you to use your discretion. (NB. Four lines and a half are cancelled here).

To have an idea, let me also know, through Teresa³, and with a card as you have done this time, how long it will take to have this tableau made. I forgot to tell you that I would like that the picture of our Lady should be a copy of our (medal), because the person to whom I am going to give it wants such a picture. Of course, in miniature and in colour it will be surely more beautiful and more expressive. But this is exactly what we are looking for, provided it resembles the other. I thank you once again for your letter, for your card, for your concern in helping me, well, for everything, as well as for partaking in the new blessings that the Lord deigns to impart on us even in this House⁴, which, by the Divine Mercy, is getting stabilised, day by day.

I am quite happy to hear very good news also about Milan. It makes strides like a giant, through the boundless charity of the people of Milan, and of you, the first among these. I have noted everything because our good Teresa informs me about the various novices who have joined, and, what is more consoling is to hear, that they are good-natured, happy and full of fervour.

Here I am now to speak to you about my projects in the not so distant future. I tell you my ideas, but we will see if the Lord will allow me to carry them out. Around the 6th of August I plan to return to Verona to settle so many affairs that one month will not be enough. About the middle of September I would like to leave for Rimini. But until I reach Verona, I cannot be precise about anything, because if I can manage to settle everything earlier, and hasten my departure, I would do it very gladly, because of the season, and because there is a lot of pressure from Rimini.

I will write to you more precisely when I get to Verona. Meanwhile, kindly pray for me and get others to pray a lot for me, as I am in great need of prayers, as you may easily guess.

¹ Margherita Rosmini, Superior at Trent (Ep.I, lett. 342, n. 3).
² LUIGI was a French gold coin worth 24 lire, named after the King Luigi XIII. In France the coin was worth 20 francs.
³ Teresa Spasciani (Ep. I, let. 279, n. 9).
⁴ The recent foundation in Trent.
Rosmini and Cristina send you their wishes. Together with me, Cristina too conveys her compliments to the Count. She will serve you in everything. I want to tell you something that consoled me a lot and I will tell it to you alone. Yesterday, for some business, I had a chance to meet a Religious who everybody considers as a saint. Speaking of the union of the hospital in Milan, we spoke of your sister Teresa\(^5\) and I, out of prudence, spoke of your Beppino\(^6\) of his unfortunate state of being so far away. This Religious lifted his eyes to heaven, and then said that he wondered what God’s will is for him. I understood that the Lord finally will sanctify him. You will say that these are beautiful words. But since they consoled me so much, I repeat them to you as well.

I embrace you heartily, and leave you in the Most Holy Heart of Mary, full of gratitude, of attachment and friendship. Kindly greet Mrs. Cicca for me.

Yours, my dearest friend

Trent, from the Convent of the Sorrowful Virgin
18 July 1828

Your most affectionate friend forever
Magdalene Daughter of Charity\(^7\)

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\(^5\) The deceased Teresa Arconati Trotti
\(^6\) Giuseppe Arconati who lost both parents. He was the nephew of Carolina Duirini (Ep.I, lett. 125, n. 2).
\(^7\) NB. The Canossian Archives in Rome have a rough copy of this letter that was then recopied by Cristina Pilotti and signed by Magdalene.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Magdalene and Carolina agree to meet in Bergamo. Magdalene informs her friend about the day of her departure and arrival.

My dearest friend

I anticipate the joy of embracing you, my dear friend, with these few lines. I am pleased to tell you that tomorrow morning, Monday the 17\textsuperscript{th}, I will leave from here. On Tuesday, God willing, I will be in Bergamo. Whoever of us reaches there first, will wait for the other. I shall tell you all the rest orally. Full of attachment, gratitude, and with a constant friendship I am

Yours, my dearest friend

Verona 17 August 1828

Your Magdalene\textsuperscript{1}

\textsuperscript{1} NB. The letter is signed by Magdalene.
Magdalene of Canossa is in Rome for the approval of the Rules. She is a guest in a good hotel. Besides, she is making a brief visit of the places in Rome. She expresses her own feelings. The layout of the letter, which is in her handwriting, is rather disorderly.

My dear friend, I embrace you. I am well. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to Mr. Bolognesi\(^1\). I must speak to you about a happy affair, however with our good ambassador.

Next time I may perhaps speak to you about my return. Mr. Bolognesi found a good hotel for me. I am grateful to you also for this.

When you write to him, please thank him. This morning I visited St. Peter’s\(^2\) for the first time. To tell you the truth, it is stupendous. According to me, as far as the layout of the city is concerned, Milan is more beautiful. I embrace you heartily. Pray for me, and think of me forever as

24 October

Your dearest friend

Magdalene\(^3\)

Give news of me to both our Houses.

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\(^1\) Bernardo Bolognesi, agent in Rome of Mons. Traversi.

\(^2\) The Basilica of St. Peter in Rome

\(^3\) Letter written by Magdalene
Magdalene was about to return, when the inclemency of the season forced her to stay in Rome for a longer period and, for the time being, without the possibility of fixing a definite date. She describes to her friend how she spent her days in Rome and what route she would have chosen for her return. But this seems to be dangerous. In Rimini she is to meet a young noble Lady, Isabella Ferrari, and she will accompany her to Verona to join the Institute.

V.G.M. My dearest friend

Rome, 8 December 1828

I reply on behalf of your Bernard, and to your cordial letters, my dear friend. I had added a few lines to the letter of Mr. Bolognini. This time I want to write to you more in detail, hoping that you will not grumble when you hear that I will be stopping here in Rome for some more weeks. Know that I had settled the date of my departure, that should have been on the 3rd. I had been to pay my respects to His Excellency our worthy Ambassador. Not having the courage to do so also to the Holy Father, I begged the eminent Cardinal Vicar to do it for me and to ask for an apostolic blessing on my journey. The benevolent and excellent charity of our Supreme, Universal Shepherd, deigned to answer that he would grant me another chance to kiss his feet.

I tell you the truth, besides this opportunity, I had the luck to stop here on the 3rd. The weather was horrible. Here we felt the effects of the great cold that came about. It made me reflect whether I should undertake such a long trip in such a season. From your letter dated 17th November, which I received only on Thursday, the 3rd, I made note of the road that you point out to me as having a milder climate, and where there are no mountains. But know that I have to pass through Rimini, as I have to take Lady Ferrari with me. She will return to Verona in order to enter our Institute. Monsignor Calsiocane, whose compliments I convey to you, had made such a description of the bad roads he found, coming from Massa, that even if I had no appointments, I would not have travelled through that road. Yesterday, hearing that there had been snow even in Furlo, through which I have to pass, I reflected all the more on this long trip. Today I heard that around Collefiorito there is an abundant snowfall. In Florence too there is much snow. Being advised by everyone, I have now resolved to stop here until the beginning of January, by which time, they tell me, the worst weather will have passed. So now I stop here. I will inform you when it is time to leave.

If the roads are good, God willing, I will leave. Otherwise I shall stay here until I can make the trip safely and peacefully. I believe, my dear friend, that your friendship and concern will praise my prudence, and that you are pleased with it. On the other hand,
supposing that I was to leave, I went to take leave of the Holy Father, to whom I said that my friend Durini would have kissed his feet. I assure you that he most cordially blessed you, and also the dear Viscounti and Count Mellerio. Meanwhile, as I do not much like going out, during these many days, I will go to see some churches in Rome. I heard the pipers who remind me how much you like them. Without having planned it, I will be here for the great solemnity of Christmas.

Well, these Roman gentlemen might think that I am a very insipid person, because I have no interest to see anything. I spend my time, generally speaking, always in this beautiful apartment that the excellent Mr. Bernard has found for me. It is very comfortable. One does not feel the winter season, as it is well protected and yet in the centre of the city. This morning Count Pellicani came to visit me. He asked me to convey his compliments to you. Our friends here, that is Donna Maria Corsini Marioni and dear Giovannina Patrizi Somaglia treat me with great gentleness. I had lunch with the Princess of Hohenlohe, your acquaintance, as it seemed to me a holy action to keep company to a poor blind woman. I have seen, or rather, visited St. Peter’s, St. Mary Major’s, St. John in Lateran, the Gesù, and some Churches where there are saints to whom I have some devotion, because, as you know, I belong to the Kingdom of Mount Baldo and am from Verona.

I beg you to give good news from me to both our Houses. If I am able, I will enclose a card for our dear Elena, and below I will write a few lines for my Teresa.

I hope that Fr. Giulio Dugnani will keep improving, as I really wish. Mr. Bernard conveys to you his compliments. Please convey mine and those of my Cristina and of Mr. Bernard too, to the Count, your husband. I forgot to answer you about your desire, that I get from the Lord the miracle of bi-location. You see, my dear friend, you are much ahead of me. Therefore I leave to you the power of miracles, because if I start working them, then yes, I will be in trouble. I have no time to breathe anymore. Already about my prophecies, you have a clear proof in the death of your horses and of your poor servant. So that is enough. Cordially embrace my very dear Visconti for me. Please pay her my respects on behalf of the eminent Castiglioni, who esteems her as much as we do.

If you see our friend Somaglia, embrace her, and tell her that I am very obliged to her dear Giovannina, and also to her children, especially Virginia who is very affectionate. She too has been granted the blessing of the Holy Father. Greet Mrs. Cecca for me.

I embrace you heartily. My respects to the Parish Priest, to whom the apostolic Blessing has been extended.

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9 Count Giacomo Mellerio, benefactor of the Institute at Milan
11 Donna Maria Corsini Marioni, friend of Magdalene of Canossa
12 Daughter-in-law of Somaglia, the sister of Count G. Mellerio (Ep.I, lett. 279, n. 11).
13 He belonged to the famous German family of HOHENLOHE, descendents of the Lords of Weikersheim and who got their name from their castle at Hohenlohe, near Uffenheim, in Franconia, which was the original property of the family. Among the contemporaries of Magdalene, the most famous were: Ludwig Aloysius (1765-1829) who in 1807 was the Governor of Galizia, his brother Gustav Adolf (1823-1896) a Cardinal and an enemy of the Jesuits, and Costantin (1828-1896) an Austrian General (Cfr. Enciclopedia Italiana, vol. 18, pag. 539, c. la e 2a).
14 The Roman Basilica in Vatican City, where the Pope resides.
15 A Roman Basilica, now the seat of the Vicar of the Pope.
16 The CHURCH OF THE GESU’. It is the main Church of the Jesuits in Rome and one of the most important in the Capital. Begun in 1568 by Vignola, it was completed by Giacomo della Porta (1575) who also designed the stupendous facade. The interior is one wide nave, with several side chapels. The rich decorations of bronze and marble, and the frescoes are a classical example of the exquisite taste of those times until the end of the 1500s.
17 Fr. Giulio Dugnani, of a patrician family from Milan.
18 Cardinal Castiglioni, the future Pope Pius VIII (Ep. I, lett. 348, n. 12).
With the greatest affection I declare myself.

Your most obliged and affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa Daughter of Charity

Goodbye, my dear Teresa

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19 NB. Copied by Cristina Pilotti, and signed by Magdalene.
The Countess Durini had entrusted Teresa Spasciani to convey to her some answers on matters that had to be mentioned to Magdalene, but the Marchioness answers directly because she has various problems to solve with the help of her friend. First of all the custodians of the house of Via Signora should be dismissed according to the advice of the parish priest. There should be no pressure for the Convent of St. Bernardino in Milan instead it should be necessary to ask the Emperor for the gift of a place in Burano. The widow of Monza, whose religious vocation is still uncertain, should be directed by Canon Tosi, because Magdalene feels that it is not proper for her to direct the lady. Finally, the matter that concerns her most. The emperor had already shown his concern in giving to Bergamo that had no Bishop, a worthy Prelate. The niece of Durini, the Countess of Castelbarco, could suggest to the Viceroy the Bishop of Massa, Mons. Zoppi who finds himself constricted to a very small Diocese, and who would really be a blessing for Bergamo. The Holy Father, knowing that Monsignor well, will certainly appreciate the imperial choice.

V. G. M. My dearest friend

Bergamo 25 April 1829

The other day, our good Teresa sent some of your errands to me, my dear friend. Since I must write to you because I have been asked to involve you in a matter which I think will be good if it succeeds, I thought of answering you directly also about what you told me through Teresa.

Regarding dismissing, or keeping Mr. and Mrs Frattini I spoke about it to the Parish Priest, who thinks that it is better that they go, therefore I leave it to the discretion of the Superior and I agree with him. As for the Convent of St. Bernardino, for various reasons I do not think that I am going to ask His Majesty for it. The first one is that because the Convent is for sale, it means that the Convent does not belong to the Sovereign. He told me repeatedly in another meeting, when I begged him for some buildings, that he would give it to me if the convent were his, but in this case, to give to me he would have to pay for it. This is always a very difficult thing to get, especially now that the Sovereign knows that we have a magnificent place. Secondly I came to know, that without my knowledge, the holy Patriarch of Venice has taken effective steps so that His Majesty may grant a place on similar conditions to the Parish Priest of Burano, in order to establish our little Institute.

Well, if his Majesty wants to do it, he would have to pay four or five thousand in Austrian currency, as it was estimated at six. As far as I know, and I am sure that you are aware of the great needs of those poor people, it would be an indiscretion to ask for something also for Milan at this moment. The appeal for poor Burano for which the poor Vicar of St. Bartholomew is so concerned, would be in danger of being abandoned. I tell you more. In the brief stay of mine in Milan I tried to be informed about the Convent of St. Bernardino, and I came to know that first of all there is no orchard any more, because it was alienated, and the

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1 Teresa Spasciani. (Ep.I, lett. 279, n. 9).
2 Custodians of the House at Via della Signora.
3 JACOPO Cardinal MAURO, bishop of Ceneda, and patriarch of Venice from 1827 to 1851.
4 BURANO, a district of Venice one four small islands in the Venetian lagoon. It was famous for its traditional lace-making. (Cfr. Diz. De Agostini, Op. cit. pag. 162). A foundation had been requested for the place.
5 The deceased vicar of St. BARTOLOMEO, the Church situated at the foot of the Bridge of Rialto. There are some famous paintings of S. Del Piombo. The Square having the same name is one of the most frequented since it is the meeting point of the roads that connect the localities of Cannaregio, Castello, S. Polo e S. Croce with that of S. Marco (Cfr. U. Fugagnollo, Venezia così, Mursia p. 372).
surrounding walls are in a bad state so that it would be a big expense to restore it. Therefore I am not thinking of it any more.

Then, with regard to the widow of Monza⁶, whom, out of your goodness, you would like me to direct, my dear Carolina, miserable as I am, I cannot do anything but entrust her to Our Lady of Sorrows, as I have no prudent reason to follow her up in any way.

If the Theologian⁷ is not going to Rome, you could take up the matter with him, but at the moment, we cannot do anything else but to pray. Perhaps, before leaving, he could entrust her to some worthy person, who will cultivate her vocation if the Lord gives it to her.

Now, my dear friend, that I have answered to all that you wanted them to tell me, here I am to carry out my errand to place Bergamo at your feet. You will say that I treat you better than a sovereign, but listen to what it is. You might have heard that this illustrious Diocese has no Shepherd because of the death of the one to whom both of us have conveyed our respects. His Majesty, who rightly loves this Country in a particular way, out of his great clemency, expressed special concern that this Diocese be provided with a suitable Prelate.

Since some know that the Monsignor of Massa ⁸ cannot continue in that abandoned Diocese, they might find him very suitable to govern this one. They would thus be very pleased to contribute to maintain such a worthy person, who, if he continues his stay over there, might soon lose his life.

You might ask me why I am writing this to you. I will tell you sincerely, though perhaps it will be superfluous. However I too, out of my veneration and concern for Monsignor Zoppi, listen to what, it seems to me, your niece, Countess of Castelbarco⁹; could try. You know how good as well as prudent she is. I think that you should beg her to speak about it to the very pious Prince Viceroy¹⁰, saying that she came to know about the clemency expressed by the Sovereign towards Bergamo in this meeting. Let her tell him the situation Monsignor Zoppi is in and his disposition not to be able to continue to be bishop of Massa. His Majesty would grant a great gift to the people of Bergamo by giving him to them as a Bishop. It would be a big consolation for Bergamo. By letting His Majesty know this, His Highness, without having to take on any commitment, would be doing a pleasant favour to him. As your niece is on vacation in a place close to Bergamo, nobody would guess how she came to know about this. In any case this attempt does no wrong to anybody. On the other hand, you may have some other better means than the one I am showing to you. Therefore, do it yourself, without showing that I have written to you about it, because, my dear friend, I have the Institute here, and if my wish for Bergamo fails, because someone else will come, I will not need to regret it, although, regarding what I am writing to you, there would be no reason for this, since no one has yet been nominated. I do it more frankly even because the present Holy Father knows Monsignor Zoppi and his situation very well. Anyway, he would know how to decide.

You will say that I am manipulating things, but I think that you will be pleased because he would find here his doctrine, his thinking, his mottos, a suitable surrounding, but most of all, a clergy of this Diocese worthy of this worthy shepherd, who cannot but form a saintly population. I would not have said it before Monsignor was, as he is, prepared to leave his present Diocese. I would love this for the good of this Country, and this would be good for him as well.

I understood from Teresa how the Lord is pleased to visit you with illnesses. Also in Verona I have Felicita who is more seriously ill. May the Lord be blessed for everything. If you write to me, address your letters to Verona, since I will be going there soon.  

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⁶ A lady who Durini wanted to entrust to Magdalene so that she might cultivate her vocation.
⁷ Canon Luigi Tosi
⁸ Mons. Francesco Zoppi, bishop of Massa
⁹ Of the FREGANESCHI family of Cremona, who had married Count Cesare Castelbarco.
¹⁰ Prince Rainieri, Viceroy of the Lombard-Venetian region.
greetings to the Count also on behalf of Cristina who conveys her respects to you too. With my greatest attachment to you dear friend.

Yours, dearest friend
Magdalene of Canossa, Daughter of Charity

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11 NB. Letter written by Cristina Pilotti, and signed by Magdalene of Canossa.
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Family ties have a strong impact on the heart of Magdalene, who forwards the letter of her sister, asking for information on whom her daughter should marry. Magdalene too cares a lot about having exact information.

V.G. M. My dearest friend

The matter I am going to write to you about, my dear Carolina, might sound very curious, but you also know what the duties of a family are. I cannot deny my attachment to my niece for whom I write to you. What could be more beautiful than this. I have to write to you regarding a marriage. Since both of us deal with each other in sincerity and simplicity, I find it better to insert my sister’s letter. I beg you to keep it secretly for yourself until my arrival in Milan. Do what is best, out of your prudence and friendship. I do not add a single word, as I entrust the matter to you. Send me an answer so that I may reply to my sister, who is in Ferrara. She went there to assist the other niece of mine, Mosti who gave birth to her second child. They tell me that everything went on well.

I hope to have the joy of embracing you in three or four weeks’ time, as I am thinking of making a flying visit to Milan.

Goodbye, my dear friend. I embrace you heartily, and I am forever

I am, my dearest friend

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa, Daughter

Bergamo (No date)

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1 The third daughter of Laura Canossa Maffei (Ep.I, lett.13, n.4)
2 Only the signature is written by Magdalene
TO CAROLINA DURINI

Durini should forward to Rome the Plan of the Institute of the Daughters of the Charity that Magdalene sends to her with an accompanying letter.

V.G. M. My dearest friend

I am sending you the Rules, and I beg you, before you leave, to address them to ……

My very dear friend, I think that last night you did not stop to visit me because you were afraid that I was excommunicated. At one time you treat me as an heretic, at another! Enough, I end because I am in a hurry to leave, and I beg you to recommend me to the Lord.

I will recommend you to Mary Most Holy so that She may bless you. I embrace you heartily and I declare myself

I am, my dearest friend

P.S. I am sending you also the letter for Rome.

Your very affectionate friend
Magdalene of Canossa
Daughter of Charity

PLAN OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY

The Institute of the Daughters of Charity, which we wish to establish officially in Venice, Verona and Milan, is according to the spirit of the Daughters of Charity of France, instituted by St. Vincent de Paul. It is adapted however, in practice, to the Italian customs and systems. These Daughters have a perfectly common life. They wear a modest dress, brown in colour, a black bonnet on their head and a medal of Mary Most Holy in the shape of a tableau as a neck pendant. They do not have any special distinguishing badge.

The Institute accepts virgins, but it also accepts widows with a good moral life. Excluded without any exception are those who are divorced, those who are married and whose husbands are still living although far way, or of whose death there is no sure legal proof, those who in order to reform their life, were to need to enter a secluded place, even though for a brief period. These measures are necessary for the good conduct, the good order and the security of an Institute totally dedicated to the cultivation and education of youth. Also not accepted is any other person who wishes to desire to retire in the Houses of the Institute to spend part or the whole of their life. The Institute itself renounces any advantage that may accrue to it in such cases.

The Daughters of Charity profess the customary three Vows in a simple form, but these last only until the Sisters stay in the Institute. These vows do not deprive the individuals of those civil rights which are their due, like hereditary succession or for any other reason, also because those who may wish to leave, are free to do so at any time.

The Rules of these Daughters have as their objective to perfect them in the spirit of charity toward God and neighbour so that formed in such a spirit, full of activity in their pious
and charitable exercises, they may become useful to society and particularly to that part of it which is most in need.

The number of Daughters necessary in each House of the Institute would be about thirty. The Houses of Venice, Verona and Milan have a total of thirty two.

The Institute does not need a permanent donation but only suitable premises. The Daughters of Charity have always maintained themselves through their own means, without any burden on the public or individuals. They will continue in this way, leaving the whole administration to their Superior, who will represent her own House in every circumstance. They are happy to be able to offer your Majesty a token of their respectful homage, employing themselves and all they have for the benefit of the poor. They also express their humble but lively gratitude for the gift given by your Sovereignty to their Foundress: that is, the gift to the Institute of the two premises, with the kitchen garden and the annexed small houses of St. Lucy in Venice and of the Saints Joseph and Fidenzio in Verona. They would be grateful for the gift of another property which they implore of the same clemency of Your Majesty in favour of their Foundress, in the much loved city of Milan, also because this city there are many good persons, willing to help in case Your Majesty, having to relieve other more pressing needs, were unable to give it to them. In the meantime, we will carry on our works of charity in the best way we can, in a rented house. But this means that in future, we would neither be able to receive the various postulants who have already asked to join these Daughters, or those who will be asking to do so, unless they have the means for their own maintenance. Then, when some benefactor, availing himself of your sovereign and most clement consent, already shown in favour of beneficent Institutes, were to give us some donations or any kind of valuables, we will utilize those goods in favour of admitting or maintaining a proportionate number of Daughters of Charity of proven vocation, but who lack means for their own livelihood, or of girls from the country. Of these we will speak presently, but everything will be done according to the will of the said benefactors.

The Daughters of the various houses of the Institute will regard and treat each other as sisters. They will have among themselves only a bond of charity, like that of the Salesians. This will be especially in communicating among themselves and in the exchange of personnel according to the various needs or circumstances of the House or of the individual sisters themselves. Of course, they must depend on their own Bishop. As for the internal running and economic administration, they will depend on their own superior. If, at the moment we were not following this, it is only because the three Houses existing now, have all been erected by Magdalene of Canossa herself.

OBJECTIVES exercised by the Daughters of Charity.

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NB. Parts of this letter are written in different handwritings.