

**THE ENGLISH EDITION OF
THE VENERABLE, SERVANT OF GOD,
MOTHER MARGHERITA DE BRINCAT'S
LETTERS**

This is the first complete edition of the Venerable, Servant of God, Mother Margherita De Brincat's letters, which we are presenting for the first time in English. Her letters were all written in Italian, except for one, which she wrote in the Maltese language of that period. We are in possession of these letters, we can say, in a miraculous way. Many others are lost, and we can hardly expect to come across any more in the future. Thus, they are precious, as they not only bear witness to the deep spirituality of this mystical soul, but are also the foundation on which the charism of the Congregation, she herself founded, is built. This can easily be perceived in those extracts inserted in the renewed Constitutions published in 1986. In 1992, these same extracts were collected, and others added, and published in the Synopsis, also in English, arranged according to, and compared with, these same Constitutions.

The desire to have an English translation of the letters in circulation has been felt for a long time, possibly since 1984 when the letters were collected and sorted out. However, the first edition was definitely expected to be in Italian. Moreover, a serious study was undertaken only when the Informative Process in the Cause of Mother Margherita's Canonization was introduced. This Process was formally initiated on the 7th July 1988 and concluded on the 17th of February 2002.

The Italian edition, of which we are presenting a translation into the English language, has been in circulation since November 2001. Now the English reader also has the opportunity of pondering the thoughts of this remarkable mystic. Her spiritual teachings lighten the heart of all those who read her letters. They are a source for profound reflection, which should lead us to live our relationship with God more authentically.

PRESENTATION

In my capacity as general Superior of the Congregation of the "Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus" I cannot repress in my heart the joy and apprehension in presenting the letters of our Foundress, the Venerable Servant of God Mother Margherita De Brincat of the Heart of Jesus, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her death.

I share this joy and apprehension with my sisters, as all of us have this great desire that Mother Margherita be known, loved and appreciated for her outstanding virtues, to the praise and glory of God, the giver of all good things.

We know that if a single word of the Gospel is received with availability and love it has the power to change a person, to make her a captivating point of reference and a guide on the road that leads to God.

Mother Margherita was one of these persons. She knew how to welcome with a profound and rare intensity, the word par excellence: God is Love. This truth, received with an ever-new wonder and supported without reservation, changed her existence into a lived, altruistic and captivating love.

We find a touching testimony of Mother Margherita's spirituality, wholly centred on Love, in the letters she wrote to her spiritual directors, to her sisters and to her nieces who were religious.

These letters manifest at least partially the inexhaustible ardour of her love for Jesus, her sweet Crucified Spouse, always present and constantly sought out by her in the Blessed Eucharist. They also allow us to catch a glimpse of the singular story of a simple creature, consumed in a mysterious way by the love of Christ, to whom she offered her own life, while allowing herself to be willingly and joyously immersed, with all her being, in the mystery of this divine love.

From these letters which are immensely valuable for they throw a glimmer of light on the uncommon spiritual experience of Mother Margherita, we may learn a wise and precious lesson: the simplicity of her relationship with God; faith and filial abandonment to his divine will; the apostolic ardour to make "the Love that is not loved because it is not known", known; the search for the real treasure for which it is worth giving up one's life completely, enlightened and sustained by the grace of the Triune God.

Without intending, in these letters Mother Margherita presents herself to us as an authentic teacher of evangelical life.

Above all, she is a teacher for us, Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus, her spiritual daughters. Moved by the spirit we raise to God our thanksgiving for giving us such a Mother, because with her heart immersed in the mystery of the Triune God and intimately united with Christ, she was a witness and prophet of God, the Love who is not loved because He is not known. Her preoccupation to make Love known so that He may be loved, which resounds ardently in her letters, constitutes a precious spiritual and apostolic inheritance for the Congregation, which she loved so profoundly and for which she worked and suffered so deeply.

But Mother Margherita can also teach others, if it is true that the essence of the Christian life consists in welcoming God as Love in one's life and corresponding generously. If we analyze her spiritual experience, as is evident in her letters, we can all draw useful stimulus for reflection, consideration and commitment.

Walking briskly and unceasingly on the way of Love, driven and supported by grace, Mother Margherita reached the highest peak of sanctity. Her letters, which allow us to learn of this itinerary at least slightly, encourage us to continue our journey on the way of Love, knowing that God has a unique and unrepeatable plan of sanctity for each one of us.

With this hope and wish, I offer Mother Margherita's letters for publication, while raising to God a hymn of praise and thanksgiving for the gift He has given us in her, to the glory of his Eucharistic Heart.

Msida - Malta

The Generalate, 4 October, 2001

Solemnity of the Feast of St Francis

*Sr. M. Anselmina Mifsud
General Superior*

INTRODUCTION

To know a person truly it is not enough to observe her behaviour externally in the successive events that unwind her existence. It is necessary to penetrate, as much as possible, into her interior world to discover the profound motivations that give vitality and dynamic impetus to her way of life.

This is also necessary when dealing with the Servant of God, Mother Margherita De Brincat (1862-1952), whose process for beatification is taking place in Rome by the Congregation for Saints.

Whoever knows her life¹, is strongly struck by a series of factors which characterize her: beginning with her courage and far-sightedness which enabled her ever since she was very young, to take over the guidance of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus, initiated about a year before in Victoria (Gozo - Malta) by Fr. Joseph Diacono². She merits the credit of giving it a clear charismatic identity and, having overcome the difficulties of the beginning, she enhanced its rapid growth and expansion.

Her life is tightly interwoven with that of the Congregation of which she was for a long time and repeatedly, general Superior. By right she is considered the Congregation's co-Foundress³, having taken up its guidance courageously in 1887 when it was faced with imminent danger of being suppressed.

The Sisters, starting with those who knew her personally⁴, have always loved and respected Mother Margherita as an authoritative and credible witness of their congregational charism. In her they have always found not only an enlightened teacher in understanding the common vocational gift better and a wise guide to live it faithfully, but also an admirable example of fidelity to the Rule,

¹ Cf. G. Aquilina, *Mother Margherita De Brincat, Evangelizer of Love* (Tip. Gutenberg, Malta 2000); P. Calliari, *Let us love Love. Biographical profile of Mother Margherita De Brincat* (Citta Nuova, Roma 1987). Cf. in the appendix, a biographical profile of her life.

² Cf. J. Bezzina, *Father Joseph Diacono, Founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus: 1847-1924* (PEG, Rabat-Gozo 2000).

³ This title is explicitly attributed to her in the document which announced her death to the sisters: "*Mother Margherita, Co-Foundress and ex-Superior General, died placidly, embraced by the Lord, at the Mother House, at the venerable age of 89*".

⁴ A confirmation of this is the sisters' reaction to the news of the serious illness which Mother Margherita suffered in January, 1940, when she was at Xaghra. In one of her reports, Sr Pacifica Xuereb refers to many sisters "*arriving from Malta and Gozo, sad because they were afraid of losing the one who had saved them and whom they loved with filial love; they wanted to see her, greet her and to hear a last word from her.*"

of an intense prayer life, of apostolic service, of availability to the most diverse services, of joyful acceptance of sufferings. And, in fact, Mother Margherita's life evidently carries not only the sign of her undeniable human qualities, but also and even more the impression of her eminent holiness.

Human holiness, a reflection and participation of God's holiness, is one in its essence, but numerous in its hues; the mysterious and powerful action of the Holy Spirit, when He finds correspondence to his gifts of grace, produces always new and authentic masterpieces of holiness. Mother Margherita is an eloquent confirmation of this; her life, like the tree which Jesus speaks about (cf. Mt 12, 33), has borne abundant good fruit because of its healthy roots from which it continually drew its vitality.

And so this question spontaneously arises: with what sustenance, docile to the action of the Holy Spirit, did Mother Margherita profoundly nourish her life, rendering it fruitful for herself and for others? We can find an answer, even if partially, from what she herself reveals through her words.

In fact we have a large number of Mother Margherita's writings. These are mainly her letters⁵ which allow us at least partially to discover the extraordinary wealth of her interior life. This is the principal motive that incited their publication on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her death, so that we too may partake of this wealth as much as possible.

The guiding thread

There are a little less than 200 letters which have been preserved and in all, these cover sixty years of her long life, although with empty periods: the first dated letter is that of 14-6-1891 (130)⁶, when she was 29 years old and had been general Superior for about a year; the last dated letter is that of 17-9-1951 (104), almost on the eve of her death (22-1-1952).

The recipients of these letters are many: numerous are those written to her two spiritual directors; even more numerous are those written to the Sisters, as

⁵ Besides the letters, addressed to different persons, 11 circular letters and 17 reports of her canonical visits are still preserved: they are relatively few, considering that Mother Margherita had filled and resumed her office as general Superior for a period of about 24 years.

⁶ The numbers within the brackets, which are many in this introduction, refer to the progressive system of numbers of the letters published in this volume.

a community and individually; others are addressed to two religious nieces or to other people.

What strikes us immediately in these letters, in a capturing and impressive way, is the inspiration of intense and ardent spirituality which pervades them from beginning to end. Whatever the occasion or the reason, Mother Margherita always felt the spontaneous and irresistible need to refer to the fulcrum of her life: the ineffable mystery of God-Love in whom she finds herself totally immersed and to whom, although aware in an all-consuming way of her unworthiness, she wishes to correspond with inexhaustible ardour.

In fact, in her letters there is a thought that occurs very frequently in various expressions: let us love Love; Love is not loved because He is not known; let us make Love known and He will then surely be loved... This thought is the key to reading Mother Margherita's spirituality and life: in fact we already find it in her first letters (130; 138) and then again in the last one (135, dated 8-9-1951). She considers and values everything in this perspective when she talks of herself as well as when she addresses others.

Mother Margherita speaks about herself above all else in the letters addressed to her spiritual directors. In very brief and precise words she was able to retrace her interior world, as shown in these letters, always focusing on these principal points: her understanding of God and Christ and the attitude of love that followed; complete abandonment to the will of God and filial trust in his paternal providence; the inexhaustible desire for intimacy with God, sought above all else in prayer and immolation of self; the ardent longing to make God known and loved, doing her best in her apostolate and offering herself as a victim of reparation; the ardent wish for heaven to satisfy her love in an everlasting communion with God.

The interior life which Mother Margherita permits to leak out in her letters addressed to the Sisters and to her religious nieces is identical, and it could not be otherwise. But the tone of her speech changes: very often, either spontaneously or in relation to specific situations, she offers her exhortations, encouragement and reminders to those with whom she is speaking so that they can live their religious vocation better, as a response of love to a gift of love. Hers were revealing words of an uncommon spiritual experience because she herself lived to the fullest what she reminds or asks of others, even if she presents herself under the humble guise of a poor sinner.

It is impossible to outline in a few pages the spiritual wealth contained in these letters, even because Mother Margherita seems to be carried away by the force of her sentiments and in a few lines often shifts (especially in the letters to her confessors) from one thought to another, seeking to put on paper what disturbed her spirit, forming a plan that follows only the heart's logic. But, with the hope of offering a panoramic vision, which serves as a stimulus for an attentive reading which allows a better realization of the many tones with which Mother Margherita regulates her theme of Love, we can briefly concentrate on some principal points.

God, the true and only Love

From the way she speaks of Him and in whatever way she considers Him (in his transcendent nature, in his Trinitarian mystery, in his paternal figure, in the person of Jesus...), Mother Margherita shows that she had a penetrating knowledge of God and an exalted experience which fill the mind with ecstatic wonder and which inflame the heart with passionate love.

The titles (which are like an interlacement of varied adjectives woven together) with which she sought to put down in words how she knew, contemplated and experienced God, are manifold and full of meanings. To give some examples: for her, God is the almighty Being, supreme, divine, holy (11; 14; 28; 44; 47; 73); He is the One and Triune (7; 11; 28; 40); God three times holy (13; 33; 34; 40; 41; 43; 49; 54; 114); the infinite Majesty (3; 44); the absolute and amiable All (7; 21; 28; 34; 44; 46; 109; 114); the eternal, omnipotent, infinite Love (3; 7; 37; 113; 114); the immense Ocean of goodness (25; 43; 113); the infinite Abyss of goodness (14; 16; 34; 39; 41; 45; 114); the paternal and eternal Bosom (22; 25; 46; 47; 50; 52); the Giver of every good (109; 120; 150; 155); the divine and infinite Mercy (30; 31; 53; 62); the divine and paternal Providence (13; 16; 19; 31)...

This list is certainly not complete, but it is already enough to help us understand the inexhaustible source from which Mother Margherita continually nourished her life. Just thinking of God (who he is and how he acts,) she was enkindled with love and fervour (3; 7; 28; 29). She was unable to translate in words what she experienced interiorly and what enkindled her heart (34; 37; 41; 43); and felt the irresistible need to adore and contemplate in an ecstatic silence (42; 46; 53; 57); allowing a free outburst of her fervour of love (40); she could not but love such tender Sweetness (3); it is sweet to love an

infinite Love (7; 28; 29); a Being so good (74)... From this followed her passionate and insistent invitation: let us love Love.

This profound attitude finds in Mother Margherita her most valid explanation in an enlightened theological and anthropological reasoning. This is how she expresses herself in a letter: *"What else, my dear and beloved daughter? Only love, pure love, love, love, love... What a sweet word is love! It is the heart's life. Therefore, love gives life to the heart, the heart is possessed by love. God being Love itself God himself needs to be the life of our heart"* (107). For this reason, it is natural and indispensable to live in God's love, as it is natural and necessary for fish to live in the sea (105).

In any case, when she seeks to express what most strikes her in God, who is her ineffable love, Mother Margherita does not use theological terms, but the spontaneous language of lovers. In fact, to give a significant example, many times she speaks of the mad Love of God three times holy (43; 109; 151); which fills her with a consuming passion which prevents her from continuing to talk about him, but which instils in her the desire to be immersed and lost in that immense Ocean (47). She strongly hears her Beloved's 'Voice' which attracts her (34; 62) and she also wishes to love to 'folly' (30; 75) and to consume herself completely in the pure flames of divine Love (6); it is a wish which exhausts and consumes her thus inciting her to offer herself completely to God with a vow written with her blood (11). Only those who love truly can allow such words to escape: *"Oh! my dear, do your utmost to make him loved for his goodness, for his infinite love, for what He is in himself What infinite love he merits! How good he is! If (for argument's sake) he were to punish us for having loved him, I would feel happy enough to have loved him at least once"* (110).

Mother Margherita does not stop wondering about the boundless and gratuitous love of God for humanity and of man's ingratitude towards such love (7; 13; 44; 50; 71). Likewise, she wonders at the certainty of God's love for her (41; 46; 49) and she does not remain insensible to this. In fact, her program of life, which she also sought untiringly to instill in others, can be summarized in this principle: love, love purely, and that is enough (12; 29; 44; 48; 79; 88; 90; 102; 122; 134; 149); love to madness (30; 57; 109; 111; 117); love is repaid with love (122; 155; 161; 162). And this, to give an example, is the most profound reason for her ardent thirst for new vocations to the religious life: to draw many girls towards divine love (7; 105; 110). But hers is a limitless wish; she wants to shout to everyone, *"at the top of her voice"* her ardent invitation to love Love

(111) and she will only be content when this wish is fulfilled (72). It is for this reason that, while she invites everyone to love Love together (16; 141; 156) she prays that everyone may grow in pure love (59).

In fact, her most ardent wish is to attain 'pure love' (1), to be completely consumed in the flames of pure and divine Love (6; 89; 119; 120); to be able to sing the sweet and dear *Fiat* of pure love (88): it is a wish that annihilates her (11). She wishes to die to herself to live and lose herself in God (14), convinced that all the rest is only vanity of vanities (138; 174). For the same reason, she wishes to love Jesus with his same Heart (8; 16; 22) and to be able to repeat with St. Paul (cf. Gal 2, 20): "*it is not I who live, but Christ lives in me*" (27; 122; 140). For this, she examines herself and asks for advice on how she can correspond to the love of God and to his numerous benefits (11; 14; 34), while she insistently asks for prayers (87; 134; 135; 136; 137) to belong wholly to Jesus (19; 46), to overcome the obstacles of her evil nature (18), to make reparation for her debts (118), never to disappoint the Sacred Heart of Jesus (20), to fulfill the divine Will till her last breath (175), to attain pure love (114; 119; 120)... to profit from the little time she has left (77)...

Mother Margherita, in her humility, is sincerely convinced of her personal unworthiness: she feels impure and ungrateful (40); she sees only misery in herself (46; 49); she considers herself a poor sinner (5; 31; 47; 94; 97); she is always preoccupied about not knowing how to profit from every occasion (96; 99; 123) and bemoans the many lost chances (127). This awareness never leaves her and torments and upsets her (22). Yet she aims high: many times she repeats her ardent wish to soar high (20; 40; 156).

Mother Margherita has a clear knowledge of the great distance that exists between God and her (47). For this, she confesses that she finds herself tormented by contrasting feelings (58; 110). In fact, she feels ashamed of herself and of her wishes to lose herself in God and at times she experiences a sense of fear (47). But then trust triumphs and instills courage in her; she does not find a better place than hiding in the abyss of the infinite goodness of her All (16). She is fully aware of her unworthiness (105; 139; 159), but she knows that God makes up for her poverty and she abandons herself trustingly in the infinite All (55). Even if at times she experiences an unpleasant sense of indifference and fear, the need of God remains strong and insuppressible (22): although she is aware of her ingratitude, yet she also has the joy of experiencing perfect union with her 'All'.

Mother Margherita sees in everything that happens a mysterious and providential manifestation of the love of God and she takes advantage of everything to correspond generously: from simple things, such as a letter from her spiritual director (3) to the grave disasters caused by the Second World War (1939 - 1945) which she sees as a manifestation of God's "justice", but also as a loving invitation to conversion (35; 38; 39; 42; 45; 47). In such a context of faith which enlightens every situation for her, it is natural to adore in humble silence the secret judgement of divine goodness (1; 39; 87).

Because of this, Mother Margherita's attitude of trustful abandonment in God is constant and unshakable. Accepting and doing God's Will in every circumstance is for her a strong point (2; 13; 17; 23; 25; 30; 31; 33; 41; 43; 63): the times in which she repeats her "*Fiat*" are numerous (that *Fiat* which is always sweet and dear, even if at times hard, like the acceptance of the new election to general Superior, an office to which she held herself incapable and unworthy of (2; 3) and she tirelessly invites the persons with whom she is conversing to do the same in all the situations of their life even the most difficult and painful.

She abandons herself, fully aware of the loving (even if often mysterious) providence of God: she is convinced of being the object of the loving and paternal (a word she uses often) "care" of God to whom she entrusts herself completely (1; 5; 16; 20; 21; 22; 24; 25; 31); she repeats with joyful gratitude her 'thanks' to Jesus whose beneficial presence she feels at every moment (3; 10; 16; 18; 19; 20; 29) who generously repays the sacrifices made for Him (3) and turns to joy the sorrows of this life (16). In short, she feels like a child who walks serenely hand in hand with God (25; 38; 39; 46) and who finds secure and joyous refuge in his paternal 'bosom' (50; 52; 53). It is her wish to die in an act of abandonment to divine mercy (75).

Jesus, the Sweet Crucified Spouse

Mother Margherita's relationship with the Triune God stands out especially in her relation to Jesus. As the Incarnate Word and the visible manifestation of the love of the Father (he is her most precious 'gift': 86), Jesus occupies the central place in her soul, in her thoughts and in her life (146; 161). For her Jesus is truly the One and Only (110; 122; 123; 130; 138; 153; 159; 177); her sweet

and amiable All (39; 40; 42; 47; 57; 108; 114; 119; 120; 127; 140); nothing and no one can substitute him or take his place as Father, Brother, Spouse (39).

He is above all else the spousal factor which characterizes the relationship which Mother Margherita lives with Jesus; more precisely, for her Jesus is the Crucified Spouse, who on the Cross showed what love means. For this reason, she desires to die crucified with the Crucified Spouse, as a need and a proof of true love (43; 70; 75): to love Love, she affirms, means to suffer for Love (141).

This spousal relationship with Jesus is a fundamental factor of her spirituality, one to which Mother Margherita returns very often, especially in her letters to the Sisters, because she considers it inseparably bound to the gift of religious life.

Mother Margherita holds religious life in high esteem for its values and for the demands which it involves. This is very evident, for example, in the widespread and striking reflections which she makes in her letters addressed to a Sister on the occasion of her religious profession (66; 105; 128; 130; 155; 166; 167); but this is also very evident in her scattered references in her letters.

For her the centre of religious life, from which everything departs and has to return, is the spousal relationship with Jesus. In fact the usual title which she usually calls Jesus is that of Spouse, often matched with similar terms (or even substituted by them): sometimes the term 'Judge' (105; 128; 139), 'Beloved' is frequently (105; 130; 138)...

A thought which makes her tremble with moving wonder and unceasing gratitude (and which she repeatedly emphasized to all the Sisters and her religious nieces) is that of being chosen from among many others and without any personal merits, to be Jesus' brides (103; 159; 161; 166; 167). Throughout her long life she is pervaded with this thought (75; 130; 167), which enkindles in her the wish to render herself a worthy bride of Jesus: it is for her a reason of great anxiety, to feel after fifty years and more of religious life still poor in virtue and merits (124; 161); she freely confesses, that she is quite old, but, she still considers herself a child in virtue (151); more so, she feels burdened with infinite debts (110).

For Mother Margherita, this generous and grateful response to the gift of religious life is summed up in a word, which is the program of life which she makes her own and which she inculcates in the Sisters: to repay the love with which Jesus loves them (72; 128). It is her strong conviction that we can only

correspond in love to the gift of our vocation (75; 118; 120; 160; 167). Some of her repeated expressions are sharp and significant, such as: love is repaid only with love (78; 122; 155; 161; 172); love is the heart's life (107), one has to love till folly (75; 109; 111; 117); loving, one learns how to love (128); to love through deeds and in truth (78; 116).

This program of life is summed up in an emblematic motto: everything in love, for love, with love (63; 105; 114; 137) or in a similar way: everything for Jesus, in Jesus, with Jesus (128; 131; 138; 167). Writing to her niece, Sr Antonia Abela, Mother Margherita sums up this program of life thus: *"Love can only be repaid with love. Let us then love infinitely Him who has loved us with boundless love! May He be always in our heart, on our lips, in our mind: ever always living a life of love, gentle and sweet, sometimes even arid, love; it does not matter as long as we do everything for his greater glory and honour!!!"* (161)

This response of love is much more motivating and pressing since, for Mother Margherita, Jesus is above all a crucified Spouse. This is the characteristic which strikes her most and penetrates her life in a decisive manner and which she often repeats in her exhortations. She takes seriously the religious profession's formula ("the world is crucified for us and we are crucified for the world": (126)⁷): the religious profession, she writes to a newly-professed Sister, is a commitment to be crucified with the Crucified Spouse (128) and the small cross which the Sisters carry on their breast is not simply an ornament, but an everlasting call to live crucified with and for Jesus (130).

In fact, because it is spousal, the love for Jesus is for her a commitment of fidelity: Jesus is a jealous spouse (71; 105; 123; 125; 130; 132; 160) and his brides are to be wholly and solely his (138); Jesus chooses whom he wants, but demands correspondence (124). And this brings about dying crucified in faithful love (70; 130): it is necessary to stay on the cross with Jesus (114). As far as she is concerned, she is interested only in her only Good (174), she wants to annihilate and consume herself in pure love (119; 120; 151) and to sacrifice herself completely for Him who loves her (156): she wishes to be annihilated by the divine will because the Kingdom of pure love is built on this annihilation (138; 140).

The Holy Wounds with which the body of Jesus is covered, an indelible sign of his sacrifice of love, are deeply impressed in Mother Margherita's heart: in them

⁷ This expression is taken from Gal 6, 14.

she finds secure refuge for her weakness (44; 61), strength and stimulus to render her a less unworthy bride of Jesus (64), trust to obtain the necessary help (73; 117) and divine mercy (103; 109).

Mother Margherita's preference, in her relationship with Jesus, her sweet and amiable crucified Spouse, also explains which Christological mysteries make the greatest impression on her: His Birth and Passion, that is the beginning and the climax of this historical manifestation of God made man for Love and of Love which is crucified, first in the poverty and humility of Bethlehem and then in suffering and death on Calvary. In fact, her references to these are frequent and diffused with ecstatic tenderness when she speaks of Christmas and with profound compassion when she speaks of Calvary (64; 65; 71; 75; 78; 79; 127; 147; 149; 160; 172); and from this ineffable school of love (65; 71), to which she remains constantly sensitive, she always attains spiritual stimulus which can be summed up in these striking expressions: in the crib one learns how to love (78); from the cross one learns the wisdom of the Saints (142).

These Christological mysteries⁸ which culminate in the splendid glory of the Resurrection from the sepulcher and of the Ascension to Heaven (116; 142; 165; 170), also explain Mother Margherita's marked predilection for the Eucharist and the Sacred Heart, two themes recurring in her letters and which constitute the most appropriate and specific component of her Congregation⁹. The reason is

⁸ In Mother Margherita's preference to the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Passion of Christ it is easy to discover a profound coherence with Franciscan spirituality. To say the truth, precise references to this spirituality are not frequent in her letters; but we can deduce from various indications that they are profoundly imbued in it.

For example, we can easily link her recurring expression "*let us love Love*" with that similar to St Francis (cf. 2 Cel 196: cf. Omnibus of Sources, n. 784). We can also easily observe the singular affinity with St Claire in placing a spousal relationship with the poor and crucified Spouse, at the centre of her consecrated life (cf. Letters of St. Claire to St. Agnes of Prague: cf. Omnibus of Sources n.2859 ff). Besides she herself confesses that when she was in Rome to take the place of the Novice Mistress temporarily, she endeavoured to instill in the religious in formation the true Franciscan spirit (96): it is a concern which is evident even in other letters (72; 83; 93). Also significant is the heading of her letters: in those addressed to her first spiritual director, the addition of St Francis' name to the initials "J!M!J!" (Jesus-Mary-Joseph) is constant; in the letters to her second spiritual director the Franciscan motto "*Deus meus et omnia*" (D.M.E.O.) always appears; in the other letters, the two references alternate. Finally, her Congregation was aggregated to the Order of the Friars Minor in 1903, when Mother Margherita held the office of general Superior: it is not in vain that she considers herself and her sisters "*daughters of St Francis*" (135), which she mentions in various letters (121; 122; 130; 133; 134).

⁹ This inspirational and devotional meaning, so conspicuous in Mother Margherita, is much more significant as it has its root in the Association of the "Twelve Stars of the Sacred Heart" of which she was a member. In fact, the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus knows its beginning from this Association, directed by Fr J. Diacono.

easily understood: the Eucharist and the Sacred Heart, in fact, together express (she speaks repeatedly of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus: 2; 5; 34; 36; 52; 88; 90; 109; 110; 134; 145; 174...) in the sign of the sacrament and its symbolism, the marvelous reality of this Crucified Love. It is therefore not surprising to observe how present in Mother Margherita is the remembrance of Jesus - the Immaculate Host (5; 10; 11; 14; 27; 28; 30; 56; 65; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 86; 87; 111; 127; 128; 146; 155) and the invitation to become small and pure living hosts (70; 109; 166; 174). Still more frequently (not only, but practically present in almost every letter) is the mention of the Sacred Heart: for her, to contemplate this mystery is like being cleansed in love (90); in that Heart, which encompasses all the fire of the divine Love, she wishes to hide, annihilate and sacrifice herself (30; 37).

After all, for Mother Margherita, in the mysteries of the Word Incarnate, Jesus communicates one sole message "*See the love I bear for you*" (65).

To be able to correspond fully to the spousal love of Jesus, Mother Margherita greatly trusts Mary, the Immaculate Virgin and the Mother of our Lord: in her she sees a sublime model of total and faithful love to imitate and she entrusts herself (and invites the Sisters to entrust themselves) to her care with tenderness and filial trust (76; 78; 109; 130; 152; 161; 166).

Prayerful love

Love is nourished and experienced above all through prayer, for which Mother Margherita always feels an urgent need.

She prefers praying in front of the Eucharistic Jesus¹⁰, whom she likes to call her 'Prisoner Spouse' or other similar expressions (16; 33; 52; 86; 118; 143; 152; 163; 167; 171; 177): as a loving spouse, she cannot stay away from her Beloved (69; 138; 152; 167; 171). An interior voice draws her irresistibly towards her 'Prisoner King' and at his feet she freely pours out the feelings of her soul (63); the Eucharistic Jesus becomes her inseparable and everlasting companion (70; 86; 87). Holy Mass is for her a strong incentive to offer herself to God in union with the Immaculate Host (14). She thus lives intensely these mystical encounters which at times prevent her from returning to her daily work (30); in fact, she often has to struggle between the contemplative yearning and the demands of her duties (15; 17; 28).

¹⁰ We have a significant confirmation in the fact that in August 1917, a few months after her last re-election as superior General, she asks for and obtains permission to keep the Eucharist in the convents' chapels.

She speaks with great joy about the offer the Archbishop of Malta made to take the House of Adoration in Valletta, which she considers an unexpected and undeserved grace (24). It was for her a great joy to be chosen as one of the first adoring Sisters in that house where she remained for six years (1923 -1929). She always maintained a vivid and nostalgic memory of this period during which she could immerse herself freely in daily Eucharistic adoration (68; 69; 85; 87; 110; 114; 127; 144). When later on because of illness and old age she is free of external duties, she spends delightful long hours in front of the tabernacle (33; 42; 48; 62; 63; 114).

For Mother Margherita the tabernacle is an inexhaustible school of love because it is there that she feels enkindled with that fire of love which Jesus brought on earth (64; 71; 75; 114). From the tabernacle, Jesus demands love, only love (72; 139) and she wishes that all may be immersed in the pure flames of Eucharistic love (30; 45; 65; 69; 88; 112; 115), she urges the Sisters to enkindle themselves with the Eucharistic fire and to transform all the community into a furnace (151); she asks the teaching Sisters to enkindle the hearts of the little ones with the Eucharistic fire (69; 88; 115), so that they will grow in love and spread it (88). She encourages the Sisters to linger during the Eucharistic prayer (123; 125; 128; 140; 147), convinced that the tabernacle consumes every imperfection (128; 140; 147; 151); instills strength and courage (118; 128; 143; 147; 153), nourishes and inflames love: in the Eucharist, she reminds us, Jesus fortifies us with his strength (111; 123) and from it we draw all that is necessary to live pure love (121; 128; 130; 137; 143; 147).

During prayer Mother Margherita lives the most beautiful moments, but frequently even the most tormented of her day. For her, prayer means many things: it means losing herself in silent adoration, breaking into exultant praise and overflowing with moving thanksgiving (2; 37; 53; 56; 78; 159); it means languishing and annihilating herself in the ardent beating of love (34), while experiencing the love of Christ (138); it means remaining hidden in the intimacy of the Sacred Heart (79; 116; 124; 153) and deeply effected and confident taking refuge in the wounds of the Sweet Beloved (64); it means living as the crucified bride in the Eucharistic cell (156; 166); it means comforting Christ abandoned by so many (74); it means imploring that "Love" may be known and loved by everyone (138); it means repenting of one's sins (63); it means regaining strength, courage and hope (2; 3; 34); it means learning more during meditation (147); it means referring everyone to the Lord (70; 114; 143), from her spiritual directors (1; 27; 32; 44; 53; 63) to the Sisters (87; 105; 114; 136; 137;

143; 148), to her living and deceased relatives (166; 167), to the sinners of the whole world (32; 51; 52)...

But for Mother Margherita, prayer is also a struggle and a torment. Often she complains of feeling dry, distracted and arid (5; 19; 22; 43; 63; 84; 109; 110) and sometimes she laments of finding herself in the thickest darkness (27). She undergoes the tormenting experience of enjoying, for a moment, the exhilarative intimacy of her God and then once again feeling him far and absent (32; 48; 138). She is convinced that her dryness is due to lack of love (9; 33): she laments that Jesus sometimes sulks but realizes that he is right (49); still, even when Jesus does not talk to her, she continues abiding with him and does not cease to abandon herself to his loving care (50; 145).

She often worries because distractions hinder her concentration (8; 15; 17; 25; 28). Sometimes, besides, she is also tempted not to receive Holy Communion, but she makes an effort because she knows that Jesus in the Eucharist is her only strength (9) and her only courage (34): in fact she finds courage only in the Eucharistic Heart (34). In any case, and notwithstanding the awareness of her weakness, she wishes to glorify and love her God and Spouse eternally with his own heart (8; 16; 22; 125; 136).

Sacrificial and atoning love

Deeply absorbed in the sacrificial meaning of Jesus' love, marvelously expressed in the symbol of the Heart and in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it is not surprising that Mother Margherita deeply feels and strongly instills in her sisters the yearning to be victims of love: she wishes to sacrifice herself totally for him who loves her (156) and exhorts the sisters to offer themselves as victims to the Sacred Heart (140) and to be the sacrificed host on the altar of the Sacred Heart (166).

This is a distinctly mystical longing: to allow Jesus to freely do what he wills with his victims (113). But for this to happen, she needs to allow herself to be consumed with the same fire which consumed Jesus, that is love: it is above all else in the Eucharist that this ardent fire which consumes every imperfection, purifies the soul, enkindles pure and divine love, is nourished and thus one succeeds in dying and living in Christ (140).

It is a longing which is logically translated even into an apostolic commitment: it is necessary to become a soul of reparation (88; 91; 92; 134). Mother Margherita sees in this commitment (complimenting that of immolation) a specific component of the congregational charism: she reminds her sisters that we are victims and apostles of souls (74; 112; 148; 155). It is a commitment which can be accomplished only in a context of generous immolation: *"The more rapidly blood flows from the heart because of sacrifice and mortification, the quicker the chalice is filled. You know that we are victims and apostles of souls and before the chalice is full and overflowing, souls cannot profit from our sacrifices and prayers. Therefore, shouldn't we be generous so that our chalice will be filled and the poor souls of sinners can benefit from the surplus?"* (148).

Mother Margherita nurtures in herself and instills in others (particularly in her sisters) the need to transform all her life into an apostolic commitment, and which can be summarized in this thought: to become a victim of pure love (6; 11; 14; 37; 40; 148); to sacrifice oneself in the Eucharistic Heart for humanity (36; 47; 52), to offer self to the merciful love to obtain mercy for the ungrateful world (155) and make reparation through one's own sacrifices for the many offences God receives (16; 20; 32), even from his brides (92). For this, she urges to accept generously all the sacrifices which Jesus asks for (91): as she says, to suffer costs little when one loves (108; 114; 149) and to save souls (148).

It is a program which she lives generously and which she puts into practice in many ways; she asks to be offered together with the Divine Victim during Holy Mass (11; 40); she wishes to die with the Immaculate Victim (60), she wishes to sacrifice herself as a holocaust with her only All (47); love incites her to make sacrifices for souls (20) and through her sacrifices wishes to hasten the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus (35); she thirsts and hungers for humiliations (30) and suffering (37); she wants to annihilate herself to save souls (32; 36). Nothing seems enough (118): she thinks that Jesus spares her greater sufferings because He does not consider her worthy of thorns (18).

It is not always easy to distinguish when Mother Margherita expresses sentiments and purposes of this kind in a more specific context of mystical immolation or in a more appropriate context of apostolic reparation, but this is not very important because both deal with the same longing which leads her to consume herself for God and for souls: she is clearly aware that in God one

lives by dying (149). The Eucharist, an everlasting and living memory of Christ's sacrificial love, stimulates us to transform ourselves into little living hosts (109), to live as holy and pure hosts (174), white hosts sacrificed for Jesus (166).

Generous and faithful love

However, one might say that this component of Mother Margherita's spirituality does not present any sign of undue praise: never does she invite the person with whom she is conversing to undertake exceptional forms of penance nor does she herself assume any. From all this, it is clear that for her to live the spirit of an immolated victim of reparation above all implies (besides praying) the commitment to exercise generous and faithful love in our daily behaviour (86); as she herself says, what counts most is knowing how to "profit" (a typical expression of hers) from the occasions that life presents: then everything becomes sweet and easy (108; 114; 149), even the cross (138). Mother Margherita is convinced that faithful correspondence to the religious vocation is summed up in living completely in pure love (75).

In this context, we understand her insistence in encouraging the acceptance of the burdens and the sufferings of all kinds, which life inevitably brings, in union with Jesus Crucified: only in this way one loves in deed and in truth (116). This is a theme that she reiterates frequently, with various complementary motivations which justify her invitation to the sisters to be happy in suffering (112; 148; 170): Jesus treats religious as his brides when they carry his Cross (136) because, while wishing to be crucified with him (156), they are not to expect roses from Him (166); love is shown through sacrifice (74; 124); to love Love signifies to sacrifice oneself for Love (141); love and intimacy with the sweet and sole Beloved grow through suffering (138); Jesus makes us drink of his chalice to purify us (109); looking at the Beloved everything becomes sweet and easy (114; 149)... In short, for her, this principle is only natural: suffering while loving, loving while suffering (163). For this she is happy to accept from the Spouse the sacrifices which He asks of her (91; 144) and she finds it pleasant to stay on the Cross with Jesus. In her words, true love is manifested in love, love for suffering (65; 74; 86; 125).

Religious life offers many occasions to express faithful and generous love in daily concreteness: it is her typical expression to exhort the sisters to accept everything without an 'if and a 'but' (90; 128; 146). It is, for example, in the context of obedience (on which she insists repeatedly: 105; 116; 130; 133; 141; 142; 147; 154) when the sacrifice of detachment from persons or places is demanded, knowing that everywhere there are sisters and above all the sweet Beloved Prisoner (141), or when somehow (let us recall the illness which Mother Margherita experienced so painfully and for so long) it involves dying on the Cross (142). We have another example in her appeals, to live united and in agreement in fraternal charity (64; 67; 75; 76; 82; 85; 109; 123; 127; 135; 149). This is the credible way to embody the love towards Jesus, who emphasizes reciprocal love: the bride of Jesus has to treasure the pearl of holy and fascinating love, imitating Him who for love came to live among us¹¹. It should however be a love free from purely human sentiments and attachments (148), she admonishes, so that we can all be united in the Heart of Jesus (133; 140; 141).

In general terms Mother Margherita recommends to the sisters all that is necessary in religious life (prayer, fraternal life, observance of vows, apostolate...), lived in conformity to the Rule and the Constitutions, seeing in this the easiest way (but also the most proper) to correspond to so many divine benefits.

Briefly, for Mother Margherita we have to do everything, always with love, for love and in love (63; 105; 114; 137): everything is little in comparison with what Jesus deserves (130); as much as possible, we have to love with the same measure with which He loved us (142; 161); all suffering is a little thing when we think of Him who died crucified for us (163). In this context we can understand her exhortation to carry out the Will of God always, even when we find ourselves in spiritual dryness: God has to be loved in a disinterested way, just as He loves us in a disinterested way (86).

This calls for fidelity which brings with it not only appropriate external attitudes, but which also demands corresponding interior dispositions, proper to a virtuous commitment: love demands that we die to ourselves in struggle and in annihilation (88). Thus, becoming holy (every religious is to aim at this as

¹¹ The recommendations Mother Margherita makes on the occasion of the "visits" paid to the communities when she was general Superior regarding this are quite frequent and at times even strongly stressed. Traces of them are found in the "reports" which are still kept.

Mother Margherita keeps reminding us: 147; 148; 149; 159; 162; 165; 169) is not difficult (148).

So that this global project of life, lived in a context of love, is fulfilled, Mother Margherita also emphasizes other demands such as: the untiring struggle against our spoilt nature, to die to our ego, that is to our pride which is our worst enemy (71; 73; 86; 102; 126; 132; 141; 146; 147; 148; 152; 161); humility which keeps us small and happy to take the last place (70; 86; 90; 105; 116; 125; 127; 128; 130; 144; 145; 147; 149; 166); a strong spirit so as not to remain immature and childish but to reach the maturity expected from a bride of Jesus (133; 143; 167); confident abandonment to Divine Providence, repeating in every circumstance and situation (as she always did), our *Fiat* which helps to overcome interior difficulties and protect us from discouragement (66; 80; 85; 93; 94; 128; 142; 143; 144; 145; 152); not to trust in ourselves but in Jesus who compensates with his grace for our limitations and our inabilities (118; 127; 131).

Briefly, to live pure love it is necessary to allow Jesus to take absolute possession of his brides (138); therefore, it is necessary to create an interior void and welcome his action (146; 148), allow him to act (109; 149), remain faithful even in aridity of spirit (86; 145). It is a difficult task, because pure love is built on annihilation of self (138), and as a result, very often perseverance abates; but awareness of one's weakness, Mother Margherita encourages, should not make us lose trust in the merciful love of Jesus (145).

Keeping this in mind, Mother Margherita's constant invitation to the sisters to proceed with courage (strong, strong courage, she often repeats) in every existing situation, faithful to the religious vocation, becomes eloquent and persuasive.

Apostolic love

For Mother Margherita, love towards Jesus is inseparable from the desire and commitment to make him known and loved by everyone. It is an interior yearning which demands complete involvement and which transforms itself in an unceasing apostolic zeal: souls are worth the blood of Jesus (9; 13; 57; 60; 132; 152) and she ardently wishes to bring them to him (72; 111).

As she herself confesses, Mother Margherita burns with the desire to save souls (7; 60; 149). The voice that echoes within her 'Love which is not known and loved'

(34; 63) drives her irresistibly also to the apostolate because all her life is guided by one leading thread: to love Love, to make Love known and loved.

This thought disturbs her peace. She cries because Love is not loved (45) and she trembles at the thought that souls cost Jesus his blood (13; 57; 60). The ingratitude of so many who neglect God alarm and distress her (7; 13; 44; 50); she is tormented by the thought that many have no spiritual help because of the lack of labourers (20), while she rejoices for the good carried out by others (12; 13; 54). Thus we can understand her sorrowful lament: it is not necessary to go to China to save souls (20).

It is a concern which she consistently repeats to the sisters, while reminding them that apostolic commitment is strictly bound to the religious profession: it is a credible sign and a concrete way to demonstrate our self-donation to Jesus (66; 130; 167) and gratitude for the gift of the religious vocation (175).

For Mother Margherita the apostolic aspect of the religious life is certainly not fulfilled in external activities: as we have already observed, for her the personal and permanent aspect of the spirit of reparation in sacrifice and prayer cannot be ignored. But the commitment to deeds retains its value fully. With awe and gratitude, she perceives in the apostolic activities undertaken by her Congregation a service entrusted by God himself (17), and this is what she instills in the sisters: whatever the office entrusted to them, they are called by the Spouse (132; 141; 145) to work in the vineyard of the Lord (111; 130), even in far-away mission lands (88).

This is another motive (besides the one previously mentioned) which explains and justifies Mother Margherita's constant concern to have many vocations, together with the realistic preoccupation that the young candidates be well cared for and adequately prepared on a spiritual, apostolic and professional level (5; 96; 110; 117).

Briefly, according to Mother Margherita, the commitment to collaborate in spreading the Kingdom of God involves the consecrated person in many ways: from prayer to sacrifice, from good example to deeds (69; 132; 143; 153). She reminds us that when we work for the glory of God, nothing is difficult (142). As far as she is concerned, she will be happy to give her life in service (130).

At the same time, Mother Margherita wants to make sure that apostolic work is carried out by the sisters with the right interior dispositions which are: to work

with a seraphic and evangelical spirit (85), to think only of the glory of God and the welfare of souls (110; 113), to act humbly and prudently (110), to keep the heart free from earthly attachments (153), not to distract the spirit of recollection (109), maintaining the trust that we are not working in vain (132; 165) ...

In other words, for Mother Margherita, in apostolic work (whatever the form or place) it is necessary to unite a sense of responsibility towards souls, for whom we are accountable to God, with integral fidelity to our vocation to Jesus and to his love (132; 160); it is from love that the wish and commitment to an authentic apostolate emerge (72).

Yearning Love

Divine love which burnt in her heart moved Mother Margherita to yearn ardently for heaven, because there she would finally repay God's love fully, dissolving in her All, in one fire and one light (57; 58; 120).

For her, living on earth is like living a long and painful exile (7; 29; 42): what is not eternal is nothing (55; 77). She is impatient to reach the end and her desire to soar high is strong (33): although she considers herself unworthy because of her many sins, she wishes to join her Spouse forever (33; 39; 177); she counts the days and the hours, even though she still feels too heavy to soar (120). But (as always) she repeats her *Fiat*: if God wills, she is ready to remain in exile even for a 100 years (59). Love renders the earthly journey sweet and short (167; 170).

When her life is in imminent danger because of her cardiac attacks or other illnesses, Mother Margherita hopes that the end of this exile is near (47) because she considers all this as a passport for eternity (103). But the changes in the conditions of her health delay the moment when she could take flight (46). She takes the opportunity to ask why God seems to tease her in her old age (113), keeping her so long on earth and she agrees with the answer suggested by her spiritual director: God wills and waits for her true and total conversion (52; 58; 59; 119). For this, although advanced in years and physically weak, (114; 124) she accepts to remain in this exile (75; 114). This thought serves as a stimulus to use the time given to her in the best way possible to correspond to the love of God, and to purify herself of her past sins: she is always convinced that the reason for the burden of physical and moral suffering permitted by Jesus is to purify her from her sins (148).

In such a situation, it is not surprising that Mother Margherita exhorts the sisters to fix their gaze on the heavenly homeland (159), where all the natural beauties are found (137) and where all the sisters are united (120; 125; 178). But she speaks about an interior gaze which should stimulate us to faithful and generous perseverance: life is short to gain an eternal joy and rest (79; 128). Jesus, she admonishes, will come like a thief and to meet him without fear we have to be ready (77); to enter with the Spouse for the eternal wedding immediately, it is necessary to correspond to our vocation till we reach perfection (170). So she encourages us to face the trials of life so that they will lead to heavenly glory (65); she exhorts us to follow Jesus Crucified now so that we can then participate with him in the eternal joy of the Resurrection (98; 165; 170): as we are now serving him, she reminds us, He will serve us (71) while repaying every sacrifice made for him (79) and there we will bless all earthly sufferings (130). She also invites her niece, a religious, to tend to sanctity so that she can then find herself in the heavenly Jerusalem to sing together the hymn of the virgins who follow the lamb (159).

In short, the thought of death which frightens those who do not believe (27; 77), does not affect her serenity. Certainly, it disturbs her to know that she has to render a serious account to God for her sins (168; 174); but she relies on his merciful love, to which she abandons herself with trust (103): she is sure that the Spouse will come to take her as a victory of his infinite mercy (175) and that she will be able to raise to heaven the hymn of divine mercy (178). Even sorrow for the death of someone dear is tempered with the certainty that in God we will find all our loved ones, whom on earth we left for his love (1; 27; 123; 129; 166; 168; 169).

Final Observations

The points gathered from here and there from Mother Margherita's letters, although to a great extent incomplete, are already enough to be able to conclude that we are encountering a person of exceptional spiritual wealth.

Undoubtedly the theological virtue of charity predominates in Mother Margherita's soul and consequently, also in her letters: she sees everything and lives as a sign of total, ardent and generous love to God in Jesus and which she expresses in the intimacy of prayer, in renunciation of self, in apostolic fervour. A phrase like this, chosen among many is enough to give us an idea: *"Know my daughter that neither the heart, nor the mind and not even the*

pen can suggest anything else other than love, love... Therefore, my beloved, I tell you and repeat: love Love, love Love so that you may become love, so that you can lose yourself in love. Ah! Then the continuous hymn which your heart repeats will be this: Let us love Love: let us love Love: come, come o souls and love Love” (139).

And already all this focusing on love is an evident manifestation and confirmation that her spirituality is authentically evangelical from the moment that God is Love, (cf. 1 Jn 4, 16) and that charity is the greatest gift (cf. Rm 5, 5), the first commandment (Mt 22, 34 ff.) and the greatest virtue (cf. 1 Cor 13, 1 ff.). But she clearly speaks of a love solidly anchored in an enlightened faith (136; 147) and consistently maintained by an indestructible hope (the numerous references made before on the merciful love of God; and on the trust which Mother Margherita places in him, are eloquent enough). This is, we might say, using a modern expression, her fundamental option which unifies, nourishes and enhances.

This signifies that the letters are a reflection not only of her thoughts but much more of her life. Already from her first letters (which date back to 1891-2, when she was just thirty years old) she appears to be immersed in that spiritual atmosphere which, in a never-ending journey, will be hers forever: Mother Margherita speaks of what she lives, and seeks to pass on to others the same convictions, the same enthusiasm and the same commitment. And, in fact, she never refers to theoretical, theological or spiritual treatises: she limits herself to show within her possibility (with simple and essential words, but often also just as sharp) her interior beliefs and allows us to glimpse her personal experience with discretion. What she tries to instill in others is not what she learnt from books, but a result of what she discovers and experiences every day.

In fact, as we know from information regarding her life, Mother Margherita did not carry out any particular, either profane or theological, studies. She certainly put to good use the sound instructions and the strict directives of the Founder, Fr Joseph Diacono, on the religious life, and she tuned in profoundly to the devotion to the Sacred Heart which he tried to inculcate so deeply¹². Besides, she shows a discreet knowledge of the New Testament, from which

¹² For a more direct and deeper knowledge of the work carried out by Fr Joseph Diacono as founder and formator of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus, one can usefully refer to the *Collection of some of the writings of Fr Joseph Diacono and of other documents of the original community* (Victoria, Gozo – Malta, 1994).

we have many references and clear reminiscences here and there in her writings. But there is no doubt that the interior world in which she was immersed is above all else the fruit of a particular grace of the Holy Spirit to whom she corresponds immediately, generously and consistently.

We discover a sign which shows that the Holy Spirit acted strongly and mysteriously in her, even in this respect. Both when she talks about herself and when she talks to others, Mother Margherita always behaves without the least pretension. She does not consider herself a 'teacher'; on the contrary, she often admits, with a moving innocence, that she does not 'understand' anything of what is happening in her life: she considers herself an 'ass' (31), an idiot (34; 43; 110) and feeble-minded (111); for her what she is talking about seems 'Arabic' (109); she does not understand the a.b.c. of the spiritual life (42); she wishes to love Christ to madness, but without knowing anything of this art (110)... Also, many times she tends to undermine what she says as if she speaks 'nonsense' or 'useless gossip' not to be taken seriously (30; 37; 44; 47; 53) or absolute folly and madness (34).

In other words, Mother Margherita's words are not those of a professional theologian, who reasons and argues about doctrinal problems; rather they are the words of a person in love, who is enraptured in contemplation and in experiencing the Person who is the sole reason of her life. It seems that Mother Margherita finds herself often torn between two contrasting needs: the heart's longing which incites her to speak even if her sentiments hinder her from expressing herself as she would like to, and quite often, also to continue (43), and her reserved spirit which refrains her and makes her cut her words short with an "enough": who loves, she repeats, perceives and understands (12; 26; 29; 53; 114; 115; 124; 127; 140; 163). Even the most frequent broken or literally irregular phrases (especially in her letters to her spiritual directors) are a sign of this state of spirit.

In any case, there is no doubt regarding the sincerity and, therefore the reliability, of what Mother Margherita writes, often (especially in her last years) with evident fatigue and difficulty. The indications which lead to this observation are manifold.

We have a first confirmation in the fact that Mother Margherita lives wholly in a sphere of profound and genuine humility. The names with which she often calls herself are convincing: very often she calls herself "Sister Miseria" (32; 75; 105; 119; 124; 130; 135; 136; 138; 140; 153; 156); the awareness, described in various ways, of being a "poor and unworthy sinner" is frequently reiterated (5; 13;

23; 31; 43; 47; 94; 97; 105; 117; 139; 159); she reaches the point of calling herself "mire" and "dung" (57); she accuses herself of being proud (60); she still feels (although advanced in years) full of self-love (123; 151)... In this context, we can understand why she keeps wondering at God's love towards her (41; 46; 49) and why she does not stop confessing her ingratitude and indignity (7; 18; 30; 37; 41; 44; 58; 62; 76; 159).

Besides, there is no sign in Mother Margherita of that ambiguous and suspicious praise, which is frequently found in persons who are carried away with imaginary sentiments and evocative sensations: at times she speaks of hearing an interior 'voice' (30; 34; 62; 63), but she does not specify further; also while instilling others with fervour and insisting on the spirit of reparation, she never speaks of extraordinary penance.

On the contrary, Mother Margherita often expresses fear of being a victim of illusions or deceit in her spiritual experiences (30; 61; 63); at other times she is afraid to speak or to dwell on her speech because it seems to be incoherent and hypocritical (44; 54): in fact, she repeats, it is one thing to speak of love and another to love (53; 54). In any case, she also undergoes the common experience of those who place God at the centre of their heart: in fact, the periods of spiritual 'dryness' which she humbly attributes to her faults are frequent and painful (8; 9; 27; 32; 43; 63).

The knowledge that we are encountering a sincere and reliable person, is confirmed among other things, by two constant and very significant attitudes. On one hand, Mother Margherita feels the imperative need to be enlightened and guided by her spiritual directors: she turns to them very frequently with the evident wish to open herself with simplicity, even if she often finds it difficult to translate her thoughts and her experiences into words (13; 14; 23; 25; 30; 31; 33; 41; 43; 44; 46; 63) and accepts eventual corrections (40; 44). On the other hand, she regularly asks those to whom she writes to help her with their prayers so that she will be worthy of God's love and can correspond better to his plans and consume herself in his love (18; 20; 40; 43; 54; 67; 75; 104; 114; 119; 120; 123; 124).

In conclusion, Mother Margherita's letters permit us to learn, at least partially, about her exceptional spiritual experience. Hopefully more profound studies will be carried out on these letters, especially to grasp better (in its various aspects) the mystical element of Mother Margherita's spiritual experience. But an attentive reading of them can already be a strong stimulus to follow her

on the way of that love, which enkindled and supported by the grace of the Holy Spirit, leads to the beatific union with God and evangelical service to God's people.

Fr Pier Giuseppe Pesce, ofm

MOTHER MARGHERITA'S LETTERS

Preface

Except in rare cases, Mother Margherita wrote her letters in Italian, at that time a common thing among the Maltese.¹³

The signed texts of the letters published here were handed in on various occasions, to the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus by the respective recipients, who preserved them jealously and with loving care.

The principal motive which led to the publication of Mother Margherita's letters, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her death is, to make her rich and intense spirituality known. This explains the omission of certain letters (few, in fact) and of those references to facts and to persons which go beyond this specific aim¹⁴.

Many letters may seem to be repetitive, and in fact they are: same thoughts, same sentiments, same state of spirit, same exhortations ... But this is also a reason which justifies their publication: they are a testimony and a confirmation of the interior world in which Mother Margherita was constantly and totally immersed.

Dealing with a publication which is aimed at widespread distribution, some formal changes have been introduced (related to punctuation, spelling, abbreviations, using upper or lower case, etc.) while leaving the content unchanged, to make the text more uniform and its reading more flowing, maintaining the essence of the language and expressions in its striking tone¹⁵, even if archaic, as it gives the text a very personal mark¹⁶.

The letters are divided into three principal groups, with progressive numbering:

¹³ Among the conserved letters, only one is written in Maltese (it is the letter n. 130, the oldest among those preserved). However words or phrases in Maltese are also found, here and there, in other letters. In such cases the translation into English is added.

¹⁴ The eventual removal of passages from certain letters is generally shown with dots within brackets (<...>).

¹⁵ One has to bear in mind that, for various reasons (the writing which is sometimes not very clear, the use of punctuation marks, broken phrases ...) in certain cases (especially in the letters to her spiritual directors) it is not always easy to denote the exact thought which Mother Margherita wants to express. But these are a few exceptions, which do not undermine the essential fidelity in the transcription of the signed text.

¹⁶ Characteristic examples of this style, which were deliberately kept, are the frequent use of dots (.....), the exclamation and question marks, the etc Also typical is the repetition of words or their underlining..

1. the letters to two spiritual directors
2. the letters to the sisters
3. the letters to other persons.

A short note has been added before every letter to place the contents in context and summarize them. Whenever necessary, short explicatory notes have been inserted.

In every group, the letters are in chronological order. Those which are not dated are placed at the end of their respective groups¹⁷.

The following elements have been inserted in the appendix, with the aim of placing all the letters in their context and to facilitate a more complete understanding of them:

1. Mother Margherita's biographical profile;
2. Short biographical accounts of the letters' recipients;
3. A chronological index of all the letters;
4. A progressive index of the published letters.

¹⁷ The recipient is not always clearly shown. But, at times, it is possible to single him out either from the content of the letter, or from other sources. At times a similar case occurs even in the dates.

I – LETTERS TO HER TWO SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS

During her long life, Mother Margherita entrusted herself to the spiritual direction of some priests with whom she even maintained uninterrupted correspondence.

Two of them, Mgr Anton Galea and Mgr Alfonso Agius, kept most of these letters and after Mother Margherita's death, handed them to the Congregation.

These letters refer to two particular periods of Mother Margherita's life: the first, the longer, (1917 – 1935); the second, the shorter (1940 – 1943). But their overall content easily reveals a dynamic continuity of spiritual tension, in which the tormenting knowledge of her own unworthiness mingled intensely with the inexhaustible mystical and apostolic yearning. From their reading it is evident how Mother Margherita's life was wholly marked and pervaded by the love towards the Triune God, three times Holy, and towards Jesus, her sweet Crucified Spouse.

With the simplicity of a child and with the confidence of a daughter, Mother Margherita was open with her spiritual directors, showing them, as far as she could (restrained by understandable discretion, numerous commitments and, during the last years, the burden of her illness) the diverse aspects of her spiritual experience. She was urged to open up her own soul by an intimate need of speaking about what formed the unifying and radiating centre of her life, but also (and more so) by the constant need to be helped, enlightened, guided and sustained.

At the same time, with that confidence proceeding spontaneously from a profound bond of spiritual friendship, Mother Margherita at times, as it were, inverted roles, offering her spiritual directors exhortations, support and stimulus.

In their material draft, these letters are deprived of formal value. They are fragmentary and discontinued, the phrases are often broken and incomplete, thoughts follow one another and overlap at a quick pace: all this bears evidence of spontaneity of sentiments and of immediateness in writing, often repeatedly interrupted and continued with fatigue. But in their essence they are documents of exceptional importance, because they allow us to know, at least partially, Mother Margherita's interior life: her thoughts, her state of being, her desires, her preoccupations, her experience ... In these simple and moving letters,

without any intention whatsoever, Mother Margherita permits us to catch a glimpse of the secret of her sanctity.

1. Letters to Mgr Anton Galea

Letter 1

Mother Margherita, who was in Corfú since 1911¹ writes to her Spiritual Father who has just left for Malta².

As Local Superior, she expresses the desire to be able to build a small church for her "Beloved Prisoner"; she shows great concern for the development of the mission but always abandons herself to the will of God and to his providence.

With delicate concern she asks for news and promises prayers.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 12 May 1917

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

It is necessary to resign ourselves totally to the Holy will of our most beloved Jesus, so that we can find assistance and comfort in the different circumstances of life.

Sixteen days have already passed since your departure and we have had nothing but bad news. How are you? What about your dear mother? Truly, the good Jesus willed that as soon as you left us, news arrived. Blessed be his Holy Will!

I hope that you have read in the attached papers the petitions made and there is also news about the newly admitted. The first does not seem happy, but is settling down. We hope there is a strong foundation. It will be a good start. Therese struggles with her mother, who is still not pleased.

Rev. Fr John³ does his best to continue to hear confession as usual, etc., etc., as well as daily Mass at seven, and three masses on Sunday at the usual time. Well, thanks to the good Jesus, till now everything goes on as usual.

¹ The community of Corfú was the first house opened outside the Maltese Islands in 1907 by Mother Margherita herself when she was general Superior.

² Mgr Galea was for some time the chaplain of the large Maltese community in Corfú and one of the reasons for his return to Malta seems to have been his father's death, as mentioned in the letter.

³ Mgr Giovanni della Vecchia was then Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Corfú and helped the Franciscan Sisters immensely. Born in Schio (Vicenza), he died in Corfú on the 22 April 1944.

The building project of a small house for the parish priest, has been accepted by Fr John, who says that the Church can afford 3,000 francs, but 2,000 more francs are still needed. If you could insist with some benefactors or His Excellency, it could be carried out this summer. Forgive me Father, but you know that we are concerned about this. Rather, Fr John says that he will have recourse to the Holy Father regarding the Church. Oh, that a little Church could be built immediately, for our Beloved Prisoner!

Can I tell you more? The dear sisters and I are better. However I cannot as yet attain that pure Love my miserable heart yearns for. Pray Father, ask others to pray so that we will all arrive at attaining that pure, sweet Love; then, undoubtedly, we can attain the rest.

What are you doing today, Saturday? Do you hear many confessions? Or are you still mourning the loss (it is no loss) of your dear Father? Eh! Have courage and strength in the Lord, he will be closer to Him being with him than living with us.

You may imagine how eager we are for your news; but we also offer this sacrifice to the Good Jesus. I hope you have already received our news, which I wrote twice. There is no need to tell you that everyone asks about you, and when you are returning.

Dear Father, I only ask you to reflect on what might become of the good that you have begun without continual cultivation. I am afraid that it will deteriorate instead of progress. Let us abandon everything to the care of Divine Providence who lacks nothing, neither means, nor personnel. The dear Sisters are all doing well, even those who did not write to you. We are resigned and wait to see the outcome of this critical situation and adore in humble silence the secrets of Divine Goodness.

Therefore, let us love the Love that is not loved because He is not known; therefore let us do our best that He may be known and He will certainly be loved.

I finish off after having resumed 4 times by sending you our filial respects, asking you to bless all of us while reminding you of the prayers we raise to our Sweet Jesus for one another.

I wish I could say many things to your dear mother as I dearly wish to know how she is, and to Mgr Agius and Fr George Preca⁴. Please tell them to pray for me as I am in dire need.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 2

Mother Margherita expressed her regret for not having yet received any news from her spiritual father and tells him with satisfaction about the spiritual profit of the missions.

She asks advice about accepting the office of general Superior, not yet officially communicated to her, but disclosed by a telegram, for she considers herself physically and spiritually incapable of carrying it out

The document even expresses a remarkable apostolic interest.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 5 June 1917

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Forty days since your departure we have still not received any letter from you... Perhaps you wrote and the letter did not arrive or perhaps it has been lost. We repeat the dear *Fiat!* But we (maybe) wait eagerly.

Our news are nearly always the same ... <...>

The very Rev. Can. is still looking after the emigrants with enthusiasm and sacrifice; he comes every Saturday for Confession and he is always in the confessional on Sundays from 5.00 a.m. The number of Communicants on Sunday so far exceeds 100; even on weekdays there are always some people.

Everyone is awaiting news from you and asking if you will be coming back. From one moment to the next, even we await any gleam of hope about this decision and hope in the Eucharistic Heart that it will be as your first sons and

⁴ Fr George Preca (12.02.1888 – 26.07.1962) founded the lay Society “MUSEUM” (Magister, Utinam Sequatur Evangelium Universus Mundus – Master, that all the world may follow the Gospel”, formed of men and women who teach catechism and commit themselves to study and spread the Gospel. He helped Mother Margherita greatly by giving her advice. He was proclaimed Blessed by Pope John Paul II on 9 May 2001.

daughters desire, though they do not correspond with generosity to what you did for them <...>

Let us pass on to something else: What do you think about the telegram of the 31st of last month? I hope that you already know about it. I have not understood it yet, rather we have celebrated the re-election of Mother Nazarena⁵ ... having seen only the signature and not the other words. Then, towards evening, I read the telegram again in order to know the date when it took place and? What? I say how? Perhaps it was for this reason? And a thousand other thoughts, and my heart was beating forcefully, without yet being able to pronounce a strong *Fiat!* Only with Jesus, can I think and think again ...

Today June 4: Fr Abatangelo⁶ came and I showed him the telegram and he confirmed the truth ... It seems however that I can refuse, I replied with bitter tears, but he replied: Isn't it more perfect to pronounce the sweet *Fiat?!?* However I am not yet convinced and I wait for a letter anxiously as well as for the decision on what to do and everything for Holy Obedience, for whose love I am ready to confront any danger, even life itself. Do you understand me, dear Father in Jesus? Help me in such a critical moment: even because of the present situation of this House, the new Aspirants, etc ...

Peppini returned home; let us pray perhaps she will change her mind. However, the others are more eager than ever and instead of being discouraged, they are full of courage all the more; rather they feel sorry for her, etc. etc. Now, we can truly say that our mission is a small trial! May the most holy Will be always done. I told the Sisters that our lack of correspondence has been the cause of Rev. Father's departure. Now I am convinced of the little profit I made during my stay in the missions and that is why the Lord has presented me with the heavy cross (if it is true, for I cannot yet believe it).

That's enough. Now I will pray to our good Lord so that He will grant me the grace never to do anything that displeases him ... I am capable of doing many such things... You, who know the present situation of our House, can inform

⁵ She here refers to Mother Nazarena Gouder, who was general Superior many times: cf. Information about her in the appendix.

⁶ Fr Spiridione Abatangelo, priest from the diocese of Corfú, was a diligent collaborator of the Franciscan Sisters.

Mother Nazarena, even about my physical and moral inabilities. I am giving you the faculty to do so, or rather I pray you to do it through charity.

Let us meet in the Sacred Hearts to love the Love that is not loved because He is not known. Bless us all, who greet you with reverence, together with your dear mother, whom we would like to see.

Your poor daughter in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

P.S. A cordial greeting to Mgr Agius.

Letter 3

Together with other news, Mother expresses the sorrow she feels in leaving Corfú which is so much at heart, but she repeats her fiat with joy.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 20 June 1917

Dear Father in Jesus,

Thanks to our Sweet Jesus, your letter finally arrived. See how the Lord repays even in this life the sacrifices made for Him. See how good our amiable Lord is! Why cannot we love him, why aren't we consumed by his love? Ah! because He is not known, such delicate sweetness, such infinite greatness, such omnipotent Love is not loved. Let us pass on to something else ...

Thanks be to God, the sick are better, that is, Vella, because Concetta is nearly always the same. Our sisters are getting better though still very weak. The other spiritual things are getting on moderately well according to the actual circumstances of work, sickness, lack of food, etc ... Eh! Patience, and always the dear *Fiat!* Now we are awaiting the rain, but only few come to pray for it. Can. Fr John as well as Fr Abatangelo and the others do their best, however they are not free as they also have their work in the city. Everyone asks about you (over here) and they all listened to your letter with satisfaction ... All sent their best regards and pray for your safe return. There are surely travelling difficulties for your dear Mother ... it also seems difficult for you ...

And what am I to say about myself? Oh, what I felt when I read your letter. I understood that I am Mother General ... for till that very moment I was not yet convinced by the telegram. Immediately I repeated (to Fr John who was reading the letter): but can't I refuse? ... and he replied: No, I do not advise you, though it is not easy to travel. You can delegate someone till things clear up and peace is re-established ... Therefore, I anxiously wait for your letter to decide what I should do. My fellow sisters do not know anything yet. I tried to distribute the duties in order to see how everything works out.

(17.6) Now they know why I came with Mr Galea, but I did not arrive on time to book. Oh, what have you done to me? The Lord has really used you to place such a heavy cross on my shoulder! Therefore you now have to help me a great deal with prayers and advice, etc., etc... for if it had depended on me, I would have certainly refused ... Well, I have repeated the dear *Fiat!*, though with a very great effort, as I am totally unable and unworthy of living not only as a simple religious but even in the company of such beautiful souls...

I hope to come within a week, if God will keep this steamer here. When I am through with these things I will inform you myself, if God wills. In the meantime, pray and ask others to pray so that our Good Jesus will give me the grace to arrive safely in his House, where He has called me and confirmed me through your command and that of the directors I also have over here ... My fellow sisters remained astonished at this unexpected news ... they cried etc. But there are resigned and are all expecting you to come back soon...

This very moment I gave the veil to Caterina Puligardo and I recommended all the sisters to the Good Jesus together with Mary, while I prayed that He will be their Superior, their Father and their Director, their Brother and their Spouse, who will hide them in His Eucharistic Heart from where no enemy can take them away, etc.

I finish off by sending our best regards from all of us, especially from the professed sisters and the postulant who wants to come with me. But it is not the time ...

Please give my best regards to our sisters for I do not have time to write ... I received the papers about the Chapter, etc ... However now I cannot think of anything else but of coming. Bless all of us and during Mass remember the poor and miserable

Sr Margherita

Best regards to your dear mother.

Letter 4

The letter is about the preparations for Mother's departure from Corfú, owing to her election as general Superior. She informs her spiritual father of the difficulties encountered on the part of the Consul, who delayed in handing over her passport.

In Mother, we observe a readiness to fulfil holy obedience, and her strong spirit of abandonment to God's will.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 21 June 1917

Very Rev. Father in Jesus!

Do me a favour and put everything in order and see what they think about my departure.

See, today I had everything ready, and the Consul did not hand over my passport. Therefore I also hand this paper over to you to do with it as you please: I am ready to stay here or leave when you and His Excellency⁷ tell me ... However inform me clearly. Many best wishes.

You understand: the enclosed is for the permission, however if you do not think it is possible or necessary that I leave immediately ... Well, I repeat, I leave the decision to you. I abandon myself to holy obedience from where I await assistance and comfort.

Bless me and remember me during the Holy Sacrifice.

Your humble servant

Sr Margherita

Letter 5

⁷ Mother refers to the bishop of Gozo, Mgr John Camilleri, on whom the Congregation depended at that time.

Mother Margherita has been re-elected general Superior. However she is unable to reconcile the thought of her re-election, which took place a month before, and that of having to leave the missions. On one hand she is afraid of lacking in trust and total abandonment to God; on the other, she is troubled by many preoccupations for the missions.

The current war does not favour her return voyage to Malta; but a letter from the Bishop of Gozo reminds her that God's will is clearly expressed in her election to general Superior.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 30 June 1917

Dear Father in the Holy Eucharist,

As you read in the letter attached to this, I was ready to leave on the 22nd of this month, together with Mr Galea who came to see you with other Maltese people. I do not know if he met you, for he did not even take the letter that was prepared with the note for the Masses.

A month has already passed since the Chapter, and in her letter, the Rev. Mother Vicar⁸ informed me about the extension of three months for the Local Superiors etc., etc. However now it is much more difficult for me to travel, not only because of the danger, but also for lack of a companion (I do not want to expose another sister to danger) and they cannot remain four only. So what am I to do? I cannot remain calm and not think about it ... I am afraid that I lack trust and total abandonment, as I am distracted and dry. *Fiat* always! Write and tell me, Father, what I should do.

Fr John is against my departure. Abatangelo isn't. However both of them have not permitted me to refuse and even His Excellency hasn't ... Here everyone is feeling the need of bread, and I do not know how it is going to end. It is really hot and it hasn't rained. This is little for our sins, however... When do you intend to return? The Church's plan, as well as that of the Parish House are ready; do your best (as I think I told you already) to provide 3000 francs and the house will be ready within a month. Ask Mother Nazarena for the copy of the Donation Act of the House at Corfú, so that you can see how the building can be planned etc ...

⁸ The general Vicar, M. Nazarena Gouder, was elected the next general Superior.

I just received the Sister's letters and that of His Excellency Mgr Camilleri of Gozo in which he told me that since I have been canonically elected, we cannot doubt Divine Will.

I have taken up my pen in order to continue this letter more than seven times. Patience! You know, Father, that this house is good for my health, but I am afraid that it is not good for the spirit; so I would like to know if you will be returning and when. Even the missions cannot make progress, as you yourself know. All the others have their own work to carry out. If the postulants are not given good direction, it would be better if they do not come, since it is not possible for them to go to the Mother House.

It seems I have done all I could to leave everything in order; now I leave everything in the hands of our good Jesus and in your care.

I am very happy: Maria and Caterina, Teresa and Maria Azzopardi are being opposed by their mothers; we hope they become good religious ... My sisters are resigned but they are praying that you will come soon so that they can at least hear a good word ... And what does your mother say? Eh! Write soon. Even the Rev. Fr John is very anxious and impatient to have your news.

I wish to tell you many other things, but my mind is blank.

While sending you our best regards, we all ask your paternal blessing. I pray you to remember in your prayers the poor sinner

Sr Margherita

Best regards to all our friends in the Eucharistic Heart.

Letter 6

Mother Margherita has returned to Gozo, to the Mother House, and expresses great joy in meeting her spiritual father again: she yearns to imitate him in his pure and generous love for Christ and to make Him known by all.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 28 August 1917

Dear Father,

I am happy that you have finally found a house where you can rest, etc. I am pleased that you have accepted the invitation, and I can now inform you that you can start on the fourth of next month, when Rev. Abatangelo departs. Thus I will be freer.

Dear Father, how distracted I feel! But I am resigned. Pray warmly to our Good Jesus, so that he will make of me a true and generous victim of pure love. What about you, how are you? How are you getting on in this pure love? Who can tell how many generous acts you offer the Lord! How your beautiful soul soars in these pure flames!! Ah! Yes, yes, let us love, let us love the Love, that is not known and so is not loved! ...

Bless me and remember me during Holy Mass, so that I will be granted the grace to be entirely consumed in the pure flames of Divine Love.

Give my best regards to your dear mother and your cousins, etc.

Your poor daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 7

This letter reveals how conscious Mother Margherita is of her duty as general Superior. Abandoned in God's hands, she starts her work. She would have liked to gather all those who desired spiritual bread, like her, and at the same time strongly feels the burden of the cross.

The letter is an authentic picture of her loving heart: it clearly expresses the intense and deep awareness of the love that god nurtures for her and her ardent desire to correspond.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, Sunday 26th October 1917

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I needed to see you before I leave, and I came purposely to Floriana, on Tuesday evening; but patience! This is what it means to sacrifice everything for duty... I am happy and resigned by divine help, while finding His help so sensitive

and attentive that I am surprised at my great ingratitude for not corresponding generously to His disinterested, rather, prodigal love towards the most unworthy sinner.

Therefore Father, I have plunged into the sea, though I have not yet started swimming. Let me explain myself, with the help of the good Jesus I find myself in the vast field of my heavy burden through I am not yet prepared with the tools required for the work ... Oh! What an impression many beautiful souls make upon me, as they await a morsel of bread; I am not referring to material bread, but a drop of courage, of comfort, etc. etc. How many others are waiting behind the door seeking shelter in the great house of the Divine Prisoner!! Oh! How eagerly I will open for them! Rather I will open the door wide for them, so that they may find an everlasting shelter near the Lover of our Souls. I feel an ardent thirst for such souls! ... Yes I feel that I am burning ... Enough, otherwise I will not finish this letter ...

I think that you have also found quite a good number of dear and precious souls to look after. Oh! Yes, yes, dear Father, let us make any sacrifice to enkindle them with pure love, in order to make them abhor the vanities of this evil world, etc... so that they can love and taste how good sweet Love is! Is that clear?

Do you remember Father, that through your authority I have been weighed down by a burden which is truly sweet for my soul (working for souls) but at the same time very heavy, on account of the exacting duties it brings along with it. *Kemm naf hux tassew?* (How clever of me!) *Trid tħobb tassew lil Ħelu Ġesù tagħna?* (Do you truly want to love our Jesus?!) Oh, how I wish to love Him with the heart of all those good souls, but this is not enough either. I only wish and pray (feeling embarrassed), the same human and Eucharistic Heart, that I may worthily love Him, who boasted that he finds his pleasures among the sons of men ... then these ungrateful sons of men do not bother to seek their peace, by staying close to the Sole Delight of hearts, not only of men, but even of angels ... What deep ingratitude! What do you think, dear Father: isn't this truly deep ingratitude?

While reading this letter again, I realized what I wanted to tell you before ... that is I await help and advice, and prayers more than anything else from the souls you guide. Let us love, yes, let us love Him who is our Sole and absolute All! Oh! How sweet it is to love Infinite Love! Three and One! What patience we have to exercise to remain in this exile! At times how difficult the dear *Fiat* is!

Enough ... Let us change the subject. How are you? How do you feel? Have you settled anything? Have courage, dear Father, every beginning is hard.

We are all well at the Mother House, thanks to our dear Sweet Beloved. We all send our best regards and ask your holy blessing while the poorest recommends herself as the, etc.

Sr Margherita

I await your reply as you will be inspired by Pure Love.

May Jesus be with us.

Best Wishes to your mother and your cousins.

Letter 8

The following letter was written during a course of spiritual exercises.

Mother does not yet feel intimate with Jesus, but burns with the desire to love him beyond measure. The spontaneous expressions which manifest the state of her loving soul are manifold.

J!M!J!F!

Notabile, 5 August 1918

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

How are you? I wished to meet you before the retreat, but I did not succeed. Patience! Now, will I be able to meet you during the retreat? I hope so. Thanks to our good Jesus we are filled with spiritual joy, under a torrent of abundant heavenly graces...

Pray dear Father, so that the profit will be great and abundant... My soul is still in a mysterious insensibility (I dare say) for I cannot understand anything... As yet I am almost unable to recollect myself and sometimes I feel annoyed, but I do not take any notice. I only feel Jesus for a few moments and no more. But I feel calm and resigned; I only desire to glorify Him and love him eternally and infinitely together with all reasonable beings.

I needed permission to use my new spectacles. I waited; but then I had to take presumed permission and used them, as I needed to. Oh! How I wish to

consume myself in honour of holy obedience. Let us love our most Sweet Jesus, who loves us infinitely. Oh! How I wish to love Him with his own Heart! But when, when is He going to grant me this grace: I feel truly ashamed only to think of it; but I desire it heartily...

I am enclosing a letter of Teresa Spiteri of Corfú ... It brought me great joy, though it can be hardly understood. Poor girl, how much she has to suffer! If only you can write a few lines to her. I have already done so...

While sending my cordial regards together with my sisters, I ask your blessing, and during Mass please remember your poor

Sr. Margherita

Letter 9

Mother feels distressed because of the spiritual aridity she experiences and oppressed by a series of preoccupations. And, as usual, she lays the blame on herself.

At the same time all the tension of her loving spirit, that only desires to please her Beloved, is reflected in this humble confession.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 19 December 1918

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I do not know if I can succeed in revealing some of my spiritual needs; but I will try. I am afraid, as usual, that the great aridity I feel is caused by my lack of love, by my indifference in the exercise of virtue demanded of a true religious. Moreover my office takes up much of my time; therefore it does not help my recollection. Father, during meditation I almost always find myself engulfed in it. Then during Holy Communion that coldness, the destruction of every good affection, leaves me utterly crushed under a mortal weight...I no longer feel comforted by obedience, I do not even remember...then, darkness in the fulfilment of the important things in the Community...

Adding to this I can rarely make acts of abandonment owing to the distance that I feel separates me from the Lord ... worse, worse, much worse than the statue of which you read about...Always *flat!* Nevertheless very little.. At

times a thought crosses my mind not to receive Communion, for fear of doing it as a habit, and thus displease Jesus; but then what should I do? These holy days of Christmas frighten me, or I'd better say, they almost afflict me, being so beautiful.

I do not want to bother you, even because of the aversion I feel against having to write all this...

In the meantime, in Council we accepted many novices and Postulants, and we have dismissed one. The decision not to admit postulants for the time being, owing to the high cost of living, hurts me deeply...Well everything adds up to oppress the heart of the poor sinner, who is frequently in anguish over past misdeeds...It doesn't matter! I deserve more than this for my grave sins, and for corresponding badly to the graces I received...

What have you done concerning the Sisters at Corfú? I have sent word to His Excellency, and he replied that he is thinking about it...Let us see...Enough, let us change the subject...

May the Holy Babe give you abundant graces and satisfy your holy desires, etc., so that you can save and sanctify many, many souls with the precious blood of Jesus the Redeemer... Finally, while I ask your paternal blessing, I recommend to your fervent prayers the poor

Sr. Margherita

Letter 10

Mother Margherita is on a visit to Corfú and informs her spiritual father about the aspirants and the wish that he return to Corfú.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 27 November 1919

Dear Father in the Holy Eucharist,

Thanks to our Good Jesus, I am healthy, as are all our dear Sisters. How beneficial your visit would be at present as his Excellency has not yet decided whom to send here. I do not know from where I have learnt that you are

free...I think I told a sister to ask you to write to me immediately if it is true but I received no answer. Patience!

Fr. Spiridione Ruggeri⁹ comes to say Mass daily and he also comes on Sunday. But the people ask about you. Meanwhile I am thinking of returning, but we still have bad weather. Teresa and Agatangela are not healthy enough so I am not sure if I will bring them with me. Maria Azzopardi is eager to come too, but her brothers do not want to give her permission. And her poor mother is greatly saddened by her departure. Parnis has changed her mind. For the rest, thanks to our good Jesus, everything is going on well. Best wishes from everyone and they thank you for the scapulars, etc...

Finally, I send you the sincere wishes of my sisters and united together we ask you to bless and remember during Mass,

your poor daughter in Jesus,

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 11

The following is a document of a high mystical level. Mother, thirsty for God and desirous of consuming herself in love, asks her spiritual director to offer her as a victim to God during the Eucharistic sacrifice.

A prayer of self offering and the vow to be a victim of divine love are included.

J!M!J!F!

Notabile, 27 August 1920

Dear Father in the Holy Eucharist,

Oh! How worn out I feel, annulled by the desire to be consumed totally and absolutely by Divine Love! How strongly I feel the thirst for that omnipotent Being, etc. But how, how do I correspond? What shall I give for so many benefits?...Ah! enough! because I know that the pen is unable to express interior things clearly, etc... The promise I want to make, and wish it to be written with my own blood is: "*Oh, Triune God, I, a poor and unworthy creature,*

⁹ Fr Spiridione Ruggeri was parish priest in Corfú for many years. A holy and good priest, he attracted people with his sympathy and was of great help to the Franciscan Sisters ... He died in Corfú in 1964.

offer myself totally to the mercy of your love, begging you to permit me to die rather than be unfaithful. Amen".

I would like to have the key of the harmonium, and you would be doing me a great favour if you could kindly preach to the Superiors on Monday or Tuesday, as the preacher can only come on Saturday and on no other day.

Forgive my liberty and bless me and offer me as a victim during the Holy Sacrifice to be purified and then consumed, as the soul of,
Sr. Margherita yearns

Letter 12

Mother Margherita informs her spiritual father about the change of office of many sisters, while also expressing trust and respect towards the sisters.

At the same time, she would like to confide more openly with him, but is hindered by that self-restraint which leads her to repeat a typical expression of hers: those who love, understand.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 13 September 1920

Dear Father in Jesus!

I did not have the chance to meet you again before returning to the Mother House. *Fiat!* I do not know how I am going to succeed in meeting you. *Fiat!* I do not know if you still go to B'Kara.

Nearly all the Sisters have been changed. Sr. Agostina is going to Qala as local Superior and Sr. Scolastica as local Superior at Nadur. May the Lord grant them the spirit of pure love, so that they may guide their small family for the greater glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

How are you doing in your new post? Who can tell how many souls you have won by God's grace, how many conquests you have made by his holy assistance, Eh! May He be always praised and loved by everyone and everywhere ...

By the grace of our good Jesus, the local Superiors have all settled down in their new offices but I still need others to fulfil other duties, and I hope to find

by the help of God's Providence, etc ... I hear that Sr Crescenza arrived at Syracuse, and perhaps she is also in Malta.

What else, dear Father? I await your reply for I do not know how you are getting along in your work.

I would like to tell you other things, but I do not trust them on paper; so I make the sweet sacrifice of voluntary silence ... Let us love Love and that is enough! He who loves understands.

Please accept the sincere regards of all my Community, while blessing your poor daughter,

Sr. M. Margherita

Best wishes to your mother and cousins.

Letter 13

Mother shows the desire of having a spiritual director of whom she feels the need. She experiences sentiments of humility and of abandonment and, as usual, considers herself unworthy of consideration and attention.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 7 January 1921

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

What is the reason for your long silence? Is it work? Or perhaps my ingratitude? On my part, I sure do not deserve it; but such a dear father does abandon his daughter without a reply. Perhaps ... I do not have time to find reasons....Whatever it be... forgive me, even if I have offended you with intention ... If you do not want to reply (as I truly deserve) because I have corresponded badly in the past, I also accept this with humble submission, strongly convinced that I deserve far worse than this ... However, I ask you to be good enough to explain so that I will be more careful in the future.

I think I'll be coming to Malta next week; but I do not know how to find you. May the divine Will be always done!

I feel quite well health wise, by the grace of the good Jesus, but I have plenty of work to do; at times I am unable to attend to my tasks ... then ... then ...

Oh! How I need to meet you! But how? Where? When? I leave everything to God's Providence!

How are you? Are you content? Who can tell how many souls you bring closer to Jesus! Yes, yes, dear Father, work for souls who are worth the price of the blood of God, three times Holy ...

Please recommend me to the Lord in your prayer and bless the poorest and most unworthy amongst your daughters in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Please give my best regards to your mother and your cousins.

Letter 14

After extending her Easter wishes to her spiritual father, Mother bursts into passionate exclamations: she manifests a heart which is profoundly in love with Christ, and burns with the desire to die to self to unite herself completely and irrevocably to Him.

She asks to be offered as a victim with the Immaculate host.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 28 March 1921

Dear Father in the Risen Jesus,

I do not wish these joyful days to pass without extending to you not so much temporal as spiritual greetings.

Yes, our good Jesus, is prodigal in enriching you with the finest sanctity...where zeal enkindles you, so that your beautiful soul may enkindle all those who draw near to you...

Oh! Father, why doesn't our good Jesus consume us by his fire of pure, pure, love? Why does he still permit us to live in ourselves?...

Ohime! I do not want to live any longer... I really want to die to self in order to live absolutely in Him, hidden and totally lost! But what can I do? Dear Father, tell me for the love of our Sweet Jesus, what can I do? Yes, my poor heart really wants to burst out for love...

Father, recommend me to the Lord and tell others to pray for me, so that I may be totally lost in God, a thing my soul continually yearns for. I know well enough that I am not worthy, but the Sweet Jesus will make up for my poverty. I would also like to know what I, on my part, have to do to obtain this grace... Well, dear Father, offer my poor and ungrateful soul during Mass, together with the Immaculate Host, so that it will become one with that Supreme Being. Oh! How unworthy I am! ...I feel ashamed just to think about this...But His infinite goodness gives me hope...

With sincere thanks for the inconveniences I caused you, I give my best regards to your family, while asking you to bless the poor

Sr. Margherita

Letter 15

Mother Margherita expresses her continual desire for spiritual help, but, as usual, she abandons herself to God's will.

J!M!J!F!

Floriana, 12 August 1921

Dear Father in Jesus!

It is a long time since we last met. God's will be always done. Amen!

At least will I succeed in meeting you tomorrow at Floriana? I will wait for you unless I hear otherwise from you. How deprived I feel of everything. I am afraid that I am living in indifference...would it were holy! Eh! Dear Father, work absorbs my mind and does not leave me free to seek our beloved Jesus in silence... Or is it perhaps my negligence...and tepidity?

Well, if God wills we shall speak when we meet. Bless me and I sign in a hurry.

Your most obedient Daughter

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 16

Mother Margherita is in Rome¹⁰ and manifests her grief in seeing Mother Nazarena Gouder, the general Vicar, whom she had accompanied, in pain.

Some characteristics of her spirituality can be found in this letter: love towards the suffering neighbour and abandonment to divine will.

She speaks of a special audience with the Holy Father and of the dialogue she had with him.

J!M!J!F!

Rome, 11 October 1921

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

I hope you have received our news. Eh! May the holy Will be done. How many acts of abandonment I have had the opportunity to make, from the moment I arrived in the Holy City. My dear companion has suffered and still suffers from rather painful wounds; she is being well taken care of, yes, but is always away from our house... Always *Fiat!!!* Thanks to our good Jesus, courage and resignation are never lacking... Perhaps I have not made formal acts very often, but prayed heartily for her recovery; but I think, always on condition that this is the divine Will.

Meanwhile we have had a private audience with the Holy Father and as Mother Nazarena felt better we succeeded in going together that day. On seeing her so weak, the Pope asked her if the Roman air was bad for her health. So we told him about her illness and he gave her a special blessing to get better etc, etc.

However, after eight days she had to undergo another, less painful and less difficult, operation for the third time. Now thanks to our Good Jesus she is better, though still in bed and very weak; I do not know when she will be able to travel. May the Divine Will be always done. We are in a clinic run by the Dominican Sisters where there are the best Doctors; therefore she is well cared for and treated.

¹⁰ She had a two-fold aim for going to Rome: to ask the Holy See for the *Decretum Laudis* for the Congregation and for a cardinal protector. The papal audience to which she refers in the letter was given on the 17th of September.

I avail myself to exercise acts of charity with her and I spend the rest of the time in the Chapel, near our most Sweet Jesus, Prisoner of Love! At times I see the days passing without a glimmer of hope. I take heart and renew acts of abandonment, but I am afraid that they are too cold, arid, and at times done through habit... Well, dear Father, recommend me heartily to the Lord so that I may avail myself of this opportunity; also for dear Mother Nazarena who endures such terrible pain patiently, etc. etc. Thanks to our Good Jesus, she has always been so resigned, that she edifies everyone, and when I assist her, she mortifies herself and tells me: *Tibzax!* (Don't worry!) Mother, our Jesus will repay you! And thus we spend the time sweetly though sorrowfully.

Oh! How good our Sweet Spouse is; He knows how to alleviate the bitterness of life; rather, I dare say, he changes it to joy!...Yes, yes, dear Father, we feel him throughout the day, rather, rather at every moment, when we think of the deeds of Divine Providence...Oh! How sorry I feel because we are not infinitely grateful. Let us love; yes, let us love the Sweet Beloved of our souls and unite ourselves to Him to love him as He deserves!!! Oh! How I wish to destroy myself, to consume myself, to annihilate myself to please Him, to make Him known and loved! But then feeling my extreme misery, I hide myself in the depth of the abyss of the infinite Good of our All. What else, dear Father, what else can I tell you??!

I do not know, I only beg you to help me to hide myself well in the Sacred Heart of our Only Love, and together live the life of pure love abandoning ourselves totally, seriously and eternally to the paternal Care of His Providence as I always wish for myself and for you and for all who desire to carry out His most Holy Wil ...

the poor

Sr. Margherita

I ask your blessing and let us pray for one another.

Letter 17

Mother speaks about her concern in selecting sisters to be sent to the newly opened house in Sicily: Troina (Enna); together with the house at Regalbuto (Enna), it is the first house to be opened in Italy.

She asks for prayers in order to obtain light in carrying out her office and spiritual graces to overcome moments of aridity.

She is delighted with the new vocations that the Giver of every good offers to the Congregation.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 12 January 1922

Dear Father in Jesus,

I have received your card and I am replying immediately. The affairs in Sicily are in progress, we have accepted and the Sisters will be leaving at the end of the month. We hope that they will be of benefit, because according to the letters arriving from there, they are eagerly awaited. May our good Jesus be thanked for deigning to use such weak instruments for such a holy work!! However, my mind is still so full of serious thoughts about the choice of the Sisters. I cannot yet decide and determine anything. Therefore dear Father, pray too so that those whom the Lord wants will be chosen...

I am afraid, for I feel very distracted and I do not recollect myself during the acts of piety; all my thoughts are on the Community; to solve, compensate, change, etc. etc.; and I do not seek the poor Jesus, I do not think of Him, I do not love Him ... Then, how can I make Him loved by others?! At times I am tired and perhaps get bored ... but then I rest in abandonment and that is enough! But I am afraid that this is due to aridity and tepidity! I really feel very dissipated and distracted. I do not find a moment of silence during the day. When I am awake, I am unable to think and thus I live all immersed in the affairs of office, yes, but not in God, as I should ...

I am pleased with the good results: let us thank the Giver of every good. On the eighth of this month we also had the Holy Clothing of four girls whose their fervour and generosity satisfied everyone ... but I hope, that more than anyone else, the Divine Spouse was pleased! ... Within another two months we shall also have the Profession of six Novices amongst whom are the dear Sr Modestina and Sr Orsolina. I fear accepting them because of their health, but let us pray that the Divine Will may be done!

That's enough dear Father, not because I do not need to dialogue in length, but time flies. *Fiat semper!*

Give my best regards to your mother and cousin etc., and then I kneel at your feet to ask for an abundant blessing and a warm remembrance during Holy Mass for the poor

Sr Margherita

P.S. When you have some free time, use it in favour of your poor daughter, by writing a few ardent lines to enkindle in her love for the good, good, good sweet Jesus. All right?

Letter 18

In this letter, sent from Sicily, Mother describes her joy at the inauguration of the new house in Troina (Enna), with a Eucharistic Celebration and the participation of the people and of the Ecclesiastical and civil authority.

She expresses sentiments of gratitude to the Lord for the apostolic work offered to his brides. She considers herself unworthy and would like to work harder than she has done till now. Aware of this, she asks for prayers for herself and for her sisters.

J!M!J!F!

Troina, 2 April 1922

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Finally I found time to write and send you our news, which thanks to our good Jesus, is very good.

I hope that you have already heard about the welcome we received, the care and respect that everyone showed towards us though unworthy, as well as the good outcome of the inauguration that took place on the 28th of last month in the presence of His Excellency Mgr Bishop of Nicosia who celebrated Holy Mass... He also presided at a refreshment in the afternoon, and delivered a speech with other speakers, etc. etc, regarding the work inaugurated. Finally he called all the Sisters, congratulated us for our mission, and encouraged us, etc. etc, like a good Father with his dear daughters. To his and our great joy, he visited us unexpectedly

the following day on his return to Nicosia and he again encouraged us to continue the work which, to the satisfaction of the whole population, has been accepted with great joy.

There are ten orphans at present, but many others ask to be admitted. To satisfy the people, a laboratory needs to be opened immediately for day students who anxiously wait to be able to approach the sisters ... We have visits from the Church and Civil Authorities, from all the Franciscan Secular Tertiaries (there are no female Congregations), from all the ladies, etc. and those who could not come, sent us their visiting card ... See, Father how different our life is from that of our Crucified Spouse?! It is so because we are still not worthy of thorns, sufferings, etc.

At first the Sisters were a bit disheartened; but later they plucked up courage knowing the benefit in working for souls, especially by teaching Catechism that is lacking for there are no workers... The people frequent the Church, but not the Sacraments, and they do not behave well in the Church; they talk and shout more than those in Corfú. However, the knowledge of our religion is well grounded in them. There are also good and recollected youth who teach catechism to a small group of children... Well, there is a lot to be done.

The Commission in charge of the administration of this orphanage gets along reasonably well with us. The President, who is the ex-provincial of the Capuchin Friars is very concerned about us: he encourages us, promises us to do the repairs left; well, just as a father thinks of everything likewise the Rev. Archpriest does his best to make us happy. Now only our generous cooperation is needed and I hope with divine help that it will be forthcoming since all of us have a good will. However we need warm and fervent prayers to overcome all the burdens of our spoilt nature, and the temptations of Satan, who always seeks our destruction...Whenever we go out, we find ourselves surrounded by a throng of children, watched by the people at the windows, in the streets and at the doors, etc. What can we do? Patience! They have never seen sisters or children in uniform. Well, may our beloved Jesus be praised for He cares and helps our poor community... May He be praised and loved for all eternity. Amen.

However, I feel ungrateful, careless, indifferent and distracted more than ever before. Oh, how much good I could have done and didn't. How much material advice I could have given and instead thought of myself and acted according to nature, etc. Oh, how miserable I am! How weak I am and what is worse, I do not

remember and I do not turn to our good Jesus as I should. See dear Father, what fruit the garden of this evil and unworthy daughter yields! She asks your blessing and recommends herself during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass...

My dear companions send you their cordial regards, ask for your blessing and have the pleasure of reading a few lines of encouragement...The unattractive and dirty streets here have impressed almost all; with the acceptance of a few... Also it is considerably cold and then, it will certainly be worse in winter; on the other hand the air is quite good...

Sr. M. Margherita

(Female orphanage of the Sorrowful Mother)

Letter 19

Mother Margherita is again in Corfú and her loving soul suffers because as a consequence of lack of priests, the spiritual life among the Maltese faithful is weak. She is comforted by the hope that some Franciscan friars would be arriving (also see letter 144).

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 2 August 1922

Dear Father in Jesus,

I always think of writing to you and do not succeed, now I started seriously and I hope to succeed... Well, Father, after having heard and seen our dear Sisters, I can say with relief, that thanks to our good Jesus, there is real progress in school, in the number, etc.

The number of communicants is not as high as it was. Patience eh! Let us pray therefore, that perhaps the coming of a Friar Minor will have effect and his stay among these poor Maltese will be permanent. Before long, work will start on the Church. His Excellency is very eager and does his best for the welfare of souls. I am not yet sure if I will leave for Rome this week.

I always need prayers for the many circumstances I find myself in, without being able to decide; but through prayers God's will is revealed. I wanted to tell you

many other things but believe me, dear Father, my mind is blank...I hope you understand me well. Is it true?

Poor Fr John has to go away again from his parish and he does not feel like it. On the contrary he says: I am good for nothing, I am old and of weak health... Eh! The Lord has great plans for him!

Well, how are you? I am well, thanks to our good Jesus, but distracted and dry...

However, I truly wish to love our dear Jesus who is so good, good! Yes, father, let us love Him for all those who do not love Him. Let us love Him for those who do not want to know Him. What ingratitude!

Bless me, and recommend me to our sweet Jesus so that He will make me totally His, body and soul, forever.

Sincere and best wishes from all the dear Sisters and also from the Maltese who remember you with pleasure. Bless them, and then bless your poorest daughter in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 20

The letter shows Mother Margherita's apostolic disposition. The new work in Regalbuto, Sicily is in dire need of sisters who have a strong spirit of sacrifice and of courage.

The dominant note of complete abandonment in God who is good and provides is again reiterated.

J!M!J!F!

Regalbuto, 21 September 1922

Dear Father in Jesus Christ,

Here I am, after a long silence. I thought I was going to return soon, but I did not succeed, owing to problems regarding the new houses and because the Bishop of Nicosia insists that I should stay ... Well, *Fiat!* <...> Let us change the subject. Thanks to our good Jesus, I always feel healthy, as I hope you and your

family feel. I did all I could in Rome about the Constitutions¹¹ ... Thanks to our good Jesus, the sisters are getting on well in Troina; they are happy and have many children in the laboratory whom they can help spiritually.

At Regalbuto, where I am at present, there is also a great field to work in and an availability that encourages me. Well, we need strength and a great spirit of sacrifice and zeal for souls enkindled within us because there are many; there is no need to go to China to save souls; there are many souls everywhere abandoned, ignored, or neglected ... Oh! If we had true love towards our Sweet Jesus, we would sacrifice our whole self to save them! ... How neglected Holy Religion is! Sundays do not seem days of obligation, of Mass and rest from work ...

Poor people! Patience! To see so many Christians who know nothing about religion ... Eh! What a vast field! The workers are few. Let us pray unceasingly so that the Lord will send his Ministers to work in his field ... we do well to leave everything to his Divine Providence whose help never fails those who trust in His goodness...

On my part, I cannot say anything else, dear Father, except that I feel arid and distracted. This is due to my laziness and unfaithfulness ... Pray the Lord for me, so that I will never, never, displease the most Sacred Heart of Jesus, whom I so much desire to see known and loved ...

I pray you, dear Father, together with your dear mother, to accept my regards and those of the Sisters. Bless them all in the Sacred Heart, but especially the one most in need

Sr Margherita

Letter 21

Mother expresses her joy at the profession of four novices and for the numerous aspirants.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 5 November 1922

¹¹ In this circumstance, Mother Margherita obtains a cardinal protector for the Congregation, Card. Oreste Giorgi.

Dear Father in Jesus!

Here is some consoling news. Dear Sr Modestina is preparing herself together with three other sisters. for Holy Profession that will take place on Sunday, 12th of the month. Only Sr. Orsolina remains, who greatly desires to make her profession but has not been accepted and so she cannot be consoled. Patience!

How I wish you could be present. Do your best to come, if the weather permits, together with your mother... Well, I abandon my poor soul in the care of Divine Providence, since I do not find time to see to it myself. All for the greater glory of our good Jesus.

Father, the aspirants are numerous, thanks to our good Jesus, but we cannot accept them owing to lack of space... I wish I could keep them in Malta, but we do not have a big house for this purpose. Providence has to think seriously about this!... Let us love our All and strive to make him loved by all and everywhere!!

Bless me, together with all my dear daughters and please recommend to the divine goodness your poor daughter in Jesus Christ

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 22

Mother expresses a great desire to meet her spiritual father. In love with Christ, she yearns to love Him at all costs, and feels afflicted because of interior silence, aridity, etc. At the same time, she feels tranquil, in the bosom of Him who alone is enough for the human creature.

J!M!!F!

Mother House, 20th December 1922

Dear Father in Jesus Christ,

What a beautiful and strong *Fiat* I have to repeat!... What a long time has passed since I managed to meet you for a brief time!... These last few days I truly wished I could, but due to the serious condition of one of my dear sisters, I had to hasten to the Mother House.

Dear Father, I really feel distracted and dry! Even tired! Patience! Oh! Yes, I abandon myself to the care of Divine Providence, but at times I doubt if I could do otherwise...If I could remedy... Then, I am afraid, etc. etc, I feel a certain tranquility, a certain indifference. I do not know if this is coming from abandonment or from aridity and tepidity...

At times I feel the need of God...the soul seeks repose and silence in the Bosom of Him who is enough for the human creature! He is only felt for a few moments... then he immediately recedes far away, distantly... Ah, then, then the poor soul remains weary, alone, alone...Ah! when, when will I experience that happy moment, when we are freely allowed access to that eternal Bosom! To that divine Bosom! And then! and then: Tell me, Father when, when shall I be given the grace my soul yearns for to soar high? When shall it be given to us?...

Enough. Eh! It is still necessary to fast! To purify myself and suffer ... and annihilate myself ... first; is it not so Father? It is necessary to pray and to implore with warm tears and loving sighs.. what a beautiful *Fiat* I have had to, and now repeat, as I feel my heart is about to burst ... in the meantime I have to be silent ... It is enough, otherwise I shall never end...

Meanwhile, dear and beloved Father in the Heart of the Sweet Jesus, let us love, let us love Him, who is so lovable ... so sweet ... so good, good ... good. Yes, let us love Him with his own Infinite Love. Only this satisfies my small and wretched heart! Courage then, let us love Love and do our best with his Divine grace to make Him known and loved.

I will stop here; it is up to you, Father, to interpret the throbbing, the anxieties, the longings ... of the heart that pines for that which, I don't know if, is divine...

The Most Holy Child, fills us with his blessings and makes us soar high, high near the Bosom of his eternal Father...and with the Holy Spirit makes us reign forever. Amen.

Sr. M. Margherita

I wait for a reply...

Letter 23

Mother, experiencing moments of interior darkness and in critical situations, wishes to be enlightened by her spiritual father.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 14 April 1923

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

What a long time since we met! And I do not know where and when we shall succeed in meeting... Tomorrow, please God, I hope and will do my utmost to come to Floriana. In case you will be able to come there, you will do me a great favour, if not, I repeat the dear *Fiat*. Pray for me to the Lord always for I am in utter darkness and then many circumstances are critical and various..

Bless me as your poor and unworthy small daughter in Jesus.

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 24

The following letter, important for the history of the Congregation, carries the consoling news regarding the Archbishop of Malta, Mgr Mauro Caruana's¹² offer of the House of Adoration, in the city of Valletta.

It also manifests Mother Margherita's humble soul and her extraordinary spirit of abandonment to the dispositions of divine providence.

J!M!J!F!

(probable date: April 1923)

Most dear Father in Jesus,

I hasten to give you some consoling news, though it hasn't happened yet... Well, dear Father, a few days ago, I spoke to His Excellency, as we had discussed together etc. Then he told me: Do you want the House at St Christopher Street? I replied, amazed: the one of Adoration? He answered: Yes, and you will hold adorations the whole day long, etc. More surprised I added: Ah, Your Excellency, I do not deserve such fortune. But he replied: Thank the Lord immediately and do all you can, so that it will not be long before it is opened...Then I added: I cannot do anything by myself. I will inform my Councillors and His Excellency about this proposal and then I'll give you the

¹² This house was officially opened in April 1924 and Mother Margherita was the first Superior.

answer later. So that is what I did. His Excellency¹³ and the Councillors want to know clearly how things stand...Therefore I am waiting for the note Mgr Camilleri had to send me.

I am hoping to be at the House of Pillar these days; if you can do me a small favour, so that I can give you the good news personally, and other news too. However it is essential to pray fervently, deeply still, for I am certain that many difficulties will crop up from all sides.

It does not matter; if the Lord wants, everything will be resolved... Meanwhile I feel disheartened and annihilated in the care of divine providence.

I will not write another letter for I have no time, and excuse me for these papers, etc. Really, I do not find one moment to spare. *Fiat semper!*

Best regards and your blessing for your poor and unworthy daughter,

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 25

Mother shows her loving soul: the dominant note is her strong desire to sacrifice herself with Christ and at the same time, the awareness of her nothingness and lowliness.

She has reached the end of her mandate as general Superior and the thought of the stark account she has to render to God for the souls entrusted to her, torments her. But, as usual, she abandons herself trustfully to God like a child.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 17 May 1923

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I wanted to meet you again but the good Jesus did not permit it. *Fiat!* Meanwhile, I am in holy Retreat but I almost feel entirely immersed in thoughts about my office.

¹³ Mother refers to the Bishop of Gozo, Mgr Giovanni Camilleri, on whom the Congregation depended at that time.

Eh! Dear Father, the thought of the accurate account I have to give for the souls of others, frightens me enough, when that of my distressed and ungrateful soul is already very exacting. What can I do but abandon myself totally in the paternal care of divine providence!! I need help, courage so that I may promptly thrust myself into that Ocean of divine Love...In the Paternal Bosom, where we find strength, light and comfort, in order to advance and move forward, till we arrive at the peak to drink the bitter chalice till the last drop...

What do you think, dear Father? At present I cannot speak more clearly, for I feel crushed under a weight on one side and on the other side I feel like a little child, accompanied by a Father whose presence makes me forget every distress, and only with Him...

That's enough dear Father, for time does not permit. I am pleased to recommend myself warmly to your fervent prayers, especially next Monday during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, so that God will grant me the grace of making a perfect act of abandonment.

Sincere regards, and a blessing for your poor *Sr M. Margherita*

P.S. I am enclosing a token which I intend to give my dear sisters before my termination of office.

Letter 26

In this brief letter Mother is preoccupied at the delay in confession. At the same time she expresses the duality within which her spiritual experience fluctuates: losing herself in Love and being aware of her wretchedness.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 8 February 1927

Dear Father,

How have you abandoned us? We wait for you daily. Some of the Sisters have not received absolution since the 17th instant, etc. If you cannot come, inform me because even Mgr Agius does not feel well.

Father, let us love Love that is not known, and therefore He is not loved. How I wish to annihilate myself for his honour and greater glory! But what can such a

poor and ungrateful creature desire! Therefore I feel consumed, tormented and ... He who loves understands.

The Superior
of the House of Adoration

Letter 27

In this letter, written from Corfú, and the last dated letter among those sent to her spiritual father, Mother expresses her sympathy on the death of one of his relatives.

She even communicates her delight at the numerous communions made and at the postulants' progress. She asks for prayers and blessings for the community.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, Friday 4 May 1935

Dear Father in the Holy Eucharist,

God's holy will be always done! There is no need to tell you anything because you have offered this sacrifice generously as soon as you received the news, therefore have courage and be strong... From the telegram's date it seemed that you had been with him already for three days...The Lord has rewarded your desire.

What did your dear mother say? We all send you our deepest sympathy, by offering prayers for the repose of his soul and that you, your mother and all your relatives may be comforted. Death is painful for those who do not believe. For us, who at any moment await to be united to our dear ones, death will be for us if not consoling (as it is a punishment for sin) at least of comfort. Therefore have courage and be strengthened in the spirit, so that you may quickly return to care for your sheep whom you have left in sorrow...

Till now people have attended regularly and willingly, but now they await your return. However there is no need to come soon, you know...Take your time but do not abandon us because I am afraid that what has been set going through so much suffering will make no progress.

The postulants are happy, but I have not yet succeeded in taking good care of them as I wish, for I am still busy. Theresa is still struggling with her mother. The Sisters are better, happy, though grieved, etc.

I have already sent you the number of communicants last Sunday: 98. Even during the week there has always been a good number; we hope to continue catering for so many needs and also hope that Fr Anton will soon return. Both children and parents all ask: when? When will he come back?

Be tranquil and seek rest in both body and soul as you truly needed it though... Eh! *Fiat!* but then straight to Corfú; of course if this is God's will...

On the seventh day, we shall have Mass and Communion, are you pleased thus? I hope so. I want to send the letter quickly, so I am not going to wait till the children write on Monday... then...

I again express our sympathy and we would have liked to tell you and your mother many other things. Our sweet Jesus knows how to comfort you, in this painful sacrifice.

Here we are Sisters and postulants:

P. Giuseppina Xuereb¹⁴

P. Maria Psaila

Sr M. Stefana of the Infant Babe

Sr M. Scolastica of the Divine Redeemer

Sr M. Crescenza of Divine Love

Sr M. Adelaide of the Blessed Margaret

Sr M. Genoveffa of St Ignatius

S. M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

asking abundant blessings on all your dear sons and daughters.

P.S. Give my regards to Mgr Agius and tell everyone to pray for the needs of the poor soul who is in intense darkness.

¹⁴ The letter "P" stand for the word "Postulant".

Letter 28

Even in this letter Mother's strong desire to love the Triune God, is evident. At the same time, as general Superior she is concerned about the formation of the religious communities.

J!M!J!F!

Dear Father in the Holy Eucharist,

I would like to know how Sr Sofia is doing: you may ask her Superior for I am worried.

Dear Father, pray for me, because I need it badly; I will also pray for you, so that our most Sweet Lord will enkindle us with his most pure Love, etc...Oh, how distracted I am! I really can't find any spare moment. Very often, I make acts of abandonment, though absentmindedly and I haven't yet spoken to all the professed Sisters; for this reason I cannot start working on the formation of communities...

Help me and I recommend myself and bless me... Let us love, let us love the Love who is not loved!! How ungrateful we are, not to love such an infinite Love. Such a Supreme Being! Such an Absolute All!! Three and One. Oh! may He be loved by everyone and everywhere. Amen.

The poor sinner

Sr. Margherita

Letter 29

In a few and incisive words, Mother expresses her heart's yearning: to be consumed in the love of her sole All and to find true rest in Him.

J!M!J!F!

Dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Thanks to our Sweet Jesus I am in good health as I hope that you and your dear family are.

You should know, Father, that the Holy Retreat starts on the 5th or 6th of next month and ends on the eve of the Assumption of our Immaculate Mother. Everything is in order. I hope to see you at the end of this month and so we can talk better face to face.

Alas! When are we going to start loving our Only All with pure love? When will our soul succeed in living the life of pure and Divine love?? When will our spirit breathe but the life of consuming love? Yes, the soul that yearns for love cannot find rest in this exile if not by pining and dying to self, etc. etc. Oh, poor soul, what pain she experiences in being continually deprived of Him... of her true rest.... What a long and holy silence she has to endure in not being given any other opportunity to express herself... He who loves understands...It is enough. Enough...Therefore let us love the Love, who is not loved because He is not known.

Bless me and pray for me, as the poor

Sr. M. Margherita does for you.

Best Wishes to your mother and cousins.

Letter 30

This letter, which concludes Mother's correspondence with her spiritual father, throws a ray of light on her spiritual experiences. Here we find, in synthesis, what Mother has disclosed in the preceding letters.

J!M!J!F!

Dear Father in the Holy Eucharist,

I do not know if I will succeed in meeting you soon, as it is very difficult...

At times I feel a real need of help because nature seems worn out, but then the Sweet Jesus immediately comes to my aid. Days ago (while I was in the chapel), I felt that my heart should no longer exist, but that the beloved Jesus should live in its stead; so I felt beside myself with amazement at such a sublime fate, and at the same time at the nothingness of such a wretched creature; and I could not contain myself for two whole days...

Afterwards I was overcome by fear of the enemy's deceit, knowing how truly I do not deserve to exist, let alone be transformed into such a holy state... At

every moment I feel something tangible in my heart, but mostly when I am in the choir or occupied in spiritual things... and in order to do material things, I feel such pain that I need to do great violence with myself in order to succeed. I feel a holy peace, a perfect tranquility...However I feel that I correspond badly for I often find that I speak about myself, relating unnecessary things, etc., etc. I feel a strong displeasure for the faults of others, perhaps without being compassionate towards them...

I feel a great desire to humiliate myself, to hide myself, to annihilate myself...I really want to be consumed, lost, annihilated forever...I wish I would be able to say truly: I no longer live but the Sweet Jesus lives in me...

But when, Father, when will this fortune befall me??? I feel that the time is approaching; but I am also aware of my ingratitude. Ah! I admit: it must be a miracle of divine mercy.

See! my usual follies!...

Father don't believe anything... However heartily recommend to the Lord the poorest and most ungrateful creature who has never corresponded well to the graces of such a prodigal Benefactor...Let us love, let us love Love who is not loved, because He is not known...Let us love Him and make Him loved by everyone and everywhere as he deserves, even if this is not possible but our soul desires it truly.

Do you love Him, Father? Do you love Him profoundly? Ah! Let us love Him truly without interest, without being tainted with self-love, loving only Him, purely for himself, because He is lovable, because He is good, good, good!

Enough, for the heart starts beating strongly, strongly and leaves me helpless...

Let us love him to folly! I do not know how; but this is how I feel I should love Him, without knowing either how or to what extent... only I would like to shout: let us love, let us love Love! Enkindle in these hearts a spark of the Eucharistic fire and they will succeed in doing great things.

While I look forward to meeting you, I ask your blessing and a warm remembrance during the Holy sacrifice, so that I may know how to correspond generously to whatever the Lord asks of your poor daughter, etc...

2. Letters to Mgr Alfonso Agius

Letter 31

In this letter, written in reply to a letter from her new spiritual father¹⁵, we observe in Mother a need for assistance and an ardent desire to abandon herself in God, together with sentiments of profound humility at the insignificance of her existence.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 28 March 1940

Most dear Father of my soul,

I hope that I will be able to satisfy your wish through holy obedience, by replying to your paternal letter of last February.

Dear Father, I can hardly hold the pen¹⁶; but I want and desire to satisfy, in an ardent and perfect manner, all that Divine Mercy disposes for this wretched and ungrateful being. If nothing else, at least your fervent prayer and even some lines will be of help to me, so that I can dwell in the mercy of Paternal Providence and not lose an instant of this life...Enough. Oh! What moments of shame this present weak life evokes!!

Interpret the rest yourself. I do not know any more ... Father bless your poor daughter

Sr M. Margherita

This is my own character.

I add a few other words.

Forgive me: Father I feel like an ass, I do not understand anything, I find no other sentiment, etc...

¹⁵ There is no record to show either when or why Mother Margherita left her previous spiritual director and entrusted herself to the direction of Mgr Alfonso Agius, who had already known her for years.

¹⁶ On the 14 January at Xaghra, where she was local Superior, Mother Margherita had a strong heart attack; for this reason she was transferred to the Mother House, where she remained until her death.

I beg you to have the kindness to offer my poor soul to the good Jesus so that he will make of me, a poor creature,... Do understand what I want to tell you...

Letter 32

Mother gives vent to her mystical heart: from the clear awareness of her nothingness to the complete abandonment in God and the desire of sacrificing herself totally for the salvation of sinners.

She also instils courage and trust in her spiritual father for the fulfilment of his pastoral service, convinced that the war which has broken out could be an opportune occasion to benefit souls.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 8 August 1940

My beloved Father in the Heart of Jesus,

Your last letter encouraged me to examine my dispositions, though cold and dry, to the extent that I am unable to explain. However, I am sure that you would understand not only what I write, but even that which I would not know how to explain. I talk about facts.

Therefore my dear Father, you find yourself in many struggles, etc., The Lord will certainly help you and comfort you as he always does with those who serve him willingly. Therefore have courage to work in the vast vineyard of the good God who at the moment, can do more good, since souls are more available and fearful...

My soul wants to annihilate itself, to save souls, to quench the thirst of the Heart of our always amiable Jesus, especially at present when abundant graces are lavished.. Oh! If only we could correspond generously!... Oh! If only we could make ourselves less unworthy of them! Oh! If only we could gain more and more souls!...

What can I do? Father, what can I do to quench the thirst of that Divine and Eternal Heart? We need to avail ourselves of the present time of fear, etc., etc. and pray and implore the Eternal Father for the sincere conversion of so many

sinner: (amongst whom I am the greatest). I believe that it is enough to see how I write without sense... poor Sr. Misery in all truth.

Dear Father, my poor heart, (if I can still call it my heart) is no longer within, but almost lost in an All. No, I do not know either how or how much!... Many times I waver from dark nights to intervals of love...but I understand nothing of this, completely nothing...Then I rest in total abandonment, etc...May the most holy Will of our most amiable All be always done!... Now Father, let us pray that the Divine Fire may consume us totally and He will be our substitute.

A blessing for your poor and unworthy daughter

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 33

Replying to her spiritual father's letter, Mother expresses profound uneasiness for the sad times of war, but renews her abandonment in God, even in accepting her illness, and her great desire to unite herself to Him, three times Holy.

Deus meus et omnia!

Qbajjar - Gozo, 9 October 1940

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

I am writing to you after 21 days of holidays at our summer resort, which permitted me to breathe very pure air and calm silence in the company of our most Sweet Prisoner Spouse.

Father, your very dear letter makes me burst in tears every time I read it (although I had to make an effort to read it, as it was illegible). Yes, dear Father, when will that blessed time arrive? When, when? Ah! I will no longer be here in that fortunate time! Hope alone in the possibility of reaching that time, makes me so happy, that I nearly forget the rest ...

Well, dear Father, how do you feel in such sad, dark, sorrowful days ... What can we do? Repeat the dear *Fiat!* ... with every sigh, with every breath ...

What a chalice does my sweet Jesus reserve for my new life! ... I deserve worse for my ingratitude!! I accept it willingly and I hope to satisfy his most amiable Heart with total abandonment! What else, my beloved Father? At

times I have a great wish to fly, to soar high ... my wretchedness thrusts me again into this bitter valley. May the ever adorable Will of the ever amiable God, three times holy, holy, holy be done. I leave the rest to You to understand...

I finish by recommending my poor soul to your care, to make it ascend higher, to consume itself in a hymn of the holy fire of love...Ah! When will that happy moment arrive?!! I feel too unworthy of it!

Bless me abundantly. Father, reply soon, though I always delay to reply.

We shall meet in the Holy Sacrifice...

Your poor daughter

Sr. M Margherita

Letter 34

Mother unceasingly seeks to meet the Beloved of her heart, by whom she feels irresistibly drawn.

She asks advice as to how to satisfy her hunger and thirst for God and demands prayers in reparation for her ingratitude.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House of Charity, 20 October 1940

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

While thanking you for your greetings, I intend to speak to you at least by writing.

Dear Father, the voice of the Lover makes me feel a great thirst at times ... a great hunger for God three times Holy ... it makes me pine away like one who is agonizing! ... Where, where could my poor soul find so many things (if it can be imagined) to somewhat satisfy such a great need? Tell me Father of my soul, tell me where I can find Him who this wretched creature seeks while pining for the heights, for this infinite Goodness ...

Oh! Father, for goodness' sake, tell me how a poor soul can find such a desired Lover... You may show me the means to somewhat satisfy this hunger. Oh! the thirst for this All.... for an Eternal and Infinite Dear Father, how strongly

my small and wretched heart beats even if it is ungrateful... Nevertheless words do not really express anything of what one intends to say... but poor nature always seeks consolation in tangible things...

Now I surely speak stupidly and madly... and I cannot do otherwise, as the spirit is full of anxiety... I would say...the voice: Love which is not known, not loved, torments me everywhere...What can I do about it? My poverty keeps me hidden even from the same Love, finding myself so poor; only the Eucharistic Heart encourages me.

I repeat, father, tell me what to do to love and to correspond faithfully to such Love.

I do not know if you can understand anything. Have compassion on me as your paternal Goodness has always done. Count me as an idiot. But recommend me to the Good God, so that I will arrive where his Divine Providence desires...Bless me abundantly and offer me during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, that I pray your charity to celebrate in reparation for my ingratitude, etc...

The poor *Sr. Margherita*

P.S. Father, *min jaf jekk hux taqrieq?! (who knows if this is deceit?!)* I am really afraid!!!

Letter 35

Always abandoned in Christ, Mother Margherita prays and suffers to appease the coming of the Kingdom of God against that of Satan, who is confusing the world by war.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 3 December 1940

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I have delayed in congratulating you for such paternal and particular protection in the penultimate struggle owing to lack of health, etc. however I never tire of raising my poor prayers to the Good Jesus...What is left for us to do, if not to continue to raise our prayers to heaven and abandon ourselves completely to

the fatherly and loving care of the ever amiable Jesus!... Well, how are you? I eagerly await news about you...

See, dear Father, my new life is in continual agony...but I feel calm in suffering...What else should I add? We hasten the kingdom of our good Jesus through sacrifices: that He may soon come and destroy Satan's kingdom that has been let loose and has once again dominated the entire world! Doesn't it seem so? Sin is not lacking amidst such great calamity as they say... What can one do? Thinking about all this, I really feel my life is running short...

That is enough, for my hand is shaking and my mind is tired.

Let us repeat the dear and amiable *Fiat!*...Bless me and often offer your sufferings for my poor soul as your wretched and ungrateful daughter does.

Sr. M. Margherita

Letter 36

This letter expresses Mother's profound contemplation in front of the mystery of Mary's Purification.

A year following the grave illness that had struck her, she feels that her physical strength is failing and is always all the more conscious of her misery, but her desire for union with God, to whom she totally abandons herself, also increases.

In the current war she sees the signs of God's "meek justice" and invites her spiritual father to pray and to sacrifice themselves together for the benefit of humanity.

Deus Meus et Omnia

House of Charity, 2February 1941

Dear Father of my soul in the Heart of Jesus,

Today's solemnity thrusts me into an abyss of annihilation. And how could it be otherwise? An Immaculate Creature, willing to renounce her dignity as Mother of the Creator, shows up amongst the most common mothers as if she were one of them!!! I am really struck dumb...Father, how sublime are the mysteries of humility in such Holy creatures!...

Here are a few lines that I am addressing to you, after a long silence. Do you see the mistakes, dear Father? I do not feel quite myself... I have already lived for a year in this new way. Anxieties and sighs increase continually... I feel my profound misery, my past ingratitude, and in spite of all this, my soul yearns only for perfect union with her All!! But enough, because I am sure that such lament annoys you... Truly the act of abandonment only urges me to repeat the sweet *Fiat!*...

However, let us pass on to something else. What hard times these are, dear Father, when Divine Providence permits us to experience paternal care together with meek justice!

Till now, thanks to the good Jesus, we have had nothing serious here...but we pity the people who beg...We pray, we pray, but habits, as far as I can see, do not change...

How do you do? What do you say to the good Jesus, when you hold Him in your hands? Eh! Pray, pray for everyone, but reserve a moment for the poor soul of your poor and ungrateful daughter. That is enough, because I will increase the troubles (of life)...

We unite ourselves in the Most Holy Eucharistic Heart and sacrifice ourselves for us and for all humanity!! Abundantly bless your poor daughter

Sr. M Margherita

P.S. I was about to tear the letter up. But I said: Father will have compassion on me and forgive me.

Letter 37

Mother expresses, as best she can, the ardent desire she nourishes for suffering and humiliations, seclusion and annihilation, considering herself ungrateful for the immense goodness of her "prodigal Master".

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 8 April 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

What should I reply to your letter? I humiliate myself, not only in the abyss of my wretchedness, but also of my ingratitude and bad correspondence towards such a Prodigal Master!! ... Oh! Father, Father, how ashamed I feel in front of such holy, such profound Goodness etc.; such Divine Majesty!!! How necessary I feel it is for me to hide, to annihilate myself to seek profound silence.

Your last letter made me feel the need to respond and to repay the debt anew, and showed me the means...but I am afraid dear Father, that at times, perhaps, I am only pleased with the satisfaction and sweetness .. and do not seek so much to repay such holy debts, for the favours granted to such an unworthy creature ... Meanwhile, Father, this nearly always makes me abound in joy and rarely in suffering, though I always feel a thirst for suffering (perhaps it isn't true).

Therefore, dear Father, recommend me always more heartily to the Good God so that He will hold me closer to His Heart, from where I cannot escape because of my dense ingratitude. Ah! Let us immerse ourselves in that Ocean of Love, of Infinite Love, of Eternal Love!!! Isn't it enough, eh?

Another word: Let us hide, annihilate and immolate ourselves in those eternal flames!!! In that Heart that contains all the fire of Divine Love!!! Do you understand? I hope you understand the way I speak to you now ... Oh! Hidden secrets ... Oh! Silence! But the abyss of nothingness and of ingratitude encourages me to ... to ... Father, I cannot do or speak of anything else. Be content with these few lines without meaning ...

I wish you the fullness of heavenly wealth from the risen Redeemer! Eh! You should rejoice because you have more than enough sufferings, so much so, that I almost envy you. I also felt a little jealous of your poor second mother when you told me about her suffering ... but I feel most unworthy, and think: that is why the good Jesus treats me so gently, otherwise he only finds in me ... He is so good, good, good!!!

Give her my best regards and pray for me ...

An abundant blessing for your last and poor little daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 38

Mother considers the air raids on the Maltese islands as a shower of graces, that is an invitation from God to conversion.

Full of trust in the adorable Heart of Jesus, she intercedes for sinners and prays for the conversion of all.

D.M.E.O.

Gozo, 27 April 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

What can I reply, if not, may our ever amiable Jesus be always thanked, loved and glorified!!! Yes, yes, let us love Him and remain in holy and filial abandonment to the most Holy Will of our good, good, good Father... Doesn't he shower many graces on us, with those bombs?

And don't you think, dear Father, that the Good Lord is showing special care towards our islands?? Doesn't it seem to you that he is expecting universal amendment?!! Ah! Dear Father I cannot pray for anything else, except a true conversion in all the souls, starting from myself poor sinner. Everyone needs to improve... Oh! I cannot understand either how or to what extent!!

Our dear Father is so sweet and so good...Oh! Let us draw close to his adorable and sorrowful Heart and ask with strong filial trust and abandon ourselves to His Paternal care like small children...

I am not at all inclined to write anything else, as today I am with the sisters together with Mother Paola, who greets you and asks for your paternal blessing together with your poor and unworthy daughter

Sr. M. Margherita

P.S. I do not want to be long in replying to your letter. The bombs really impress me but the goodness of the good Jesus protects you. Let us love Him and that is enough.

Letter 39

Mother expresses her own grief at the current war, in which she sees the signs of "offended divine justice". But she does not lose trust in God's mercy and for this reason she invites her director to renew acts of abandonment in divine providence.

This trust instils in her courage to pray for the forgiveness of her own sins (by which she feels oppressed) and for those of others.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 7 May 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

What can we say? What can we say in such critical moments? Very bad news [reaches us]; it seems that the Father of light ceases to watch over poor humanity!! But He does not refrain from being a good, good, good Father! What a punishment to heal our wounds! To show us that after having waited for us for so long, he awakens us, not with caresses but with a hard stick. He always remains the best, infinitely merciful Father! Let us adore Him in profound silence, united to the Most Holy Humanity of our Divine Redeemer and Adorable Saviour!!!

What do you think, dear Father? Anyway, my poor soul is very often continually prostrate in front of offended Divine Justice, etc. etc. At times I feel tired and nearly exhausted...I cry, cry and sigh...Now it is truly the time to make acts of total abandonment to the Paternal care of divine providence!! So, let us make these acts, my dear Father, and strive to see that they are made by everyone and everywhere so that we may influence our good Father...

In your last letter you suggested how we can arrive in repaying our debts; I thank you infinitely for I always feel very oppressed by these debts. Oh! Yes, yes, we are so rich as well as to pay the Justice of the Eternal Father for all our sins and those of the whole world which is so ungrateful and oppressed...Therefore, have strong, strong courage and firm confidence in the infinite goodness of our All-Father, Brother and Spouse!...

Dear Father, I beg you not to leave me deprived of your news in these terrible moments!... The dear *Fiat is* always in our heart, continual thanksgiving on our lips, and a humble prayer of forgiveness for us and for all our sinful brothers.

Do your best Father, to keep the poor oppressed people tranquil and resigned. Thus you can hasten the hour of forgiveness...

Let us love the Love, which is neither known nor loved.

Bless your poor daughter heartily

Sr. Margherita

Letter 40

Mother feels the need to give vent to her soul in a moment in which she is acutely aware of her own poor physical (which, as she says, renders her a burden to the sisters) and spiritual (which she thinks renders her ungrateful to God) misery, but also the irrepressible yearning for God, by whom she feels loved and attracted. She asks her spiritual father to help her to love God and invites him to love Him together.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 3 June 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Thanks to the good Lord, I returned to the Mother House where I find the nest of my repose, though I was happy just the same by the sea <...> Well, I also had the company of our Sole Jesus!

Ah! Dear Father, permit the poor heart of your small daughter to speak. Oh! How tired, worn-out, dissipated I feel... A wretched, ungrateful, impure being yearns for the heights, to quench her thirst, to satisfy her hunger etc....; how can I withstand such behaviour on the part of God three times Holy, obsessed by such a wretched ungrateful creature etc...!!! I feel annihilated, unable to live; nevertheless I move on, forward, yearning for an All that I hardly know...

What else can I say? What mistakes! I do not know otherwise...; but believe me Father, and have compassion on my need for help and an outburst, etc...Perhaps I seek relief from a little suffering, but I am weak and very poor. Tears are sweet bread to me, but darkness depresses me. May the most holy Will be done in this wretched nature that does not know how to offer even the smallest sacrifice.

I feel ashamed of my dear Sisters who see that I am good for nothing; however I rejoice in the wretchedness in which I find myself, unable to help myself. I am afraid of being a burden to all, mostly to the Superiors who are so good towards a poor and unworthy person ... I do not feel hurt by this situation. It is only because I feel ungrateful towards a God who deserves infinite love, and I do not correspond to his Goodness...Oh! Father, help me to love Him. Let us love Him! Let us Love Him! Let us unite ourselves to Him...He is such a holy Being, Three Persons in One...who can speak of it? Who can understand?! Let us love Him and that is enough!...

We abandon ourselves to His Paternal care and have no doubt either about the soul or about the body...Have you understood? Dear Father, during the Holy Sacrifice do not forget to offer, with the Immaculate Victim, a poor soul who desires to be entirely consumed in that divine fire!

Your news is greatly appreciated especially in such critical times... An abundant blessing on your poor daughter,

Sr Margherita

P.S. If you reproach me, I greatly deserve it.

Letter 41

Mother admits she finds herself in a state of spiritual aridity: even the physical illnesses from which she suffers seem to be an incomprehensible message from the good Jesus.

As in other letters, she communicates the suffering experience of frailty and of misery in front of the infinite goodness of God, three times holy.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 10 September 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I do not know what to talk about, physical or moral matters, as my spirit finds itself in aridity.

I have returned to the Mother House after an absence of two months. The sea air was good for my health but I was not very recollected in spirit; however watching

the blue sea, I felt really immersed in an ocean of goodness, etc. etc. On the vigil of the Assumption a strong stomach ache nearly brought me to the end, but I was calm on the Feast Day and after two days I returned to normal. I still do not know what my good Jesus wants of this wretched being. I feel I am getting worse instead of advancing in virtue. In fact, during my convalescence, I am unable to count the times I asked and showed my will, something I rarely did before. It seems that I am taking too much care of my wicked body ... See, how concerned I am about myself ... What wretchedness! What frailty!

When, when will all these troubles end ... I am ashamed to say much for I feel plunged in an abyss of darkness and of misery. Dear Father, pray, pray for my poor soul, so that it will not be lost after such great mercy shown by the Infinite Goodness of God three times holy.

Father, I feel the need to speak but I do not know how and I cannot ... Patience eh! I leave everything in the care of the Goodness of the Good Jesus and in your care, dear Father ... What more shall I tell you? I do not know. I pray you to question me according to the inspirations you receive from the Lord, thus, perhaps you might understand better the extreme misery of this poor soul of mine ...

Meanwhile, dear Father, how are you? Who knows how readily you work with souls for the love of Jesus? I wish that this work will be abundant during these critical times ...

Forgive me and bless me abundantly and do not forget to offer your poor and miserable daughter to God.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 42

In this letter, Mother Margherita's fervent desire to unite herself as quickly as possible to her Beloved and a heightened spiritual experience are apparent, however she does not know how to describe them. Besides, she manifests great appreciation for the care she is given.

D.M.E.O.

Sacred Heart Convent

Qbajjar – Marsalforn, 7 October 1941

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

First of all, you should know that I am beside the sea, where I can breathe a little better than when I was at the Mother House. Through the charity of my good Mothers ... In the House, we also enjoy the dear company of our Amiable All, Jesus Prisoner. Oh! His humiliation to such depths amazes me! And for how long will my imprisonment on this miserable earth last? Father, my mind and heart often relive the anxieties of the great Apostle: *cupio dissolve et esse cum Cristo*. What beautiful Latin!! But it comes to me thus, and I cry and I sigh and I pine ... then I finish with the beautiful and Holy Fiat. What a hard exile! What a prison! ... May the most Holy Will of the Good Jesus three times Holy be done, loved and adored!!!

Dear Father, I am convinced that I am still distant from arriving where you have advised me that I should arrive ... but ... but the soul, in its audaciousness, forgets herself and flies, flies in an abyss which she does not understand ... How can I write if I do not understand the a.b.c. of such flights ... (*Inkun sejra ngħidlek la temminnix* – I will be on the point of telling you not to believe me). Do you understand? Dear Father I am certain that you sense what I would like to say, therefore I keep silent. Dear Father, the needs of a soul who seeks nothing else except the only One, how can one live without feeling an excruciating burden?...I would like to continue for a little longer at least, but I get tired, I therefore stop in an eloquent silence...At least, you could while away some time with such a renowned sheet.

In your last letter, you reminded me of the good fortune of so many beautiful years of priesthood. Together with my dear sisters, including Sr M. Tecla, Sr Scolastica, Sr Poala etc., I have offered masses and communion. The Lord will grant you many years to come whence you can conquer many, many souls yet. Have you understood?

I apologize for the paper as I have nothing else here. Now I pray you to write the address underneath. You tell me beautiful things and also send me news of yourself and of your family whom I always and often recommend to our good Jesus who we hope will shorten the days of such a harsh calamity. However everything is a sign of mercy, but I am afraid that we do not avail ourselves of it; I am the first, the worst of all.

Bless me strongly and may the Sacred Heart keep me hidden and buried forever.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 43

Mother replies to some questions put by her Spiritual Father. She assures him of the benefit she derives every time she reads his letters.

She opens her heart with simplicity (even if she has difficulty in expressing herself) and reveals (as is often the case, with broken phrases as a result of being full of sentiments) an awareness of being so loved by God, to the extent that she feels physically weak.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 13 October 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Here I am writing in reply to your various queries and recommendations. But my dear Father, believe me, I do not succeed in revealing all that takes place within my restless spirit as I desire. I will try with the help of Holy Obedience.

Your letters always leave a sweet and sensible impression on me, not only the first and second time but every time I read them. I truly believe that you are the interpreter of what my poor soul needs.

Yes, I feel it dear Father, I feel the tender and (I call it) insane Love of God three times holy; I feel it and this urging often keeps me inert and weak. See, I cannot continue...I will try again. Father can we believe in so much love without immersing ourselves in an Immense Ocean? And what can my poor soul do in an abyss of greatness...Enough, enough.

Dear Father, I want to move on but neither the tears nor the beatings of my heart permit me...Love, love...Who is God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? It is useless; I wait for days and days and when I speak on such an argument can hold myself no longer...

Father, the obedience given to me to keep my gaze fixed on my Sweet Jesus...makes me soar high, higher.... See, and isn't it a torment not to be able to talk about it? Forgive me Father and help me to respond...to die crucified with the Crucified Spouse, as this is the proof of true love ...

Let us love, let us love and make Love known and He will certainly be loved.. Isn't it true, dear Father?? Do your best to make Him loved, to make Him known, since you have such a great possibility through your ministry...Oh! How many things I would have liked to tell you, but Father, Father, Father, you will guess whatever I am silent about... Be patient, yes, use your delicate love towards an idiot, who is good for nothing...

You cannot imagine what effort these lines, so disjointed and so incorrect, have cost me...

We unite ourselves in the most Sacred Heart of our only All and understand each other in profound silence let us say we love and that is enough! Deign to bless your poor and unworthy daughter in Jesus

Sr. M. Margherita

Forgive her and have compassion on her...

P.S. I add a few other lines:

Father, I do not always feel the action of love in my soul; no, rather at times, I feel so dry and cold that I believe nothing, so it seems. Oh! How I would like to tell you everything! but a strong, strong *Fiat* keeps me happy, abandoning myself totally to the paternal care of Divine Providence

Letter 44

The principal themes of the letter are the commitment with which Mother seeks to correspond to the Lord's graces and her gratitude toward her spiritual father, with whom she confides with simplicity, always revealing new sentiments within her loving heart.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 12 November 1941

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

First of all, I ask pardon and then thank you, etc. You can rest assured that I do not await an immediate reply to my nonsense; rather I marvel at your goodness when you reply with great love to such meaningless writing...

Meanwhile Father, You understand that which I, with great difficulty, do not succeed in mentioning, and then why don't you tell me how I should correspond to such infinite favour that the Good God shows towards the most ungrateful creature? How ashamed I feel even simply being in such a loving presence!!! You know, dear Father, that at times, without any preparation, I feel intimately recollected in an All, with abundant tears. And then? Then, almost (I would add) without knowing how, the soul loves, the soul finds rest... May our Infinite All be known so that He will certainly be loved...

Permit me to whisper a word in your ear regarding my inner feelings. Eh! Father, I don't wish to tell you one word but many, after such a long time... because I often recall your presence and I continue to recommend you heartily to our good Jesus to help you and comfort you, so that you will succeed in leading many, many souls to him, souls who are so precious to his divine Heart!...

Father, in your letter you obliged me to concentrate always on our most Sweet Jesus, that is on Love; well, I feel very happy and I thank you... However at times it is impossible for me not to see the shameful correspondence of my soul...but I am not discouraged by this, rather I feel more enkindled with pure love towards an infinitely good Father... and as if I am consumed...by this strong feeling of love; or fire...

What more can I say my dear and beloved Father! But why isn't such a Beloved Love loved? Such a Divine Being? Forgive me, Father, but today I feel a little free. I would like to speak and say many, many things though I do not arrive at a conclusion. Father, I am afraid that I do not correspond with whatever I feel... I do not know how to keep calm and respond meekly in the small occasions I encounter...

Is this the fruit of love that often seems to burn within? Oh! I feel happy when you show me my wretchedness and nothingness, better still, my great ingratitude for the favours I receive from such Majesty, etc. Yes, I would have liked to hide myself... I would have liked to annihilate myself and do not know what else to do but hide with all my miseries in the wounds of my Sweet Jesus, in that Jesus in whom the Eternal Father finds his pleasures! I am really tired. Let us love and that is enough!

Father, I am about to write further nonsense. Be patient I am now advanced in age. I am already 79 years old, and have walked a long way, full of miseries...

I take up my pen after 10 days. Father I have suffered heart failure and so I am confined to bed, I hope that if I continue thus, my turn will soon come...

Bless me heartily, and recommend me to the good Jesus.

Your unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 45

In this letter a loving and a sorrowful propensity merge as Mother Margherita considers the offences and omissions towards the Lord, the Father of infinite mercy.

The expression "Love that is not loved; Love that is not known", which is the guiding thread in all Mother Margherita's writings, is reiterated, and sums up her whole life of contemplation, of immolation and of action.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 19 December 1941

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

Your last letter filled me with awe and silenced me in the face of such indifference, while Eternal Love shows us and permits us to feel His Infinite Goodness. What can we do, dear Father? What can we do.. but throw ourselves in the Bosom of a displeased Father, but he is always the Father of Infinite mercy.

My sighs increase but my wretchedness still keeps me bound to this harsh exile. However the "*Fiat Voluntas tua*" [May your will be done] on earth as it is in heaven leaves me in holy abandonment. Physically, I do not know how I can carry on any longer, but then I receive the help that compels me to stay...

I pray, yes, I pray, Father. I pray poorly but He who can do anything, is rejected, forgotten and offended! Who can tell how you are feeling in these sad days and nights?

Patience and total abandonment in divine Providence...Forgive me dear Father, because I cannot continue. I only wish you pure fire of love, that is, that fire which the Holy Infant came to bring on earth, so that it may enkindle all those souls who approach him, etc. etc...

Father, the constant cry I hear: "Love that is not known, Love that is not loved" makes me cry and I ask: but Lord, aren't you the Master of all your creatures? And like you, I bow my head in silence. Enough! we will meet near the crib of the Infant King and there, in silence, adore, thank and love, love, love and that is enough.

A warm blessing for your poor unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 46

Mother Margherita here shows a state of physical weakness and profound spiritual suffering. But, as usual, she abandons herself to the will of God, her dear Father, who has a wide-open, sweet, holy, loving heart.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 26 January 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I read and re-read your last letter and I did not succeed in replying. Partly because of my weak health and even as you yourself said, because of the present critical moments, etc. Dear Father, my stupidity seems worse than yours as even at such sweet and loving times, I hardly ever succeed in remaining intimately recollected with our good All. May the most Holy Will of our Sweet Father be always done, as we abandon ourselves body and soul, life and death ...

I spent weeks, in which I seemed to be passing away ... but suddenly I feel healthier than before. Father what are these tricks? I often see good souls taking flight and I am still bound in this harsh prison? What does our good Jesus want of his poor slave? That she may convert and become his true faithful Spouse? I wouldn't know...

However, looking back at my past life I do not find anything else but faults to weep over and make amends for, as you have reminded me in your letter... I am afraid of not availing myself of the time, which is very dark at present: I can hardly ever concentrate, my mind roams here and there without stopping. The thirsty soul seeks an All and cannot find it. What does it do? It tires and pines...

Father, good Father, how many things I would like to tell you! but as you wrote, they are inexplicable. If we look up, we lose ourselves in silence...down here we are silent without finding any sign of refuge. Oh! Let us permit our Perfect Father to do with us whatever he intends to do...we remain in his loving and Fatherly embrace like small children. Oh! The Fatherly Bosom hides and saves us from all our enemies.

Father, we are united in prayers, in sacrifices, in abandonment in such a wide-open, sweet, holy, loving Heart!! It is enough eh! We understand the rest... You don't have to apologize for the delay in your replies, though I am pleased to receive from you, but I know that I do not deserve even a belated letter. Yes, have courage, dear Father, and let us strive to gain souls, souls, souls...

Deign to bless your poor daughter in the Sweet Jesus as she prays for you.

Forgive me and excuse me.

Letter 47

Mother expresses her gratitude toward her spiritual father, for the help she receives from him, and for her intimate yearning (even in the recurring anxieties due to her own miseries) to perfect union with Christ.

Awaiting the end of her earthly exile, she incessantly longs for the love of Christ by offering sacrifices in holocaust to her All, in reparation for humanity's numerous sins.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 22 February 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!!

Do you see how my eyesight too is failing? *Deo Gratias!*

Your last letter encouraged me to repeat words that have no meaning...I thought: therefore time and paper will not be wasted etc...

Dear Father at times I feel the need to speak to you personally to tell you what my poor soul feels. Father, I feel that the wishes and yearnings of my poor soul are not truly coming from the Divine Spirit, (forgive me, Father) but, serve only to calm

the spirit for a while, though I do my best to resist and abandon myself totally in the Bosom of Him for whom my poor soul only yearns.

But dear Father, I fear not only the holiness of this Supreme Being and the poverty of my nothingness but even my ingratitude...I recall that in one of your letters, you gave me the obedience not to think about it anymore...but Father believe me, light together with darkness!...And then these past sad times. I do not always feel in the same way, because I sometimes feel a great aridity especially during Holy Communion. Oh! Then I shall have more courage to embrace him tightly as my thirsty soul desires...

Do you understand dear Father? Then at other moments I feel so uneasy at resting in that Heart, on that Bosom that I feel ashamed... Oh! Father, Father, one has to experience to believe these tricks...

Now, what else can I tell you to make my wretchedness, and the goodness of that All, clear! I feel my health is declining and perhaps I can hope to reach Him, Him...Enough, enough...

Let us offer the sacrifice of our distance in not being able to understand each other as we would like to. But our good Jesus knows how to make us comprehend one another as usual. Isn't it true Father? Let us love, let us love and sacrifice ourselves as a victim together with our All who imposes his sweet punishments on humanity to draw us closer to Him as a merciful Father...Who can tell, Father, how sorrowful the Sweet Heart of Jesus is, permitting justice to fall on poor humanity? And how eagerly he wishes us to help through prayers, sacrifices and penance and...

What can we do? You can do a lot as you hold the treasures of the Sacred Heart...Ah! Pray, pray fervently... kiss that ciborium and embrace it, etc...for it contains the amiable Jesus who loves souls so dearly.

Let us remain united in affliction and in prayers, and then abundantly bless your small daughter (Is this what you want?),

Sr. M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 48

In this brief letter, attached to the previous one, Mother communicates news about her health and discloses some personal secrets.

22 February 1942

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I add some more words. I thank you for the news you sent me in your last letter, but now I hope that things have improved, as I can say regarding your poor daughter, thanks to the good Jesus.

At present I can still go to the choir near the Sweet Jesus for hours, I can hear Holy Mass etc...However I have to be very careful, because my stomach is very weak and can digest very little. Patience and always *Fiat!*

At times the Sweet Jesus is felt and at other times he hides himself; and then, then my poor soul, nearly agonizing, seeks...

And you, Father, how do you get along with Jesus? How do you abandon yourself in his sweet Bosom? Especially in your discouragement? etc. etc.

Forgive my freedom...but a small daughter, is concerned about the wellbeing of her Father who knows...etc.

Let us love and that is enough eh?

Letter 49

Mother Margherita acknowledges she is a sinner and recommends herself warmly to her spiritual father's prayer. She accepts the limitations of her strength, that hinder her from spending several hours with Jesus prisoner in the Tabernacle.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 30 March 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

Your letter made me bow low with my face to the ground, hidden in the most profound confusion...May the pure and Sole Mercy of God three times Holy be thanked and blessed forever! Dear Father what does the good Lord want of this miserable being who corresponds so ungratefully, so badly, etc... Understand me...Your help makes up for it, dear Father, and have the patience, for I want to write, but I do not know and cannot...

I was very pleased to learn from your letter about the Crusade¹⁷ that has just started! Oh! Father, Father, speak heartily to those good souls of my misery; recommend me to our most Sweet Jesus, though he often sulks, and with good reason, because I fail him in generosity, etc. etc.

Father, I now tell you, how I spend my time at present. My physical energy is almost drained, I only hear one Mass, receive Holy Communion, and retire to my room. I have even caught the 'flu, but I fear I am giving too much importance to the needs of my evil nature. Before I spent hours in front of the good Prisoner but now I only spend a very short time. I can hardly keep a conversation with the Sisters owing to lack of breath. The dearest *Fiat* applies me constantly in sweet abandonment without feeling. Do we agree? See, how concerned I am about myself. Meanwhile in these holy days, we linger in the company of our most Amiable Jesus and during the holy ceremonies, Father, do not forget your poor and wretched daughter, who will never leave you...

I hope that the Crusade will flourish, and if you introduce any practices let me know.

Let us love, let us love, let us glorify the Giver of all good; all glory; honour and praise be His forever. Amen.

We can derive our Easter wishes from the glorious Heart of our most sweet Redeemer... Your abundant fatherly blessings for your poor elderly daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Holy Wednesday, towards evening.

Letter 50

Mother shows her own concern in the sufferings and difficulties of others. She seeks to support her spiritual father in the dramatic events of the current war, inviting him to confide totally in God alone.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 30 April 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

¹⁷ It is difficult to pinpoint to which of her spiritual father's specific pastoral initiatives, among the many undertaken by him, Mother Margherita refers.

The long wait for your news made me very apprehensive. Though I am very weak, I have the courage to ask you the precise news and do not know what to think. Our good Jesus does not say anything...However we abandon ourselves totally to his paternal care which will never fail us. How are you in these terrible hours? How do you feel? Father please write me even a few lines. Oh, in such sad moments, the sweet *Fiat* calms our soul and directly wounds the most sweet Heart of our Jesus!!!

Let us remain strong, abandoned in that Paternal Bosom! From Him we shall receive the help and strength to joyfully attain intimate union with Him... Courage, dear Father. The Lord permits us to live as poor people, in continual fear, to bind us more strongly to Him alone, alone, alone. Do we agree? We understand one another in the most sweet Heart, where the Eternal Father finds all his pleasure... Let us remember that the Sweet Heart of Jesus finds pleasure in dwelling among men... today a prey to destruction...Eh! let us pray and hope.

How is the Crusade doing? Father, do not get discouraged, do your best: the Lord is easily satisfied, provided that we do not trust in ourselves but only in Him.

Bless your poor and unworthy daughter

Sr Margherita

Letter 51

Mother received the Holy Viaticum and waits for the door of heaven to open. Abandoned in God, she seeks to comfort her spiritual father, inviting him to think of eternal things and to pray for sinners.

D.M.E.O

House of Charity, 9 June 1942

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

Here I am writing after having overcome a grave danger... 10 days ago, I received the Holy Viaticum but nevertheless the door does not open... At present I feel rather poorly: may the Holy Will of the most High be done, adored and loved.

I heard that you are also retired. How are you? Ah! In such sad and distressing times, only total abandonment to the Paternity of the ever amiable Jesus, comforts and strengthens us... Have courage, dear Father,

strong, strong courage; that which is not eternal is worth nothing... In my present weak state, my mind dwells on my miseries and not on high... But the dear *Fiat* always accompanies me as I hope in the help of my dear, dear, Sweet Jesus... This time, I suffered severe indigestion with heavy vomiting, etc. Now I feel extremely weak. Every suffering is a small [punishment] for my sins.

Let us love our good Jesus in whatever way he treats us... Let us pray for the conversion of sinners. Let us strive hard, for this pleases Him. That is enough for I am tired. While asking for your paternal blessing, I would also like to hear news of you, even if only in brief.

May Jesus be in our hearts to comfort us and help us to the end.

Your poor daughter in Jesus,

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 52

This letter, like the two previous ones, allows us to see Calvary from two viewpoints: Mother Margherita's and the spiritual father's. Mother reiterates that to convert and make reparation for past faults, it is necessary to avail oneself of the time spent at the feet of Jesus in the Eucharist, and abandon oneself totally to His divine will.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 19 July 1942

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Thanks to our Most Sweet Beloved Jesus, you and your poor daughter have quite recovered... And how many times does one return? And how many times does one feel that the hour is near only to find herself treading the earth of this exile? What a profound *Fiat* it is necessary to repeat!!!

You believe that it is necessary for conversion and I, to make reparation for the faults and debts of my past long life... in any case, we should avail ourselves of the time given to us so that the Eucharistic fire can consume all

our debts and eliminate any stain of sin, till the sweet Jesus will come and take us etc. etc.

Strong, strong, courage, dear Father, in such a dark exile, as harsh as ever before, we abandon ourselves totally in that Paternal Bosom where we can find whatever our poor soul can desire and need.

I hope that you are better; are you, Father? I often pray that you may again start looking after the souls who seek help in such painful circumstances. However, do not abuse of the little strength that you might have... Our good Jesus knows how to make up for everything with us and with them... Father, father, let us love the Love that is neither known nor loved!! Oh! How thirsty for souls! How pleased God is to be asked and entreated for souls. Let us sacrifice everything, give him everything, all we have and all we are, and He will do the rest.

Dear Father, I am very anxious for your news, write to me even briefly...

United in the most Sacred Eucharistic Heart living the life of hidden and annihilated love...I finish off by humbly asking you to bless me abundantly and during Mass to remember ...

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 53

Mother thanks her spiritual father for helping her to understand her spiritual weaknesses. She recommends herself to his prayers and to his spiritual care. She sends her regards and promises to pray so that both may obtain the grace of sanctity.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 4 August 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

While re-reading your last letter, I was amazed by all those ideas... and then you say that you are unable of forming a thought? Well, let us praise the Lord for whatever he disposes of us, his poor creatures! Let us avail

ourselves of all that it pleases Him to permit in our regards, always ready to sanctify us, isn't it true?

Dear Father, my misery does not allow me to see, like you, my immense ingratitude towards the father of infinite mercy...therefore I content myself to ask you to pray that the good Jesus may enlighten me so that I may clearly see my poor soul, in which there is nothing but lack of correspondence, etc. etc. ingratitude and what disturbs me most is, that I can do nothing else except call the Father like a young daughter, and abandon myself in His Bosom...Father, dear Father, it is one thing to speak of love, and another to love truly. Silence alone satisfies me in front of the good God...and the tears respond to the heart...After all, it is enough, he who loves understands!

I spent the feast of your Patron Saint praying continually for the needs of my dear Father, and treasuring memories etc...and I hope that the dear saint, will obtain for you complete health so that you can resume your work for souls. Do we agree? I hope you have understood, as usual, the nonsense of your poor daughter, etc.

I thank your goodness for sending me this abundant blessing, while asking you to intercede with the good Jesus so that He will grant me this grace and to you the sanctity demanded of a true and holy apostle.

Your poor and unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 54

Mother is at Marsalfom (Gozo) and enjoys the sea air and the tranquility of hermits¹⁸. She congratulates her spiritual father for his recovery and urges him to work with enkindled zeal so that Jesus may be known and loved.

¹⁸ Mother Margherita wanted this house, built in 1900, to give the sisters the possibility of enjoying a period of rest in a quiet place by the sea.

She fears she might be a hypocrite when she writes, because she does not succeed in putting what she says into practice. She manifests, with simplicity, the theme of her meditation and prayers: the praises of the Seraphim (Holy, Holy, Holy). With this prayer she intends to make up for her ingratitude.

D.M.E.O.

Marsalforn, 21 September 1942

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I have delayed in replying to your letter. I received it at Marsalforn about four weeks ago. I was not feeling at all well at the Mother House and dear Mother General invited me to accompany her for a day. On seeing her kindness I agreed, and when she was about to return in the evening, the sisters told her to leave me here, since I was already better with the change of air... So I am still here, enjoying the sea air and the silence of the hermits...

Dear Father, let's talk about you. I am happy that you are well and that you are working in the field of the Lord. Your poor daughter prays for you, as usual, as she cannot do anything else, she satisfies herself with the knowledge that others work for Jesus who deserves infinite love, etc.

Oh, yes, yes my dear Father, may our sweet Jesus be loved, may He be served faithfully and comforted in these sad times: He truly deserves it and seeks it, His Heart being so afflicted!! Have strong, strong courage, cultivate the field entrusted to you with zeal, enkindled with the flames of his most Beloved Heart... Is it clear?

I would have written many other things, if I were not afraid of hypocrisy, confusing words with works... For one does not love by words but in deed and in truth... Father I speak with the simplicity of a small child: at present my prayers and my meditation are the hymn of praise of the Seraphim: Holy, Holy, Holy... I am afraid of deceiving myself, knowing that I am very unworthy, I feel ashamed and weep... What can I do, being so wretched and poor in virtue, only rich in weaknesses and faults, etc. etc. Oh, the infinite goodness of the good God, three times Holy, makes up for my great ingratitude! Let us love, let us love the Love that is neither known nor loved! Let us do our best so that He may be known and then surely He will be loved.

Dear Father, I beg you to remember the most wretched amongst your good daughters, and ask you to recommend me to them, so that by your fatherly prayers I will have the fortune to securely reach that state of love willed by the goodness of the good Jesus.

I even await your paternal blessing every evening.

The poor *Sr Margherita*

Letter 55

Mother is fairly recovering, even if the physical decline does not pause. Abandoned totally in God, she awaits the moment to unite herself to Him forever and entrusts herself to the prayers of her spiritual father, while encouraging him anew to work for souls.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 28 October 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

Thanks to our good Jesus, I have returned to the dear Mother House. I feel still better but more distracted in spirit. I would like at all costs to reach the summit you wrote about in your last letter. But dear Father, nothing except weakness, defects and worthlessness can be found. My only and sole activity, I would almost say, is nothing but an act of total abandonment in an Infinite All... What more can I do? My mind is weak, my eyesight poor, my strength is diminishing. In the meantime Father, through your holy prayers help the poor soul whom Divine Providence has entrusted to your paternal care so that she will happily attain the embrace which she unceasingly yearns for; on the other hand, I feel infinitely unworthy. Eh! How much, how much, how much longer! However, I even repeat the sweet *Fiat!*

Let us now talk about you, dear Father. How are you? Have you suffered any bad effects through these attacks? I hope not. For I am (almost) sure that our good Jesus preserves us in his most holy Goodness. Courage, as I always repeat, to work for souls and even to encourage everyone to suffer with patience; that which is not eternal is worthless! I leave you in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, together with them we live a life of pure love and that is enough for us.

Forgive my delay, but the mind...and I cannot apply myself. Patience at the many new ailments of old age. Please bless me abundantly, as usual, I thank you for your blessing and I pray you to renew it for me every evening.

Your poor elderly daughter in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 56

This letter is, like so many others, a humble and sincere confession. Mother sends her Christmas greetings fascinated by the love of God who became a Child and a small host. She is aware of her weak faith and love in front of this great mystery: this is why she is still alive, laden with years.

She considers herself a small drop of water to be into the chalice during Holy Mass.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 20 December 1942

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

I thank you heartily for your goodness in replying so patiently to the annoying nonsense of your most poor, wretched and unworthy daughter.

Without any merit on my part, I am hampered with a state of health as befits my old age of 80 years.

Dear Father, your last letter was of great comfort as usual: but quite often, the thought of not having confessed well comes to mind, etc. etc.; on my part I humble myself and hide in the ever amiable Heart of the Sweet Jesus, and cling to trust; as you recommend me to ... afterwards I feel tranquil and serene ... Oh! How good the Lord is; He lavishes abundant graces also on those who are ungrateful! Ah! We can say that at such a precious time we stand in reverent silence and only let Love speak. The excessive love of God who becomes man ... becomes a Child! Moreover He becomes a small Host! We need little faith not to die of love. Nevertheless this wretched writer possesses neither faith nor love, since she is not yet dead after so many years.

Eh! It is enough for there is sufficient matter on which to meditate...

I hope that you are sufficiently prepared with love, with ardour and with great courage in order to carry out your ministry. We remain united on that Holy Night and during the three Holy Masses hold me in the chalice together with the drops of water, etc...

Together with dear Sr Scolastica, who thanks you, we ask, as usual, your paternal blessing and your fervent prayers...

Your poor daughter in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 57

Mother gives in to the pessimism with which she regards herself: dung, mud, worse than nothing etc... The spirit of Francis, who exclaimed "Who are You and who am I?" perfectly corresponds to her sentiments of humility.

In view of Christ's infinite Love, and redemptive sacrifice, she feels the pressing need of silence, but her longing to love increases to "folly" and her ardent desire that Love be known and loved is transformed into prayer.

D.M.E.O.

10 January 1943

My most dear Father in Jesus,

Oh! I feel worse than dung! I find myself at fault for my bad correspondence to so many graces! (I wouldn't have disturbed you, if I did not have the present occasion.)

Dear Father, what extremes, the All and the mire, worse than nothing...But what can I do to respond to such Goodness and Love?!

I hide and would like to annihilate myself: but how? how? or where, can I find so small a place? And then the anxieties to love an All, to correspond to an Infinite Love? Oh! Father, Father how incomprehensible Divine Love is! I need to be silent and that is enough...

Let us love and make this Love known and then He will surely be loved! Oh! My God, may you be known by all the creatures you created in your image, and redeemed by your most precious Blood. And yes, yes, Let us love to folly!! And when, when shall we love Him, up there? And when shall we be one fire? one light? one All? Enough eh!

I would like to tell you many other things but silence helps us understand each other better.

Our All consumes us completely, as your poor and unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margerita yearns

Letter 58

In the following letter the immense gratitude that Mother Margherita nourished towards her superiors for the care they have shown her is evident.

Always consumed by the desire of uniting herself in heaven to the most desired All, she abandons herself in God even amid continuous struggles of the spirit and of the flesh.

D.M.E.O.

Sacred Heart Convent

Ghasri Village, 15 March 1943

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Oh! What a long silence! I deserve more for my miseries! Forgive me dear Father, be conscious that your poor daughter has reached old age...I am again in a House in the country where there is the silence of a hermitage. I was already very weak and our dear Superiors are doing their utmost to take care of my poor life. Poor me! Perhaps then I do not do my best to avail myself of such precious time. Eh! How long will this exile last? how far am I from the possession of such a desired All??!! I still have to pay the debts; I still have to make amends for my faults, etc: therefore I abandon myself in the paternal arms of divine goodness...

Oh! Father, father you tell me that I should do what I can to make the most of this time, but I find myself in a sea of miseries, etc. etc...What am I to do? I find

myself absorbed in both spiritual and material tribulations. The soul wants to be free from it all, but finds itself stuck in the mud. What am I to do? O what affliction! What a contradiction ... Who can understand? Well, you may understand something, as usual... Do not leave me dear Father, for I strongly feel that my health is failing...I have made an effort but I feel exhausted. *Fiat semper* I do not know what else to say, for that All permeates everywhere!!!

Please bless me and heartily recommend to the good God your poor, little daughter in the good, good Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 59

Mother's only desire is to do God's will. She yearns to offer herself as a victim during the divine sacrifice of the altar to purify herself: thus she fulfills her act of abandonment to the divine will.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House of Charity, 16 May 1943

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Deo gratias et Mariae!

What does the good Lord want from this wretched being?? Ah! True conversion... Dear Father, [I often repeat) the act of abandonment to live for a 100 years and even more, if it pleases His Divine Majesty, and when I find myself so close (through extreme weakness) and nearing the end, I repeat it immediately... and it comforts me, etc.

Now that I have regained my strength, we shall see?? It is enough for me to do his Adorable Will perfectly! I feel a little worried about myself for being so weak and can eat very little, but his will be done. I would like to avail myself of the time he gives me: perhaps I do not do all, all that I can...

I thank you, dear Father, for all you do with this most poor soul, and for what you would like to do...I do not wish for anything else, but to be consumed as a victim of reparation; therefore I ask you to offer me together with the immaculate victim during the Holy Sacrifice, in order to be purified, and become etc., etc. It is enough Father for I am very tired.

Deign to bless your poor unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 60

In this letter Mother's desire to contribute towards the salvation of souls, together with a love that urges her to immolate herself, dominate. At the same time she feels unworthy, presumptuous and a sinner.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 17 July 1943

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus,

What can I reply to your letter? What a burning thirst I feel to save souls!! I wish and yearn that all souls, redeemed by the most precious blood of our Divine Redeemer, be saved... But what should I do to obtain them? Meanwhile, I only have defects and faults and worry about myself...wretched sinner! Then, at times, I dare to repose in the most sweet Heart of Jesus (I am ashamed and accuse myself of being proud). How I would like to explain to you the present poor state of my spirit! But I resign myself to his divine will! Yes, I do pray, I pray for souls and never cease presenting them to our good Jesus; and oh! How painfully afflicted I feel when I see so many souls who are lost in vanity, etc.

At the moment I am well, however everything is a burden, almost everything bothers me. I have been at Marsalforn and I will be returning in two days' time: all for obedience, as the Superiors are making this exception, since the sea air is good for my health ... And for how long will I linger in this life? Eh! *Fiat* always! In that All, one lives by dying. Isn't it true Father? Therefore that's enough ...

How are you? During the Holy Sacrifice, on that Calvary, how do you feel dying together with the Immaculate Victim?

Ah! Yes, let us love and sacrifice ourselves for the love of souls that have cost [His] life, etc.

Bless me and pray always to the good Jesus for your poor and unworthy daughter,

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 61

Mother Margherita is grateful towards her spiritual father for having reminded her of so many faults committed in her office as general Superior, and asks him to help her make acts of perfect contrition, of humility, etc.

She even expresses gratitude toward the community and asks for help in order to succeed in making acts of perfect contrition for all her grave faults.

D.M.E.O.

Marsalforn, 28 July 1943

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

Lying prostrate I sincerely ask you pardon for the time wasted in searching for my address, as it was so illegibly written. Then, I thank you profoundly for your paternal suggestion to recall my past faults and ingratitude during the long time I filled such a difficult and delicate office. Who knows, dear Father, how many vocations were accepted without the true religious spirit, and others refused or not well-cultivated... Oh! ... What a dark veil opens itself in front of me ... Yes, Father, I believe that I am left in this ungrateful world because of my grave faults and sins. Rather, dear Father, I am afraid at times, that what I feel quite often is only an illusion.

However, rest assured that your last letter was immensely beneficial. I thank you once again and beg you to continue in this way, but do not ever use the title Rev. Mother, but rather the sweet name of little and poor daughter, (though unworthy). Help me, dear Father, to make sincere acts of perfect contrition and of the most profound humility, as I am so ungrateful towards God, three times Holy! Only the wounds of our most Sweet Jesus can, and I hope will, make up and forgive such infidelity and so many grave faults. That's enough, eh! Let us move on to something else.

The forthcoming solemnity of your Patron Saint strongly reminds me to send you my humble and sincere wishes, but not as worldly people do, but like all the saints, that is to grow in age as well as in sanctity ... Are you pleased in this way? I hope so ... Oh, let us love our good Lord, as St Alphonse loved Him!! How truly he deserves to be loved by all... Father, let us love him together, let us love him with his own infinite love in order to please him and glorify him... so that we may satisfy the needs of our poor hearts. Isn't it so, dear Father??!!

I wish I could say more and more. Strive, dear Father, work actively for souls and for the greater glory of the Father who has given his Only begotten Son, for such a good, good, good Father...so that He will keep you in good health. Poor me! I am nothing but a hindrance, a burden, a disturbance. Only the goodness and love of the Superiors and sisters support and care for me...Our good Jesus himself will repay all those who show love towards the most ungrateful sinner, your unworthy daughter.

I finish off, dear Father, by asking pardon once again and thanking you, etc. Bless me Father, and pray the good Jesus for your most miserable and unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margherita

The address was so difficult, but the letter arrived safely, the way you sent it.

Letter 62

The present letter (the last dated letter among those sent to her spiritual father) is almost a synthesis of Mother Margherita's spirituality: she acknowledges she is unworthy sinner, but with deeply-felt amazement, she experiences God's love and mercy.

She thanks her spiritual father for his letter and expresses sentiments of gratitude for many good souls present in the community, who assist her promptly and lovingly. Not being able to serve the community, she desires to live the hidden life of the house of Nazareth, to stay alone and at length with her Beloved Prisoner.

After having purified her spirit with confession of her whole life, she abandons herself to the lasting yearning of her heart and would like to shout to the whole world: "Love Love and make Him known so that He may be loved by all."

Deus meus et omnia

House of Charity, 12 September 1943

My most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

After so much resistance, finally I am about to reply to your dear letter from which I acquired many useful things for my poor soul. Dear Father, how good our dear Jesus is!! He keeps me in his house in the company of many other good souls (you see, they do not leave me alone: one goes and another comes). Patience! Now every sentiment has slipped away and time too ... *Fiat!*

Father I am even amazed by the Infinite Mercy of the good God, who still sustains me in life and who waits for me to be all his, body and soul, in spite of my present and past ingratitude. Where can I hide myself with all my faults, tribulations and ingratitude? Where can I annihilate myself so that He will reign over such a poor and miserable being? ... Had it been possible for me to show you the state of my poor soul ... but *Fiat!* I believe that, as has often happened, you may imagine.

I take up the pen again. Therefore, my dear Father, I am spending my life, as it were almost in external idleness, as I cannot do anything. I would like to live the hidden life of Nazareth in spirit but I am distracted. I spend hours near the Prisoner of Love, at times in aridity and at times weeping. Only, the dear *Fiat!* and abandonment are repeated at every instant of my life. I will have to stop here for otherwise I will not succeed in finishing it off today.

Have the goodness to find in me a thousand more defects than others.

Father, let us love, let us love, let us love Love for He is neither known nor loved. I often hear an echo or an interior voice within me, which at times makes me cry and desire to shout for all the world to hear: Let us love, let us love so good and holy a God!!! Then I feel I myself am ungrateful.

Pray for me during Mass dear Father, so that I shall be able to fulfil perfectly whatever the goodness of such a merciful and amiable Being wants of me, poor sinner.

Bless your poor daughter who often feels that the end of her life is drawing near eh! when, when?...

The poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 63

This letter is meant to be a confession, in which Mother Margherita bursts out in an outpouring of love in a contention between sorrow and joy: sorrow, for the many faults committed and which displease the sensitive heart of Jesus; joy, for she feels called by name and drawn by her "dear Spouse". Kneeling in his presence, she feels relieved and taken up wherever He wants. As usual she asks for help to correct herself, realizing she merits perdition.

The letter is the answer to a precise request made to her by her spiritual father, but Mother does not succeed in doing away with sentiments of humility, contrition, joy and sorrow which she feels at the thought of an Infinite, merciful Love towards all, and particularly towards her, a proud sinner, and that He is not loved because He is not known.

The framework which Mother painfully outlines of her suffering and exalting spiritual experience concludes this section of her letters most appropriately.

Deus Meus et Omnia
House of Charity

Most dear Father in the Heart of Jesus!

<...> Let us speak about ourselves. I made the act of contrition but I also want to ask you pardon, dear Father for I am finding it hard to write, and link the ideas my poor soul is feeling.

I feel confused and stop with the pen in my hand without knowing what to say. I go near the Prisoner King and kneel at his feet: I weep bitterly, as if sensing my offences and those of all who afflict his sensitive Heart!!! Then I remain for about an hour or more, as if dead. At other times, I hear a call (not with my ears) and I repeat: dear Spouse, dear Spouse, with so many sighs, etc. it seems my heart wants to burst! At other times I feel arid, as if there is neither Jesus nor anything else. And so the days pass in these conflicts. I am only afraid that I do not correspond either to joy or to tears. However, I try to spend as much time as possible in recollection, and stay for two hours near Jesus, besides those spent with the Community, and after an act of

adoration, I stay close to him and according to the attraction of his presence, I let him take me wherever He wants...

This is what I could note with difficulty and bewilderment. Now your goodness will advise me according to the light you receive with regards to this poor and miserable creature.

Oh, I believe that if it were not for the goodness of God where would I be this moment? This thought often thrusts me into a most profound abyss:, and then, I feel not only an attraction towards such an Infinite Being...Oh! Yes, here I will be able to write and say, say, say!... but immediately the little strength in the poor and miserable soul is gone. Dear Father, have mercy, mercy on such a wretched and so proud a being who yearns and pines for so many high and holy things. Many times I deeply fear of being deluded, finding myself so distant from the pure being and then and then...

Enough, enough...Let us love, let us love the Love who is neither known nor loved. Father, I very often feel such lament within: Love who is not loved; Love who is not known... and I often dwell on such a feeling, even when I feel distracted. How painful and just such a lament is! What can one do to please Him? What is there to give in order to attain this pure love? To love not with words but with facts?

I believe that I have pleased you with all this scribbling. So let us ask forgiveness from divine mercy and hope and abandon ourselves to his paternal care.

In union of prayers, of sufferings and of sacrifices, in Love, for Love and with Love. I ask you to bless abundantly your daughter in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

II – LETTERS TO THE SISTERS

This section contains numerous letters, written by Mother Margherita to the sisters as a community as well as individually.

These letters, which cover a period from 1891 to 1951, allow us to catch a closer glimpse of the intense and vibrant spiritual environment in which she lived during these sixty-six years of her life: from the first time she was elected general Superior till the eve of her death.

At the same time, they highlight her sincere and maternal affection toward the sisters, her prompt care in encouraging them to live entirely faithful to their religious vocation and her ardent eagerness to direct them towards the pure and total love of Christ, their sweet Crucified Spouse.

Comprehensibly, the content of these letters is less intimate than those sent to her spiritual directors (and, even for this reason, the exposition is less fragmentary and the phrases are less broken); but the spiritual environment is identical. To give a certain order to this vast material, it is thought appropriate to group the letters according to the respective recipients.

It is logical to suppose that Mother Margherita disclosed the thoughts expressed in her letters to the sisters even in her personal contacts which were always frequent because of the love and respect the sisters showed her.

Things being as they are, these letters assume exceptional importance for the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus: the most characteristic elements of the charism of their Congregation are reflected clearly and inspiringly.

I Letters to the Communities

Letter 64

In this letter Mother Margherita (at that time general Superior) sends her wishes to a community as Christmas draws near. The wishes she sends to the sisters spring from her strong yearning to make the Lord known and loved with a pure, generous and strong love.

She concludes her letter exhorting the sisters to imitate the Divine infant who was born in a cave between two animals and died Crucified between two thieves and so he merits our love.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 22 December 1920

Most beloved daughters in Jesus Christ,

Fire! Our Most Sweet Saviour came to bring fire, and does not want anything else except that this fire be enkindled in the cold hearts of men. My dearest, even I do not wish and cannot wish you anything else but this pure love, generous love, strong love ... And since fire, apart from warmth also gives light, likewise the soul that truly loves becomes also humble and obedient; thus she becomes the true Bride of Him, who out of love, from Creator became a creature, from Lord a servant, etc.

Therefore, my very dear daughters, let us love, but by deed and in truth, that is through sacrifices, renunciation of our own judgements, even in small things, with fraternal love and mutual compassion in weaknesses, etc. Do we agree?

While continuing to live in the Sacred wounds of our sweet Beloved and keeping our hearts lifted high, we shall certainly render ourselves less unworthy Brides of the Divine Infant who was born in a cave between two animals and died Crucified between two thieves!...What a model to imitate!! ... What a Spouse to love! ... That's enough...

While wishing each one of you pure flames of such love, I kindly ask you to recommend to the Lord your poor mother in Jesus Christ
Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 65

Mother seeks to instil courage in the sisters of a community which the Lord has visited with illness.

She invites the sisters to accept the Lord's mysterious visits patiently, courageously and lovingly thus having something to offer the Child Jesus at Christmas, in exchange for his love.

J!M!J!F!

Hamrun, 10 December 1921

Dearest daughters in the Eucharistic Jesus,
I heard that the Lord has visited you [with his cross] in your Institute ... Patience, patience and charity.

Even here the sisters and myself have had the fever. May the Master of our lives be thanked. Now that Christmas is approaching we have more suitable occasions to make us less unworthy of Him. Courage, everything passes, then we shall go where we can love purely, without self-love ... but loving and rejoicing, always, ever! It is worthwhile bearing the cross at present so that in the next world we shall rejoice for all eternity! Let us also look at Baby Jesus in the Crib, on Calvary and in the Eucharist. What does he say? See the love I bear for you!!

So do we want to rejoice from now?... Courage, courage and let us move on, dearest daughters. There is no true love without deep love for suffering, for sacrifice and for humiliation... Therefore, let us profit from the occasions that divine providence sends us, and it will help us etc. etc. <...>

Finally I wish you all the most beautiful Eucharistic flames which consume us in the purest love as the poor

Sr Margherita desires

Letter 66

This letter, addressed to newly professed sisters, was sent from Troina (Sicily) where Mother had gone to open two new works: at Troina and at Regalbuto, the first two Houses of the Congregation opened in Italy.

Mother allows herself to be taken up by enthusiasm that animates her and she recommends to the sisters to be faithful to their religious vocation and to correspond promptly and generously to the demands that even apostolic work make. She invites them to pray and to offer sacrifices for religious vocations.

J!M!J!F!

Troina, 17 March 1922

Most beloved daughter in Jesus!

From afar I think of you, who within a few days will make your Holy Profession; rather I think that when you receive this letter you will have already made it.

Yes, offer yourself totally to our Lord Jesus, who is offering you the most fertile mission in order to win souls, souls, souls! Our Sweet Jesus offers us fields to work in and to cultivate; yes, let us do all that is possible to be generous with Him in corresponding to his loving calls!... Ah! You, dearest daughter, who have newly united yourself to Him through the Holy Vows, unite yourself evermore to Him, so that you can correspond generously and faithfully to such a greatly desired Spouse!!! Ask him for flames, flames of pure love, of zeal for his greater glory and for the salvation of souls, souls, souls! Oh! How many souls await our works, our words and above all, our prayers!...

Therefore, dedicate yourself immediately to work, to spreading the Word and to fervent prayers!!! Encourage yourself always through confidence without limits in His Almighty help and diffidence in yourself. Everything, everything is possible with his Divine help

although we can do absolutely nothing by ourselves. Have you understood? I believe so ...

Well, your profession takes place on this beautiful occasion of the opening of two houses far from our country, where there are souls who hunger to be taught and guided. Therefore pray heartily to the Divine Spouse who wants to save many and many souls! Pray, pray deeply for good vocations so that many other souls will experience the joy which you have tasted. Do we agree? I hope so, my beloved daughters! Let us even offer this sacrifice of deprivation of my poor presence for this intention. It would have been my pleasure too, to be with you. Yes, let us offer it generously without an if, without a but, in order to give abundant fruit to these two new houses of Troina and of Regalbuto, etc, etc.

May your new Spouse bless you and make you holy as He desires of you, and as your poor

Sr Margherita

wishes you, while recommending herself to your fervent prayers.

Letter 67

This is a parting letter. Mother Margherita's office as general Superior has expired and therefore, while recommending herself to the charity of the sisters, Mother asks pardon for the faults they have seen in her; and promises that, even if in a different office¹, she will continue to recommend the practice of religious virtues.

J!M!J!F!

Pilar, 25 April 1923

Most beloved daughters in Jesus,

I hope that this will be the last occasion I speak to you as general Superior. But I will never fail, even when I am in a different situation, to exhort you to be small and docile, and yielding and to

¹ Mother Margherita, besides other offices, practically held that of general Councillor till her death.

love and help one another. Yes, my dearest, yes, let us always help one another to carry each other's burden so that the Lord will deign to unite us in perfect fraternal charity and in pure love, while mortifying the evil and malicious human self, etc. Have you understood?

Therefore forgive all the faults you have seen in me poor sinner, and never cease to recommend me to the Lord, as the poor and unworthy

Sr M. Margherita

also promises sincerely to do for you all.

P.S.: I wish the dear orphans many beautiful things, so that the Lord may fill them with his blessings. And I recommend myself heartily to their prayers.

Letter 68

Mother invites the sisters to rejoice with her at the inauguration of the House of Adoration in Valletta (Malta). Great is her joy at the presence of many persons who love and adore with her the most sweet Jesus, restored on his Eucharistic throne.

From that day, the Congregation started to realize, in a more explicit way, a fundamental point of its charism: perpetual adoration, one of its aims being reparation for one's own sins and for the sins of others.

Conscious that the house has no income, she invites the sisters to confide blindly in divine providence, because she is certain that Jesus himself will provide for the needs of his daughters who seek to love him, to make him loved and to serve him wholeheartedly.

J!M!J!F!

Deus Meus et Omnia

House of Adoration, 7 May 1924

Most beloved Sisters in the Holy Eucharist,

I cannot let this great joy that overflows from my poor heart in these days pass in silence. Yes, our holy joy has been great at the Inauguration of our

House of Adoration... So now our most Sweet Jesus is perpetually on his Eucharistic throne! *Deo gratias et Mariae!!!*

On the 28 of April, His Excellency Mgr Mauro Caruana came to place the Eucharistic Bread on the throne, from where He had been removed to the great disappointment of the whole Island, to be, once again, daily exposed for public adoration. Our dear Sisters take turns to spend half an hour in adoration and sometimes this is repeated two or three times to their greatest pleasure and satisfaction...praying for their respectful superiors, for their dear sisters, for the whole world... Oh! How happy we are!... Even you, dearest, are united with us, because we do not know who will be fortunate to remain... But provided that our Amiable All is adored, that is enough.

Now all the local Superiors, the Most Rev. Mother General, the Vicar General and the Councilors are in retreat...The Holy retreat started immediately after the feast... *Deo gratias*...What happiness for all the Maltese! Everyone thanks the Lord for having deigned to return to his Eucharistic Throne!

The small church is always crowded with devout people and even the entrance of the House is full for Mass and Benediction... Divine Providence manifests in a sensible way the care He has for his daughters, who entrust themselves tenderly to Him...Let us love then, let us love our Sweet Beloved and serve only Him. Amen.

I am sorry for not writing at length because I make use of every minute. We have 3 sermons daily, then teaching delivered by the respected dear Mother General, and I do not profit from anything! How bad I am! Pray fervently for my poor soul which has to give an account for so many souls to the divine judge!...What a scare!!!

Let us hope that the Adorations allotted to me will serve me to implore mercy both for myself and for those who have suffered because of me.

Many and many dear greetings from all the Rev. local Superiors and all the Sisters... I would like to say many things to everyone but this is enough for I am sure that I will not succeed in finishing off.

I have received the papers... I thank you immensely for I needed them badly.

All yours in the Eucharistic Jesus

Sr. M. Margherita

I will never forget you during prayers, do you understand, Mother Genoveffa?

Letter 69

Mother informs the community of Troina of the great joy of having daily adoration and of being able to spend long hours in front of Jesus. She describes in detail the altar adorned for Him, and joyfully expresses her hymn of praise and thanksgiving. She considers herself fortunate for having been chosen to keep Jesus company on his Eucharistic throne.

At the same time she congratulates Sr Celeste, now about to make her Perpetual Profession: she invites her to prepare herself well, with the lighted lamp and with courage, to be the consoling bride and reparatrix of the Crucified Christ.

While she asks prayers for herself debtor of many graces received from the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, she also expresses her concern for the formation of the aspirants and the desire to have a beautiful novitiate.

As usual, she exhorts the sisters to practise virtue, to be prompt in their work while other sisters adore and make reparation in front of Jesus exposed on the altar.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 11 June 1924

Most beloved sisters in the Holy Eucharist,

I am writing to inform you about my trip to Regalbuto which I unexpectedly had the fortune to make...I almost came to see you too. But obedience permitted me to go only thus far; may his most holy will be done!! Meanwhile I had to return with St. Francis Xavier's Holy Arm, and we entered the harbour almost at the same time as the Cardinal who arrived for the Eucharistic Congress. I do not think that you are still oblivious of this news and so I give you other information regarding our House of Adoration.

In infinite gratitude to our most Sweet Jesus, adoration is being held daily: from 7.00 a.m. till 5.30 p.m. The altar is beautifully decorated with fresh and artificial

flowers; people attend adoration daily. May the Name of the Lord be blessed for He has deigned to choose us, poor creatures to keep him company near his Eucharistic Throne. You also should be content and joyful, my dearest and beloved Sisters, because while you are accomplishing your duties, you are aware that your sisters are adoring and making reparation in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament!!! *Deo gratias et Mariae!... Our* ardent desires have now been truly fulfilled! Our anxieties have been deeply repaid! *Deo gratias, Alleluia.*

I am enclosing a photograph so that you may see how the altar was decorated on the day of the Solemn Inauguration; however you cannot see the colours. It was beautiful because the colours were elegant, with roses, curtains and the lace of the altar cloth, all decorated with paintings and then the flowers, all pink and white. May Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament be blessed!!!

Pray, my dearest so that we will avail ourselves of these fortunes and perhaps it will be your turn, or that of others, in the near future. Meanwhile already one sister has departed for Regalbuto, but the days we spend here can be as full as we want them to...

How are you? How are you getting on with our good Jesus? Though He is a Prisoner in the Tabernacle, He is also with you, day and night...So there is no need to be jealous of us! How are the orphans doing? Do they love the Sweet Jesus? How many of them desire to become Sisters? And how many aspirants are there? And who are they?... Finally , let us pray to our dear Jesus so that He will satisfy us by providing us with a big house for the Novitiate!!

Within a short time, you will also have another perpetual profession!! Who knows how fervent our dear Sr. Celeste is, to present herself to the Spouse with the lamp filled to the brim with oil! Ah! Yes, yes, my dearest, prepare yourself for such a solemn and precious event...Whoever has tried it, understands... Strong, strong courage and be united to the Sweet Crucified Spouse so that you may console Him, make reparation, in a word, He can find His rest in you... I wish you the purest flames of Eucharistic love, etc. etc.; on your part, do not forget to recommend, on that fortunate day, your old Mother who sincerely needs to correspond to the graces received...

I end by recommending to each one of you pure peace and fraternal union, the most beautiful and continuous abnegation of your own will and lastly a great, great love for crosses, for humiliations, with the help of which you will arrive where the Saints our brothers and sisters have arrived... Have you understood?

This is what I wish you and pray to our Prisoner Jesus for you, my dearest,
and for the poor sinner

Sr M. Margherita

A cordial greeting to all those who know me.

Letter 70

Mother Margherita invites the sisters of a community to love the Sweet Crucified Spouse Jesus until they let themselves be crucified with him and to make themselves small, small to enter the kingdom of heaven.

House of Adoration, 20 November 1924

Dearest Sisters *kollha* (all),

I have no time to write to every one of you but only to all of you together. My dearest, love our sweet Crucified Spouse Jesus; and, in order to love Him truly, it is necessary to be crucified with Him. Therefore on bitter occasions and when our self-love is wounded, we should turn to Jesus and ask for his help and comfort; and He will certainly not fail in giving it abundantly. Be strong and make yourselves small, small, because Jesus says: whoever does not become small like a child will not enter the kingdom of heaven. And he who humbles himself will be exalted and he who exalts himself will be humbled.

Therefore, have you understood?! From our misery we shall help you with our daily adorations in front of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Oh! What a sweet companion we have!!

Let us love Him, let us love Him together, you by means of your sacrifices and we by means of our adoration. Do you agree? Do you want to? Do you like it? May Jesus Christ be praised! Your sister

Sr Margherita

May Jesus bless us. Regards to those who know me; pray for me.

Letter 71

Writing once again to the community of Troina, Mother invites the sisters to correspond with generous commitment to the love of their most sweet and jealous Lover.

In contemplating the mystery of Christ from His birth to the cross, and to His annihilation in a small host, her heart, unable to resist, looks for a reason and finds this reply: Jesus did, does and will do everything for our love and to obtain our poor affection.

Therefore, she exhorts the sisters to struggle against spoilt nature and to look up towards heaven, where Jesus "will serve" them forever.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 5 December 1924

Dearest Sisters in the Eucharistic Jesus,

How are you? How are things going with our most sweet beloved. Oh! how good he is! How sweet! Let us love him, let us love him. Can't you see how time passes and soon we shall be with Him forever! As we have served Him, He himself will serve us for all eternity. How little we can do for his love, when He has done so much, does and will still do!!...

Alas! I do not know how our hard heart can bear to witness an excessive effusion of love towards such poor creatures from such a Holy and Great Lord! How amazed we should be to see God, three times Holy, born in a cave and dying on a cross on Calvary. And He remains almost annihilated, in a small host etc. etc. What do you think my dearest? Why did he make himself so small? Why did he humble himself so much? For our love, his poor creatures. In order to attain our poor love... and then he does not even succeed in obtaining it. Oh! black ingratitude!...How often is our love for him full of Self?? Oh! Then he will have nothing. He is so jealous that he is unable to bear our love for Him being the least tainted with another love... And justly so since he has all the right... And after all, isn't it all to our present and eternal advantage? Yes, yes, only for us... *Ah! nifmuha darba ghal dejjem* (Ah! Let us seek to understand it once and for all)...

We should struggle against our spoilt nature; we should always sacrifice ourselves and die to our satisfactions...to our evil inclinations. We should never yield to human reasoning; neither to the demands of our flesh...Our heart and our

thoughts must be always raised high and never dwell on these base things... Let us always look as far up as we can with Divine grace, far beyond Etna. further up, further up where we shall never feel either hot or cold, but a sweet, gentle air. May the Holy Child give us a pure spark of that fire which He came to bring on earth. This is what your poor elderly

Mother Margherita wishes you.

I wish many beautiful things to the Postulants as well as to the Aspirants and courage and keep moving forward.

Letter 72

The following letter, sent (it seems) to the Community of Troina, begins with sincere thanks to the sisters for having remembered and recommended her to Divine Mercy.

Mother appreciates the gift received and sends her thanks; however she can do nothing else but ask for what is at heart: for souls who love Jesus passionately. For this reason she invites the sisters to love our perfect Eternal Father as He demands and to make him loved by all.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia

House of Adoration, 22 November 1925

Most beloved Sisters in the Holy Eucharist,

I thank you heartily for your goodness in deigning to remember your poor old mother by recommending her to the Mercy of the Good Jesus. Yes, dearest, I thank you immensely for the holy pictures which I liked very much. But I desire a richer and more precious thing. I want, I desire and I yearn for souls, souls... Give me souls who truly and purely love the Lord and Eternal God, and I shall be happy, very happy... Oh! Let us love, let us love this perfect Eternal Father, who loves us infinitely though we are nothing except his poor, wretched creatures!... What does He expect from us but love? Love; from the Holy Tabernacle he demands love. He demands love through so many inspirations. What does he want? He wants to be known and loved, loved,

loved. It is enough to love Him and make him loved by all and everywhere. Oh! If only we could make him known, surely He would be loved.

You, my dearest, have so many appropriate occasions to make him known to those women, young girls and children... What luck! Know how to avail yourselves from every occasion, always and with everyone...What can't you do with the poor orphans. Oh! Sanctify them all! All, all...yes, all...What about the Postulants? Oh! Fill them all with Seraphic love. Let us then begin ourselves, o my beloved, yes, let us begin ourselves by being small and enkindled with the pure love of our Most sweet Jesus. Let us generously follow his plans, etc...Let us abandon ourselves to the care of his providence...; let us combat our famed self always and everywhere and the beautiful and holy hour will arrive to sing the hymn of pure Love.

This is what the poor

Sr M. Margherita wishes you all.

Letter 73

Having returned to Malta from Rome², Mother reminds the novices of the beautiful time she spent with them in the midst of so many beautiful spiritual experiences, while inviting them to meet one another spiritually near the Beloved Prisoner during the holy hour on Thursday...

But she is most concerned about their formation: that they may be free to love Jesus, ready to die to self, that poisonous weed that easily grows without leaving room for true love. She invites the novices to maintain a pure heart to become worthy brides of the Immaculate Lamb.

She expects sanctity from the first novices of the holy city in order to attract other vocations. Through love and prayer, and through the merits of the Most Sacred Wounds of our Crucified, Mother is securely convinced of obtaining everything.

From the expressions she uses (dearest little daughters...old grandmother...) we can observe Mother's affection towards these first novices of the house in Rome.

Deus meus et omnia

² Mother Margherita was sent to Rome in August 1932 to replace the mistress of novices (Sr Dionisia Thomis) who was sick, and remained there till February 1933.

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent³

2 October 1933

Dearest daughters in the Heart of Jesus,

I have finally succeeded in writing, first to thank you for all the prayers you offer for your poor and old grandmother...How deeply I cherish the memory of that beautiful time we spent together. How I recall the long walks to the Churches, to Mass at St. John's, to the Holy Steps, etc. etc.

Eh! How distant we are! But I hope that we meet in spirit during the hours near our Beloved Prisoner... even during the Holy Hour on Thursdays... Do you remember? Yes, let us meet and together love our Spouse who yearns to find souls who truly desire pure love...and do you really want to love Him without self-interest? without reserve? ready to die to Self? How poisonous this weed is! How evil! How minutely we should examine ourselves not to let it grow in our garden: being so small, it soon spreads; and then what will remain of true love?? Eh! It is necessary to watch seriously and with a generous disposition to prepare a spotless and pure heart till our union with the Immaculate Lamb.

My dear little daughters, how grateful you should be to the Spouse who preserved your vocation while the other three have been deprived of it... Therefore you should be extremely attentive in order to become saints, being the first Novices of the House in the Holy City. I have always told you this and repeat it more so now that you have been reduced to such a small number. Rather through living a holy life, you can earn the reward of more vocations of very holy girls..

We expect much of you... Do you understand? We can obtain everything with love: love and pray, through the merits of the most Holy Wounds of our Beloved Crucified and we shall have everything...

³ It is important to clarify a terminological question once and for all. Referring in her letters to the place where she was then living, Mother Margherita at times uses the name "Casal Caccia", [The Hunting Village], at other times the name "Xaghra". The first name derives from the fact that the locality, situated at high level and semi-desert, was sought out for hunting. These two names have been used without distinction for a long time to indicate the place. After 1950 the first name was practically forgotten and the official name remained that of Xaghra.

The community "*Casa Maria Bambina*" was opened in November 1930 and Mother Margherita was the first Superior. Subsequently, at Xaghra, the care of the church "Jesus of Nazareth" was also entrusted to the Franciscan Sisters, and the sisters built a small house next to it which took the name of "Jesus of Nazareth Convent".

While wishing you all the graces to be Holy Religious, I exhort you to be small, small, very small and to pray seriously for the poor and wretched elderly [nun],

Your affectionate grandmother,

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 74

In this letter, addressed to the community of sisters in Rome, Mother expresses her ardent desire to make reparation: it is necessary, she affirms, to comfort Jesus and it is only through sacrifice that love is shown. Her poor soul does not desire anything else but love.

D.M.E.O.

7 August 1944

Dearest daughters in the Heart of Jesus!

I am glad that you are all well, thanks to our Amiable Spouse Jesus!! How sweet He is! How amiable he is! How lovingly He watches over us and assists us with such great love, more than a father does... Oh! Why can't we love such a dear Being??! We should approach him and with filial love tell him many beautiful things to comfort him for being thus abandoned. Ah! Dearest daughters, yes, true love shows itself through sacrifice. So, rejoice, for you can make him happy in such a hard trial through your generosity...

It is enough! My poor soul desires nothing but love, love. Send me a little of your ardent love.

Meanwhile, dear, dear daughters, I bless you one by one and embrace you to my maternal heart for I love you, and would also like you to be pure, pure for Him who is our All, and together we may be united in his Eternal bosom...This will be through the merits of Jesus and Mary.

If anyone ascends the Holy Steps, please kiss them for me.

The poor Margherita still does not have enough love to meet Him whom her soul loves.

Letter 75

As the years roll by, Mother feels the burden and the infirmities of old age all the more. However, the love for Jesus who is a prisoner for our love in all the tabernacles of the world, is further enkindled in her heart.

The love for her Beloved is so profound, that she speaks of the "folly" of love. She therefore invites the sisters to live the life of the most pure love, to correspond generously to their religious vocation, to live in a spirit of submission and in fraternal charity.

As Christmas is approaching, she invites the sisters to celebrate this Mystery of God who became a Child for our love, with due commitment.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 14 December 1945

My dearest and beloved daughters in Jesus,

How can I show you my frail old body? Eh! My exile is so long! But I hope that it will not be much longer... However I am happy to stay here as long as it pleases our most Sweet Spouse Jesus; Jesus who is a Prisoner for our love in all the Tabernacles of the world... What love! What excessive love! After he became a Child, he humbled himself becoming food for us. How passionate we should be for his Love! Let us live, let us live a life of the most pure love... He came to bring fire on earth and he does not want anything else but that it be enkindled. Let us love him and strive to make Him loved by everybody and everywhere...

I would like to mention you one by one but I am unable to, therefore, I embrace you all, together, near the cradle of the Most Holy Child, in the company of His and our most holy Mother and of St Joseph, and the Holy Shepherds, and there we pour out our pure love ... Dearest daughters, how grateful we should be for our holy vocation?! How jealous we should be to correspond generously and faithfully. True correspondence consists in love, in the pure love of true and holy Brides of God three times Holy ... of a Spouse Crucified for our love ...

While I earnestly advise you to continue living in fraternal union and humble submission, etc. etc. I wish you all the graces that the most holy Child promises to his faithful and generous brides ... Do you understand? I believe you do! Then peace will never, never, never fail us. Finally, I warmly recommend to you the very poor and wretched Sr Miseria, so that she will be able to end her life in an act of profound abandonment to divine mercy.

May the most holy Child and his Mother bless us all.

Letter 76

Mother would have liked to write to the sisters at length, but she is impeded owing to old age and sickness.

The letter is brief, but abounding with spiritual wealth: Jesus, whose name she repeats four times, is the only thing necessary for her, and she invites the sisters to always have recourse to Him, present in every House under the Eucharistic veil.

Her trust in the Immaculate Virgin is also strong and she invites the sisters to keep her always close. Finally she exhorts them to be of consolation to the superior by their behavior.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 14 September 1948

Dearest daughters in the Heart of Jesus,

I would have liked to write a few lines to each one of you, but writing has become difficult. Therefore I write to you all united in the most Sacred Heart of our Amiable Spouse Jesus! Jesus, Jesus, Jesus hidden under the Eucharistic veil, in that Holy Tabernacle, where we fortunately find Him in all our Houses. Oh! May you always be united in Him and with Him!

Always have recourse to him in all your joys and sorrows and deprivations etc. and then turn to our tender Mother, Mary Immaculate: with her and in her always remain close and united. And then be of support to one another, of consolation to your Mother Superior who needs you all. Thus united one heart and one soul, you can find peace in the hearts of Jesus and Mary.

This is what your poor and unworthy elderly Mother wishes, while recommending herself heartily to your fervent prayers and sacrifices.

Sr M. Margherita

Jesus, our Crucified Spouse wants and expects pure love. Do you understand?

Letter 77

As the years roll by, Mother feels that the time to go and join her Spouse for whom she longingly yearns is drawing closer.

She thanks the sisters for the prayers they offer for her needs, and recommends vigilance, because the Spouse will come like a thief.

D.M.E.O.

My dearest Sisters in Jesus,

I thank you heartily for the prayers you offered for my poor soul, and I ask you to continue to pray so that the good Jesus will grant me the grace to avail myself of this short time granted me.

Meanwhile, all of you, my dears, see that you are always more generous with our Amiable Spouse, so that we may attain the predetermined goal of our perfection.

All of us should be on the alert for He will come like a thief to snatch us away; and as long as we are always ready no one will frighten us; rather, he will be expected and desired. Let us love Him always more purely and more generously; never saying enough, but always better and always more. Be courageous and bold, bold in every circumstance of life, be it prosperous or adverse. Oh! How the things of this world change!

That which is not eternal is nothing; therefore let us look to our future destiny and nothing will hinder us.

I end by recommending to you your poor elderly Mother

Sr Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 78

During the Christmas season Mother exhorts the novices in Rome to avail themselves of these days that speak only of Love.

The letter is short but extremely rich in reflections: to dwell in profound silence of adoration, to love through deeds and in truth, to learn to love in front of the crib of the God Child. Besides she exhorts the sisters to pray to our Sweet Mother Mary who teaches us pure and generous love towards the new born Child.

D.M.E.O.

My dearest and beloved daughters,

A few words to all of you. In these holy days, we do not speak of anything else except of Love, of Love, Love. And why not? if a God has become man for love??? An Infinite Being, in his Greatness, in his Majesty etc. etc. deprives himself of everything and becomes a little Child...and why? Out of love for ungrateful humanity...

What else can we say? It is better to pause in the profound silence of adoration...Then to love, love and love...Love is repaid with love. Therefore, my dearest, let us love through deeds and in truth and that is enough...One learns how to love in front of the God Child! Therefore I leave you in the company of such a sweet model while wishing you to become an exact and perfect copy... There is even his Sweet Mother who imitated Him faithfully. Ask her to teach you the pure and generous love of the newly born Child. Do you understand?

That is enough.

Your poor little "grandmother"

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 79

This letter is addressed to a Community, following the death of a sister. Mother reminds the sisters to think of the hereafter and to be continuously vigilant, drawing profit from every occasion.

Besides, as it is Holy Week, she invites them to reflect on the love that the Crucified Spouse has for each one of his brides and on how to commit themselves to repay such love because only thus can they rise with Him to a new life.

J!M!J!F!

Holy Thursday

Beloved daughters in Jesus,

See how everything comes to an end; your striving and your dear sister's pains have ended too! This is what we take with us in the next world! So let us work purely for our sweet Beloved who knows how to reward every little sacrifice we shall have made for his love; and he will reproach us for what we did with a less pure intention, etc., etc. Courage then dear daughters, life is too short to earn our eternal rest. Therefore, let us do our best not to let any occasion pass by without availing ourselves of it.

In these holy days we even see our Amiable Jesus filled with shame. He was obedient till death and death on the cross. What else do we need to crush our pride to death or should I better call it our Rev. Self-Love. Ah! Let us understand it well: without dying to self, one cannot rise again. Therefore, let us die with our Good Jesus, so that we may rise to a new life with Him...Let us love him purely and that is enough.

I also wish you to experience sufferings so that you may resemble the most sweet Crucified Jesus, the Beloved of our souls, so that we will then be glorious for ever, in Heaven above with Him. Amen! Amen!

Pray for the poor

Sr Margherita who embraces you one by one in the Wound opened by the lance and there enclosed, we shall live the pure life that consumes us in love, love, love!!!

2. Letters to Sr Pacifica Xuereb⁴

Letter 80

This letter is an invitation to the sister to abandon herself at a particular moment of her life, to the divine care of her Spouse Jesus.

⁴ The profuse correspondence that existed between Mother Margherita and Sr Pacifica (the 15 letters here published confirm this) bear witness to the strong spiritual bond existing between them, and with which they supported one another.

Gently, Mother places herself as an example of weakness and misery, supported and helped by God's holiness, to stimulate in Sr Pacifica the same sentiments of profound humility and unlimited trust in God to obtain forgiveness and holiness, to sanctify the sisters.

J!M!J!F!

16 April 1922

My dear Sr Pacifica,

I think that you are at peace and faithfully trust in the care of Divine Providence, without which we can never do any good whatsoever. Therefore, never cease exercising yourself in this beautiful practice of total abandonment in God, our Father! Oh! What tranquillity our soul enjoys by abandoning herself to the care of our Good Jesus. And why not? If He takes care of the birds of the air and the insects of the earth, how can He not help or comfort his beloved Brides who have left their home and their families and above all renounced to their freedom for his love? Therefore, diffidence in ourselves is a holy thing, but then we need to expect the strength of Divine help, which is given to all those who ask and trust in the Heart of our omnipotent Father and Divine Spouse!

Therefore, instead of weeping and getting discouraged, humble yourself in front of his goodness and ask him pardon for so many weaknesses that still exist in you, and with a strong will, resolve to do your utmost to correct yourself as quickly as possible: as it is what you do, not the offices assigned to you⁵ by Holy Obedience, that is keeping you back. Do you understand?

Therefore, we must have diffidence in ourselves and unlimited confidence in God. I am nothing by myself except misery, ingratitude and sins but by God's help I can become holy and sanctify others too... It is truly so, for the Lord is always the same with all; provided that we are fully convinced of the truth.

I do not know what effect this letter will have but I hope that the outcome will be beneficial since I had no other intention but to encourage you...

While embracing you in the Sacred Heart I recommend heartily to your prayers, the poor

Sr M. Margherita

⁵ Sr Pacifica was superior in the house at Troina from 1922 to 1929, when she was elected general Vicar.

Cordial wishes to all I know.

Letter 81

In this letter, Mother Margherita's concern for the formation of young girls called to religious life and the hope that she might soon have a house to welcome them in, is evident.

Besides zeal for the spiritual life, she is concerned about the temporal and cultural life of the sisters, of the postulants and of the orphans.

Mother ends her letter, as is her custom, by asking for prayers and inviting her to abandon herself to Divine Providence.

J!M!J!F!

Pilar, 26 January 1923

Most beloved daughter in Jesus,

I thank our good Jesus for the good news you sent me. May He be thanked for all the good he bestows upon our dear little Congregation! I do nothing but recommend to him my poor little daughter so distant from me and resign myself, leaving her to the care of the Father who knows, can and wants to fill the souls entrusted to Him with His grace <...>

I have been in Malta since the 2nd instant and I do not know when I will be able to return, first because of one thing and then because of another, I always find something to do. There are some postulants but I do not have room for them... Pray so that the Lord will provide a big house according to His Heart. And how is Annunziata? and the other orphans? Do they persevere in their vocation? Eh! Teach them to exercise themselves in self-denial... <...>

What else my dear? I am afraid I shall have no other free time, so it's better to finish off now while telling you: do your best to help the sisters in their spiritual life and also in their studies etc. etc. If you can manage, even you should study a little more and avail yourself of Ms. Calabrese etc. Sr Celeste also studies the piano well; and Sr Costantina designs etc. Anyway, all of you should profit as much as possible. Also seek to accustom the orphans to spiritual and temporal education and do not spare anything for this. Help them to be prompt and obedient, etc, etc.

What else can I tell you? I send many beautiful and holy wishes to dear Sr Clotilde and our good Jesus will bless her and give her a speedy recovery to work in the vineyard of our Sweet Beloved. Do you understand? Courage...I hope to give you some consoling news⁶ in another letter; now pray and ask others to pray with your Community and with the dear orphans and we leave everything to the care of divine providence as I always recommend. Pray for me as I am in great need.

May Jesus bless us and keep us in His Heart.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 82

Mother Margherita, among other news, mentions the first Eucharistic celebration, held privately, in the church of Adoration in Valletta (Malta).

She concludes by asking for a prayer so that she may conclude her service, as guide of the Congregation, properly.

J!M!J!F!

Pilar, 25 April 1923

Beloved Sr Pacifica

I have received your letter, etc... <...>

Now I wrote to M. Nazarena about the delegate; therefore, do as she tells you. What else my dear? Let us pray heartily because we are in very great need of everything...

Tomorrow, Thursday, the First Mass will be celebrated in the Chapel of the Adoration, but behind closed doors, as there is nothing certain, therefore everything is done carefully.. Meanwhile pray heartily that everything will be according to the Lord's wish.

⁶ Mother Margherita here refers to the offer made by the Archbishop of Malta to entrust the Church of Adoration in Valletta to the Congregation, and the current negotiations for its acceptance.

What else my dear? Courage and keep moving forward...Our Good Jesus blesses us and makes us all Saints like the little St. Therese of the Child Jesus whom our Mother Church will declare a saint, next Sunday...

Finally, I recommend to you the poor Sr M. Margherita that she may receive the grace to conclude honourably the period of carrying the greatest burden of our Congregation.

Many wishes to all those who remember me.

Letter 83

Mother who has been at the Adoration House in Valletta for some months, sorrowfully remarks on the holy death of the new general Superior, Mother Giovanna Fenech, which happened only a few months after her election⁷.

She exhorts the sisters to pray, so that the Lord may provide a Mother who knows how to lead the Congregation according to his Heart.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 8 October 1923

Dear Mother Pacifica

I am pleased with the restorations you have started to make etc...

And what do you think of the irreparable loss of our beloved Mother? What do you think? How secret are God's judgements! Who ever thought that another general Chapter would be held after 4 months ... Eh! Then let us pray heartily and fervently for her good soul and for 9 days offer our Holy Communions with the Sisters and the orphans for the repose of her soul ... And then pray for our dear Congregation which has been orphaned and immersed in such acute sorrow. Only the Will of our Sweet Jesus comforts and helps us ...

I was fortunate enough to assist her on her last day. And while receiving Jesus as Viaticum, I told her: "Eh! You have been more fortunate than I, because I have not received him today." She replied: "Oh! How calm I am now." This was at about 8:00 a.m., 18.09.1923. Then we spoke to one another, etc. After dinner she could not take

⁷ Mother Margherita had written a long letter to this sister on the occasion of her religious profession (cf. letter 130).

anything, so towards evening she received the Anointing of the Sick, and at about 4 o' clock the following morning they asked her if she still wanted to receive Communion. She replied: "And is the Priest here?" ... he was sent for quickly and immediately her agony started and she expired placidly within half, or three quarters of an hour ... <...>

What else is there to say? I do not know ... Let us always repeat the dear and amiable *Fiat*, and that is enough ... It is still necessary to pray earnestly and reflect in front of the Lord so that He will provide us with a Mother who knows how to guide according to his Most Sacred Heart. Do we agree?

With my best wishes, I leave you all in the Sacred Heart, where I ask you to remember the very poor,

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 84

Mother thanks the sister for the news received and shows the joy she experiences for the little deprivations that can never be compared to the poverty of Bethlehem. Once again, worry about acquiring a big house, in order to accept the great number of aspirants who would otherwise go elsewhere because there is no room, is evident. Meanwhile, she is dedicated to serving the sisters, alternating it with Eucharistic adoration, the source of every spiritual and material good.

The confusion she observes even at the Mother House worries her and she invites everybody to pray in order to obtain good leaders for the Congregation. Work, study, mutual help: Mother appreciates everything, abandoned to her dear Fiat. For her all is well if it is accepted with resignation, because everything contributes to the welfare of the community.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 20 December 1923

Dearest Sr Pacifica,

I received your letter and your news with great pleasure. Let us thank the Lord who has already crowned our little efforts! See how sweet it is to find such an original site. It lacks comfort but not as much as the Cave of Bethlehem! Isn't it true? He even knows how to ease the severity of the seasons seeing that we are willing to be patient.

I am glad that the restoration works have begun: thus you will have more order in your matters. And what about the Aspirants? Oh! I deeply desire a big house!

Though it is not my responsibility, (thanks to Divine Providence) however my desires are still the same, perhaps even more intense! Who are those who have presented themselves? And who has changed community? How I rejoice to have good and holy Aspirants! Here there are another twelve of them but the novitiate is full; and so they have to wait, and then they get impatient and go elsewhere. Therefore let us pray for a bigger house...<...> I wanted to write other things on such holy days, but I feel very distracted and then many recommend themselves to my prayers as if I had nothing else to do...I would willingly have made only adorations, etc, etc. but instead the door knocks quite often. *Fiat!* Providence does not lack, thanks to our sweet Beloved, because though we do not have a school nor a laboratory we are getting on well and I hope that when we have perpetual adoration the means will increase. We are short of sisters as only 5 have been assigned for this work and no one plays the organ; therefore, we will wait for the next profession hoping that some young professed sisters will be sent here, etc... We thank the good Lord for your house, for He always supplies us with what is necessary and it is for this reason that I never lack courage in whatever work He entrusts us with... However, we should help one another by encouraging the sisters to study, because while Providence procures the means in raw material, it is up to us to procure a spiritual as well as an educational formation...Fhimtni? (Have you understood me??) Oh! How necessary study and then the ability to do everything for God's greater glory!...

Your sister in the Heart of Jesus, *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 85

Mother received unpleasant news from Sr. Pacifica (superior of the house at Troina) and clearly expresses how important it is to behave as true religious, recollected and submissive, docile to the inspirations of grace and to the dispositions of superiors.

She advises her to do her best with everyone, prudently but firmly, in order to correct the harm done and unite the sisters in fraternal charity.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 6 August 1924

Beloved Sr Pacifica,

I rejoice in the new mission assigned to you. Be careful to be prudent in this office but at the same time work with a seraphic and evangelical spirit...Eh! my dearest, how important it is to be docile to the inspirations and the dispositions of the Superiors. Courage, be strong, strong and show the greatest trust in Jesus, our Sweet Spouse, and total diffidence in yourself.

We are offering so many prayers and adorations for this sole aim in our House; that is, so that virtue and not vice may be victorious. Let us leave everything to the care of Divine Providence, but struggle strongly; be a true mother to all the sisters there and keep them united as much as you can in fraternal love, without which the House will truly become a little hell. <...>

The Lord knows how to repay abundantly all the sacrifices borne for his love with as many comforts and rewards...

Enough, for I do not know how many times I had to stop and start again. Patience eh!, and always *Fiat!*

Recommend me to the Lord and I will include you in our adorations ... Do you want to? I hope so. Courage and let us keep moving on, always forward. May Jesus bless us all.

Your poor

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 86

Mother joyfully communicates to the sister the progress made in the House of Adoration. She attributes to the intercession of St Joseph the fact that they do not lack necessities and to the Immaculate Virgin the order that reigns in the community. She wishes that the Congregation could always have adorers in spirit and in truth.

She still thinks about the orphans, the aspirants and the postulants that they may be well-cared for and formed.

She then invites the sister to prepare herself spiritually for the approaching Christmas, which reminds us of the precious “gift” God gave us in the incarnation of His only Son.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia!

House of Adoration, 5 December 1924

Most Beloved Mother Pacifica,

I was pleased to receive your dear letter, as I had long been expecting it, not having heard any news of you since our last meeting. We thank the Lord that everything is going well. Even here, thanks to our sweet Beloved we are getting on pretty well: adoration, studies of the newly professed, the ladies’ work⁸, visits to the sick and we are moving on. The good St Joseph never fails to provide for us and the Holy Immaculate Virgin also does her part as Directress; and so we hope that one day our Eucharistic Spouse will have adorers in spirit and in truth ...

And how are you getting on with the orphans? With the students? And with the postulants?... and how many aspirants are there? Eh! Let us pray that He will provide us not only with good subjects but also with a good place to accept many more. Take good care of them, so that they will be helpful and holy ...

I often speak with Mother about the House of Ognina, but she replies: What can one do for the subjects? And I would like to split myself into 4, into 6, and even into 10, while I hardly serve as one ... Patience! And slowly!

What do you wish me to tell you?... Eh! Let us love our sweet Spouse, even in the solitude of the spirit, in dryness and aridity of the soul: it doesn’t matter, it is enough if we always do his Holy Will! ... Let us always repeat the dear *Fiat* and keep moving forward without getting tired or bored ... Let us always act contrary to nature, always struggling against our human Self and then it is enough: we shall have a continuous and long-lasting occupation ... Have you understood? Take courage and keep moving forward.

⁸ The “ladies” to whom Mother Margherita refers were a group of women who weekly frequented the House of Adoration to participate in prayers, and to sew holy vestments for poor churches.

II - LETTERS TO THE SISTERS

Now that we are in the Holy season of Advent, let us do our best to make beautiful vests for the Holy Child; let us also prepare a fire⁹ for His Beloved Mother so that she can keep the newly-born Babe warm. How immensely has the Eternal Divine Father loved us when He gave us such a Precious Gift, His Only Son!!! Why don't we die with gratitude at such prodigal Love? Let us love Him! Yes, let us love Him with pure, disinterested love like his... Let us love Him by sacrificing all our satisfactions, all our cares, all our comforts,... etc. Do we agree? Well, let us totally abandon ourselves to his Paternal care without any reservations. Do you like it so? I hope so...

May Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist be always our indivisible companion and may his pure love consume us like wax in his fire...

Pray fervently for me to our All so that He will make me small, small and totally hidden...

Your poor sister *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 87

Mother thanks the Lord for having chosen her to be one of the first adorers, and is happy with this occupation. She adores the divine judgments which fill her with amazement.

She rejoices with the 5 Postulants at Troina and compares them to the five wounds of the Crucified Spouse. She exhorts them to be lovers of Jesus and to die to their own judgments in order to be authentic religious.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia

House of Adoration, 25 March 1926

Beloved Sr Pacifica,

I rejoice at your prosperity and even at your deprivations because this is what it has pleased our Heavenly King to give you.

⁹ In metaphoric language (vests, fire ...) Mother invites the sister to prepare herself for Christmas through little sacrifices.

Thanks to our Sweet Jesus, our health is not too bad, but we are happy with our occupation; that of keeping Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist company. Who could have ever said this, about 4 years ago? That the House of the Sisters of Reparation had to be handed over to the poor Franciscans. And what amazes me most is that the poor and weak Sr Margherita is one of the Adorers!!! Oh! How secret are God's judgments! Let us adore them in silence!

I am glad to hear about the Postulants: What a beautiful number! They resemble the 5 Wounds of our Sweet Crucified Spouse. Tell them to be greatly devoted to these wounds or rather, to be truly enflamed with love. Tell them to die truly to their own judgment and freedom, and that they should desire nothing, if they want to be authentic sisters and not by halves. Do you understand?

And how earnestly we have prayed for a House for the Novitiate; and still no result! Let us always, always, always hope and trust...

While embracing you one by one in the Sacred Heart. I recommend myself to the prayers of everyone while promising to do likewise for them... All the sisters send their warm regards to each one of you.

Sr M. Margherita

Best regards to all the dear Postulants and orphans and on the day of their clothing the adoration will be offered for them.

Letter 88

Mother has returned to the House of Adoration, after an unspecified absence; and her heart is distressed for diverse motives. She is sorry for losing many occasions to do good and because, for lack of good vocations, the Congregation has to refuse certain works.

"To make reparation" is Mother's password, which she reiterates continually in her writings. For unrepaid Love, she demands reparation through pure and generous love, especially from the young sisters so that they can take Him wherever they are sent in the missions.

She compares the true love for God which is so rare, with self-love which is common to all and concludes by reminding the sister that only in destroying the human ego can we succeed in possessing divine Love.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia

House of Adoration, 8 June 1926

Most beloved Mother Pacifica,

I am writing to inform you that I have returned to the same House. I am sorry that I do not know how to profit from this.

I rejoice that you are well and we have thanked our good Jesus for the good trip you had. I am pleased that Sr Eleonora is well and that the young sisters have made progress; may the Lord preserve them in their simplicity and make them grow in his Holy Love so that they will become worthy to go to the farthest missions!!¹⁰ <...>

Let us pray earnestly for our Superiors because the prosperity of our Congregation depends on them!!!

What beautiful days we are having! They remind us of the pure Eucharistic Love. And how badly I have corresponded! Eh! How I need to make reparation. Love, love and make reparation through sincere, pure, and generous love!!

Enkindle these tender hearts with the Eucharistic fire so that they shall all be holy and pure, and with the passing of the years they will grow in love and can enkindle this fire wherever they shall be.

What else my dearest? I really do not know. Let us love truly and that is enough! True love for God is so rare! And self-love so common! We always need to struggle, to die, to humble ourselves, but we do not know till which point: Oh! we then arrive at the destruction of the human Self and the possession of Divine Love. In this way, the soul can sing the sweet and dear *Fiat* of pure love. Oh! my dearest, how far, far, far I still am... Let us pray, let us pray for one another so that our most Sweet Jesus may help us reach such a desirable goal. Let us hide ourselves in this most Sacred Heart and, hidden there, consume ourselves totally. Amen. Alleluia!

I end by wishing you and all our dearest daughters, flames of pure love that blaze in his most Holy Eucharistic Heart so that we will annihilate ourselves always more in love... as the very poor

Sr M. Margherita always desires and prays

¹⁰ It is likely that Mother Margherita is referring to the opening of a "mission" in Ethiopia, warmly supported by the Maltese Capuchin missionary Fr Angelo Mizzi. In fact, the first house in Ethiopia was then opened in Sofi in September 1927.

Letter 89

In this letter, as well as in many others, Mother invites the sisters to avail themselves of all the occasions to acquire merits through good and holy works. For her, every occasion is good enough to shake us from the sleep of tepidity: even an earthquake.

Her thoughts turn repeatedly on the countless vocations to be accepted and to be adequately formed to work in the Lord's vineyard; and for this reason she wishes that Mgr Michael Gonzi (then Bishop of Gozo) could provide a house for the Novitiate (it seems that she is referring to the project of opening a house in Rome).

She would have truly liked so much to pray to the Lord for the intentions which were so dear to her heart, but finds herself immersed in aridity owing to her wickedness and pride, and so she persistently asks for prayers.

J!M!J!F!

House of Adoration, 13 July 1926

Beloved Mother Pacifica,

How are you? Did you feel the earthquake? We felt it quite strongly but it did not do any damage. Eh! We need to shake ourselves up a little from our sleep. Because apathy ruins everything...Let us pray so that we may profit enough, otherwise we may expect worse things...

I hope that the young missionaries continue to be happy and profit from the occasions. Eh! Time passes quickly and never returns: so it is necessary to enrich it with good and holy deeds!

Next Friday, the feast of Our Lady of Carmel, our student sisters will sit for their first examination and then continue for 8 consecutive days. Therefore, pray for them to the Lord, with the sisters and orphans so that they will have good results if God wills. Poor things they have studied unceasingly. They have sacrificed themselves and so we hope that they will have good results. May everything be for the Lord's greater glory and for the advantage of our little Congregation...

Today two aspirants asked to be admitted: one is 24, the other 22; They are sisters, both good, serious, but very backward in education. What a pity if they

are refused... Let us pray my dearest for I am tired of repeating wait, wait... And I do not know when we shall see the big house for the Novitiate.

How is Sr. Leonia? and what about the matter at Bronte? And that of Catania?¹¹ I do not know anything about it. Patience eh! And let us pray heartily... Mother always writes to me: pray, pray earnestly, and at times I feel unwilling and indifferent, I do not know why... Because I am wicked and proud... Therefore, let us do our best to be useful in the Lord's vineyard which is so vast and the labourers so few! What am I saying? The workers come but they are refused owing to lack of space!!!

Well, I repeat: let us pray! Now Mgr Gonzi will be coming to Catania <...> Let us see if he will provide us with a house abroad.

May Jesus bless us all and consume us in his pure love, as the poor

Sr M. Margherita always desires

A cordial embrace to every sister.

Letter 90

On her return from a voyage to Corfù, Mother ardently desired to visit the sisters at Troina too. She offers this unfulfilled desire as a sacrifice to the Lord: being unable to meet Mother Pacifica meant much to her; but the love for Christ was by far stronger.

She asks about the young sisters, encouraging them to study and to practice the virtue of humility.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia

finished 20 November 1926

Dearest Mother Pacifica,

Oh! How I wished to come and see you! This has been the only sacrifice I offered to the Lord during my long trip. May his holy will be always done.

¹¹ While the initiative concerning Bronte did not materialize, the first house of the Franciscans at Catania was then opened in 1952.

Dear Sr Matilde arrived here safely as you read in her letter. I did not receive your letter in Corfù because we left Corfù on November 2 in the evening and arrived at Catania on Friday at noon ... and in Malta on Sunday morning. We found Mother awaiting us as she had to depart; in fact, she left on Monday evening... See how many trips; finally we shall arrive *għand il-Bambin, trid? Għaliex jiena dana qiegħda nistenna ... Kemm konna ngħidu xorti kieku Itqajna iżda ..*(near Jesus, do you want to? Because this is what I am expecting ... How many things we might have said if we met, but..) perhaps it is better to sacrifice all for our good Jesus!... <...>

Int kif int? Il-Madre qaltli li forsi hija u ġejja, tmur Nicosia biex tara lill-Isqof! Kemm għandna bżonn nitolbu. Kemm għandna bżonn inħobbu l-Ħelu Ġesù tagħna! Lili l-vjaġġ għamilli tajjeb ferm għall-grazzja t'Alla u s-sorelli ħadu pjaċir wisq għaliex kellhom bżonn ta' konfort! (How are you? Mother told me that on her way back, she might go to Nicosia to visit the Bishop. How earnestly we need to pray, how deeply we need to love our sweet Jesus! I had a good trip, thanks be to God and the sisters were very happy for they needed someone to comfort them). Poor things! Still without a church!

It is useless for I do not succeed because someone or other comes, as I have not yet stayed at home. And what am I to do? It is better to stop, otherwise I do not know when I shall finish. And then, my head will not permit me ... I am already old; I am still able to travel but good for nothing else. Let us love our good Jesus and immerse ourselves in his most Sacred Heart, where we shall be cleansed in his love!!!

Let us love and that is enough. Perhaps later on it will be easier for me to write but not today as they will not let me.

Best regards to all, and I embrace each one of you in the Sacred Heart as if I have come myself, while even you offer up this sacrifice for the intention of the Sacred Heart. Do you want to? Do you do it willingly? I hope so. Then my dearest sisters, let us all offer to the Eucharistic Heart the deprivation of our cordial presence for the encounter we could possibly have made... The Good Jesus in his secret judgments did not permit this. In peace ... without a but, without an if, we remain as happy as a child.

So, how are our dearest Sr Costantina, Sr Giustina, Sr Celeste, Sr Emiliana, Sr Salvina, Sr Salome and Sr Celina doing? ... How are you all, my dearest? Are you humble? Have you learnt the important lesson of humility? Sr Salvina, do you

remember when last year, we read about humility?: therefore let us always study the same lesson in order to learn it well at the very end. *Rajt kemm ili li bdejtha u għadni ma spicċajthiex?* (See, what a long time since I started and I have not finished it yet).

We greet you all and embrace you in the most Sacred Heart. Let us always pray, as we have said, in order to obtain true humility; let us learn how to be small, small and simple like innocent children, not ignorant and proud. Have we understood? Let us study the teaching of the little Therese and learn the true way of sanctity: true, brief and easy ... Your poor sister in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 91

Mother Margherita asks and gives news to Sr Pacifica regarding the health of some sisters and invites her to suffer in a spirit of reparation.

Rome, 8 March 1930

Dearest Mother Vicar¹²,

I am better, thanks to our good Jesus and my cough has already subsided. I hope that I will soon be totally cured if God wills. Now our good Mother is coughing; the doctor has assured us today that she has caught the common 'flu like mine and like so many others. May the most holy Will be always done. Were you also running a temperature and did you have the 'flu? Well done, our Mother Vicar truly knows how to struggle! Be strong, strong and let us always move on in the Lord ... We should make reparation and therefore suffer what our Sweet Spouse sends us.

Listen, Mother Vicar, I would like to know how Sr Scolastica¹³ is, as I left her very depressed, etc... <...>

Bless me and let us pray for one another

Your poor *Sr Margherita*

A cordial greeting to all.

¹² From 1929 to 1945 Sr Pacifica filled the office of general Vicar. In those years she was also superior at the Mother House and at Xaghra more than once.

¹³ Sr Scolastica was Mother's niece, the daughter of her brother Saviour.

Letter 92

In this letter, written from Rome, we can observe Mother's suffering at the blameworthy behaviour of certain sisters and above all for the displeasure they give to Jesus.

Mother considers suffering as a gift of Christ's love to her who abandons herself completely to his paternal care.

Deus meus et omnia

Rome, 24 March 1930¹⁴

Most beloved Mother Vicar,

Here I am, thanking the good Jesus for restoring my health without any merit of mine. I am pleased that you are also well, so that you can work in the Lord's vineyard without delay ...

The displeasing behaviour of some of our dear Sisters makes their Superiors suffer ... But let us be patient and courageous: human weakness is found everywhere. Poor Jesus, He suffers because of everyone and because of everything!!! We do our best to make reparation, and to help and encourage our sisters so that they can bear the sweet burden of religious life lovingly and generously ... then ... then we leave the result to the Sweet Jesus who permits everything for our greatest benefit. It is better for those who are not happy to leave of their own free will.

Therefore, courage, be strong, strong, we can do everything by Divine help, which never fails those who ask for it. Since our sweet Spouse visits us with tribulations it is a clear sign that he loves us dearly; therefore, let us correspond with generous love by abandoning ourselves totally and irrevocably to the Paternal care of His Divine Providence and keep moving forward, on in the Lord without any discouragement... Doubtlessly he helps us, he comforts us...

I do not need to tell you anything about our good Mother since she has written to you...

¹⁴ During the first months of 1930 Mother Margherita was in Rome, together with Mother General (Sr Nazarena Gouder) in order to arrange for the extension of the house, which had opened in 1927.

My greetings to all the sisters of all the Houses whom I recommend heartily to the Lord day by day as I hope they do for me, poor..., and then all those who ask about me...

To you my dearest Mother, a cordial embrace in the Sacred Heart and ask your blessing and union of prayers. Always yours,

the poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 93

Mother, presently superior of the community of Casal Caccia - Xaghra (Gozo) expresses solidarity with the general Vicar who communicated unpleasant news to her.

She is sorry because she is unable to help her; at the same time, she promises her prayers and urges her to do violence on the Heart of her sweet Jesus, in total abandonment to divine providence, certain that He who knows her real needs, knows how to take care of everything for his greater glory.

Deus meus et omnia

Casal Caccia, Maria Bambina Convent

15 February 1932

Most beloved Mother,

I was immensely pleased to receive your letter despite the adverse news. Patience! Our good Jesus knows all our needs, therefore he acts according to the goodness of his most Sacred Heart!!

I am ready for his smallest sign. If I could, I would have done my best to help you...I pray and ask others to pray so that the Lord may grant us the help necessary in these critical circumstances. Let us trust even against all hope. Courage, be strong, strong and keep moving forward, joyfully in the Lord.

I would have liked to tell you other things but... who knows how our poor Mother is? I have had no news about her for a long time... Eh! Truly our Sweet Jesus has placed us in a rather critical situation. May his most holy Will be done now and always. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Bless us all. Let us do violence on the Heart of our Sweet Jesus so that he will provide us with what is necessary for his greater glory.

All yours in the Heart of Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 94

Always more respectful and prompt, Mother asks the sister about her health. She invites her to be patient and to abandon herself trustfully to divine providence.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra - Maria Bambina Convent,

4 May 1932

Most beloved Mother Vicar,

How are you? And how do you feel? I have had no news either about you or about your dear companions. I waited for you to come, and so I did not write: but today I was told that you would not be coming because you do not feel very well...Is it true? And so how are you now that you are opening a new house?¹⁵ I can imagine how tired you feel! Eh! Our good Jesus wishes you well, so now that the most Rev. Mother General is there, how come you don't feel well? Our Mother is not very well. Patience eh? And always *Fiat!* Courage, be strong, strong and abandon yourself totally to divine Providence! The Lord knows all about our limitations and he also wants us to be convinced of them, so that we may put all our hopes in Him alone, only, only...Have you understood?? I hope so...

And how is our new house progressing? Are there many girls and boys? How does providence assist?! And how is dear Sr Filippa? I have heard that she is not very well, is it true? Poor thing, how she suffers when she wants to work and feels so weak. It is always necessary to repeat the dear *Fiat!* and let us keep moving forward joyfully in the Lord!! <...>

¹⁵ Mother is here referring to the house opened in March 1932 at Siggiewi (Malta).

Thanks to our good Jesus, all of us are in good health though I feel the burden of old age!

We had 8 candidates for First Holy Communion; if it had not been because of age we would have had another 6. May the Lord keep them in their innocence! Now I have heard the news of Orsola's death. What a surprise! R.I.P. However I have thanked the Lord for having called her to Him, she is so good!!!

I anxiously await your news; bless us and accept our wishes and filial respect... and I recommend the poor sinner

Sr Margherita

Letter 95

On her arrival in Rome (to replace the sick mistress Sr Dionisia Thomis) Mother also found some sick novices and sisters. She values providence for planning everything efficiently in sending her at the right moment, to give a helping hand.

She avails herself of the opportunity to educate the young sisters in prayer, in sacrifice and in the acquisition of the true religious spirit from the Lord Jesus, while mistrusting themselves.

She respectfully greets all the sisters at the Mother House and asks for the "little flowers" [little sacrifices] and the practices used in the Novitiate to introduce them in the new Novitiate in Rome.

Deus meus et omnia

Rome, 11 October 1932

Dearest Mother Vicar,

How are you? I have heard nothing about your health...<...>

Meanwhile, my dear, it was truly by heavenly disposition that you sent me here: it could easily have been another person, but our dear Sisters really needed help ... What happened here is really a mystery. They are short-staffed because two are sick and it is necessary to stand in their offices and to assist them, etc. etc... Then there are the boarders and the students; really I am always running

about breathless. Patience! When one does everything always calmly ...

My dearest, pray hard for me so that I may help these dear sisters in the best way possible as, poor things, they have been put to the test as soon as they took their Holy Habit. Truly I do not know what I can do to keep them happy and at the same time profit from these occasions ... Also pray earnestly for them and ask others to pray, so that they will learn the true religious spirit from the Lord Jesus and not from me for I am only able to mess things up. Meanwhile write to me for I always await your news and those of the Mother House for I can easily understand that the Rev. Mother General will have no time to deal with such matters.

My wishes to the Rev. M. Secretary, M. Fortunata and M. Veronica, and then to all the elderly Sisters, the professed sisters, the sick etc... The dear Novices greet you and recommend themselves to your prayers, while asking your maternal blessing on them all.

Your poor daughter, *Sr M. Margherita*

(I await the "little flowers" [little sacrifices] and the other practices used in the Novitiate from the Mistress of Novices).

Letter 96

The sick sisters in Rome have recovered however there is much work to be done and Mother feels satisfied for having been sent to Rome, so much so, that she would have been ready to renounce the office of Councillor to remain there.

The care of the novices is very dear to her heart: she wants them all holy, to be the crown of his divine Majesty, to the advantage of the Congregation and for the benefit of souls. She admires their good will, and excuses them in every way, even if they differ in culture and character.

It is important for her that they acquire the true religious and Franciscan spirit, in the same way as she desires it to increase in all our "poor Congregation".

Deus meus et omnia

Rome, 14 November 1932

Dear Mother Vicar,

Thanks to our good Jesus, I am healthy but I greatly fear that I do not avail myself of all opportunities to do good which I find at every step.

The dear Novices have a great need to be supported, and the dear professed are extremely busy etc. On the whole, there is truly a field for spiritual and temporal activity, particularly with these illnesses, etc... etc. Thanks to our good Jesus, Mother Superior¹⁶ and the Mistress are now convalescent, but since they were sick for a long time, their convalescence will not be brief. May his most Holy Will be always done. Amen.

As for myself I am very happy doing my best, with divine help, to help everybody in everything, limited only by my insufficiency. The dear Novices are well; now they have recovered their health and have started to understand the importance of religious life, though the Italians are very different from the Maltese. Their characters are very dissimilar but they also have their good qualities. As you have known them since they were young, insist in front of the Lord to make them all saints... so that they might be His crown, an advantage to our Congregation and of benefit to many souls... All of them have a good will. They have started to taste the things of God a little better, being more recollected, though they are nearly always busy. Poor creatures, I often think and reflect that they had hardly finished their postulancy; and shortly after they became Novices, all these losses, troubles, frights, regrets etc, changes etc. occurred. Now they have been set on the way again; we hope they will continue diligently. As for me, I do

¹⁶ The Superior to whom Mother refers in some letters (100; 108) was Sr Gemma Camilleri. In 1935 she was summoned to Malta as general Councillor. She was greatly sought out and appreciated as a spiritual counselor, above all by persons of culture, and died in odour of sanctity on the 4 March 1973.

my best and together with the Mistress, study the best way to instil in their tender heart the true Franciscan spirit; though it is very difficult.

My dearest, seeing all this need, I am ready to renounce the office of Councillor but I dare not hint at it, to avoid having remorse of conscience. I am ready for everything, and I enjoy a tranquil peace as I have not had any say on this occasion... divine providence really disposes things according to the light granted to Superiors... Let us then leave everything to the Paternal care of our Sweet Spouse who knows more than us what is for our greater good... <...>

My dear, let us always pray more earnestly so that the religious and Franciscan spirit may increase in all our poor Congregation, as the poor

Sr Margherita always desires

while asking for your blessing and in union of prayers, etc...

Letter 97

Mother writes to give the sister news about Mother General and about her father. She feels very close, with affection and delicacy, to the poor sick person.

She recommends the care of souls to sanctify them.

Deus meus et omnia

House of Adoration, 26 January 1934

Beloved Mother Vicar,

How are you? I hope that you are well as I am, thanks to our Good Jesus. Three days ago the most Rev. Mother General gave me this letter. Poor Mother is still assisting her father and we do not know how long this will last; however, he neither speaks nor moves...till God wants. I do not intend to leave Mother till this engagement is over.<...>

So my dear, you can work hard with those souls, make them perpetually holy and not just for a short time. Eh!

Embracing you in the Heart of Jesus while asking your blessing, I recommend to your earnest prayers and to those of the boarders, the very poor sinner

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 98

Among other things Mother Margherita briefly refers to Easter which has just been celebrated, with the exhortation to die with the Lord in order to rise with Him. It is important to please him and that is enough.

Deus meus et omnia

Pax tibi!

Xaghra - Maria Bambina Convent

3 April 1934

Dear Mother Vicar,

<...> Finally, He is risen!... Lent has passed in the twinkling of an eye... Eternity is drawing near, quickly...If we die with the Lord Jesus, we shall also rise with Him!.. Let us do our best to please Him and that is enough...

Tell me if you hear any news regarding Rev. M. General. In filial respect, I leave you in the Heart of Jesus, asking your maternal blessing for everyone.

Your poor sister in the Heart of Jesus

Sr Margherita

Letter 99

Mother asks the sister to do her a favour and send her a beautiful thought on the love of our most Sweet Jesus who knows how to hide and mask himself in his own way: evidently she is in a state of spiritual aridity.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra – Maria Bambina Convent

10 April 1934

Dear Mother Vicar,

How are you? <..>

Meanwhile, my dear, let us love our good Jesus, and avail ourselves of every occasion without ever getting tired... not as I do, for I am bad!! <...>

This morning I am not in the mood for writing; and if you are, do me the favour of writing a few beautiful words on the love of our Most Sweet Jesus who knows how to conceal and disguise himself as he pleases...

Bless us all. Your poor

Sr Margherita

Letter 100

Mother asks for some charitable services and promises to recommend the sick sisters to the Good Jesus so that he may console and comfort them.

Deus meus et omnia

26 April 1934

Dearest Mother Vicar,

I do not think that the Sisters have gone to Malta in this bad weather. Sr Eleonora has a slight cold already and I am afraid to expose her to the elements. Will there be any other occasion? I rejoice at M. Gemma's success. We hope that she will be able to return home in the best of health ... <...>

I greet all the dear sick sisters lovingly, one by one; I send my warmest greetings to Mother Fortunata, and Amen and *Fiat...* and this is for all, especially the sick sisters... May our good Jesus console them and comfort them, while welcoming them in His Sweet Bosom, embracing them one by one, and holding the one who has mostly abandoned herself to his paternal care longer.

Accept our most cordial wishes, and give us your motherly blessing as a confirmation. A particular prayer for the poor

Sr Margherita

Letter 101

Mother would like to know how the feast of Christ the King, our Amiable King has been celebrated. She wishes everyone, through the intercession of all the Saints, the spirit of humility and the pure love these practised to attain their glory.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra - Maria Bambina Convent

31 October 1934

Dear Mother Vicar,

How are you? How did the Feast of our Amiable King go? Was he truly the King of all hearts? Ah! How I wish it were so!!! <...>

My greetings to all and let us pray heartily so that the Saints will teach us the spirit of true humility and pure love by which they arrived at such glory in heaven... Our regards and your blessing...

Sr Margherita

Letter 102

As Christmas is drawing near, Mother invites the sister to study and to imitate the beautiful virtues of the Holy Infant Jesus, especially holy poverty, simplicity and total abandonment to divine providence: they are of great help in the continuous struggle against self-love, that always wants to dominate.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia

(December 1934?)

Beloved Mother,

How are you? How do you feel? It has been a long time since we met, *Fiat!* <...>

Thanks to the good Jesus, we are all in good health, happy, struggling against our self-love... What do you think? Always the same combat, without rest and without relief... We always have to go against the grain. Is this not true? What do

you others do in order to win? How do you cope in the fight? At times I am a loser, and at times I am a winner. I must always be patient and humble. Let us always seek to learn the beautiful virtues of the most holy Child Jesus, especially holy poverty, simplicity and abandonment to the care of divine providence: at least we will draw as close as possible to our Model, thus to love Him, love Him, love Him! And that it is enough.

How are the Sisters? And how are the orphans? Always moving forward, isn't it true? M. General needs good people and does not know where to find them.

One of the old novices at Misterbianco¹⁷ has already passed away; they might have more space in that beautiful house in a short time...are there any aspirants? Here they immediately go with other communities that accept them without dowries... How sad I am when I see good young girls going elsewhere... Patience! And always *fiat!* Let us love and struggle to achieve the aim for which the Lord has chosen to deliver us from this evil world...

I end my letter by wishing you and the dear sisters all the graces and heavenly blessings which make us true and faithful Brides of the God Child... At least our Good Jesus may find rest and comfort as your poor sister who recommends herself to your prayers...

Sr M. Margherita always desires and prays.

Truly great graces were granted to us after many prayers and processions.

Deo gratias et Mariae.

Letter 103

Mother confesses with simplicity that she has accepted as a "gift" the fact that God has deprived her of the possibility of assisting her own sister Adelaide. Nevertheless, she thanks and invokes the Lord's reward on those who assisted her instead.

She feels the burden of infirmity and considers it the "passport" for eternity hoping for divine mercy from the most Holy wounds of her most Sweet Jesus.

Deus meus et omnia

House of Adoration,

¹⁷ The house at Misterbianco (Catania) was opened in 1927.

19 August 1936

Most beloved Mother Vicar,

I thank you for the prayers and for the help you have provided for my beloved sister. The Lord will reward all the help, prayers etc. etc. The good Jesus has given me a gift in depriving me from assisting her and I offered it to Him in full submission: May the Holy Will of the good God be always done. My foot is still the same. We shall see what the specialists will say next Friday. For this I also repeat a deep *Fiat! Hux tassew?* (Isn't it true?) Yes, may the Divine Will be done. I believe that this is the passport for eternity though I do not feel prepared; but I hope in the most Holy Wounds that our most Sweet Jesus will be merciful with me... <...>

Dear mother, it is enough, eh! Let us only pray heartily that the most Holy and Divine Will of our good Jesus be done in everything.

While I renew my thanks, I send you my filial regards and ask your blessing and recommend to you your poor and unworthy daughter

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 104

In this letter, which is the last dated letter, Mother Margherita informs the sister that she is for a period of convalescence at St Joseph Institute at Hamrun. Great is her gratitude towards the sisters of the community who compete to offer her their assistance. She confesses with simplicity that she feels very comfortable; however, the thought that she is fulfilling an act of obedience cheers her up.

Deus meus et omnia

Hamrun - St Joseph Institute

17 September 1951

Dearest Mother Pacifica,¹⁸

Here I am at St Joseph Institute near the very dear M. Minima. I feel a little better owing to the air found in this great big house. But I am afraid that I am too

¹⁸ At that time, Sr Pacifica held the office of general Councillor.

comfortable. But all this in holy obedience to my very dear superiors. I recommend myself to your prayers that I may avail myself of the time, etc.

I send my regards to you and all the dear sisters, to whom I exhort to be generous in the love of our common Spouse Jesus!!

The poor *Sr Margherita of the Sacred Heart*

3. Letters to particular sisters

a) to Sr Nazarena Gouder

Letter 105

The letter is addressed to a sister (the future general Superior for many years), on the occasion of her religious profession. Mother exhorts her to rejoice and to show her gratitude towards the Spouse for the gift received of holy perseverance and in the practice of virtues: thus she could always taste true joy.

Long live our Victim Spouse!

13 May 1896

My most beloved daughter in Christ!!!

I was moved to tears reading your ardent letter and I promptly took the opportunity to send you my most sincere wishes...

Yes, my dear daughter, you have reason enough to rejoice and to be full of love and joy because the Sweet Beloved with whom you are about to unite yourself, is truly prodigal in his riches. Yes, rejoice, love and pray and above all unite yourself with Him, eh, with your Beloved! Oh! What luck! oh! What a blessed destiny! Yes, yes my beloved daughter, while humbling yourself as much as possible, while esteeming yourself unworthy of such a great preference, however do not refrain from lifting up to the stars the most cordial thanksgiving to the Supreme and Only Beloved, at the same time asking him to make your gratitude perpetual through the most holy, pure and painful life as becomes a faithful Bride of the Crucified!

My beloved, remember that your Spouse is very jealous; therefore I exhort you strongly to persevere in your present resolutions, and thus I assure you, that your gladness and present joys will also be perpetual, though they are not always so sensible and evident. Ah! I would like to open my maternal heart, to make you see my solicitude, to find true and faithful Brides for my Sole vowed Spouse. Eh! I would like to call all pure souls to remain thus and to consecrate themselves to my, to my, oh! to the Sole beloved of my soul! And oh! how I rejoice to have daughters who are so glad to give themselves totally to his perfect love! Oh

how heartily I ask Him to grant them perseverance and further progress in his graces!...

That will do because my strength does not permit me to write longer. I only want to remind you never, never to forget throughout your life to die, both to what is temporal and to what is spiritual and to abandon yourself totally to the mercy of the Beloved even when He seems to hide himself; to seek to be recollected, humble and most obedient. And there is no need to tell you to do everything with love, for love and in love, because you know more than I do, that even the most wonderful deeds, do not please our Beloved at all if carried out without love.

Well, live in the Heart of the Sweet Beloved the life of love, of pure love, of painful love, as fish live in the sea! I wish you the same, from my nothingness while warmly recommending to you, the most unworthy sinner

Sr Miseria

Letter 106

This letter, addressed to the sister (then Superior General), manifests the delicacy, the respect and the dependence which Mother nurtures towards superiors.

She communicates information with simplicity and thanks everyone, but above all, divine providence, for the help she receives.

Deus meus et omnia

House of Adoration, 2 December 1930

Most beloved Mother,

We are still well as you have left us, thanks to our good Jesus; however, we have felt the void of your absence, but Fiat!!

I read your letter with pleasure, and I have already told Teresa to inform her brother-in-law about the chairs; but we also need a stove... We need a salt jar from Sr Carmela and the "*little flowers*" for Advent... Heartfelt thanks for everything.

Yesterday we were given some potatoes. We cooked a pot of cauliflower and potatoes and dined at midday, because it was not ready before. We had enough left over even for supper. Today we cooked broth and baked

potatoes. Yesterday we woke up at 4.45 waiting for the alarm but the alarm did not ring. Today however we woke up at the exact hour even without the alarm. *Deo gratias et Mariae!... <...>*

Bless us all while accepting our filial respect, extended even to the dear Mothers and Sisters.

Your poor *Sr M. Margherita*

b) to Sr. Luisa Busuttil

Letter 107

The letter is addressed to the future Mother Luisa Busuttil, one of the general Superiors of the Congregation, who has long awaited the moment to be admitted to the Congregation.

It is an important document for those who are responsible for initial formation: it explains to young girls what it means to embrace religious life.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 2 November 1920

Dearest Mary,

Finally the moment you have so eagerly yearned for has arrived. *Deo gratias!* Yes, my dear daughter, the time of trial has been long but I rejoice in this, for you can now appreciate the grace received better.

Therefore, you are already accepted; you can come at your convenience into the house of your Spouse, to love Him, and serve Him faithfully and generously till death.

Be careful to cast away your own will in the sea on your way here, so that you will possess nothing except the will of Jesus in your Superiors.

Make sure that you come here to be the smallest, the handmaid of all, to love and to suffer with Jesus and to make reparation for the offenses He receives. What else, my dear and beloved daughter? Only love, pure love, love, love...What a sweet word is love! It is the life of the heart. Therefore, love gives life to the heart. God, being love itself, needs to be the life of our heart etc.

Well, let us put aside any other earthly love and retain only that which is pure, sweet, Divine...

I embrace you in the most Sacred Heart while praying Him to consume us in His pure flames, as the poor

Sr M. Margherita always desires

Letter 108

Mother encourages the sister, who is in Rome,¹⁹ reminding her that everything passes; at the same time, she warns her to be on guard for even if at present she can enjoy some rest, the Good Jesus always prepares something new, and she will be fortunate only if she knows how to avail herself of it.

She joyfully recalls the time spent together at the House of Adoration and at the House in Rome, and the thought of meeting one another forever in heaven consoles her! Everything will be easy when one puts true love into practice.

She admits that she is concerned about every sister in particular, for each one is a member of the Congregation.

Deus meus et omnia

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

21 June 1934

My dearest Sr Luisa,

How are you? Who knows how busy you are! Eh! How can it be otherwise, especially when Mother is away; but everything passes... Nothing lasts in this life, neither joy nor sorrow, though the latter is rather more common and lasting.

I believe that you are on holiday at present, at least you need some rest; however our dear Jesus, as a good Master, prepares some other occupation even unexpectedly! It is good for us if we know how to avail ourselves of it... Yes, I understand that the number of helpers has increased, and we can even depend on the future Professed; (we hope in the goodness of our Spouse Jesus), but the greater burden always falls on the elder Sisters...

¹⁹ In 1935 Sr Luisa was nominated superior of the house in Rome and remained in this office till 1945.

Meanwhile my dear, I can never forget either the time spent at the House of Adoration, or that at the House in Rome, where we were in good company! Oh! Let us do our best to meet one another in heaven for ever, Amen...

Dear Sr Giulietta still struggles with her character: she works, has an impressive school and she is also happy, thanks to our good Jesus. We have to be convinced that we need to struggle everywhere and always, and to rejoice and suffer with everyone: such is the condition of the present life! But through the practice of true love, everything will be easy; and rather sweet for us, even that same love. Let us take courage and keep moving forward joyfully in the Lord!...

I hope that now dear M. Gemma has recovered, has she?... How dear are her and your news to me! I have some news at times, but very rarely, perhaps I am anxious, but still I cannot remain indifferent... I take a great interest in the things of our poor Congregation and its members, I would like to know about everyone in particular etc... Perhaps it is too much but 'grandmothers' are all the same even if they are as mature as ever...

There is no need to tell you to do your utmost with all, because I am fully convinced of it: but do not neglect either your health or your soul. Divine Love can be loved, all together and in everything, with pure love and this will make up for everything. Do you understand?

I leave you with a cordial embrace in the Heart of Jesus, our All, while recommending to your prayers the poorest

Sr M. Margherita

Regards to all, Mothers and sisters from my companions.

Letter 109

Mother thanks the sister for the news received and invites her to thank and to love the Lord for all that He deigns to do for us, poor creatures.

She is always ready to help those who experience moments of crisis and of spiritual aridity. Her skill comes from her own experience. She assures her that the Lord permits his generous brides to taste the bitter chalice; but it is enough to go to Him, recognizing one's own nothingness and lowliness humbly, in order to find help, comfort and security. She suggests another spiritual remedy: to seek the help of the sisters, to open her heart with confidence, to

Speak together about Him in order to be enkindled with love for Him alone. And in order that the spirit does not abate, she advises her not to overload the sisters with work.

Recalling the anniversary of her religious profession, she admits that she is still imperfect after 51 years of perpetual profession. She encourages herself, confiding in Jesus and recommending herself to the prayers of the sisters.

Thanks and prayers follow so that the little Jesus will make up for everything and help them become small living hosts.

D.M. E. O.

Casal Caccia - Jesus of Nazareth Convent

9 December 1938

My most beloved daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I have read your long letter with great satisfaction for it brought me good news. Yes, my dear, let us thank God the Giver of all good, for all He plans for us, his poor creatures! Let us bless Him, thank Him and above all love Him! Oh! My beloved, how I wish to see Him loved, adored and always revered and respected by all, as the most sweet Father, the most meek Master... the All... and that is enough.

Let us move on to another subject, otherwise I will finish the letter in the new year. Therefore, my dear, I am happy about the union and the profound spirit of sacrifice of your dear daughters; and thank God for them because you have a reason to. However, be careful that too much work does not slacken the spirit, as it is easy for excessive external work to dispel reflection; but if, as you have said, they bear their burden with joy, they can work harder. This spirit encourages me; may the Lord enkindle it always more!

Do not be dismayed about your anxieties and darkness: don't you know that our good Jesus permits his generous Brides to taste the bitterness of His Chalice? And don't you know, that He likes to see them all alone, crushed under the weight of the cross, so that He can convince them of their weakness and they will thus, at once, abandon themselves with great trust to His paternal care? What do you think my dear? What weakness!! We are truly nothing! But this should incite us more to approach Him with filial trust and abandon ourselves totally to his folly! In this same darkness, in bitter sufferings.... be strong, strong and take courage. You know to whom you are espoused: to a

King crucified between two thieves...to a Prisoner...locked securely in thousands of poor Tabernacles. Therefore, have recourse to Him with the greatest confidence, abandon yourself blindly in him and you will never regret it...

I am pleased with the support you find in dear Sr Dionisia. Yes, yes, be united and always exchange words of comfort and courage, in the Most Holy Eucharistic Heart, convinced that in union there is strength; and in the Heart of Jesus this will be invincible. Do you understand? <...>

What more shall we say my dear? I do not know. Do you remember when 5 years ago I was near you and made a three-day retreat before the anniversary of my religious Profession!! This year I also made a short retreat but nearly always in aridity and distraction... Truly our Sweet Mother needs to hide me under her maternal cloak, for finding myself so repulsive, impure, and proud I don't know what I can do to appear in front of our Sweet Spouse Jesus. Do me a favour, my good daughter, and recommend me to the prayers of your good companions so that I may succeed in fulfilling the plans Divine Providence has for me... Already 51 years have passed since my Perpetual Profession and it seems that I have nothing of a Religious except the habit and the name, and I am burdened with infinite debts!!! Only the Wounds of the good Jesus encourage me. <...>

I end by wishing you greater zeal and strong courage to accept light-heartedly all the crosses that the little Child of Bethlehem intends to send you in the New Year. Do you understand? Are you happy? The Holy Infant seeks strong hearts, pure hearts, generous hearts... We do our best, He supplies the rest with his two little hands... He is so small!...so good... so strong...so prodigal!... Let us understand Him, let him make of us living hosts...small hosts, so small that they are hardly noticed or sought, to annihilate them. I do not know if you understand such language...because it is Arabic to me... But I feel this longing to make myself thus small, and with Divine help I keep hoping... hoping... that is enough.

My dearest, excuse me for so many beautiful phrases and have compassion on me, old as I am... Let us love, let us love, let us love our good God to folly because He loves us to folly... Let us be united on that blessed Night beside the cradle and together with His Mother and St Joseph, let us adore the mysterious Infant three times Holy...the Almighty.

Your poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 110

The following letter abounds with a sense of fellow feeling and of great interest for vocations. Mother recommends to the sister, who was the superior of the house in Rome, to take care of the sisters, cultivate them and form them well in the spirit of a holy vocation.

Deus Meus et Omnia

Jesus of Nazareth Convent

28 July 1939

My dearest and beloved daughter in the Heart of Jesus! Yesterday morning I went to the Mother House and by chance I saw dear Sr Domenica. How shocked I was at her appearance! She looks rather rundown, but very happy; she told me herself, when she brought me the gift which you so kindly sent me. She also suggested: "*Why don't you write to M. Luisa who is so eager to hear from you?*" And so, today I am writing you a few lines, after having attempted many other times without any success. At times, my dear, my inspirations come from the Eucharistic Heart and I thank the Sweet Beloved that you are able to realize some of them.

My dear, you acted wisely in keeping Sr Daria and Sr Renata: a house like that needs to be provided with capable subjects. <...>

Are there any other vocations? Here there are a few at present. Patience, we do not deserve them! May the few we have be good and holy. I have a small girl near me, turning over the pages and there is no way to make her go, she is very gracious, she kisses all the pictures she comes across... I have tried to send her away but she does not want to leave unless I give her a sweet... But I like her innocence; would I were like her!! I offer her innocence to God and shall content myself by crying over mine, which I lost so many times...

Let us talk about the children. How are they? Who takes care of the elder ones? Do they have good opportunities of going out this summer? and the girls, with whom do they stay? Fortunately, Sr Ugolina has not left. Is Sr Tranquillina prudent? Is she recollected. and devout? You know, my dear, how necessary it is for those who deal with people, to be serious and humble, so humble as not to trust in themselves but scared of the shadow of danger.

We need to pray earnestly for them, poor things, because at times they find themselves in danger where they least expect it. Therefore, we need to be serious and prudent, and fearful rather than courageous, always, everywhere and with everyone... Do you understand? I think you have understood me. Experience is the mother of prudence!

What else have we to say, my dearest Sr Luisa? I have had a pain in my side recently but now it is over; I thought it was the end but I have once again settled in my daily routine. And this morning I was thinking: Who knows if I shall return once more to the Holy City to see the new Pope? I don't mind travelling by sea, but the train wearies me. Between us etc... you know ... Well, we have said nothing about our Sole All. How are you doing? Many times He leaves me alone, alone ... arid, arid, dry, dry; at other times, I feel the desire to love him to folly without knowing anything of such a skill ... Then I am ashamed of myself when I see that I know nothing ... Once, I could at least speak of this, but now I cannot and I do not find anyone who understands my old language ... Do you recall those hours of adorations? Do you remember ... Eh! Enough, enough... I believe that you, my dear, feel otherwise. You can work for souls, and so enjoy the satisfaction ... not for its own sake, but for the greater glory of our good God. Oh! My dearest do your utmost to make Him loved for his Goodness, for his Infinite love, for what He is in himself. What infinite love He merits! How good He is! How amiable He is!! If, (for argument's sake), He were to punish us for having loved him, I would feel happy enough to have loved him at least once!

My dearest daughter, cultivate and form these dear daughters properly, that they may be capable of maintaining the spirit of our holy vocation and they will prove beneficial to our poor community and above all, to all the Congregation in the future. Sr Daria's and Sr Renata's mothers have tried to obtain permission for them to make their Profession here in Gozo, poor things, but I shall work in opposition to this, so as not to leave them here. I send my poor congratulations to all our dear candidates and pray the Good Lord to lavish his graces on their souls so that He will transform them all into Him alone, alone, alone. Do you understand?

I would have written at greater length, but I believe that you have plenty to do today and will have no time to waste on this idle talk. Anyway, we have spent some time together. May it be all for the greater glory of the Good Jesus; the Spouse of our souls.

I embrace each one of the Postulants, Novices and newly Professed, then the elderly Sisters... <...>

Pardon me, my dear for all this gossip; these things belong to doddering old idiots like

the poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 111

Mother rejoices at the detailed news that she receives from Rome, particularly about her dearest, cherished spiritual daughters.

She takes delight in recalling the beautiful times spent together at the House of Adoration overshadowed by the real presence of the Immaculate Host, who protected and strengthened them.

Besides, she feels the strong yearning for souls: she desires to repeatedly remind everyone to love Him who is not loved because he is not known. Her exhortation is constant: to love and to work readily in the Lord's vineyard and gain souls to his love.

She even invites the sister to make a good vocational discernment of the young girls called to religious life because it is not the number that counts, but the quality of the candidates.

Deus meus et omnia

Casal Caccia - Jesus of Nazareth Convent

9 October 1939

Dearest and most beloved daughter in the Heart of Jesus!

Here I am, unable to express what satisfaction your dear letter gave me. News about my dearest cherished daughters always gives me great pleasure. Oh! Yes, let us bless that time when we lived overshadowed by the Real Presence of the Immaculate Host! He strengthened us with his strength. He cared for us and hid us under his wings! How good it is to be hidden and annihilated! My dear, do not long for anything except intimate union with Him, and I feel an urge to be annihilated and to be transformed in Him without even His knowing it (how impossible it is); but old age makes us feeble-minded...

Meanwhile, let us love Him to folly... let us love Him in order to love Him, to please Him, because he is so humble that He deigns to accept the love of his poor creatures... What does he do? What does he seek? Souls, souls! Oh! I would like to cry out at the top of my voice, souls, souls, come and love Love! Come and see how amiable Divine Love is! Poor Jesus, how little He is known and therefore how little loved. He loves us infinitely as if he could not be happy without our love... and we, ungrateful souls, correspond so badly to such Goodness!!

Let us change the subject. I am pleased that you are under medical treatment for your health: hopefully it will be helpful, so that you can work more actively in the vineyard of the Lord and gain souls to his love. You could help even here and promote vocations. There are many souls who do not know how to realize their holy inclinations. But be careful, my dear, to see that they are true vocations... otherwise instead of benefit they will be of harm...

I am happy that the house in Rome is doing well... By the way, a few days ago, Sr Renata's sister came to see me and told me that her mother is upset because it is a long time since she received news about her. When they are far away, mothers always expect the worse.

What else my dearest? Give my regards to dear Sr Domenica to whom I could speak very little, patience...as well as to dear Sr Emanuela... These are the small sacrifices which I meet quite often... They are nothing much but I do not find greater than these. I am so weak that the Good Jesus does not present me with big ones. May He be blessed and loved by everyone and everywhere. Amen.

I leave you with an embrace in the Sacred Heart my dearest, while thanking you for the memories and the news you give me etc...that always fill me with satisfaction.

Please convey my wishes and an embrace to Sr Alfonsina and Sr Silvia; then to all the sisters in Rome where I believe I am ready to return... I end while praying our good Jesus to bless us all and consume us in his pure love

The poor *Sr Margherita*

Physical weakness offers Mother the occasion to repeat her dear Fiat, remaining totally abandoned to the paternal care of divine providence.

She does not forget to direct her maternal greeting to her dearest daughters of the house in Rome, recommending to all pure love towards the sweet Crucified Spouse and mutual fraternal charity.

Deus meus et omnia

Casal Caccia - Jesus of Nazareth Convent

14 January 1940

My dearest Sr Luisa,

I feel somewhat better,²⁰ thanks to our good Jesus; however the Doctor wants me to stay in bed, and I spend the greater part of the day idle, repeating the dear *Fiat* with a sincere heart while abandoning myself totally to the Paternal care of Divine Providence. Meanwhile, let us pray for each other and always abandon ourselves completely in the bosom of our common Beloved Jesus.

I send many beautiful and holy wishes to all our dear daughters; I embrace each and every one warmly and maternally, while recommending to all of you pure love towards our Sweet Crucified Spouse and mutual fraternal charity.

I end by asking the Eucharistic Heart to embrace us all as one in His flames and to consume us in his eternal fire.

The poor old *Mother Margherita*

Let us love, let us love and let us love the Love who is not loved because He is not known.

Letter 113

Returning to the Mother House after a heart attack she had during the month of January, Mother assures the sister (who was also sick at the same time) that

²⁰ Contrary to her expectations, at this time Mother Margherita had a severe heart attack, that effected her health once and for all. Previously, as one can deduce from the hints spread in various letters, she was prone to various illnesses.

she is beside her in an exchange of affection, just as when she was beside her during her sickness.

She invites her to renew together their total abandonment to the Paternal care of the most sweet Spouse Jesus who will make of his victims that which is pleasing to Him.

She encourages her and invites her to pray together to the amiable Jesus for her recovery so that she can work in his vineyard, but above all she exhorts her to have an unlimited trust in that Ocean of goodness and in his immense and infinite Love.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 12 April 1940

My dearest daughter in Jesus! M. Luisa,

Here I am beside your bed as you yourself were beside mine at Casal Caccia...

Do you recall how breathless I was? Now that I have been here for nearly a month, I feel better thanks to our good Jesus and I even go to the chapel for Holy Communion and sometimes for Matins too. It seems that for the time being our sweet Jesus wants to joke with his old [bride].

You, my dearest, were also passing through a bad time, isn't it true? You had to carry this burden, while I, poor sinner, was spared all this. Meanwhile, let us renew our act of total abandonment to the paternal care of our most sweet Spouse Jesus who deals with his victims as He pleases...

I imagine myself near you to encourage you, to continue to suffer with full resignation as you have done till now: and then together to do sweet violence on the Heart of the amiable Jesus, so that He may grant you a quick recovery, to continue your work for his greater glory and for the benefit of souls...Do you want it so? Yes, yes, my dearest daughter, your suffering will soon end, as we hope in the Heart of our sweet good Jesus, because you still need to work not because the Lord needs any one of us but because it pleases him to use creatures to be glorified by them and through them. Therefore, be strong, strong and show courage and boundless trust in that Ocean of goodness; in that immense and infinite Love...How many things we could then recount! How many things we would be able to understand! Isn't it so, my dearest?

Let us love, let us love, let us love eternal love. Have you understood? Yes, we will understand each other in that immense Ocean of love, that is the Eucharistic Heart, and that is enough. I cannot go on much longer for the heart is sick and very weak!!

Always united in the most Sacred Heart, we live a life of love and total abandonment as

the poor *Sr M. Margherita* wishes.

Letter 114

This is the last letter among those extant, written by Mother to Sr Luisa Busuttil. It is a follow up of exhortations and appeals to the commitment to love her sweet Jesus heartily and to abandon herself totally to his divine providence.

She reminds her anew of the time spent together at the House of Adoration, bound to their only All, with particular reference to the last evening before her departure. Her maternal interest in all the sisters is always strong.

Mother admits that she has little strength left, but it is enough to go near her Beloved.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 13 March 1945

My most beloved daughter in the Heart of our Lord Jesus, M. Luisa,

We are still alive thanks to Divine Providence; distant, it is true, but news arrives though sparse and brief.

How beautiful and precious are these sacrifices offered to our most amiable Spouse Jesus! What do you think my dearest daughter? Shouldn't we count the drops? and the least seconds? And then, then doesn't He raise us always to the most intimate union? Why not? It is so sweet to stay on the cross with Him though our weak nature is not always pleased... It is love that makes everything easy and sweet. Who can tell how happy you feel in those moments of intimate union with our sweet All, though they may be brief? What do you think my dearest; isn't it true that we feel immersed in an abyss of goodness etc. etc. She who loves understands and that is enough...

I am glad that you are in good health and that you have plenty of work; therefore you have the opportunity of making acts of charity etc...But beware of setting aside the holy occupation of Mary. When the soul abandons herself in that All everything helps her to humble herself... always more. Therefore, be strong, strong and take courage. Let us thrust ourselves blindly into the Ocean of Divine Providence and there find our rest.

Do you recall, my dear Luisa, the House of Adoration? What a wonderful time we spent there! Do you remember the last evening before our departure? How time flies! We hope that the house will be restored for it is nearly completely destroyed²¹. But Adoration still continues thanks to the Good Jesus.

What do you think of my long abode in this harsh exile? Eh! I still have to expiate... May his Holy Will be done. I am losing everything: sight, hearing, teeth, I still have a little strength sometimes to go near our Beloved and near the sick sisters, always present at the Mother House. Thanks to our Good Jesus, it is enough for me, eh!!

I always ask about all our houses and all our dearest daughters and sisters, and in my misery I spend hours praying to the Good Jesus, at times even for each one, individually. Now it is enough, eh!

I recommend myself to the prayers of everyone so that our most merciful Jesus may give me his pure Love that consumes me together with my ingratitude. Amen.

I would have liked to embrace each, one by one...I would have liked to mention them all but I do not remember all the names. Well, accept a tender embrace in the Sacred Heart of our most Sweet Spouse Jesus so that He may inflame us with the Fire he came to bring into this ungrateful world. And to you, my... we understand one another.

Many thanks to my dear Sr Dionisia etc. For now, that is enough, because I am tired. Everything for love, everything with love, everything in love.

Let us love Love, Divine love, the eternal and infinite Love of a God, three times Holy Holy, Holy.

The poor *Sr M. Margherita*.

²¹ Mother refers to the damages caused by the aerial bombings during the war.

c) to Sr. Dionisia Thomis

Letter 115

Writing to the sister, then Mistress of novices at the house in Rome,²² where she has been for some months to replace her during her illness, Mother reveals how dear to her heart the problem of vocations is.

While at the Mother House every place is full, it seems that vocations are lacking in Rome and so she asks for prayers and sacrifices for this intention. There is work to be done and houses to be opened, she says, but God's will be done.

She assures the sister that she will recommend her to the Lord, together with the Novices, especially during Holy Hour. She gives her precious advice of a practical nature, in union of intentions and of organization with the mistress of novices in Gozo, in order to have a sole spiritual direction. Finally, she exhorts her to hope in the good Jesus and to abandon herself to Him courageously, enkindled by the love of the Eucharistic fire.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra – Maria Bambina Convent

Dearest Sr Dionisia,

Here I am after a 15-day separation! How time passes! How it flies! I have met many sisters. They all asked about you. They all wish you health and holiness ...

Well, I am in our little Convent of *Maria Bambina*. What peace! What poverty! What simplicity! They really enrapture me. But here, I feel the cold much more than in Rome. The last 8 days have been very cold, there has been a very strong wind and it has rained continually, etc. In fact, no one could cross from Malta to Gozo. I escaped this bad weather by a few hours. May our good Jesus be thanked for his paternal, loving care for us. Let us love Him with all our being.

And how are you? Are you still well? Or do you feel very weak? <...> And how are the Novices? Are they responsive? Are they recollected? Yesterday, during Holy Hour, I remembered and recommended them to the good Jesus ... Pray earnestly with them so that God's will may be done in them, that is, with regards

²² Sr Dionisia was mistress of novices till 1945, when she was entrusted the office of superior of the house of Rome.

to the novitiate there. Unfortunately, we do not have room here at the Mother House and so we cannot admit more Postulants ... and then what shall we do to procure other Aspirants, when there are offices to be filled and other houses to be opened??? Let us pray, let us pray heartily and seek to do some penance for this intention ...

I have seen the Aspirant from Misterbianco; she seems good and comes from a good family; her father receives Communion every day. Her mother and father came to present their daughter, though with the greatest sacrifice on their part. She has a good foundation in piano playing, she works ... I haven't seen those from Troina yet because I did not go there.

We hope that they can stay at Misterbianco with the boarders till they are ready to start their Postulancy ... I have told Rev. Mother General to send two other Novices to be of spiritual help to them, and everyone agreed on this matter ...

Therefore, pray so that the will of our Amiable Spouse may be always done ... You can contact M. Francesca so that the Novices will have the same formation, which is a very good thing. Well, hope in our good Jesus and abandon yourself totally to his folly with unlimited trust, and keep moving forward courageously in the Lord! Do you understand? Write to me, for I often feel that I am with you in the Novitiate.

It is cold over there, so procure to light your fires; here we only use the Eucharistic fire ... and at times it is not enough; we have to wear shawls, etc.

We understand each other tacitly about all the rest ... Let us love, and that is enough.

Your most affectionate companion in the Sacred Heart,

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 116

Mother is concerned about the health of the sister and that of Sr Ines Gauci (one of the future general Superiors).

She considers sufferings and humiliations as the most necessary means for the soul, so much so, that Divine Wisdom permitted them even for Jesus; then it is beneficial to abandon ourselves to them. In this way, we love in deed and in

truth! She hopes that thus the novices may be taught to meditate in this way: on the Passion of our most sweet Crucified Spouse, in order to penetrate the real meaning of pure love, true and profound humility and perfect obedience.

She then turns directly to the Novices, with a series of important exhortations.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra - Maria Bambina Convent

2 April 1933

Dear Sr Dionisia,

I rejoice that you are well and hope that you will not have to visit the policlinic again...*Sewwa?* (All right?) How sorry I am for dear Sr Ines. *Fiat!* Are the others well?

Let us leave everything to the care of Divine Providence who disposes everything for our greater good. What else can we do but adore the judgments of Divine Wisdom, and abandon ourselves totally to his mercy??!

Can't we see how our Beloved has been treated?... What sufferings, what humiliations and sorrow...? What more do we want to convince ourselves of the necessity of suffering and humiliations? See how much he loves us! How he loves in deed and in truth... Who can tell how many beautiful and holy meditations you are doing these days and make the novices do.

Yes, my dear, do your utmost so that they may learn to meditate profoundly on the Holy Passion and Death of our most Sweet Crucified Jesus and also to penetrate deeply into the true meaning of pure love, etc. etc. Thus they will learn true and deep humility, perfect obedience, etc. How immensely he has loved us! How privileged we are, having been chosen from among thousands and thousands of others worthier than us...

Tell the novices to avail themselves of the beautiful instructions of their Mother Mistress, but above all of the Prisoner and Crucified Spouse..., and to interiorize them well. They should pray to Him, pester Him, so that He will make them his true, generous and faithful little brides: small, so small that they could enter the little wound on his left, in order to be closer to his Heart... Have you understood?

Therefore, together, let us meditate the Passion of our most sweet Jesus and of his Sorrowful Mother, as we linger with her, with St John and with Mary Magdalene... and then, at Easter... we shall rise with Him to a new life.

I embrace you one by one in the Sacred Heart, so that together we may live the life of love.

Pray for the poor old

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 117

In view of the offices that will be assigned to the novices after their profession, Mother Margherita desires them to be well formed so that their soul may be transformed in that of the Sweet Crucified Lover and their hearts may be free, detached from all creatures, especially from themselves.

She invites the sister to pray, like the Canaanite woman in the Gospel (cf. Mt 15, 22ss.), for them and for the novices in Gozo, and to offer all the deprivations and contrarities so that they may always nurture that same fervour they had in the novitiate.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra - Maria Bambina Convent

23 February 1934

Most dear Mother Mistress,

I congratulate you for the success of the dear Novices. Take care, my dear that they are truly recollected and helped in these last months, for you know that after their Profession, duties will be assigned to them and they shall hardly have time for their formation; and then owing to their temperament, they will regress (may the Lord never permit it)...

But we are responsible! Therefore, do all that is possible to fully transform their soul into that of the Sweet Crucified Beloved. There is no need to tell you how: you know well enough; only, do not be discouraged. but strengthened by Divine help, you will succeed. I have high hopes but not without some fear for I know how difficult success is, particularly in such an environment. Therefore, do not cease

insisting that their hearts should be entirely free, detached from all creatures, and especially from themselves; in short they have to understand the traits of their Crucified Spouse and know that they themselves are full of misery and defects etc. etc... If you succeed in instilling this spirit in them they will surely have strong foundations in this spiritual edifice; if you don't, both they and we are to be pitied. Let us pray as the Canaanite did for her daughter; let us also pray for our dearest daughters and certainly our good Master will not be less generous with his old (but perhaps ungrateful) Brides. Have you understood?

For this intention, let us offer all the deprivations which we encounter in life, all the occasions contrary to our nature etc. etc. We will not pray only for these [novices] but also for those at the Mother House, and are quite numerous, thanks to our Spouse Jesus ...

These days I have been at the Mother House and I sat near the novices during recreation: to my great pleasure I spent half an hour amidst these beautiful doves...They seemed like real doves. However, when I think about their future, my heart grieves; because they do not continue with the same fervour ... Not all of them eh! but ...but ... Therefore you, who take care of them, watch over them steadfastly; through love and humility we shall obtain everything...

I would like to tell them many beautiful and holy things but I am certain that you know what to tell them better than I, a poor old nun. Therefore, I only promise you help through my poor and unworthy prayers, and through the Holy Wounds of the Sweet Beloved; so that we shall be fortunate to see them all deeply in love with the Crucified Spouse Jesus...mad, madly in love with Him, who boasts of being a Prisoner under the roof of the House of his Brides...Oh! What fortune! What fortune envied by his own Ministers. Let us love Him and that is enough!

I embrace you one by one in the Heart of Jesus and recommend myself to their prayers. I greet you, my dearest companion, in the Heart of Jesus, as the poor sinner:

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 118

The sister has been appointed local superior of the house in Rome instead of Sr Luisa Busuttì, and Mother congratulates her for the vast field of work that the Lord

has willed to entrust her with, reminding her that on her own she can do nothing, but with Him she can do everything.

Therefore: prayers, trust, and good example; then peace and union to gain the heart of all the sisters and draw them closer to Him.

She suggests to repeat the ejaculation which the sisters still recite after evening recreation: "Divine Fire enkindle the hearts of all men".

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 21 July 1945

Rev. Mother Superior Sr Dionisia,

My dearest daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I congratulate you for the vast field of work that has opened up for you. The Lord is with you, do not be afraid. On your own, you are worth nothing, you can do nothing; be profoundly convinced of this. But also rest assured that with the help of the Good Jesus you can do whatever He wants of you. Be strong, strong and courageous; the Lord is with us. He has always shown us his paternal assistance; therefore, show persevering fidelity and we shall arrive in our true homeland... Dearest daughter, I can only help you with my poor prayers, which, rest assured, I will never cease raising even in remembrance of our agreement: we have always been united (hopefully in this world and then in the next, eh!). Do not forget that my office is drawing to its end, and therefore I need more help to make reparation for the many debts etc. etc. I do not even want to mention them; they have been deposited at the Blood Bank" of our divine Redeemer, eh?!

There is no need to tell you anything because you have dear Mother Luisa's instruction and example which will show you the way; and then in peace and union you will have conquered the hearts of all. I warmly exhort you to have recourse, with filial trust, to the Prisoner Spouse who solely for you, is completely annihilated in this Ciborium. Oh! what unknown love; and He is not even loved by his Brides.

Repeat and tell others to repeat: *Nar divin ahraq il-qlub kollha tal-bnedmin. Fhimtha?* (Divine Fire, enkindle the hearts of all men. Have you understood?)

I embrace you all in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary our Mother etc.

Your poor Mother in Jesus,

Sr M. Margherita

A blessing to each of the dearest Sisters one by one; those whom I know and those whom I only know by name. May they pray and love our good Jesus very, very dearly!

Letter 119

In this very short letter Mother describes her present state of health and the reflection she derives from it.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 7 February 1946

Dearest daughter Sr Dionisia,

Be patient and read the unsteady writing of the poor Sr Misery who still drags herself along the corridors of the dear Mother House. What else does our good Jesus want? He awaits my complete conversion. Pray and ask the dear Sisters and daughters to pray so that He may consume me in his pure love...

May our All enkindle us in the fire of his Divine Heart, as the poor

Sr M. Margherita always prays.

Letter 120

Within a few days Mother writes again to Sr Dionisia, reminding her of the year 1932, when they were together at the novitiate in Rome, and expressing the hope of meeting in heaven, for which she yearns ardently.

She invites her to enjoy the company of so many daughters, while exhorting her to accustom them to sacrifice. She reminds her that it is her duty to sanctify them all with the Eucharistic and Crucified Love.

She recommends herself to her prayer so that the Lord may consume his poor slave in the pure fire of his holy love.

D.M.E.O.

10 February 1946

My dearest daughter in the Heart of Jesus, M. Dionisia,

Do you remember the year 1932 when, I think, we were in the Novitiate in Rome? How time flies. Now I hope we shall meet in heaven eh? Next to our Amiable All! Oh! He seems to be still far away; I count the days and hours but I still feel too heavy to soar... I really can do nothing. I spend my life in idleness; yes, I pray but I am too distracted...poor old [nun]!

Dear daughter, I rejoice that you are surrounded with a crown of dear daughters. You will now soon have another three. They are still timid and tender, but in your maternal care they will be trained to sacrifice themselves, etc., etc. they are docile and good; I hope you will be pleased with them...

Work my dear daughter; yes, work in the immense vineyard that our good Jesus has entrusted to you. Make them all holy with the Eucharistic and Crucified Love! Do you understand? I believe you do.

The sister who brings this letter can give you my news; and then recommend me to the Giver of every good, so that when He wearies of keeping his poor slave at a distance, he may consume her in the pure fire of his holy love, and that is enough.

Your companion in the Sacred Heart

Sr Margherita

Letter 121

Mother recommends to the sister strength, patience and the other virtues which can be obtained from the holy tabernacle because her specific duty, as responsible for the Community of Rome, is to make Jesus known and loved by the sisters whom the Lord has entrusted to her maternal care.

D.M.E.O.

14 September 1948

To the Rev. M. Dionisia,

I recommend to you fortitude, patience, etc. Seek everything from the most Holy Tabernacle, everything is hidden there. Oh! How fortunate I would consider

myself if I could make Him known by everyone and everywhere! At least let us make him known and loved by our beloved daughters and very dear sisters.

I embrace you in Him whom I heartily desire to love purely and perfectly.

The poor *Sr. Margherita*

d) to *Sr Rosaria Sotera*

Letter 122

Writing to the young sister (whom she treats confidentially as a "small grandchild"), about to make her Perpetual Profession, Mother shows her with what dispositions and resolutions she should prepare herself for her consecration to the eternal Spouse.

D.M.E.O.

14 January 1940

My dearest daughter and grandchild,

I am happy that you are well and that you are eagerly awaiting your perpetual consecration to our beloved Jesus. What better and holier desire can you have than that of perfect union with your Eternal Spouse?

Yes, my dearest, fervently yearn and long for that fortunate day and never tire of believing yourself unworthy of such blessed fortune. Then do not neglect to prepare yourself with all your strength, praying to the most Blessed Virgin to obtain for you her beautiful dispositions, to her most Chaste Spouse, Joseph, to our Holy Father St Francis, etc. Then love, love and love, and that is enough. Love is repaid with love.

Our Spouse loved us, preferring us over many others; let us love Him in preference to everyone and to everything ... One love, one All! We who are so small, small, lose ourselves in that All, so that while we are living hidden and annihilated, it is not us, but He who lives in us. Do you understand? I hope so ...

My beloved, I leave you in the Eucharistic Heart where we shall meet every morning ...

Your poor 'grandmother' *Sr Margherita*

Letter 123

As in other letters, Mother speaks to the sister as a "grandmother" does with a young granddaughter.

She is happy with the best dispositions of the young sister and invites her to abandon herself to divine providence, especially in that particular moment when her Superior has been changed: Jesus from his Tabernacle stretches out his arms to welcome her and she can thus pour out to Him the affections of her heart.

She encourages her to seek Jesus in the Tabernacle often, so that she can then meet Him in heaven for ever. She exhorts her to be of help and comfort to all, to live in peace and in fraternal union.

Concerning herself, being already 83 years old, Mother feels like a small child, free from everything and taking the last place; this situation is sweet for her, so much so that she feels she has been newly admitted into the community.

Her only and last desire remains: to avail herself of the time that remains to make reparation for the time lost to place her trust in the infinite merits of our Most Sweet spouse Jesus and in the prayer of all her good daughters.

D.M.E.O.

(probable date: 1945)

My dear grandchild in the Heart of Jesus, Sr Rosaria,

What can I tell you, if not to confirm your resolutions that is, to love absolutely and only, only the jealous Spouse Jesus? What a beautiful *Fiat* and total sweet abandonment to the Paternal care of his divine providence!! And don't you think, my very dear daughter, that He will extend his arms to enfold you within the embrace of his most sweet Heart?

Yes, yes, my dear, go near the door of his Prison to pour forth the affections of your crushed heart. You will come out from there feeling courageous, strong and above all happy because of the sacrifice you have offered to your Spouse Jesus. In this life we can often have these encounters everywhere, but up there, in our homeland, we will always enjoy the perpetual company of our All and of all our dear ones...

Therefore, have courage my dearest, unite yourself with your new Superior, Mother Dionisia not less than you did with the dear M. Luisa; help her as much as you can, and in unity you will find that which the mourned²³ M. Luisa taught you by word and example.

Do you understand? Do you understand me well? I hope so. Yes, you may be burdened with work but I hope you will soon receive help. And you, my dear, by work and by example (as you have always done) will be of help and comfort to your good Mother and to the dear sisters. Then you will live in perfect peace and fraternal charity; union is strength as you will learn from experience.

That is enough, because I am already tired and I would not like to leave you without a line, perhaps it will be the last.

I am well in health, eh! What do you expect, with the toll of my 83 years? Now that I am free from every burden I feel like a little child. Oh! How sweet it is to take the last place: it is as if I have just recently joined the Community. I only desire to avail myself of the time that still remains to make always more reparation for wasted time...Eh! My trust is only in the infinite merits of our most Sweet Spouse Jesus and in the prayers of all my dear daughters, isn't it true??

I finish with an embrace in the Heart of Jesus and of Mary

All yours Sr M. Margherita, 'your grandmother'

Letter 124

Mother rejoices with the sister for the office of sacristan which has been assigned to her, because in this way she will have a greater possibility of enjoying the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. She invites her to love purely Him who loves us, while recommending herself to her prayers.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 10 February 1946

My dearest daughter in Jesus, Sr Rosaria,

²³ The word "mourned" should not be misinterpreted: evidently even if inappropriately, Mother Margherita intends to refer to the fact that in 1945 Sr Luisa Busuttill was transferred from Rome to Malta as general Councillor and Secretary.

Your grandmother has become so old that she is hunched, hard of hearing and cannot see; but she is still full of self-love. Oh! Let us leave everything and go next to our most Sweet Beloved!

I am pleased with the holy office you have been assigned. Eh! Enjoy his company, pray to Him to reduce us to ashes so that we may be all his, and have nothing of our own; now that I have come to my last hour... My dear, let us love, let us love purely Him who loves us!

That is enough, because my eyes get tired; let us unite ourselves in His Sacred Heart and live his life etc... He who loves understands!...

There is no need to tell you to recommend to the Good God the poor old Margherita who desires to love Him profoundly but still lacks all holy virtues. Our Jesus will bless us all, all. Amen.

Visit the Holy Steps instead of the poor Sr Margherita.

Letter 125

The following letter, rich in feeling, is also full of questions which Mother puts to the young sister.

The recommendations for strong courage, for generous and faithful fulfilment of her duty and perseverance in recollection are warm and maternal: even study if done for obedience, helps her to know the good God better. She exhorts her to love her divine Spouse with his own Heart, which He will give her willingly.

D.M.E.O.

My dearest Sister in Jesus, Rosaria,

How are you? How do you feel? How are you getting along with the good Jesus, the most sweet Spouse? Do you linger with him in private conversation? Do you caress Him as a new, young Bride? Do you relate to Him your grief and your joys during holy Communion? Do you seek Him in holy meditation? Do you keep Him beside you in your study to enlighten you?... or do you leave Him aside and let your mind and heart roam distractedly?...

I can hear you tell me: "Mother, how many questions are you putting me?" Yes, my dear, because your wellbeing urges me... Not because I have any doubt that your Mother takes good care of you...but it is never enough...vigilance over our affections is never enough. And besides, I feel

something curious about you...I feel that you should be a small, small saint, therefore you should be careful to correspond faithfully to the inspirations of the good Jesus. Have you understood? Do you understand me?

My dear daughter, our good Jesus chooses whom He wants. He is the Absolute Master of his creatures, but woe to those who are not faithful in corresponding to his plans...Therefore have courage, be strong, strong; be generous in the faithful fulfillment of your duties, assiduous in recollection. Do not trouble yourself about your study: when you do it for obedience and for the glory of the Lord, it cannot harm you, rather it helps you know God better... Isn't it true? Be attentive not to lose any opportunity of approaching the Sweet Jesus in his Ciborium. You will always find Him ready to enlighten us, to comfort us and help us.

Let us love Him my dear: yes let us love Him, because He has loved us infinitely and we can love Him very little; but let us take His own Heart which He will give us voluntarily and thus we can love Him infinitely and that is enough... Do we agree? I hope so...and as love is shown through sacrifices, you will meet these on the way, isn't this true? Grasp them, to make a bouquet of flowers to offer to the Most Sacred Heart, instead of the thorns with which He is continually crowned... It is enough because you are busy, but I hope that it will not be a waste of time for you to read this letter...

Therefore, I leave you, my dear, in the most Sacred Heart of the sweet Child and I wish you all the graces you need to be able to please fully such a good, sweet and loving Heart...You can be assured that from my poverty I'll never cease recommending you to the Sweet Jesus, so that He may keep you always hidden in his Divine Heart, as I hope and desire that you likewise do for the poor M. Margherita, so that one bright day we shall meet up there together to sing the eternal Hosanna. Amen.

e) *to Sr Geltrude Gatt*

Letter 126

Replying to the sister (who is at Regalbuto, in Sicily), Mother bewails the times lived at the House of Adoration, which, though in the midst of so many

deprivations as at Bethlehem, they were also deprived of the noise and tumult of the world.

However, recovering immediately, she insists that the most important thing is to avail oneself of all the occasions to humble one's pride, our greatest enemy, and to detach oneself from all earthly things, especially vanity.

She finally exhorts her to do her duty well, without ignoring that which is improper, even in the girls: it is important for them to have a sound spiritual formation.

Deus meus et omnia

Xaghra - Maria Bambina Convent 1

11 January 1934

Dearest Sr Geltrude,

I was pleased with your letter which reminded me of past times. Oh! How the House of Adoration has changed! In recent years besides the organ they also have the violin. Do you recall how recollected we were?!

What joy and what peace we experienced while deprived of all noise and chaos...We were really in Bethlehem! Eh! Everything passes! And we too pass away...Therefore let us avail ourselves of all opportunities which enrich us with holy virtues; while always abasing our pride first of all, our greatest enemy who lies dormant; then total detachment from all earthly things, above all from vanity, not only in us, but also in things and in the persons who approach us, as we state at our holy clothing and profession: "The world is crucified for us and we are crucified for the world." It means that the world leaves no repercussions on us.

Be careful not to let anything go uncorrected as far as it depends on you, even with the girls... It does not matter if they do not approve but you would have fulfilled your duty precisely... Later, when they leave, they may do whatever they like. However, when they are well formed in the spirit, by time they will return to seriousness ...

Therefore make them meditate on the *novissimi* [the four last things: death, judgment, heaven and hell) and on man's goal... these grave meditations will definitely influence them.

I embrace you in the Sacred Heart, while recommending to you the old

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 127

This letter is pervaded by a Christmas mood and by the maternal recommendations to be able to celebrate the mystery with fervour, recalling the first Christmas celebrated at the House of Adoration.

To this spiritual daughter, with whom she seems to have a truly maternal bond, Mother confides that, though ill, she feels satisfied that she is able to go to the choir to enjoy the sweet company of Jesus in the Tabernacle.

She advises her to trust in Him completely, to consider herself always the smallest, the last, and the good Jesus and his sweet Mother will supply all the rest. She sends her a special Christmas greeting: that she may destroy her 'Ego'.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 24 December 1936

My dearest daughter in the Heart of Jesus! M. Geltrude, <...> My dearest, to-day is Christmas Eve: who can tell how many beautiful things you have prepared? Who can tell how many beautiful and holy 'little flowers' [little sacrifices) you have prepared even for your companions? As we once did on the first Christmas night we celebrated at the opening of the House of Adoration! Do you remember? What beautiful hymns! What a long procession! Then the most Rev. Father, called us "sacks of coal"... What sincere joys we experienced! What holy delight! What a flow of holy affections! Eh! Preparations are not lacking today, but maybe the methods are different, according to the times.

At present I am bound to my room: I can hardly walk to the Chapel to receive Holy Communion; however, I am extremely happy enjoying the sweet company of Jesus without having any other external occupation because I cannot, etc... This urges me to avail myself, but finding myself lacking in so many virtues...I bewail the past opportunities when I did not draw profit etc... Therefore, I pluck up courage and exhort you earnestly to strive hard in order to become holy and make others holy... Trust only in Him and with Him and for Him, without relying either on yourself or on any other creature. I assure you that you will succeed outstandingly...

I am pleased with the harmony and peace in which you find yourself... I wish you holy perseverance, rather, always more and always better. Do not be afraid to be a loser; remain always small, the last one and our Good Jesus and his Sweet Mother will provide the rest. What else my daughter? Eh! Let us together love our only All!... Let us love our Most Sweet Beloved who for us made himself so small not only in human flesh, but still more in a small Host and He always lives truly with us...with us poor and miserable, maybe ungrateful creatures (like me).

That is enough eh! Let us remain together with Mother Mary to cradle the Holy Babe, and He will give us those looks which pierce the heart and then?... then we shall be absorbed and then? That is enough,... she who loves, understands.

I reciprocate the Holy Wishes full of holy affections that destroy all the remains of our Ego.

The poor *M. Margherita* recommends herself to the prayers of all.

f) to Sr. *Giuditta Zammit*

Letter 128

The letter is addressed to a new bride of Jesus, bound forever with Him in joys and in trials, which she has already experienced during the years of formation.

Ascending the Holy Steps in Rome, Mother Margherita prayed that she may possess the virtues of generosity, perseverance and humility. She invites her to feel always bound to the Crucified Spouse, to the Congregation and to the Church.

Deus meus et omnia

Rome, 28 January 1930

Most beloved in the Holy Eucharist,

Finally, you are crucified with the Crucified Spouse! You are united with Him forever and not for a short time! See, my daughter, our sweet Beloved has already shown you in these circumstances the words I myself repeat, that is, that He wants you only for Him alone!!! I congratulate you for the joys you have experienced as well as for your sorrows. Oh! My daughter... everything will pass

away here, just like the past years...but then the joy and the crown will be eternal...

Have courage, be strong in the new life (so to say) which you are about to start... Always with Jesus, always for Jesus, and always in Jesus, your most sweet Promised Spouse. Never tell him enough but be always generous so that you will reach the ideal which your sweet Spouse has destined for you. These past days I have frequently prayed, especially while ascending the Holy Stairs where Jesus was so deeply humiliated, that you may avail yourself of the present situation. Come on, repeat with strong disposition the Sweet Fiat without if, without but. Have you understood?

Now you are united for ever with the Spouse, with the Congregation, with the Holy Church; only your correspondence remains to become a true and holy Sister. Always seek the company of Jesus in his Tabernacle; from there draw all the help, comfort and light you need, and always persevere with indestructible trust, and abandon yourself totally to his dear Paternal care... I cannot think of other exhortations, for I am certain that you know the true way to holy perfection well enough... I always repeat the same words, that is, be small, small in everything and always, and you shall certainly find every peace and joy in this poor life and then, eternal union with the divine Beloved in the next.

I would have liked the satisfaction of hearing: how the dear Sr Giuditta behaves as a true religious...how docile she is, how submissive: well, how humble she is. Do you understand? I hope so, rather I am certain of it, after such impressive and varied circumstances.

Let us pray for each other, because you have just started while I have reached the end. Let us together love our sweet, promised Spouse, let us love Him only, only and that is enough. While loving, one learns to love. Therefore, courage, be strong, strong and always keep moving forward.

I have greatly appreciated the beautiful holy picture. I hope that I will have one to send to you.

May our sweet Beloved bless us and may we, together with his sweet Mother, love Him.

Sometimes, on Sundays, go and spend half an hour in adoration...and pray for your poor Mother who is in great need.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 129

Mother congratulates the sister, who lived in the house at Zebbug, Malta for resigning herself to the Lord's amiable will, shown on the occasion of a great family loss.

She counsels her to embrace the Cross that the Spouse Jesus has offered her in order to crucify her with Him.

D.M.E.O.

9 October 1936

Dearest Sr. Giuditta,

I have read your letter with regret, but on the other hand, your resignation to the Lord's ever amiable will has comforted me... Yes, my dearest, I believe that it is a very strong trial for all your family and more so for you who are so sensible and loving. What can I tell you, if not to pray for you to accept the Holy Cross that the Divine Spouse has offered you to crucify yourself with Him? Yes, my daughter, avail yourself of this and exercise yourself in generous acts of total abandonment to divine providence, and at the same time thank Him for the good dispositions you have witnessed in the dear patient which is the greatest grace, for a good death... Today or tomorrow we have to depart from here... Ah! Our home is not here; hopefully in heaven we will be with all our dear ones... Therefore, have courage, be strong, strong and do not behave like a child but be steadfast. You should be strong even in front of your dear mother and console everyone, everyone... Do you understand?

I shall be united with you with my poor prayers, and I am certain that our good Jesus will be of comfort and help to you.

While awaiting some other news, I send my regards to all your dear family and to you, my dear daughter a strong embrace in the Heart of Jesus, from your poor mother

Sr M. Margherita

g) to other sisters

Letter 130

This letter, the first written by Mother (among those preserved), is addressed, to Sr M. Giovanna Fenech, a future general Superior,²⁴ on the occasion of her religious profession.

It begins with a very joyful greeting, because the Spouse whom the sister has chosen can never be taken away from her. She advises her on how she should behave towards the Crucified Spouse: with delicacy and aflame with the desire to love him above everything else. The exhortations on humility, on taking the last place, on fraternal love, on respect towards the Superiors and on generosity in the apostolic service which will be entrusted to her, are forthcoming.

In this letter the ardent love that Mother Margherita has for the Crucified Spouse is again evident: she repeatedly invites the sister to love Him sincerely, so that, at the end of her life she may receive the crown of eternal joy.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 14 June 1891

My dear daughter in Jesus!

I am pleased and rejoice with you for the courage with which you have been enriched on the day of your Profession, or to be more exact in your total consecration to your Immaculate Spouse. Yes, my dear daughter, rejoice, be glad and serene because no one can take away from you the Spouse whom you have chosen. Now, however you should concentrate on how to live for his honour and glory, studying his likes and preferring death a hundred times rather than giving him the least displeasure. And how can it be otherwise? Could a bride ever have any other preferences than those of her divine Spouse?

Oh! My daughter and sister in Jesus, yes, yes, commit yourself with great zeal for our beloved Congregation, take care and think, within your possibility, in work and in study, with the children, with the Sisters, with the Superiors; in a word, seek to be always the most fervent in order to be one of the prudent Virgins. Always consider yourself a learner, always esteem yourself the last one everywhere, whatever the office assigned to you. Seek to be joyful and glad when you find an occasion to mortify your self-love. Be always careful not to dissipate your spirit, rather seek to detach yourself always more from created things, from yourself, and unite yourself only to your sweet Crucified Spouse

²⁴ She succeeded Mother Margherita in the office of general Superior on 21 May 1923, but died unexpectedly on the 19 September 1923 (cf. letter 83).

to whom you have been espoused forever and whom you carry on your breast, not as an ornament, but as a reminder of the crucifixion with you which he rightly expects. Yes, courage dear daughter, courage; let us die for Him who died for us amidst so much pain and sufferings!!!

Oh! If I could give up my life in the work that I do in community for the love of my only Spouse!! Oh! How happily I would die! Yes, I hope to obtain this grace, through his mercy! And don't you want to work in his vineyard? Don't you want to care for the souls we love so deeply? I hope that this will be the greatest commitment with which your heart is enriched, as a sign of the fidelity you have shown to your Spouse on your Profession. Isn't it so? Yes, yes, I hope that I can bless all I have done for you in my poverty, and hope that with God's help I can still be helpful, and I am sure that if you correspond faithfully and persevere in your promises, you will be of honour and advantage to the religious Family which has deigned to accept you as a dear daughter...

I do not want to bore you with my words; nothing more interests me, neither weariness nor tepidity, but I offer everything up for the glory of my sole Beloved. Yes, love Him, love Him and make others love Him. He is worthy of everything; everything is too little, compared with what He deserves.

Oh! If I could enkindle the hearts of all men with the love of our Beloved or else, if at least I could know that the hearts of our Sisters are all sincerely and solely enkindled with love for Him alone. Yes, I greatly desire Him to be loved as he deserves. But what can I do, if my heart is ice-frozen? And that which is worse, perhaps I am a bad example to the Sisters. Oh! How sad I feel when I think of this, but I trust in your fervent prayers. And because you are a new Bride, He is very careful to please you.

Therefore, pray earnestly and deeply for your poor mother, so as not to have the misfortune of seeing the Sisters surpass her in loving her Spouse.

Love Him, yes my daughter love Him, love Him alone, solely, because He is very jealous, and be attentive to this, guard your heart, and see if there is the smallest attachment to anything that is not He because if you displease Him in any way, it will no longer be very easy to please Him. Be therefore firm in what you have given Him, seek to show Him the true love you have for Him in practice.

I repeat, consider yourself the least, learn to obey promptly, blindly and exactly. Recollection and silence should be the means to cultivate your spiritual

life and union with your Crucified Spouse; your gaze should be very modest and often turned towards Jesus Crucified and your heart should seek rest in the Tabernacle; especially when you are sad and tempted, you should seek and expect comfort only from Him.

Also often recall that the Mother of the Spouse can do everything for the benefit of her Son's Brides. Do not forget St Joseph who has guarded Him for you with so much love and pain, and even your holy Father St Francis who was his true image on earth. When we are convinced of all this, we do not feel the sufferings which we will certainly encounter in this poor life, at the end of which we will then hear from the Beloved Jesus: "Come my Bride, come from suffering to eternal repose, to receive the crown which you have merited through so much work and sweat". Oh! Then how eagerly we shall rejoice, how much we shall bless this suffering!!>>>

Have courage and pray for the poor unworthy servant of Jesus

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 131

Mother invites Sr Marta Galea who is a member of the community at Misterbianco (Catania), to seek only the amiable Spouse, always and everywhere: we find him in every house, she affirms; it is enough to love him and do everything for Him.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 27 September 1936

My very dear Sr Marta,

How are you? How do you feel in a different climate? I hope that you are well and happy since it is enough for us to be near our amiable Spouse, and feel at home wherever we are, isn't it true my dear?

Courage, always be stronger and better... Our good Jesus, makes up for everything when we have recourse to Him with trust!!!

Therefore, love Him, love Him and do everything for Him, with Him and in Him!!!

Every now and then do drop me a few lines and thus we can understand each other better.

Now since Mother is leaving, you are certainly sad but offer everything to Jesus and you shall find the same affections in the new superior and...

Courage and let us keep moving on in the Lord

Your poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 132

This letter, of high educational and pedagogical value, is addressed to Sr Rebecca Muscat, who has been entrusted with a noble and delicate office: the care of the tender orphans in Rome.

Mother reminds her that the little ones are precious treasures, who cost the blood of the Son of the most High and that their spiritual salvation depends on her care, etc.; she warns her against seeking in them her own natural satisfaction because, by so doing, she will wrong her divine Spouse.

Besides, she exhorts her to nurture a spirit of sacrifice and self-mistrust and to confide fully in the Lord: the more we nourish ourselves from the divine Ciborium, the more our educational mission will bear abundant, beneficial fruit.

9 April 1937

Mother House

Dearest and beloved Sr M. Rebecca,

I am writing to you to congratulate you on the noble, sweet and delicate office that your Beloved Spouse has entrusted you with. My dear daughter, first you took care of the day students, but now you have to care for the tender orphans?... This is a more noble and more delicate task and furthermore, more and more difficult. Learn, my dear, how to recommend yourself warmly to the Good Jesus, the tender Father and to Mary, the Mother of the orphans, to their Guardian angels, so that they may guide you in your difficult and critical task.

Be convinced that you have such precious treasures in your hands, which cost the blood of the Son of the Almighty! My beloved, their salvation depends

on you, and the divine Judge will demand a strict account from you. He will also recompense you for the sacrifices that you will have endured in educating them, spiritually and temporarily. Certainly you have to work hard: to struggle, to combat, but do not become discouraged; do not trust in yourself but trust in your Sweet Jesus: you will succeed in making them holy. Often, often, when you are recollected in front of the Blessed Sacrament pray heartily for them and offer them up to him so that He will keep them in his Paternal care: and you, on your part, always propose to them sentiments of sweet love towards the Amiable Jesus. Often encourage them to make 'little flowers' [little sacrifices] and on various occasions know how to direct them sweetly towards love...

It is easier to instil this sensible affection in these small hearts...certainly there is no need to tell you never let them be kissed and caressed overmuch, even though they are small; rather, it is because they are small that they have to be well brought up, so that while loving them in the Lord, you do not spoil them (as certain mothers do). Yes, my dear, here lies the greatest difficulty: in loving spiritually and never in a sensible way. And since our Spouse's jealousy has no limits...be attentive not to be conquered by nature... and do not allow others to deal with them in such a way. Forgive me my dearest daughter, but I am more experienced than you are.

Therefore take heed of what I am telling you, adhere to it with trust and you will never regret it.

I am sure that certain children are really very attractive and intelligent; therefore, you must be very hard with yourself in order not to show them certain affections. Eh! Here lies true virtue; this is the sacrifice that we have made for our Spouse; do not ever forget it, because the moment we take something back from our good Jesus, it will surely not be beneficial to the children... You can be sure that we can never be attentive enough in this regard.

Then, be particularly careful, my dear, not to foster vanity which is already innate in woman. See that they are well-dressed but not beautifully dressed (for example, are those two big ribbons Franceschina is wearing in the photo necessary?) Be careful, and keep your eyes wide open, for there is no need to nourish or display the vanity that always exists in the world especially in these times. Then we should be true enemies of vanity not only in ourselves but also

in those who depend on us. Also beware, my dearest, of showing preference because this immediately gives rise to jealousy...and loss of peace etc...

Oh! My dearest, I have poured all my heart into this letter in advising you about such things. But I am sure that your good mother whom I know well, will tell you what you have to do etc. Then you have to be very docile to her instructions; above all, as I have already told you, often turn to our good Jesus and to our most holy Immaculate Virgin Mother.

Perhaps I have bored you with this letter... But I felt all this actually in front of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; rather I wanted to tell you many other things but I do not dare to tell you everything... I repeat, my dear, pardon me and always pray for me, with these dear children, to Jesus who is so good, for I desire them all to be holy together with you. I assure you, my dearest, that I am telling you and advising you for your own good.

May the good Jesus bless us and keep us united in His Sacred Heart.

Your poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 133

This letter is addressed to Sr Paola Cilia, Superior at Fra Diego Institute, Hamrun (Malta). She thanks her for remembering her and invites her to continue to do so in her prayers.

She informs her that now she is at the Mother House and she earnestly desires to avail herself of the beautiful occasions of submission, which divine goodness gives her.

D.M.E. O.

(probable date: spring 1940)

Dear Sr Paola,

Thank you for remembering me, poor as I am, and I ask you to continue praying for my poor soul; and I promise to do likewise, from my nothingness... Let us love our Crucified Spouse, and rejoice when He treats us as his true Brides, that is, when He burdens us with his crosses. Do you understand?

Thanks to our Good Jesus I am well in health. I am no longer at Xaghra but at the Mother House²⁵. I truly wish to avail myself of the many beautiful occasions of submission, etc., etc. that He has granted me through his Divine goodness.

I would like to know how the good Sr Blandina is: I would like to see her, but *Fiat!* In the meantime let us love our Amiable Jesus always more and to him alone, alone, alone we confide our poor being.

While recommending my poor soul to everybody's prayers, I pray to our Good Jesus to bless us all and consume us in his fire, as his poor

M. Margherita always desires.

Letter 134

Mother thanks Sr Filippa Bezzina at Pilar (Malta) for the prayers she offers for her, and which we all need. She invites her to take courage and confide in such a good and sweet Father who is always ready to forgive and help.

D.M.E.O.

20 October 1946

My dearest M. Filiippa,

I thank you for the prayers, etc. ∴ I need them badly!

You also say that you are in need of prayers. But we need to have courage because our Father is the most sweet, most merciful Father; He therefore pardons all our weaknesses and helps us carry any burden that oppresses us. Do you understand? I believe so. Therefore, courage and let us move always forward with love and without fear. Let us love Infinite Love with pure love and that is enough.

I send you my regards and bless you all one by one in Jesus, dearest sisters and daughters, where I would like to embrace you in the Eucharistic Heart. Be truly small, humble so that you can always remain there!!

While I recommend to your prayers the poor

²⁵ This is the reason that justified the date of the letter, Spring 1940: Mother was transferred to the Mother House from Xaghra after a severe heart attack in January 1940.

M. Margherita, I thank you once again, etc. And you, M. Filippa be strong, strong and always look ahead. May Jesus bless us.

Letter 135

This letter, addressed to Sr Cornelia Cassar, Superior at Birkirkara (Malta), bears a strong Franciscan characteristic: the joy which all good daughters of St Francis experience.

A fundamental aspect of the charism of the Congregation is also evident in the letter: referring to the House dedicated to the Sacred Heart, Mother says that through their union and fidelity, the sisters make reparation for the many offences the Heart of Jesus receives even from his children.

She exhorts everyone to love our Spouse Jesus, Prisoner for our love, always more purely.

D.M.E.O.

22 October 1946

Dearest Mother Cornelia,

I thank you for the prayers for I need them greatly.

I am glad that you are all happy and at peace as befits the dear daughters of St Francis. Then your house is dedicated to the Sacred Heart, therefore through your unity and fidelity you make reparation for the offenses Jesus receives even from his children.

I advise you all, one by one, especially dear Sr Adelaide (with whom I spent so much time) then you all, to love always more purely our Spouse Jesus, who is a Prisoner for our love. Let us love Him, let us love Him and make Him loved by everyone and above everything. Do you understand? I hope so.

Our Good Jesus will bless us all and keep us united and secure in His most Sacred Heart, as the poor *M. Margherita* always prays and wishes all her daughters.

Letter 136

Writing from St Joseph's Institute in Hamrun (where she is for a period of convalescence), to Sr Martina Vella, superior at Misterbianco, (Catania), Mother refers to her nephew's departure abroad and to her health, but immediately her thoughts turn to that which her heart always suggests to her, that is: to love the Love who is not loved because He is not known.

She asks others to pray for her, for she is a poor sinner.

D.M.E.O.

Hamrun – St Joseph Institute

8 September 1951

My dearest M. Martina,

You know that I am at St Joseph Institute with Mother Minima. I have already been here for 15 days ... I believe that my nephew Don Enrico has already arrived with his father. I feel a little better being able to breathe freely. May His most holy will be always done.

How are you? I hope you are well, eh! Let us love the Love who is not loved because He is not known!! Let us meet in his most Beloved Heart to love him with his same fire.

Best regards to all the dear sisters, whom I would like to embrace one by one, in the Heart of the most sweet Spouse Jesus!! Pray earnestly for me, poor sinner and I assure you that, in my poverty, I will pray for you all to the Prisoner of Love. Aren't you happy? Therefore, let us love him together, here with vivid faith, and in Heaven face to face.

May the good dear Jesus bless us all, all, as the poor

Sr M. Margherita prays.

Letter 137

Writing to Sr Amata Vella, who was superior at Ascoli Piceno, she invites her to abandon herself to divine providence, to be docile to the spiritual director and, above all, to love Love and to do everything in love.

D.M.E.O.

My dear Sr Amata,

Here I am writing to you, just after reading your letter which Mother Vicar handed me ... Yes, my dear, I rejoiced that you are happy and can do good to these sons of God.

Resume your work under the Paternal care of our good master, hidden in His Prison, that is so dear to us, and from his Paternity, you will have whatever you need.

I am happy that you have a Director; adhere to all he tells you in the best way possible and thus he will also please you. I rejoice that all of you are happy ... love, love Divine love, and do everything, everything for love, with love and in love. And when you see those beautiful mountains and rivers, remember Him, who alone creates such beautiful things, and the joy that will be ours up there in our homeland. And let us love Him!!!...

This is the remembrance of the poor *M. Margherita*, who recommends herself heartily to your prayers as she herself does for all.

4. Letters to unidentified sisters

Letter 138

This letter is addressed to a sick sister with the intention of comforting her. It is a brief treatise on mysticism, as Mother outpours all her love for the Beloved Prisoner.

Mother is so profoundly in love with Him, that she is unable to find words to express her love if not to invite everybody to love Him. She exhorts the sister to rejoice even in sorrow, for while loving Jesus heartily and suffering together with him, every pain becomes sweet.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 16 April 1892

Most beloved sister and daughter in the sweet, sweet, most sweet Jesus,

I read in your letter that you are still confined to bed. Oh! How precious is the breath taken on the tree of the cross with the only Beloved of our heart!... Oh! How dear it is to stay alone with the Beloved, pining lovingly!...

Isn't it perhaps true, o dearest, that at times you feel his presence?... Do you feel that He loves us, that He wants us to be completely his?... That He wants us to forget ourselves and all creation to live only, only with Him, for Him and in Him?... Oh! Yes, yes, I often feel this interior colloquy, rather more and more tangibly. Eh! How is it therefore, my dearest, that we don't surrender ourselves to such invitations? How is it that we cannot annihilate ourselves totally in such powerful waters?... Why don't we surrender our care, pretensions, ambitions, self-will, etc. etc.?!

We know, my beloved, that pure love strongly desires the absolute possession of our hearts so that it can act freely and powerfully. Since we know full well that this is where our advantage lies, and that to be totally satisfied, our soul, in its transports, needs to annihilate itself completely in the Divine Will, why, why don't we let ourselves be totally destroyed and humbled? Oh! Blessed loss... Oh! Blessed annihilation...on which the kingdom of pure love is established. And if we believe this, will not every small cross granted to us bring us immense joy?

Therefore, stay happily in bed or in the armchair and when you can, go near the Beloved Prisoner. Ah! Then pour out all, all your soul and that is enough, enough...for the Beloved alone knows what the one who loves feels when in his presence.

My beloved, are you happy now? Are you joyful?... Do you love Jesus? Do you love him profoundly?... Do you love Him only? Do you love Him enough? Yes, yes let us love Him because only, only He deserves to be loved...the rest is nothing but vanity of vanities... Oh! How sweet it is to love Divine Love! ... Oh! Why, why doesn't everyone love Him?... Eh! Because He is not known... Let us pray my dearest, that He may be known everywhere and by everyone and thus He will certainly be loved.

I leave you in his Heart where we shall always remain together to love our ever amiable Spouse as I desire for all our dearest Sisters...

Yes, yes, let us love Him, let us love Him, and seek not to be outdone by others, either in love or in the purity of love.

That is enough, otherwise I will never finish, and I have little energy; I get easily tired....

I embrace you together with the other very dear Sisters, especially the '*primarja*' [principal]²⁶ whom I seek in the Beloved, while recommending to you the most unworthy sinner

Sr Miseria

Letter 139

Mother satisfies the request of a sister who desired to receive a letter from her. It is a continual hymn of love for Jesus and of ardent zeal for souls so that they may also love him. She invites her to be generous in sacrifice, strong and courageous, always happy and to unite herself intimately to Him.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 28 May 1895

Beloved daughter in Jesus!

Finally I am going to comply with your desire, but my daughter, know that neither the heart nor the mind, and not even the pen can suggest anything else other than love, love... Therefore my beloved, I tell you and repeat, love Love, love Love, so that you may become love, so that you can lose yourself in love. Oh! Then the continuous hymn which your heart repeats will be this: let us love Love, let us love Love, come, come o souls to love Love...

Here is everything in a few words! Are you happy? I hope so, rather I believe that your heart is already throbbing and echoing such words. Yes, let us love our Beloved, let us sacrifice everything, body and soul to become fire of pure and perfect love. Yes, give everything, o my daughter, to the true love of our Promised beloved, and I assure you that He will not disdain to espouse you as His beloved. Have courage therefore and be strong, always happy and united with Him, love Him, embrace Him, He is so dear and lovable.

My daughter, our Beloved desires nothing else from his beloved [brides] except generous, constant and pure love, therefore guard this love well and

²⁶ The word '*primarja*' [principal] was used during the early times to indicate the superior.

He will be very happy; moreover, he will fill you with his graces and give you a share in his sweetness.

What do you expect of me, poor and wretched being? Ah! I embrace you and leave you in the Sacred Heart while recommending to your prayers and love the unworthy sinner

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 140

Mother, who nourishes a tender love towards her spiritual daughters, seeks to draw attention to things which are always new, for the sister who wants to be a faithful bride of the Sacred Heart and who is ready to annihilate herself, in such a way that, as St Paul the Apostle says (Cfr Gal 2, 20), only Christ lives in her.

Mother stresses the importance of offering oneself as a victim to the Sacred Heart, inviting the sister to carry out this sublime act, because only thus can her heart be enkindled with zeal for souls, to love and to serve the community.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 6 May 1907

Beloved daughter in Jesus Christ!

May the sweet Jesus be in your soul!

Here I am to make you conscious not of new things, but of the most ancient and oldest; however they always seem to be new to those who truly want to be faithful and to be immolated to the Sacred Heart!

Therefore, my dearest, the fire that consumes the victim should be the same fire that consumed the Supreme Victim and it is only through Him that the immolation will be acceptable. Therefore you should be more than sure that the sufferings, the pain and the humiliations will be the waters that cleanse and purify the victim soul until it becomes capable of being enlightened with the pure and Divine love that unites her intimately to the Almighty!...

And where can one find a more ardent, more capable fire to consume every imperfection if not in the Most Holy Tabernacle?!... And where will it be most in our power if not when it takes possession of our heart?... And the Sweet

and Sole Beloved of our heart, Jesus, how can He not possess and consume our soul entirely, if we are so close and united? ... Oh! Yes, yes, let us yield all our faculties, all our anxieties!... Let us die like doves wounded by the divine hunter!... Oh! Then, how precious such a life would be, when it becomes life and death together, life in Him and death to self ... Oh! Happy state!... Oh! Happy life!... It is not I that live but Christ who lives in me!... such a soul may say this by right!... But when, when o my dearest, shall we be able to repeat such a line?... Slowly...slowly...slowly... However it is not impossible; because everything will be easy for her who wants.

Therefore, have courage and great confidence in the Sacred Heart, ardent zeal and constant perseverance.

Yes, yes, we need to sacrifice ourselves as victims to the Sacred Heart at the cost of all sacrifices!... O, my dear soul, do not let me lament of the sacrifices I made for you... As compensation, I only expect to see you consumed and sacrificed as a victim. Be zealous, work and love our dear Community, in pure sacrifices you shall find true peace...love and understand.

I leave you, my most beloved. Let us always remain united, if not as daughter and mother, with the sweet name of intimate sisters in the pure love of our sole All!

While blessing you dearly for the last time in the Sacred Heart, I beseech you heartily to love, love, love our Jesus purely and to pray to him ardently for the most unworthy sinner

Sr Miseria

Letter 141

This is a letter of encouragement to a sister entrusted with a new mission: the care of children. As a thoughtful Mother who has at heart the little ones and the defenseless, she advises her on how she should behave towards them.

She explains the value of detachment from her dear ones, and reminds her that wherever obedience sends her, she will also find "the most sweet Beloved Prisoner"; from Him she can draw strong spiritual vitality.

J!MJ!F!

Mother House, 4 November 1920

Dearest daughter in Jesus!

See, the sweet Beloved Jesus sends you on another mission. He entrusts you with his small ones to cultivate them and to sow the little seed of divine grace in their small hearts; of true love towards our amiable God!! Have courage and keep moving forward, for our good Jesus does not let himself be surpassed in generosity. If you are constant and faithful, He will help you in all the circumstances and necessities you encounter. Let us love Love, means let us suffer for Love... That is to say we shall be always happy and ready on every occasion to mortify our self-love, to offer divine Love, wood that is suitable to be consumed, etc.

Therefore, o my daughter, sacrifice your sisters, your mother and father,²⁷ and go wherever obedience calls you; there you will also find a good Mother, dear and good Sisters, a zealous Father; but above all you will find the sweetest Beloved Prisoner who will console you, who will always help you, always and every time you have recourse to Him... Let us love Him together and we shall remain united in that Sweet Heart where one enjoys eternal delight. Pray for the poor

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 142

Mother reminds the sister to reflect on the mysteries of the passion of Christ and exhorts her to be happy and to repeat her Fiat incessantly. She insists on the value of obedience, which consists in knowing how to die on the cross, with Christ. In this way, suffering becomes sweet and gentle. She ends her letter inviting her to look at the Crucifix in order to learn the wisdom of the Saints.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 26 March 1921

Beloved daughter in Jesus,

Be content with all the dispositions of divine Providence!... And always repeat the Holy *Fiat!* without ever, ever getting tired; as we have meditated in the Crucified

²⁷ Mother does not speak of relatives, but of the sisters, of the Superior and of the Confessor.

Christ, our Only most sweet Spouse! But now behold him glorious forever!!! Sufferings are over, trials have passed, He is triumphant and glorious for all eternity.

What about our student sisters? Do they get along well together? Are they well in health? Are they resigned? Have they meditated profoundly what obedience means?...obedience till death, and death on a cross? Are they convinced that when they work for the glory of God, suffering is not difficult? And I say this to everybody... <...>

I would have liked to tell you many other things but the door keeps knocking; so I end by saying: It is necessary to love to the extent to which we have been loved.

We have learned to suffer every kind of pain our most Sweet Beloved offers us! Now we rejoice at his glorious Resurrection, the consequence of his humiliations and of his death on the cross...It is enough to look at the Crucifix to learn the wisdom of the Saints.

While embracing all of you, one by one, in the Wounded Side, I recommend to you the poor

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 143

Mother exhorts a very discouraged sister to abandon herself to every disposition of Divine Providence, as becomes a strong Bride of Christ, who should only cry for the offences her Spouse receives.

At the same time, aware of the need to vent her feelings, she invites her to go near the tabernacle to obtain the courage and strength to encourage the sisters to dedicate themselves for the benefit of souls through sacrifice, through prayer, through word and through good example.

Mother's interest in the initial formation of the aspirants to religious life is evident; she believes they should understand from the start that it is a life of sacrifice, of renunciation and of absolute detachment.

J!M!J!F!

Regalbuto, 5 May 1922

Most beloved daughter in Jesus!

It is now necessary to abandon ourselves to every disposition of divine providence! Yes, let us always repeat the dear *Fiat*. However, courageously and joyfully, not in tears and sighs. Do you understand? Diffidence in ourselves and boundless confidence in divine goodness; and that is enough! Have you understood? It is necessary to struggle against our nature and the devil who does nothing else but inspire diffidence, and discouragement with his suggestions, etc. etc... Therefore, have courage and do not behave like a child, but abandon yourself totally to the Sweet Spouse as a strong Bride; and that is enough. I do not want to hear any more about your tears; that is, I do not want you to cry any more for these things, but for the offences our Sweet Jesus receives. And in secret, never showing that you are hurt and discouraged. When you feel thus, go immediately near the good Jesus, a Prisoner of love and you will come out encouraged and strengthened; however this depends on your dispositions and on your correspondence. Be therefore, generous in abandoning yourself, and constant in trust, and you can be sure that you will be granted whatever you need!!! Try and see ...

Also, encourage the other sisters ever so often to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of souls, through prayer, through sacrifices and even through word, but above all through good example ... Make the aspirants understand clearly the sacrifices encountered in religious life, especially self-denial, absolute detachment from the world and from everyone, etc. etc. <...>

On Sunday, Sr M. Arcangela made her Profession; I would have been pleased had you been here. But *Fiat!* Meanwhile, I hope that next Monday I shall leave for Catania and then, perhaps for Malta but I am not sure yet ... Have no doubt about my prayers for I can do nothing other than humble myself before God and recommend everyone to Him, so that He will deign to bless our feeble efforts etc. etc. Also pray for me, and thus we shall remain united in the Heart of our good Jesus, loving him and serving him generously until He hides us in His Sacred Heart as the poor

Sr M. Margherita always wishes.

Letter 144

Writing from Corfú to a discouraged sister, Mother invites her to be serene, to do her best and to learn from the favourable and unfavourable circumstances of life.

As usual, she suggests humility to be later exalted in eternity, love, commitment, trust and abandonment to the care of Providence, in order to succeed in every office.

J!M!J!F!

Corfú, 1 August 1922

Beloved daughter in Jesus Christ,

I am still here in Corfú waiting for our friars²⁸ to come, to see if they can stay or not. Therefore I reply to you in the way I can.

I am sorry to hear of your discouragement which I would never have liked to enter the heart of any of the brides of the good Jesus. We should do our best, leaving everything to divine providence, without any fear. Have courage, then, be strong, strong, without taking heed of what others say about you; but always do your best with confidence. <...>

Therefore, my daughter, see how eager we should be to learn... and act in such a way that others may learn because in the various circumstances we shall discover how relevant it is to study and how worthwhile the sacrifice we make to learn and ...

What else can I tell you? Patience and courage and above all humility because she who humbles herself will be exalted and she who exalts herself will be humbled and so on.

In the meantime: let us love our sweet Beloved who loves us infinitely and let us make him loved by everyone, everybody, and then let him do what He pleases. I exhort all our dear sisters to take courage and commit themselves to whatever is needed in their work for the Lord will certainly help them, but they should trust in Him completely... Do you understand? That is all because I cannot tell you anything else.

How beautiful and gracious are the sacrifices we offer to our sweet Spouse!...How dear it is to be able to say: I have loved my Spouse with a sacrifice He himself provided for me...that is, He has procured it for me He prepared it for

²⁸ The friars to whom Mother Margherita (then general Superior) refers are the Capuchin Friars of the Venetian Province, who had established themselves in Corfú in that same year and are still there today.

me...May his Holy name be blessed. Oh! What peace the soul enjoys thus resigned and abandoned to the care of divine Providence. Come on, courage, be strong, strong...Aren't we the Brides of the King of Heaven? Why do we doubt? Why do we lack confidence in his Paternal assistance? Oh! How ungrateful we are!

With the hope that all together we will truly love the sweet Beloved, I ask His Blessing and embrace you

the poor *Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart*

Letter 145

Mother begins the letter offering wise counsel to help a sister to uproot from her heart sentiments and an attitude which are too human, in order to rediscover everything in the Lord.

She also includes suggestions of practical pedagogy to be used with the sisters and with the students at school and in the orphanages, the two "fields of work" entrusted to the Congregation by the amiable Spouse Jesus.

It is the responsibility of superiors to make the sisters taste the sweetness of deprivation, to educate them in contemplation, to spiritualize everything, referring everything to Him, not only by words but above all by example.

J!M!J!F!

Regalbuto, 9 October 1922

Most beloved daughter in Jesus!

Finally you are convinced of your weaknesses; however do not be discouraged but humble yourself, and trust more and more in the goodness of our sweet and amiable Jesus. I am pleased, for when we recognize our faults we can remedy them; but when we are not convinced of our faults we never seek a remedy. Therefore my dear daughter, you too should rejoice in recognizing your pride; yes, you truly have a very subtle self-love that makes you sure of your opinions; but good will and certain good dispositions are not lacking in you either. Therefore recommend yourself strongly and often to the most Holy Eucharistic Heart, to help you understand clearly and uproot every sentiment from your heart and to nourish only sentiments of humility, of lowliness; in a word, the idea of truth, our pure nothingness and the Lord's all.

And the more we perceive that we are unable to do good, the more capable we shall be with divine help. Therefore we should keep in mind the maxim of our Holy Father St. Paul²⁹: I can do everything with God's help but nothing by myself... Then always have recourse to the protection and assistance of grace. Yes, my dearest daughter, let us often have recourse to our good Jesus and entrust ourselves to Him. Even when we feel that He is distant, far away, it does not matter: we remain at his feet as if He were sensible to us, etc. etc. Do you understand?

Often teach the pupils and even the orphans so that even their teachers will feel encouraged. Eh! Yes, yes, let us work in this beautiful field which our amiable Spouse entrusted to us!!

Then, make the Sisters taste the sweetness of deprivation, imitating our Sweet Jesus who lacked even the bare necessities of life.

Always seek to spiritualize things, even in the most insignificant occasions. Yes, we should always, always gaze upwards and not downwards. Oh! How vile it should appear to us to speak of, to look at things regarding the body. But we should make good use of them eh, of course! But there is no need to think much about them. We should, as much as possible spiritualize the material and the natural...

Well, she who truly loves our good Jesus, will be happy to think of and refer everything to Him etc...

That is enough for you, because now I do not know when I shall have the opportunity to write to you at length. May our sweet Jesus deign to hide us in his Heart as the poor

Sr M. Margherita wishes.

Letter 146

Mother replies from Rome to a sister, who entrusts herself to her spiritual direction.

²⁹ St Paul is profoundly venerated in Malta, because he was shipwrecked on the island, when he was being taken prisoner to Rome (cf. Acts 28, 1ss). This explains the title of "Holy Father" which the Maltese give him. The thought Mother Margherita is referring to is found in Philipians 4, 13.

H - LETTERS TO THE SISTERS

She repeats the usual recommendations: lowliness and humility, not to forestall the Lord's actions, but to follow them generously, in order to merit the graces necessary for a true and faithful Bride of Jesus three times holy. She finally wishes her complete possession of the faithful and eternal companion, Jesus, to be always safe.

7 January 1930

Most beloved daughter in the Holy Eucharist,

Do not feel offended that I am writing to you on the same sheet of paper of our beloved daughter, which is next to me... Then what do you want to know? Eh! My daughter, my exhortations are always the same... Be small, small, let the sweet Jesus act in you as He pleases. Be careful not to hinder his actions but follow them generously and faithfully, without a but or an if! Do you agree? Therefore, in brief, I wish you all the graces, that you need to be a true and faithful bride of Jesus, three times holy.

May Jesus be in your heart, may Jesus be in your mind, may He be always and everywhere your faithful and everlasting Companion!... Who can harm you when you have such a companion? Yes, yes, my dearest daughter, be firm in destroying nature in order to live the pure, the holy, the perfect divine Love.

I embrace you in the most Sacred Heart and keep me with you during the ceremony.

All yours in Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 147

Mother is distressed for not having known how to satisfy a superior, who had recourse to her, and invites her to turn to the Father of light, the wise Director and Master of all hearts, in order to be guided and to be able to guide the sisters, not to let herself feel crushed by her office, and to overcome criticism.

She reminds her that it is necessary for religious to sanctify themselves: all else is secondary. Therefore: prayer, fulfillment of one's duty and good example so that the sisters will learn exactness, recollection and submission; to compete in the

practice of humility and abnegation of one's ego, the chief enemy of our souls; and to do everything with love, and not by force.

Deus meus et omnia

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

3 December 1931

Dearest and beloved daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

How grieved I feel not to have fully satisfied you at our last meeting! My dearest, be calmer, more recollected, and you will certainly find peace, even in the harshest contradictions. Listen to me, my daughter: go near our Prisoner and tell Him all your difficulties, your anxieties, your doubts...but with peace of mind...and do not think you are wasting time; it is rather to gain time, peace, calm and more energy to act with better results...

It is necessary for a Superior to stay close to the Father of light often, often; near the wise Director, near the Master of all hearts, for without having such recourse it is not possible either to guide yourself far less others. Perhaps you ask me: How can I attend to so many responsibilities? Eh! My dearest, be sure that the necessary help will not fail you and that you will even find the time, etc. Give it a try, but calmly and with unlimited trust in our always loving Jesus, and with diffidence in yourself, and you will see what the Goodness of the Lord can do.

Keep in mind my dearest, that everything passes away in this world; only one thing is necessary: to save one's soul, or rather, for us religious, to sanctify it! All the rest is secondary. Therefore let us pray continuously never to fail in our duties, but rather let us endeavour even to dedicate ourselves to those entrusted to our maternal care. Let us strive so that through our good example they will be exact, recollected and devout, and above all humble and submissive through love and never through fear. Let us vie with each other, especially during these holy days, to see who is the most humble among us, who is ready and docile to deny self, the chief enemy of our souls!!!

Oh! Let us fix our gaze on high and we see God who descends from the eternal Bosom of his divine Father, coming to take on himself our human miseries; and to live as one of the poorest...and then...then slandered and condemned to death, and death on a cross between two criminals as if He were the worst among them!!!

Oh! Holy Faith!!! What things you teach those who meditate with love!!! My dearest daughter, I have always recommended to you trust and holy abandonment; but now I recommend them to you more than ever, asking you to exercise yourself in them, in the critical situations you will certainly encounter as Superior....

Wishing you all the graces of our Good Jesus necessary to make you a great Saint, while being patient and bearing all the crosses that the Spouse chooses to load on your shoulders...Do you like it this way?!!

I leave you with an embrace in the most Sacred Heart recommending to your prayers, your poor but faithful mother

Sr Margherita

May our good Jesus bless us.

Letter 148

From the way Mother addresses the letter, "daughter of my heart," we observe that there is a strong maternal bond with this sister, who has opened her heart with her, complaining of her long silence.

She assures her that her memory is still alive in her heart. Nevertheless, she reminds her to accept everything from God's hands because the Lord is jealous and wants her all for himself and so demands this trial of purification, adding that the unum necessarium [the one thing necessary] is to abandon herself in Him alone.

The content of the letter revolves around this strong spiritual tone in living the religious consecration with commitment.

Dear daughter of my heart,

If one looks at things from a purely human point of view, you have the right to lament about my long and deep silence.

It seems that my heart lives in frozen indifference, that it no longer remembers the benefits you poured on me with such prodigal kindness and with greater filial and loving affection. Not at all, my dear daughter. Your memory is preserved in my heart and will not be erased till we shall be in the

bosom of the eternal Father, where I hope it may increase in proportion to the deprivation. You know my child, that divine union becomes more intimate, the more the soul progresses in renunciation. Therefore, my daughter, I clearly see an all-divine consent in my long silence. Only Jesus has planned this fine mesh through which your heart and soul may be purified from excessive affection which you nourished and enjoyed, when you came with me to Rome. Jesus wants you to be completely His and before He possesses you entirely, He allows your spirit to undergo an intimate and intense trial of purification, in as much as the affection you nourished was vivid and intimate.

Therefore, rest assured that no one in the world is the cause of my silence, but only the divine Proprietor. I am very busy, yes, because besides my duty, I also have that of the late Mother Rosalia. I have enough to do and, to crown it all, sometimes I even have to deduct two hours from the night. But it is not for this that I do not find time to write you a few lines. What would they cost me? Truly nothing! even between the continuous coming and going of many visitors, which annoys me continually, I know how to find half an hour, one day or another, to satisfy your anxieties. But my dear daughter, believe me: the pen stops dead on paper every time, so that I find it impossible to continue. Who would believe it? God alone since He permits it. Do you know that I started to write to you on New Year's Day and till today, I have not succeeded in finishing it? Consequently no more laments, let God's will act on us as it pleases Him. Ah! my dear daughter, how sweet and gentle it is to abandon oneself. *L'unum necessarium* [The only thing necessary] for us is to abandon ourselves in Him alone.

We must become saints, you know, my daughter. And it is not difficult: it is enough if we forget ourselves and please God, moment by moment. Let us free ourselves from self and make room so that Jesus can reign freely in us. Let us allow Him to do his will and let us love Him in these tough situations, difficult at times; let us fix our attentive gaze on the beacon of his divine will: from there we can attain the light and strength for the present moment. Let us keep our spirit in peace and tranquillity even amid the dense darkness, pertaining to this life of union. Surely, we must ascend the mountain of myrrh and drink from his chalice, in order to arrive at perfect union! The more rapidly the blood flows from the heart because of sacrifice and mortification, the quicker the chalice is filled. You know that we are victims and apostles of souls, and before the chalice is full and overflowing, souls cannot profit from our

sacrifices and prayers. Therefore, shouldn't we be generous so that our chalice can be filled again, and the poor sinners will benefit from its surplus?

Have courage and let us work diligently first in our spiritual world that is through self-forgetfulness and by seeking to die to all created things, humbling ourselves more and more in the most profound abyss of our nothingness, while trailing the path of simplicity, of abandonment and of spiritual childhood. Let us give ourselves to him without reservation. Do you understand, my dear daughter?

I feel better with regard to my health: yes, let us thank the Lord, but I am not cured, my dear. At present I have been in bed with the usual attacks, since the January 25, the feast of St. Paul. Today I got up for Mass and I feel a little better. I am very happy to suffer. If you only knew my daughter, the crushing strain of intimate physical and moral sufferings through which the good God continually passes me in order to purify me? But I so eagerly long for suffering that this seems to me very little to please my Jesus. Suffering is a very small price to save souls and then I have so much reparation to make! Here in solitude, in the light of the Divine Sun, the reality of my past life is clear. What a difference, my daughter, from what I thought before! I only trust in the forgiveness, goodness and infinite mercy of God, who came and suffered so much to save the sinner. It is enough.

The news about the house of Rome is rather satisfactory. I am well and press forward under His paternal protection. Unlimited trust in Him alone. Have courage always. Jesus will be with you. Recommend me to Jesus for I am in great need. Give my regards to those good and dear daughters, one by one: I never forget them in my prayers. A fond embrace for you in the most pure heart of Jesus.

I am always yours in the Heart of Jesus

your poor Mother

I wish you a Happy Easter, for I do not know if I shall succeed in writing to you for Easter. As He wants. He guides us well.

Letter 149

Mother addresses this letter to a spiritual daughter, encouraging her to accept suffering courageously from God's hands and to move forward, totally abandoned in Jesus.

Being close to Christmas, she invites her to fix her gaze on the Divine Infant and on his Immaculate Mother, who are the real models to imitate.

D.M.E. O.

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

20 December 1939

My dearest daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I was delighted to receive your dear letter in which you tell me that you are in good health, etc. Let us thank our good Jesus for all his good dispositions in our regard!

Yes, of course I remember the conversation we had at Marsalfom!...And as you know, our Sweet Spouse seeks to try us out on occasions, to confirm our good inclinations... Let us allow him to do whatever He wants without hindering his plans.

It is true that our Ego suffers and struggles, but we can conquer with Divine help. Courage, my dear, and let us always move forward without dwelling on many thoughts that may distract us from fixing our gaze on total abandonment... Do you understand?

I am pleased that you are well and happy and I thank you for allowing me to share this with you, for I desired to know. Everything passes away...everything is easy for the love of our Crucified Beloved.

When we look at Him...everything becomes sweet...And the divine Infant is refused...He seeks shelter in an open cave...The serious reflections we can make should make us feel ashamed of our weaknesses. Let us love, let us love and that is enough. But it is not possible to become holy without humiliations, therefore let us become small, small, like the Infant of Bethlehem, near his manger and near his Immaculate Mother, who considers herself the most humble creature. I leave you, my dearest, next to such Models, and I stop here because my eyes are dim. *Fiat!*

I wish you all the holiness that the good Jesus, in whatever way He leads you, has destined for you. Do you understand?

Pray earnestly for your poor old [mother] who greatly wishes you to be holy, etc...

Our Holy Child consumes us with the fire which He brought for us in this ungrateful world...

The poor *Sr M. Margherita*

P.S. I wish you all the heavenly blessings of the Holy Child in order to make you all, Mother and sisters, all, all holy, becoming small, small, small. Have you understood?

Letter 150

Notwithstanding the infirmities of old age and illness, Mother is still able to write. She thanks the Giver of all good, she rejoices for the good news received and she urges the sister to direct everything and everyone to Jesus.

In the letter we observe a sense of detachment from persons and things: to remain united in the Sacred Heart, she reminds the sister, there is no need to meet one another face to face, but a brief thought and a sigh in the Heart of Jesus are enough.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 22 October 1945

My beloved daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I can hardly hold the pen, thanks to the Giver of all good!! My dear, there is no need to thank me so that I will not tire myself too much, because until I was preparing to write to you, and started to write, my eyes were already filled with tears; therefore, I will soon have to stop...

So, my dearest I rejoiced at your good news especially about the spirit of sacrifice with which you are all filled, and your fraternal union, etc. etc. May our common Spouse Jesus inflame you always more, so that you may surely attain that union desired by you and by Him!!

In order to be united in the Sacred Heart, there is no need for us to meet in person: a short prayer, a sigh in such a Heart is enough, we understand each

other at once. To meet, let us offer this sacrifice and trust in his providence. Do you understand?

Excuse the paper, which I think is very spoiled; you see my condition, poor and old as I am.

I tell you, let us truly love our All purely and seek to make Him loved everywhere and by everyone, etc. etc.

An embrace for each one and let us pray earnestly that the most Holy will of our Beloved Jesus be always done in us as the most wretched and poor

Sr Margherita desires.

May Jesus be in our hearts, in order that He may be loved by all.

Nar Divin ahraq it-qlub kollha tal-bnedmin! Fhimtha? (Divine Fire enkindle the hearts of all humanity! Have you understood?)

Letter 151

This letter reveals Mother Margherita's intimate feelings in a moving manner. "I am old in age and a child in virtue," she confesses, and bursts into sentiments of profound humility. She hopes that, though she feels unworthy, Jesus will hide her in a secret corner of his most Sacred Heart.

The letter continues with her characteristic expressions that flow spontaneously from a heart which truly loves.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 14 April 1946

My dearest daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I am old in age and a child in virtue. Believe me, my dear... No, I have not forgotten you; rather, quite often I recall that agreement we made between us, that we should always be united in the Most Sacred Heart of our ever amiable Jesus...

You asked me how I am being consumed by the flames of this sweet Love. I reply that I feel I am full of self-love...believe me, my dearest. However, I do not want to scandalize you, because I want to hope, that at the end, our good Jesus will grant me the grace to annihilate myself; eh! then I shall hide myself in a secret corner of the Blessed (I am ashamed to say), of His most Sacred Heart... Now

that I have no other duty, He finds me free. May the mad love of the divine Beloved compel us to forget ourselves, so that enraptured in Him, we no longer live but He alone, alone.

My dearest do your best to make the whole house a furnace of divine Love and you may be sure that all the dear sisters will be enkindled from this furnace, that is the Tabernacle. That Eucharistic Ciborium cries out loudly: souls, souls, love, love. Oh! How can you ever get tired, so inflamed with infinite fire! Do you understand? Yes, meditate and believe, believe and it will be enkindled... I leave you amid these flames, together with your companions while wishing you the remains of the fire [of love] which is eternal.

While embracing you one by one, I recommend to your prayers, the most worthless

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 152

Mother rejoices with the sister for having intensified her work for the benefit of souls, who cost the blood of her sweet Saviour. She exhorts her to place her trust in God and to eliminate any interference from the human ego, capable of ruining the work of God in us.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity, 10 January 1947

My most beloved daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I congratulate you for the progress made. May it be all for the glory of Christ the King, our only All! I am glad that you have intensified the work and thus the benefit for souls redeemed by the precious Blood of our sweet Saviour has increased too! Also rejoice, always in the same Saviour, and grow in pure love and firm trust in the paternal care of divine providence. Firmly place all your trust in the Beloved Prisoner, and move forward courageously. Beware of any interference on the part of our famous human self which is capable of destroying everything... Our Immaculate Mother Mary will not fail to help you in all your needs, etc...

My dear, let us always remain united in the Most Sacred Heart, even when the poor M. Margherita is released from this prison (who knows where she will be!). Meanwhile we shall always be where the divine Spouse disposes.

Therefore, that is enough, because I have become old on every count. *Fiat semper!* I thank you for everything, but particularly for that Child covered with that sheet!! Every time I look at him, he is so graceful that he impels me to kiss him.

Let us love Him and strive that He will be loved everywhere and by everyone near and far, always more, always more.

While embracing you together in the Holy Child, let us remain small, small, small like Him.

The poor sinner *Sr Margherita*

Letter 153

This letter is addressed to a sister from the community in Rome. Mother reminds her of their union in the Heart of Jesus, and that only in that intimate wound of their All can they feel close: the sister through her work always gazing up high, and Mother Margherita hidden and annihilated in secret.

D.M.E.O.

12 September 1948

My dearest daughter in the Heart of Jesus,

I am writing to remind you of our intimacy in the Heart of Jesus! Is it true? We feel close in the wounded Heart of him who is our All! You, in your work, in the zeal for his glory and for souls: so that they may be all his and one in mutual charity and in perfect union with the Heart of our common Beloved. The poor Sr Miseria in secret isolation, etc. etc. Do you understand? Oh! How can I love in a life so hidden and annihilated I cannot understand... We will only understand in heaven!

I am glad that you are very busy; but you should not lose sight of that which is above, above, that hidden Wound!! Pay attention, eh! One heart, one love and

that is enough. Jesus, Mary, Spouse and Mother, Father and Holy Spirit!! and enough!
enough!

Letter 154

The letter is addressed to the general Superior, to whom Mother asks pardon for the many times she showed her own will.

Besides, she declares that she always wants to be at her complete disposition.

Deus meus et omnia

Most beloved Mother,

First of all I ask you pardon for those times when I showed you my own will regarding the matter of going to Malta, etc. I am really sorry, but I have experienced extreme miseries. Forgive me, Mother forgive me. I beg you to tell me when I should depart and with whom...and whether to go directly from here or to come there first...

In this place three sisters are enough. I hope that the builders will come to build the school; I am not sure yet, but I have to do my best.

I hope that you are well, as I heartily wish you to be. Bless me and recommend me to the good Jesus. Your poor daughter *Sr M. Margherita*

If you need me, order me freely! The sisters are well, many thanks to our Good Jesus.

Letter 155

The letter is addressed to a Junior who is in Rome, as she will soon consecrate herself perpetually to the Giver of all good, who has chosen her from among thousands and thousands to be the bride of his only-begotten Son.

Mother fervently exhorts the young sister to commit herself to an intense preparation for that great and unforgettable day, through renunciation, annihilation and faithful correspondence to the many favours her spouse Jesus shows towards her.

J!M!J!F!

Deus meus et omnia

Dearest and beloved daughter in the Holy Eucharist,

I am very pleased to know that you are content and joyful in the house of the Holy City. Yes, you are right, and then not only in such happy circumstances, but also for the peace and unity found there. Continue to be more vigilant and eager to attain intimate union with the most Sweet Spouse of Virgins.

Yes, yes, my dear daughter. The day which your sincere heart has longed for will shortly arrive even for you. Then... then give yourself and consecrate yourself totally, irrevocably and perpetually to the Giver of all good who has chosen you from among thousands and thousands of others to be the Bride of His only Begotten Son. What luck! What blessed fortune! Love is repaid with love...Therefore my beloved daughter, you should correspond to such prodigal love with generous and pure love...You should be totally sacrificed for Love! Your life should be totally lost, annihilated in pure love and hidden with Christ in God Do you understand?

This is how you should faithfully correspond to so many graces lavished on you by Infinite Love! You are unworthy, yes, my dear daughter, but He who is Infinite does not look at the lowliness of his creatures; it is only love that steals his Heart and puts aside his greatness and majesty...Therefore, humble yourself in your own nothingness and even for your past ingratitude; but trusting in the most Sacred Heart of our most sweet Jesus, thrust yourself in that Ocean of goodness, deeply convinced that you will be readily accepted and there rejoice and enjoy your fortune and then... then be completely silent so that you may speak in recollection with your All. I leave all the rest to you ...

I assist you from here in spirit and together let us offer ourselves to the merciful Love to obtain mercy for all the ungrateful world.

Your poor Mother in the Heart of Jesus

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 156

In this letter, which concludes the second section, the two pillars which support Mother Margherita's spiritual life are very evident (with admirable simplicity).

She yearns for pure love and for complete union with the most sweet Beloved and she is ready to sacrifice herself totally for Him. At the same time, she feels unworthy because of her occupations and the dissipation and distractions that try to hinder her from looking towards heaven where she finds Him who awaits her to fill her with his gifts and with his favours.

J!M!J!F!

Most beloved daughter in the Sacred Heart of the ever amiable Jesus!

What can I tell you of my weariness?! Yes, my dearest, notwithstanding the many occupations, the dissipation and the various distractions that deprive me of the ever longed-for rest in the bosom of the Most Sweet Beloved, my thoughts are on heaven. But I am happy, I am resigned and often repeat the dear *Fiat*. Rather, I would like to sacrifice myself totally in honour of Him who loves us so immensely. Yes, yes, my dear, the spirit is ready though nature objects. Are you happy my beloved daughter? Do you believe me?... I feel rather well. I eat and sleep pretty well, thanks to our Beloved, etc. etc.

Sr M. Teresa's suffering impresses me, but *Fiat*. Are you happy?... Be convinced that I have written the plain truth Oh! Let us together love our Beloved Jesus and let us love Him purely without any self-love. Yes, yes, let us endeavour to satisfy the desire of Jesus to see us all his, Brides who are crucified with Him, prisoners with Him in the Tabernacle.

Oh! Let us soar, soar high, high up to find Him who loves us and who expects us to overflow with his charisms³⁰, with his gentleness, etc.

That is enough, otherwise my letter will be long and time does not permit it. The bell has already gone for Matins. Let us go and praise Him with the Angels and the Seraphs.

While embracing you fondly in the Sacred Heart, I bless you and recommend to your prayers the poorest *Sr Miseria*

³⁰ This word provokes a certain surprise because at that time, it was not in common use: it is only since Vatican Council II that it has become familiar. In any case, it expresses very clearly the knowledge that Mother Margherita had of the many and great gifts that God generously lavishes on humanity and which she experienced so intimately and surprisingly.

III – LETTERS TO OTHER RECIPIENTS

The letters collected in this section are nearly all addressed by Mother Margherita to her two religious nieces: Sr Antonia Abela (daughter of her sister Maria Antonia) and Sr Elena De Brincat (daughter of her brother Carmelo).

We again find even in these writings, together with comprehensible references of a more familiar character, the same spiritual tone in which Mother was totally immersed and which, irresistibly and untiringly tended to radiate around her.

Another two of Mother Margherita's letters have also been included, one to Fr Joseph Diacono and another one to Mgr Joseph De Piro. These letters allude to facts and moments of great historical importance in relation to the origin and to the development of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus.

1. Letter to Fr Joseph Diacono

Letter 157

The letter is certainly addressed to Fr Joseph Diacono, found of the Congregation because, concluding her letter, Motehr refers to him as "Father General".

At the end of a course of spiritual exercises, Mother joyfully communicated to him the great profit that the large number of sisters present acquired from it.

She recommends the Congregation to his prayer, so that its members may remain united in perfect charity, according to the teaching they received from him. She thanks him for what he did in the past and what he will still do in the future in favour of our dear Community.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 6 September 1918

Most Rev. Father,

I would like to inform you in brief that even this time the retreat was immensely successful thanks to our most beloved and sweet Jesus.

The preacher showed us the real essence of sanctity, etc. Silence and recollection were felt everywhere, notwithstanding that we were 73 in all ... What a beautiful crown of virgin Brides of the heavenly King. We hope that great profit will be derived from it, now that all of us are filled with so much fervour, that it is almost tangible. Consequently let us love our most sweet Jesus so that He may give us the grace to make Him known and loved by many, many hearts, who are still far from Him; some due to ignorance, some due to idleness and some even due to malice, etc. That is enough because my door is always knocking... but I am happy when I see them recollected and happy.

I beg you to accept my heartfelt greetings and confirm them by an abundant blessing and a fervent memento during Holy Mass for our entire Congregation, so that we will always be united in perfect fraternal love as you have taught us, etc.

Well, while I heartily renew my thanks, not only for what you did in the past, but for whatever you will do (as I hope in your goodness) for the benefit of our dear Congregation, who recognizes you as Father General etc. as your poor

daughter and humble servant,

Sr Margherita wishes.

2. Letter to Mgr Joseph De Piro

Letter 158

Mother asks Mgr Joseph de Piro who is about to leave for Rome, to obtain information regarding the papal approval of the Congregation of which she gives him a precise report.

The “decretum laudis” was then given on 2 July 1937 and the Holy See’s definite approval was given on 23 December 1946.

J!M!J!F!

Mother House, 6 April 1921

Most Rev Monsignor,

I take advantage of your goodness and profit from your trip to Rome to ask you the favour of procuring for us some information needed for our approval. I am asking this favour in agreement with the Bishop of Gozo, where our Mother House is situated, and I am also sending a manuscript copy of our Constitutions.

In the limited space of this letter, I can say that our religious Community was initiated on the Island of Gozo in 1880. Its founder was the Very Rev. Parish priest, Father Joseph Diacono, a pious priest, of good reputation, full of zeal and who is still living. The aim of the Congregation is the education and the instruction of girls, both internal and external, especially of the poorest. It particularly insists on the teaching of Catechism, preparing children to receive the Sacraments fruitfully. Apart from this, they are taught domestic science, how to read and write and also arithmetic.

The first Houses were founded in Gozo, one at the Mother House and the other at Qala village. As our Congregation continued to develop, it then spread to Malta where we have 9 houses at present. A house was also founded in Greece, on the Island of Corfù. At present our Congregation numbers 125 Professed Sisters, 17 Novices and 38 sisters who have passed away.

May the Lord continue to bless our Congregation by making it holy and leading it to flourish always in virtue and in zeal.

Confident that with God’s help you may safely bring this duty to its conclusion which is also our greatest desire, together with the whole community, I wish you

a safe journey, success in your work and a quick return. Asking for your paternal blessing, I have the honour to confess myself to be

Your most humble and obedient servant

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

General Superior of the Franciscan Tertiary Sisters¹

3. Letters to her niece, Sr Antonia Abela

Letter 159

After having given her niece, a nun with the sisters of Charity, some news about the family, Mother lets her pen flow with enthusiastic expressions that burst from her heart which overflows with love towards the divine Prisoner.

She gives precious advice on how a true religious should live, and how she should lose herself in Him who loves her so profoundly and who does not want anything else from her except love.

Deus meus et Omnia

Mother House, 10 May 1930

My dearest niece,

Thanks to our good Jesus, I have finally returned to our Mother House, where I can once again see our dear sisters, and also our dear relatives.

All are in good health, as dear Sr Agostina wrote to you already. <... >²

All our Sisters who know you, greet you and pray in unity of prayer, that we may all succeed in attaining the holiness expected of our state of life, so that we may one day meet in the heavenly Jerusalem to sing the hymn of the Virgins and to accompany the Immaculate Lamb wherever he goes. Do you wish it

¹ "Franciscan Tertiary Sisters" was the name that the Congregation had at that time. In November 1936 the name was changed to "Franciscan Sisters of Malta". The present name "Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus" was assumed in March 1970.

²² We consider it useful to insert here some brief information about some of Mother Margherita's relatives whom she mentions in these letters:

Besides her brother Michael, Mother mentions her sisters: Dolores and her son Joseph, Adelaide and her husband Michael, Sr Paolina (baptismal name M. Rosa), an Augustinian sister. Among the nieces mentioned two were sisters in her own Congregation: the sisters Sr Agostina and Sr Scolastica, daughter of her brother Saviour. She also mentions a brother and a sister (Joseph and Josephine) of Sr Antonia Abela's father.

so, my dear? Ah! Yes, yes, my dearest, let us always keep our mind focused on the heavenly homeland, always living detached from all worldly things, which can never satisfy our heart made only for God... Let us always thank our most Sweet Spouse Jesus, with a truly thankful heart for He deigned to choose us from among millions of others, much worthier than us. Let us seek to satisfy His Infinite love by our generous correspondence...Let us love Him, yes...let us love him with pure love, let us love only, solely Him; especially in the intimate moments of Holy Communion, during meditation and during the visits we pay Him, a Prisoner in the Tabernacle.

Ah! My dearest niece, how good it is to stay alone with Him alone! Try it and you will feel something of the Divine...heavenly...of paradise... However you have to be very recollected and detached in order to find Him alone, alone. Do you understand? I hope you do understand me well, eh? Think of Him only, seeking to keep away from everyone; enjoy the sweetness of the dear solitude of these mountains, so picturesque; look up higher, higher, higher and you will find the Creator of all the universe and then contemplate...and then love, and then, then...That is enough, I leave you in the Most Sacred Heart where I always want to find you, do you understand? <...>

Please convey my respectful greetings to your dear M. Superior and to all the dear sisters, one by one, to those I am acquainted with, even those at the Hospital, at the Orphanage; well, to everyone as well as to Lady Countess and remind them to pray for your poor aunt

the unworthy *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 160

Mother thanks her niece for her letter and rejoices for the office that has been entrusted to her: that of looking after the children. She gives her spiritual and practical directives on how she should carry out this delicate service; therefore, she urges her to be generous towards her sweet Spouse.

The letter ends with a Christmas greeting: that the Holy Infant may enkindle her heart and that of her little ones with pure and holy love.

Deus Meus et Omnia

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

15 December 1930

My dear niece Sr M. Antonia Abela,

I was pleased to receive your dear letter and I am glad that you are happy, as, thanks to the good God, the Brides of the Lord should always live their holy vocation...

I am also glad for the office assigned to you by your Superiors: to take care of the children...Oh! What a holy and precarious office. My dear, pray most earnestly to the sweet Jesus who was so fond of the little ones. Yes, pray to him to enlighten you clearly on how to cultivate them well in his holy love, to keep them away from evil and to instil true Divine love in their tender hearts...

Be careful, my dear, never to love in a natural way but only for the love of Jesus, therefore without being partial... Keep your heart always pure, expressing perfect love towards our Spouse Jesus who takes care of his Brides with exacting jealousy. Do you follow me? I hope so.

Now that you have already made your holy vows, you are happier and more careful to cooperate generously with your holy vocation...Isn't it true? Don't you feel as grateful and obliged as ever towards the sweet Beloved who gives us a taste of such sweet satisfaction unknown to the poor worldly people? Yes, yes, my dearest, let us always be imbued with such sentiments so that we may live the life of pure love, and of true and total detachment from creatures, and united only to our always amiable Spouse Jesus...

This is the sincere greeting I send you for the coming Christmas: that the Lord may enkindle you with that holy fire of pure, pure love for the most holy Child Jesus and that with his fire, you will succeed in enkindling the hearts of all those children...and thus Jesus will have a crown of innocent children to comfort him amidst the many offences he receives from many and many ungrateful sinners. Are you content my dear?

I finish off by sending you the wishes of your aunt and uncle etc., who are all well, of your younger brother and sisters... your cousins Sr Scolastica, Sr Agostina and Sr Eufrosina...then your friends...

For the moment I am staying at Casal Caccia, where we have a new house. Do your best to present my sincere greetings to your R.R. Superiors, asking them to remember me in their prayers.

Then at last, accept an embrace from your most affectionate aunt,

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 161

Mother replies to the letter addressed by her niece to her aunt Adelaide, her sister.

While Mother exhorts her to correspond generously to the gift of the religious vocation, she reveals her state of being tormented by a thought: that of feeling always crushed under the weight of her great debts, notwithstanding that she has worn the Holy Franciscan Habit for fifty years.

She gives vent to her love and invites her to live the life of love, and to act always for God's greater glory and honour, not to find herself, at the end, poor and wretched like her.

Deus Meus et omnia

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

14 April 1931

My very dear niece,

Reading your letter addressed to aunt Adelaide, my sister, I was very pleased to learn of the joy you are experiencing in the way you have chosen; I can understand you, having the same vocation. My dear, how great is our duty to respond generously to this Prodigal Lord! Yes, my beloved, I have been wearing the Franciscan Habit for 50 years, and I feel crushed under the weight of great debts, finding myself so poor in virtue and merits!

From now on do your best to enrich yourself with the most beautiful religious virtues, so that the same things that have befallen me, poor and wretched as I am, do not happen to You. How great and beautiful our vocation is; therefore, we should be grateful to our most sweet Spouse Jesus, for having chosen us, poor creatures, from among thousands of others who are more capable and worthier than us. Love can only be repaid with love. Let us then infinitely love Him who has loved us with boundless love! May He be always in our heart, on our lips, in our mind: ever, always living a life of love, gentle and sweet, at times even arid love; it does not matter as long as we do everything for his greater glory and honour!!!...

Thanks to our good Jesus, I feel well. I attended all the sacred functions of Holy Week. At present I am in a new small house at Xaghra, Gozo. We have some small boys and girls... thus we can be of benefit to them. Well, my dear, let us love without measure...But it is necessary to struggle always against our sworn enemy, who is always within us, that is our self-love, do you understand? You also feel it, don't you? How wicked he is! How cunning! Let us always pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Virgin to grant us the grace to conquer him till the end...

Now I send my wishes of peace and pure, divine love, to you as well as to the Superiors and all your sisters, at the same time, while signing off, I beg you to pray for the most wretched among the Brides of the Lord.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 162

Once again Mother Margherita writes to her niece, expressing her joy and gratitude to God in knowing that she is in good health and happy in the religious state she has chosen.

With a maternal heart she gives her heartfelt advice about her spiritual life. She turns to herself; repeating the same thought of the previous letter: "I have already worn the religious habit for 50 years and I have not yet started to be an exemplary sister."

Deus meus et omnia

22 July 1931

My dearest niece,

I learnt about your good health and happiness from the letter addressed to your aunt; I can tell you the same about myself, thanks to our good Jesus.

Yes, my dearest, we are infinitely grateful for the remarkable grace of our holy vocation. And now that you are on holiday, avail yourself of this time to recollect your spirit to make up for those moments when you are occupied with your work. For we shall have to render a strict account to the Lord, if we are not diligent in using our time well.

Meanwhile, I wish you as usual many graces from the Lord, so that you may become holy, and a great saint...

Pray for me, because I have already worn the religious habit for 50 years and I have not yet started to be an exemplary sister.

May the good Jesus bless us and keep us embraced in His Most Sacred Heart forever.

Your most affectionate aunt

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 163

Having returned to Malta from Rome (where for some months she had replaced the novice mistress, who was sick), Mother Margherita writes to her niece giving her detailed news regarding her relatives.

In the last part of the letter, Mother exhorts her to live the spirit of Lent in order to be able to prepare herself properly for Easter. She invites her to stay with the sweet Jesus Prisoner in the Holy Tabernacle in her free time, so that she could taste the intimate joy of faithful and generous souls with their sole and absolute Beloved.

Deus meus et omnia

Casa! Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

24 February 1933

My most beloved niece,

Here, I am writing to give you our news...

Therefore, infinite thanks to our Sweet Spouse Jesus, I arrived safely in my country after a wonderful trip. <...>

During this holy Lent let us stay closer to our Passionate Spouse from where we learn to suffer while loving and to love while suffering...She who loves understands...In silence one learns to speak... During your free time, remain with the sweet Jesus Prisoner in the Holy Tabernacle, thus you will taste the interior

joy of

faithful and generous souls with their Only and Absolute Beloved... Do you understand?

Take courage, and keep moving always forward joyfully in the Lord; all that we can do and suffer for Him who has died crucified for us is very little.

I finish by sending my most cordial greetings to all the Superiors and Sisters, and then I embrace you in the Sacred Heart while recommending to the prayers of all the poorest

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 164

Replying to her niece's letter, Mother first advises her maternally on her spiritual progress. Then she congratulates her for the forthcoming Canonization of the foundress of her Institute, Sr Giovanna Antida Thouret.

She adds that such an event should be for all a stimulus to sanctity, which is the only thing the true and faithful brides of the Crucified Christ should desire.

Deus meus et omnia

Mother House, 2 January 1934

My dearest niece,

I was very pleased to receive your dear letter, full of wishes etc. and I reciprocate the same, filled with sanctity etc...

I am glad that you are well, not only physically but even more, in making progress in love for suffering, for humiliations etc. etc. as we see in the example our most Sweet Spouse Jesus has given us himself; as well as his saints.

By the way: within a few days there will be the solemn canonization of your Mother Foundress. Perhaps you will be fortunate to attend the ceremony. You could be present in spirit everywhere... thus you can enjoy the abundant fruits of her example and even of her protection, etc.

That is enough. Therefore, I congratulate you and all your Congregation for this great honour etc... May it be for us a spur to virtue... not to arrive at great

things but to give ourselves totally to holiness that is the true and only yearning of the true and faithful Brides of the Crucified.<...>

Finally, I recommend myself to your prayers while I recommend you heartily to the pure love of the Sweet Jesus.

Your most affectionate aunt

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 165

Mother has a doubt about her niece's health; therefore, she asks her to inform her and, if; eventually, her duty is changed, being entrusted with the care of the sick, she invites her to be attentive, more serious and more recollected in God.

As it is Lent, she exhorts her to draw profit from this period in order to meditate the mystery of the passion and the death of the Lord more profoundly.

Deus meus et omnia

28 March 1936

Mother House

My dearest niece,

As I do not know if you have moved house, I am sending this letter to the same Institute.

I urge you, my dear to be more attentive, more serious, more recollected in God, in case you are taking care of the sick!! I want to think that it is so, if you are not sick yourself. God's will be always done! Meanwhile I pray you not to take too long to explain your actual position...

I avail myself of this opportunity to greet you for the coming Easter feasts: first the sorrowful, then the glorious celebrations, full of graces, of sanctification etc.... Our good Jesus was glorified after having suffered infinitely. Even we, as his Brides, hope that, after having lived in this vale of tears in poverty, we shall go and meet Him eternally in his beautiful Paradise. Do you like it so, my beloved? Eh! Let us love, let us love, let us love in truth, and everything will be given to us...

I strongly wish to receive news about your Rev. M. Superior whom I often recommend to the good God ... Give her and the other good sisters, my dear and sincere wishes. I recommend to the prayers of all your poor and most affectionate aunt

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 166

Mother expresses great joy because her niece has informed her that she has been admitted for her perpetual profession. Besides beautiful and holy wishes, Mother pours out fervent, maternal advice on how to prepare herself properly for this great day as a true bride of the Crucified Christ.

She recommends her to entrust her preparation to the Immaculate Virgin and to all the Saints so that they may adorn her with their beautiful virtues: thus she may courageously draw close to this mystical union. She does not promise her roses and flowers, but renunciation, work and suffering: this is what she should expect, always and everything for love, as well as to please the Crucified Spouse.

She adds varied family news, but always at the end turning to the spirit.

Deus meus et omnia

25 August 1936

House of Adoration

My dearest niece,

Your dear letter brought me your very dear and precious news, that is, of your perpetual consecration to the Most High God...

What luck! What fortune! Certainly we are not worthy of all this, we who are such poor creatures...What goodness, what condescension on the part of such a sweet Divine Spouse! Therefore, how careful you must be in order to render yourself less unworthy... My dearest, the finest quality through which you can make yourself somewhat precious before your Divine Spouse is holy humility...awareness of your lowliness, of your nothingness etc. etc.; then total detachment from all creation, especially from yourself, your will, your judgement

etc. Make of yourself a white, white host to be immolated on the altar of the Sacred Heart! Do you understand?

Now at last you have experienced what it means to be a sister of Charity, you already know the sacrifice that you have to suffer in order to become the true Bride of the Crucified... But this last action, will make you taste its sweetness better... Endeavour my dearest, by all means to prepare yourself carefully, asking earnestly, humbly and confidentially the Immaculate Virgin and all the Saints to adorn you with their virtues; then throw yourself reverently at the feet of our Spouse Jesus and ask him, with a humbled heart, to deign to apply his infinite merits to your poor soul, and thus adorned you will be able to advance boldly towards mystical union.

I would have liked to tell you many other things, especially to recommend to you the true and pure love by which you can only please the Spouse; and I remind you that the Bride cannot expect crowns of roses from the Crucified Spouse...

In this short life, we suffer, we work, but in the next we shall rejoice forever. Look at your dear aunt Adelaide, after having lived for 76 years, helped by so many sisters, relatives and priests, she passed away so calmly and in peace, that she seemed to be asleep in a sweet rest... Now, offer your sacrifice even for the repose of her soul and do not act feebly by crying etc... we should not delight in our dear ones here because we have already given them up, but in the next. Do you understand? When she read your letter, she was pleased that you are going to pronounce your Holy Vows. She said goodbye and blessed you, etc. R.I.P...

She had an inflammation of the throat, but it was not very painful; she was calm, as she always was throughout her life. She passed away almost on the day of the Assumption of our Heavenly Mother!!! I could not be present either, as I am still in bed because of my leg, but now I am recovering...*Fiat semper!*

How amiable is this *Fiat* even in bitter things, isn't it true, my dear? Yes, yes, let us always repeat this sweet *Fiat* so that we may arrive in the next life. Moreover, all our family is well, even dear Sr Paolina and Dolores; Uncle Michael is resigned and he will perhaps stay with Cetta. I am in Malta at the House of Adoration for treatment, Sr Agostina has urged me to write to you not to keep you waiting longer for the news as it will be worse, isn't true? Therefore, take courage, be strong, strong. <...>

Your most affectionate aunt

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 167

Mother congratulates her niece for having been chosen as the bride of the Eternal King, unlike others who perhaps are worthier than her. Her joy, fervour and concern are expressed, as usual, in holy exhortations: the bride of a God three times holy, of a Crucified God, who is insulted, wounded and humiliated but then glorious and infinitely eternal, should only live with her spouse and for her spouse.

She wishes her courage, strength and joy to continue the long earthly voyage, drawing everything from the Tabernacle, where she will be enkindled with holy zeal for the salvation of souls.

Finally, after having given her other family news, she advises her niece to work, until time permits, for the love of the sweet Spouse Jesus, because when old age sets in, she would be unable to do anything else.

D.M.E.O.

House of Adoration, 9 September 1936

My dear niece and daughter,

I rejoice at your luck, so much desired by so many good souls, who in spite of their nobility and capability, have been denied this grace, either due to their parents' ignorance, or to their ill-health, etc. Well, they cannot accomplish their holy desires...and we, wretched and poor though we may be, were allowed to be espoused not to a worldly King but to an Eternal one. What luck to be envied! What fortune! What a gratuitous choice, on the part of a God, three times Holy!...

Now you have given yourself unreservedly to this Most High Lord. Have you considered such a promise? Have you meditated seriously my dearest, on the holy challenge you must engage yourself in, to correspond generously to the love of the Spouse? Know, my dear daughter, that the Bride should never look at, think, bear, act, and above all, ever love anything other than the Spouse, with the Spouse and only for the Spouse...Do you understand me well? This Spouse is crucified, insulted, wounded and humiliated... but then...then infinitely glorious forever!!!

Then, my dearest, it is worthwhile to live crucified for a few years and then to enjoy love eternally. Courage my dear, and be strong, strong and always joyful, continue on your journey, and though it may seem long and difficult, love makes it sweet and brief. Eh! Seek your comfort and help from the Holy Tabernacle, close to the Prisoner Spouse. He will enkindle you with his fire and then, filled with courage, you will enkindle those good innocent souls And oh! If you succeed in saving only one!... but not only one, there will be many: at least, at least nurture their innocence longer etc. Well, humble and trustful prayer is the key to all graces. Do you understand? Let us pass on to another subject.

I wrote to the Superior in Rome to send someone, but I do not know if the letter arrived in time... Anyway, let us always leave everything to Divine Providence! At present, I feel a little better, thanks to the good Jesus but I still cannot walk without a stick. Now I am going to the Mother House. and you can write to me instead of to your good aunt R.I.P.

Recently Sr Paolina, and then aunt Dolores and her son Joseph who has been in America for years, came to see me. All of them are well according to their respective ages. Eh! Work, my dearest, as long as you are healthy and time permits, for the time will come when you can no longer work. All for the love of our Sweet Beloved Jesus with whom and in whom we live; and one day, when God wills, He will call us to His eternal embrace.

Cordial greetings from all and an embrace from your loving aunt

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 168

While expressing the desire to receive news about the family, Mother cannot hide the wish to know and to participate in the joy of her niece's new life after her perpetual profession which has bound her more intimately to the Crucified Spouse.

Referring to some family news, her thoughts once again turn to Him; she speaks of his love, and reminds her niece that the intimate joys enjoyed at the moment of her profession, can be enjoyed always, especially when she renews her profession in the face of a sacrifice.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 28 October 1936

Dear niece and daughter in Jesus,

How have you left us without any news? Maybe you think beautiful memories are enough for us. No. I thank you in the name of all, but we are not satisfied without your faithful news. We have been very sincere in communicating to you our news even that which was sad and disconsolate and you write nothing? Has the letter been lost perhaps? I don't know, I only tell you that your father, brothers and all your uncles, worry about you and anxiously demand news of you. Therefore, my dear, immediately inform us of your state, now that after your perpetual Profession you are happier and more firmly united to your Crucified Spouse!!!

Meanwhile, my dear, I cannot tell you anything except that thanks to our good Jesus, we are enjoying good health; even my leg is better. Some days ago aunt Dolores came over to Gozo and remained for a fortnight with her son Joseph. Thus she kept uncle Michael, who is a widower, company... Thus the world is always in motion. We thank our good Spouse Jesus who thinks of us and gives strength and comfort according to our trust and the love we nurture for Him... Let us love Him, let us love Him, my dear because He merits it and even in reparation for the insults which He receives at present more than at other times! Do you understand?

Who knows how immensely you rejoiced at the holy and happy fate of your profession... What sweet moments! What a sweet union! What secret and intimate experiences! ... I would have liked to tell you more, but I await a hint of acknowledgment from you to write at greater length; you would have had a sacrifice to offer him, if you knew beforehand. But now it is nothing compared with the holy ceremony, which will be perpetual and which you can renew at every moment of your life, especially in the hour of sacrifice. Then, then after a long or short life we shall go and enjoy forever not only our sole, Beloved Spouse, but even everyone else, all our dear ones, with more merits for all those we have given up...

A cordial greeting to the very dear sisters I know and an embrace for you, from your most affectionate aunt,

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 169

Mother reassures her niece, giving her news about the family, particularly about her father. She invites her to thank the heavenly Spouse, who takes care of those she has left for his love.

She desires her niece to detach herself from everything in order to be able to find everything in heaven. Besides she asks her to trust in her words, even if at present she does not understand clearly the reason for the advice she gives her.

Deus meus et omnia

Mother House, 25 November 1936

My dearest niece,

Rest assured, do not worry about anything, for your dear father is well cared for. Your dear sister Josephine takes care of him and respects him. He is working and your brother Joseph works too; everybody loves him for his faithfulness, and so he lacks nothing; only pray for them so that the Lord may keep them in good health and in his grace, all the rest is superfluous. Therefore, give ample thanks to your heavenly Spouse, who in our absence looks after our dear ones whom we have left for his love. Do you understand? However, on my part, I will do my best to watch over them; and you may be tranquil; you only have to pray for them to the Divine Spouse, who knows how to and can repay the sacrifices done for his love. Do you understand? I hope so.

And what are you going to do with all these photos? Every time you look at them, pray God for the dead, and for the living that they may in turn make a good and holy death, so that we may all be united in heaven one day to praise the Divine Mercy... Then we shall surely bless all the sacrifices we have made for Jesus, our most sweet Spouse! Do you like it, this way? My dear and beloved daughter, let us lift our hearts up to heaven, to heaven, where we shall find our dear ones who preceded us. In this life, one goes before and the other follows; but all of us, all, have to depart, even nephews and grand nephews, one after the other...

Perhaps you say, what does my aunt mean by this? Eh! I intend to tell you what I understand today and what you, my dear, cannot understand at your age, but if God grants you a long life you will understand clearly. Therefore, do

you understand? Let us love our sweet Spouse and He will satisfy our just desires...

I am very sorry that your dear Mother Superior is still suffering but let her console herself for within a short time our good Jesus will comfort her... Meantime, stay calm and enjoy the peace of your holy vocation; seek diligently to be generous and full of fervour in sacrifices, so that you will attain that grade of sanctity which the Lord desires of you, and for me only pray for this same purpose which I hope is not too distant...

Your poor aunt greets everyone and recommends herself to the prayers of all.

Sr M. Margherita

Letter 170

The death of her niece's Superior offers Mother a starting point for beneficial reflections on death. Everything passes, joys and sorrows: it is important to avail ourselves of every occasion to learn the wisdom of God and to be prepared for the Spouse's arrival for the eternal nuptials.

She encourages her niece to accept sorrow and suffering, on the example of Jesus, in order to be able to present herself purified at God's fair judgement.

Deus meus et omnia

House of Charity, 3 April 1937

My dearest and beloved niece,

Thanks to our good Jesus, I feel a little better and can walk up to the chapel without using a wheelchair. I hope that I shall be able to continue even if only in this way... But may the most holy Will of our Amiable Spouse Jesus be always done!

See! the good soul of your beloved Mother Superior has left this exile!! R.I.P. How I awaited her news! See how everything comes to an end in this life... how everything passes away, joy and sorrow!... Blessed is she who knows how to profit from such occasions...Therefore, my dear, learn how to avail yourself from every occasion, to advance in holy perfection as our holy vocation demands. Thus at the arrival of the Spouse He will invite us to enter at once for his eternal wedding feast... Then how truly blessed we shall be!!! Then we shall bless pain more than joy,

suffering more than enjoyment! We have considered this well during the holy time of Lent and then in these Easter festivities. After a shameful death, such a glorious Resurrection, then his Ascension into Heaven in the company of so many holy Patriarchs and Prophets, etc. etc. Have courage and keep moving joyfully forward in the Lord!...

I thank you for the dear, and for me very precious, remembrance of your Mother Superior of whom I anxiously awaited news, and whom, from my lowliness, I always recommended to the Lord, as I recommend her now that hopefully, she is enjoying her eternal repose; but we do not know the nature of the just judgment of the good God... At times He purifies us and then He recompenses us fully...

I congratulate the new Superior and I advise her to bear the heavy cross by trusting herself totally to the Good Jesus in the Holy Ciborium, and from Him expect all help and comfort.

I finish off by reciprocating the greetings of holy peace to all and, while recommending to you the poorest sinner, I wish the whole Community true fraternal union etc. Thus it will be an entirely holy Family according to the Heart of our most amiable Spouse Jesus...

Your most affectionate aunt

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 171

Mother again sends her niece news about her father. She instils serenity and prepares her for his approaching death, reminding her of the reward that awaits him for having offered his daughter to the Lord.

About herself she informs her that, even if she can only walk with difficulty, she is happy because her Beloved Prisoner is near and she can go to him whenever she wants. She asks her niece to pray for her, as she does not aspire for anything else except her eternal homeland.

D.M.E.O.

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

29 June 1937

My dearest daughter and niece,

I had already sent your letter when Sr Agostina sent me yours. Now that some time has passed and news about your father is still the same, I want to be clear with you about his state as I have already written in Sr Agostina's letter. Therefore, as I have told you, there is no need for you to worry, for he is at peace and well looked after, both in body and in soul... Besides, your father is elderly, and cannot endure the strain much longer. And when he is so well looked after and happy, what more could you wish for? Thank Jesus, who takes such loving care of Him, in compensation for the sacrifice in having offered you to His service. So rest assured and trust in God's will, and pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to continue to look after him, more than ever before... You can be sure that this is the whole truth. I went to town on the 24th of this month and Sr Agostina confirmed all that I wrote to you.

I feel better here in the village, though I can only walk with difficulty. But I am very happy because I am near our beloved Prisoner and I go there whenever I want... For this, may He be thanked and praised everywhere and by everyone. Amen

I leave you my dear, in the Sacred Heart of our only Spouse, asking you to pray ardently for your wretched aunt who wishes nothing but heaven...

Please give my best regards to all your family, etc.

The poor *Sr M. Margherita*

Letter 172

Writing to her niece as Christmas is approaching, Mother wishes her the gift of humility to please Jesus; she invites her to rejoice with the Divine Beloved who deigned to make himself small for our love, and to love him because love is repaid with love.

She exhorts her niece to be united with her on that Holy Night, near the crib, together with the Immaculate Mother, to adore him and thank him and renew their consecration, in fidelity and generosity for the future.

Deus meus et omnia

Casal Caccia - Maria Bambina Convent

17 December 1937

My dear niece and daughter,

Christmas is approaching and I hope that even this year we shall celebrate it. I have already celebrated the great day of the Birth of our sweet little Infant 75 times, and every time I believe that it will be the last! However, my health shows me that I won't celebrate too many more Christmases... Let us abandon ourselves to Divine Providence. Meanwhile, my wishes to you are that these feasts will be filled with every heavenly blessing. May the Holy Babe Jesus make us small, small like him for we can only please him by becoming small.

The sisters are preparing for the concert³ for Christmas night, and they are distracting me. How sweet their singing is and how melodious their songs... Who can tell my dear, how many beautiful songs you have prepared? Oh! Yes, yes, let us rejoice with our Divine Beloved who has deigned to make himself so small for our love... Let us love Him, yes, let us love Him, because love is repaid with love. Therefore, let us be united in Spirit on that Blessed and Holy night near his Crib and, together with our Immaculate Mother, merge our poor affections with hers, so warm and pure, to thank Him while renewing our consecration... proposing to be more faithful and generous in the future etc. etc.

Now let us pass on to something else. In the first days of last November, I went to Malta and I again met your dear sister, Sr M. Paolina, who was not feeling well. But now she feels better, however she is still confined to bed owing to her weak heart. Meanwhile she is very happy and resigned although sad that she cannot receive communion as usual. She recommends herself to your prayers while embracing you dearly...

Even my elderly sister Dolores, your aunt, is well, considering she is 90 years old. The paper is nearly full. My brother, Uncle Michael, comes to see me at times; he is well, but he has advanced in years too. Well, my dear all of us are growing old. The Lord has blessed us with a long life. Oh! that it were filled with holy works! Dear uncle Michael, aunt Adelaide's husband, passed away R.I.P., after being comforted by the last Rites. Let us pray God for him, so that it won't be long before they meet in an eternal embrace. Your dear father is still the same; he speaks a little clearer but he is resigned. Your brother goes near Sr Agostina often. I think they will write to you about this...

³ Here she is simply referring to the rehearsals of the hymns to be sung during the liturgical celebration.

Letter 173

Mother is content with the news received about her niece from the Bishop of Gozo who jokingly advised her not to be as bad as her aunt.

Mother, turning the joke around, and taking it seriously, exhorts her niece not to be like her, who after 58 years of religious life can say that she has only the name and the habit of a religious: as long as there is still time and health, she asks her to seek to acquire merits, save souls, sow the good seed which would bear flowers and fruits in good time, especially in small children.

In concluding the letter, she reminds her that Christmas is approaching, a time of tenderness, of caresses to the Holy Babe, who came into his world and did not find a small place to welcome him.

D.M. E. O.

Casal Caccia - Jesus of Nazareth Convent

(Probable date: December 1941)

My dearest niece,

I am truly happy with the news that His Excellency brought me about you. He told me that he warned you not to be as bad as I am... Yes, my dear, be careful to be a good, or rather, a holy religious because after 58 years of religious life I can only say that I have the habit and the name of a true religious! Poor me! Take care to do your best because time is still in your favour and you are healthy; be careful to gain many merits for heaven and to save souls... Be zealous with the dear children under your care, make them practice little sacrifices, inspire in them true love towards our Lord Jesus Christ and towards the Virgin Mother and do not reason that they do not understand, that it is useless; no, no, my dear, do your very best, sow the good seed in these tender hearts and by time good plants will sprout forth, then the flowers, then the fruit. Although you yourself may not see it, but the Good Lord will, and repay you abundantly. Have strong courage.

Well, the time of sweetness and caresses towards the most holy Infant of Bethlehem is approaching. He came into this world which He created himself, and yet did not find a small place which was more fit and comfortable than a cold and dreary cave...What Infinite love and what dense ingratitude!

My dear, the letter for my birthday did not arrive. It got lost; for my dear sisters would have sent it where I was, as they had done at other times. It's not for the greetings... I only wanted your news... The Lord permits these things at times to mortify our anxiety; so may He be blessed. Amen!

Therefore, we have agreed: let us love, let us love Him who loves us in preference to many others, without any merit on our part, and let us correspond with generous and strong love, in both prosperous and adverse circumstances. Do you understand? I hope so... On that blessed night we shall meet near the Holy Crib and tell the newly-born Babe many beautiful and holy things and remain in company with his Most Holy Mother to adore Him, love Him, etc., etc., etc., etc.

Your elderly aunt

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 174

Mother confides to her niece that her end is near and she is engrossed only in Him as she has no other duties. She feels burdened with debts, however she is certain of God's forgiveness even if she fears the great judgement.

This leads her to think back: sixty-three years of religious profession, she affirms, is a long time; who knows if I have lived for at least one day as a true religious? In fact, for her, what counts in life is pure love towards Jesus; the rest is vanity and misery.

She thus recommends herself to her prayers for the present and more so after her death and plans to meet her in heaven, through Christ's mercy. At the same time, she renews her invitation to love Jesus and others for his love; to be grateful for the grace of her vocation; to keep herself hidden in the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist and thus to live as a pure and holy Host.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House of Charity

(Probable date: August 1946)

My dearest niece Sr M. Antonia

Finally, I am going to write you a few lines, in which I intend to tell you a few, but very significant things.

My dearest, my life has been long and it is almost nearing its end. Everything indicates it: my eyesight, my hearing etc. etc. but it doesn't matter, as I have no more duties to perform. (Infinite thanks to the highest Good). I am only engrossed in Him, as far as my extreme misery permits me... Only I feel burdened with debts etc. etc. It is true that our Beloved Saviour pays for each repented fault, but I always fear his great judgement...!

My dear, oh! Everything has passed. All my life's events have passed like a dream...I cannot say anything about them. It is better to stop for I have already taken up my pen three times. My dear, let us love, let us love our Amiable Jesus purely and live the life of his pure love because only this is enough, the rest is vanity and misery.

I embrace you in the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary our gentle Mother, whose Assumption into Heaven we celebrate shortly. On that day it will be 63 years since my first Profession... What a long time! Who knows if have spent one single day as a true religious! Poor me! Pray earnestly for me now and more so after my death and I, from my poverty will never cease praying for you till we meet in Heaven (through the infinite mercy of our Good Jesus, our Love and our All!)

I advise you heartily to love Him always more purely, and others, for love of Him. Be always humble and grateful for your Holy vocation. Keep yourself always hidden in the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist; when you are free, seek to stay always close, live as a pure and holy host... Do you understand? This is our only aim, in this vale of tears! Do you understand? I hope so, my dearest. I embrace you once more in the Sacred Hearts, while recommending your poor last aunt

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

Letter 175

Mother rejoices with her niece for the service she generously carries out and exhorts her to persevere in obedience, for the glory of God and the benefit of souls.

She admits she is physically weak, declaring herself capable only of troubling the sisters who serve her so lovingly.

Mother foresees the end is near and therefore beseeches her niece to pray and ask others to pray so that she can fulfill the most holy will of God till her last breath; and thus, at the end, the Spouse will come for the victory of his infinite mercy.

D.M.E.O.

Mother House, 14 February 1949

My dear niece,

Your letter arrived safely and I was happy to hear that you are busy: the work carried out through obedience and for God's glory is a pleasure for those who are healthy and willing...Isn't it true?

Your poor, old aunt can do nothing except trouble the sisters and make them merit. They serve me with filial love... I have had the 'flu twice this winter; at present I have a cough which exhausts me. It's very little compared to my gross sins.

Well, let us pass on to another subject. Rejoice my dear, that you can still work. Be always ready to help everyone generously for the love of our Beloved and Sweet Jesus! Yes, my dear, never tire of serving and helping others to love Our Spouse, to whom we can never be grateful enough for our religious vocation... Do you understand?

Perhaps this will be my last letter...who can tell, as I recover from one illness and succumb to another... However, finally my Spouse will come to carry away the victory of His infinite mercy. Pray my dearest, and ask others to pray so that I can fulfill his most Holy Will till my last breath. Every now and then drop me a few lines and heartily convey my good wishes to your Superior and to the Sisters whom I ask to remember me in their prayers.

With a sincere embrace in the Heart of our Good Jesus, I pray Him to consume us in his Most Holy Fire as

Your poor aunt

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart ardently desires.

On 6 February I celebrate 68 years in religion: What debts!!

Letter 176

Mother sees the positive side of things, always and on all occasions. That which by nature makes her suffer, is for her an occasion to be offered to the good God.

She tells her niece, desirous of family news, about the family concerns which are most to heart. However, she emphasises, the important thing is to pray for them so that they may be good and holy and together love the Spouse Jesus, yearning for his eternal embrace.

D.M.E.O.

My dear niece,

In order to make us suffer a little, our good Jesus permits us to feel the sacrifice which separation brings along with it; thus we have the opportunity of offering him beautiful and holy 'little flowers' [little sacrifices]; isn't it true? Yes, then it does not matter; when we do not often receive news, we should reason: perhaps the letter got lost, and we resign ourselves... <...>

I recommend to you to pray for Mother Superior, and even for the other sisters, so that our good Jesus may grant them total resignation and all the comfort they need. Meanwhile, you, my dear, do not deprive me of their news and yours...

Let us love our Spouse Jesus and yearn for his eternal embrace. Amen! Your poor aunt

Sr M. Margherita

little old [nun]

Letter 177

Feeling that her end is near, Mother manifests the desire to see her niece for the last time. However, she abandons herself to the most holy Will of her most beloved Spouse Jesus, for whom her poor and most unworthy soul yearns.

She is pleased with her niece's spiritual progress and assures her of her prayers. She exhorts her to be grateful to the good God for the gift of her vocation, to

correspond generously through a holy life, always united to the Beloved Prisoner, in whom she finds everything: this should be the holy life of a sister of Charity.

D.M.E.O.

House of Charity

My dear and beloved niece,

How I wish to see you for the last time! I knew that you had to come but I did not know when and how, therefore I waited anxiously for you ...

My end is approaching ... May the most holy Will of our most amiable Spouse Jesus be always done. This is what my poor soul yearns for, although I feel unworthy!!

I rejoice that you are happy and you should grow always more in the holy fervor of pure love and for the salvation of souls. My dearest, I always pray for you from my misery. Oh! How time flies, though it seems long! Oh! How grateful we should be to the good God for choosing us and preserving us in our religious vocation! We should never cease thanking his Infinite Goodness heartily for such a singular favour, corresponding generously through a holy life. Do you understand? Be completely and always united to the Beloved Prisoner ... Oh! We find everything in Him, in Him alone! He and you! This is the life of a holy sister of Charity. Do you understand? I hope so.

With the hope of embracing you personally, I greet you even in the name of your cousins, sisters and relatives, who all desire to see you again after more than 18 years etc.

Give my best regards to your Rev. Superior, and sisters and I recommend to you all, your poor and most affectionate aunt

Sr M. Margherita

P.S. From the letter, etc., etc. you may perceive your aunt's condition.

4. Letter to her niece Sr Elena De Brincat

Letter 178

In this brief letter, the only one preserved among those written to this niece, an Augustinian sister, Mother expresses once more some characteristic points of her spirituality: the ardent yearning for the heavenly homeland, the humble demand for prayer, the pressing invitation to live the life of pure love, trustful abandonment to divine providence.

Deus meus et omnia

House of Charity, 16 August 1946

My dear niece Sr M. Elena,

I am writing a few lines to let you know that I am still in exile. My dear, pray earnestly for me and I also pray for you till we meet in the heavenly homeland, through the merits of our sole Spouse Jesus and those of our most gentle Mother, Mary. Do you understand? I hope so ...

I embrace you dearly in the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary while I sign

Your poor, most affectionate aunt,

Sr M. Margherita of the Sacred Heart

P.S. Let us love our good Jesus with pure and generous love and abandon ourselves to his paternal providence living the life of pure love in this vale of tears till we soar to sing the divine mercies forever. Amen.

APPENDIX

MOTHER MARGHERITA DE BRINCAT'S

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

- 28 November 1862 Virginia De Brincat was born at Kercem (Gozo), the sixth of 11 children, and baptized on the same day at the Mother Church of St George at Rabat – Victoria.
- 8 December 1877 Virginia De Brincat is accepted in the Association of the “Stars of the Heart of Jesus”, whose director was Fr Joseph Diacono.
- 15 August 1880 The first eight “Stars” start to form part of the religious association of the Franciscan Tertiaries founded by Fr Joseph Diacono.
- 1 September 1880 The bishop of Gozo, Mgr Peter Pace, approves the new Institute of the Franciscan Tertiaries, the first nucleus of the future Congregation.
- 5 February 1881 Virginia De Brincat is accepted in the Association of the Franciscan Tertiaries at 54, Ghajn Qatet Street, Rabat (Victoria).
- 20 February 1881 Virginia De Brincat takes her religious clothing and is given the name Mistress Virginia of the Blessed Margherita.
- 15 January 1882 The ‘House of Charity’, the seat of the Franciscan Tertiaries, is transferred to 10, Palm Street, Rabat (Victoria).
- 17 August 1883 Mistress Virginia makes her temporary profession.
- 15 August 1884 Mistress Virginia is appointed general Secretary.
- 1 January 1885 The opening of the second house at Qala (Gozo), where Fr Joseph Diacono was parish priest.
- 31 May 1885 The opening of a house at Birkirkara, the first on the island of Malta.

- 15 August 1885
Mistress Virginia drafts the first regulations of the Franciscan Tertiaries, directly elaborated by them.
- 7 May 1886
The bishop of Gozo, Mgr Peter Pace, hands over to the Franciscan Tertiaries the new Rule and the Constitutions, which he himself had prepared.
- 6 March 1887
Mistress Virginia is elected Principal Superior (*Primaria*) of the Franciscan Tertiaries, instead of Rosanna Gauci who returned home to assist her sick mother.
- October (?) 1887
Fr Joseph Diacono, founder and spiritual director of the Franciscan Tertiaries, definitely hands over the guidance of the Tertiaries to Mistress Virginia.
- 8 December 1887
The Perpetual Profession of Mistress Virginia, who becomes Sister Margherita of the Sacred Heart.
- 10 June 1889
Mother Margherita is elected general Superior in the first general Chapter of the Franciscan Tertiaries.
- 6 June 1892
Mother Margherita is re-elected general Superior in the second general Chapter.
- 3 June 1895
In the third general Chapter, Mother Margherita is re-elected general Superior.
- 28 August 1900
Mother Margherita submits to Pope Leone XIII the first petition to obtain the *Decretum Laudis* for the Congregation.
- 27 May 1901
In the fourth general Chapter, the term of office of general Superior expires for Mother Margherita and she assumes that of general Vicar.

12 October 1903	Decree of aggregation of the Congregation to the Order of the Friars Minor.
5 March 1904	In the fifth extraordinary general Chapter, Mother Margherita is re-elected general Superior instead of Mother Rosalia Vella.
28 January 1905	In the sixth general Chapter, Mother Margherita is confirmed in the office of general Superior.
1 April 1907	The opening of the house in Corfù (Greece), the first beyond the Maltese Islands, is approved by the general Council.
3 June 1911	Mother Margherita renounces to her re-election as general Superior.
15 June 1911	Mother Margherita is appointed superior of the house in Corfù.
28 May 1917	In the eighth general Chapter, Mother Margherita is re-elected general Superior for the sixth and last time.
29 July 1921	Mother Margherita forwards a second petition to Pope Benedict XV to obtain the <i>Decretum Laudis</i> for the Congregation.
6 August 1921	Mgr John Camilleri, bishop of Gozo, approves the rule of the Congregation, updated in conformity to the Code of Canon Law which had come into force on 1 January 1918.
17 September 1921	Mother Margherita is received in an audience by Pope Benedict XV.
March 1922	The opening of the houses at Troina and Regalbuto (Sicily), the first houses in Italy.
30 September 1922	Pope Pius XI nominated Cardinal Oreste Giorgi Protector of the Congregation.

- 20 April 1923 Acceptance of the House of Adoration in Valletta (Malta), offered by the archbishop Mauro Caruana.
- 21 May 1923 In the ninth general Chapter, Mother Margherita terminates her office as general Superior. She will constantly remain a member of the general Council, as Councillor.
- 6 April 1924 Mother Margherita is appointed first superior of the House of Adoration in Valletta.
- 22 July 1924 Fr Joseph Diacono dies at Rabat (Victoria – Gozo) assisted by Mother Margherita.
- 21 May 1927 The opening of the House in Rome, in which Mother Margherita was interested since 1922.
- 10 September 1927 The opening of the house in Sofi (Ethiopia), the first step towards the spreading of the Congregation outside the European continent.
- 21 November 1930 Mother Margherita is appointed first superior of the new house at Xaghra – Casal Caccia (Gozo).
- 28 August 1932 Mother Margherita is in Rome to replace Sr Dionisia Thomis, the mistress of novices, who is sick. In February 1933 she returns to Xaghra.
- 20 April 1937 Mother Margherita is reconfirmed superior at Xaghra.
- 2 July 1937 The Holy See concedes the *Decretum Laudis* to the Congregation.
- 27 September 1938 Mother Margherita is reappointed superior at Xaghra.
- 14 January 1940 Mother Margherita's first heart failure. Similar attacks of this kind repeat themselves often throughout the following years.
- 16 March 1940 Mother Margherita leaves Xaghra and is transferred to the Mother House.

- 2 April 1940
Mother Margherita asks to be exempted from the office of superior of Xaghra and of general Councillor: the second request is only partly accepted.
- 23 December 1946
The Congregation becomes of pontifical right with the Holy See's definite approval of the Constitutions.
- 22 January 1952
Mother Margherita dies at the Mother House (Victoria – Gozo)
- 14 May 1977
The recognition of Mother Margherita's remains by the bishop of Gozo, Mgr Nicola G. Cauchi, on the occasion of the transfer to a niche in the crypt of the church annexed to the Mother House.
- 27 January 1987
Cardinal Pietro Palazzini, Prefect of the Congregation for the causes of Saints, grants the "*nulla osta*" for the opening of Mother Margherita's cause of canonization.
- 7 July 1988
The bishop of Gozo, Mgr Nicola G. Cauchi, officially opens Mother Margherita's process of canonization.
- 22 January 1994
The transfer of Mother Margherita's remains from the crypt to the Church annexed to the Mother House.
- 22 January 2000
Conclusion of the Process of Mother Margherita's Cause of Canonization on a diocesan level.
- 17 February 2000
The diocesan process having been concluded, the subsequent phase is initiated at the Congregation of the Saints, in Rome.

**A SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF
THE RECIPIENTS OF
MOTHER MARGHERITA'S LETTERS**

1) Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus

BEZZINA Sr Filippa (25.03.1903 - 22.02.1969)

She was born at Zebbug (Malta) and joined the Congregation at the age of 20.

She rendered service in many communities in Malta and was twice local Superior.

She observed the rule faithfully: prayer and work were the soul of her life.

BUSUTTIL Sr Luisa (25.12.1900 - 05.03.1982)

She was born in Valletta (Malta) and joined the Congregation at the age of 20.

When she finished her advanced studies, she was transferred to Rome where she remained for many years. She was local Superior during the Second World War (1939-1945) and she did her utmost to help the poor and the needy, among whom many Jews in danger.

She returned to Malta, was general Councillor and Secretary for six years and then she held the office of general Superior for 18 years (1951 - 1969). She was subsequently general Councillor till her death.

CASSAR Sr Cornelia (20.02.1908 - 31.10.1981)

She was born at Cospicua (Malta). She carried out her educational service as teacher in various communities in Malta and was local Superior for many years.

She was always prompt to changes in office and community.

CILIA Sr Paola (14.12.1896 -26.10.1966)

She was born at Zebbug (Malta). She was a reserved and a hardworking nun.

She was superior of the community of "Fra Diego" Institute at Hamrun (Malta), for many years, lovingly caring for the orphans residing there.

FENECH Sr Giovanna (26.06.1868 - 19.09.1923)

She was born at Mellieha (Malta). She joined the Congregation at the age of 18. She rendered service in various communities and was noted for her intuition and prudence.

On 21 May 1923, in the ninth general Chapter, she was elected general Superior, but remained in office for only four months: she died of a heart attack at the age of 55.

She was deeply mourned by the sisters who had known and respected her.

GALEA Sr Marta (14.02.1915 - ???)

She was born at Zejtun (Malta). She joined the Congregation at the age of 18.

When she was still very young she was sent to carry out apostolic and educational service in the community at Misterbianco (Catania). She dedicated herself enthusiastically to the education of the girls, teaching them sewing, embroidery and drawing. She was a zealous catechist in the two parishes of the place. In 1957 she was summoned back to Malta, rendering her service in various communities.

GATT Sr Geltrude (17.12.1901 - 03.06.1966)

She was born at Zebbug (Malta), and joined the Congregation at the age of 19.

Her first apostolic assignment was in the new community at Misterbianco (Catania). She was a zealous educator and she even dedicated herself to the teaching of sewing and embroidery, attracting many young girls by her gentleness.

Summoned back to Malta, she was mistress of novices for 27 years in the novitiate of the Mother House (Gozo), where many aspirants were eager to enter religious life.

At the peak of her activity she was struck by an incurable illness and died at the Mother House, when she was 64 years old.

GOUDER Sr Nazarena (21.01.1874 - 26.10.1951)

She was born at Notabile, the ancient capital city of Malta. She terminated her major studies, and then joined the Congregation.

She was the first Superior of the community of Corfù (Greece), opened in 1907. In 1911, when she was only 37 years old, she was elected general Superior instead of Mother Margherita, who had renounced to being re-elected. She remained in office for six years and guided the Congregation with strength and determination.

In 1924 she was re-elected general Superior and remained in office till 1945, profoundly modifying her method of governing: replacing severity with maternity, strictness with comprehension and goodness. She subsequently held the office of general Vicar.

The Congregation's significant development in the twenties and thirties is due to her dynamism.

She is one of the foremost figures in the history of the Congregation and can be considered the twin soul of Mother Margherita to whom she was always close through unity of intention and affinity of spirit. Mother Margherita, who was aware of her abilities and her goodness, held her in high esteem.

MUSCAT Sr Rebecca (16.07.1912 - ???)

She was born at Naxxar (Malta). She joined the Congregation at the age of 17 and her first assignment was in the community of Rome where she rendered service educating youth, favouring particularly girls coming from broken families.

Subsequently she was local Superior at Catania. Elderly and sick, she returned to Malta, becoming a member of the community at Msida, where she passed away.

SOTERA Sr Rosaria (10.02.1914 - ???)

She was born in Troina (Sicily), joined the Congregation at the age of 17 and made her novitiate in Rome.

She had the fortune of profiting from Mother Margherita's spiritual guidance for some months, when the latter took the place of the sick novice mistress.

She always remained in Rome where she has carried out various offices, particularly that of Principal of a nursery and elementary school and local Superior.

THOMIS Sr Dionisia (20.02.1893 - 21.11.1956)

She was born at Hamrun (Malta) and was among the first sisters sent to Rome to open the new house, holding the office of mistress of novices for many years. In 1945 she was appointed local Superior.

A humble and generous woman, she was loved by everyone for her goodness and for her gentleness.

VELLA Sr Amata (01.03.1890 - 05.09.1963)

She was born at Notabile (Malta) and spent almost all her religious life in Italy.

She was in Rome as an Assistant to the boarders; was superior at Ascoli Piceno, at the boys' "*Cantalamessa Institute*", and at Catania, at the "*Casa di Cura Musumeci*".

While in Rome, she had a stroke and so spent the last five years of her life in a wheelchair.

VELLA Sr Martina (28.11.1904 - 29.02.1992)

She was born at Victoria (Gozo), but lived in Malta. She joined the Congregation at the age of 17.

She was first sent to the House of Adoration in Valletta. Later on she was sent to the community at Misterbianco (Catania) and remained there for 30 years, giving proof of her capabilities, her strong character and her nobility of soul.

Above all during the most critical years of the Second World War she did her utmost to help those who needed protection, placing herself at risk. She left such an incisive mark in the hearts of the people that the civil authorities of the country honoured her with a token of appreciation in 1983.

After her return to Malta, she was local Superior in the community for the elderly at Zebbug (Malta).

During the last years, elderly and sick, she continued to sow the good seed by word and example, thus carrying out another form of apostolate that left an indelible mark on the sisters who looked after her with affection.

XUEREB Sr Pacifica (16.11.1886- 31.01.1978)

She was born at Mqabba (Malta). She was the first local superior of the new community at Troina (Sicily) from 1922 to 1929, and subsequently she was local Superior at the Mother House and at Xaghra (Gozo). For many years she filled the office of general Vicar (1929-1945) and then that of general Councillor (1945-1951;1957-1963; 1966-1969).

She lived for various years close to Mother Margherita, and willingly confided in her. She was the sister who knew Mother Margherita and about the events of the first years of the Congregation most.

Aged and sick, she retired to the Mother House (Gozo). She loved to narrate, above all to the young novices, about the origin of the Congregation and to speak about Mother Margherita's virtues, also leaving some written "*memoirs*".

ZAMMIT Sr Giuditta (22.10.1899 - 28.03.1982)

She was born at Valletta (Malta), and rendered her service in diverse communities in Malta.

She was the head of various schools; she taught drawing and painting, an art in which she excelled. She was also local superior in various communities.

For some years she lived close to Mother Margherita at the House of Adoration in Valletta.

She loved prayer, recollection and silence. She deeply nourished her spiritual life and worked hard with young girls and with aspirants to the religious life.

2) Other recipients

ABELA Sr Antonia (02.08.1906 - 17.05.1997)

She was Mother Margherita's niece, the daughter of her sister Maria Antonia. She was born at Kercem (Gozo) and at 21 embraced the religious life in the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of St Antida Thouret.

She received her formation in Rome and spent her life in Italy, carrying out various activities above all in the education and assistential field.

She was very close to her aunt Mother Margherita, who guided her and encouraged her in her spiritual and community life. After her death she was described as "*a soul of heartfelt prayers and always ready to forgive*".

AGIUS Mgr Alfonso Maria (21.04.1873 - 16.03.1957)

He was born in Valletta (Malta) and was ordained priest on 12 June 1897.

He was a canon at the Cathedral, director of the "*Opere Missionarie Pontificie*", of the Conference of St Vincent and of the "*Pia Opera dei Tabernacoli*" established in the church of Adoration in Valletta and entrusted (from 1923) to the Franciscan Sisters.

He was an assiduous confessor. He was Mother Margherita's confessor and spiritual director for several years: she often had recourse to him, even in writing when it was not possible for her to meet him personally.

DEBRINCAT Sr Elena (13.11.1891 - 13.09.1979)

She was Mother Margherita's niece, daughter of her brother Carmelo.

She was born at Kercem (Gozo) and at 19 she embraced the religious life in the Congregation of the Augustinian Sisters, Servants of Jesus and Mary.

She spent nearly all her religious life giving service at the Generalate in Rome, where she died.

She was gentle and good-natured, and left the sisters a remembrance of enduring serenity and profound goodness, of a spirit of continual prayer and untiring activity.

She was in touch by correspondence with Mother Margherita who sought her out when she went to Rome.

DE PIRO Mgr. Joseph (11.02.1877- 19.09.1933)

He was born at Mdina (Malta), son of the marquise De Piro. He studied at the university of Malta and at the Pont. Gregorian University in Rome. He was ordained priest on 15 March 1902.

He returned to Malta, and in 1910 founded the religious Congregation for men "*Missionary Society of St Paul*", with the specific charism of mission "*Ad gentes*".

He was very close to Mother Margherita and helped her in the running of the Congregation through his wise advice and his encouraging word. Mother Margherita had great trust in him and thought highly of him.

He died unexpectedly after having led a Eucharistic procession at Hamrun (Malta).

DIACONO Fr Joseph (16.08.1847-22.07.1924)

He was born at Rabat (Victoria - Gozo) and was ordained priest on 15 March 1871.

As vice parish priest of St George at Rabat, he looked after the female association of the "Stars of the Heart of Jesus".

In the spring of 1879 he opened the first "House of Charity" at 54, Ghajn Qatet Street at Rabat, as the seat of the association directed by him. The following January/ February he planned to found a religious association of Franciscan Tertiaries who obtained the approval of the bishop of Gozo on 1 September 1880. This was the first nucleus of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus, of which Mother Margherita was a member from February 1881.

On 1 April 1881 he was appointed parish priest at Qala (Gozo) but he continued to take care of the Franciscan Tertiaries in his capacity as "principal Director". On 15 January 1882, he transferred the "House of Charity" to 10, Palm Street. This became the Mother House of the Franciscan Sisters. On 10 April 1886, through a notarial act, he donated the building premises of 10, Palm Street to the sisters, reserving some rights to himself. From that moment, for reasons beyond his control, he ceased to function as director of the Congregation founded by him, entrusting it in the hands of Mother Margherita who in the meantime had been nominated Superior (*Primaria*). Justly, the Franciscan Sisters revere him as their founder.

On 30 August 1891 he was nominated parish priest of Xaghra, Gozo, where he remained till February 1909, when he resigned. Keeping the title of honorary canon of Xaghra, he went to live at Rabat (Victoria), at 10, Casal Caccia Street. He died on 22 July 1924, lovingly assisted by Mother Margherita, and was buried in the parish church of Xaghra.

Brusque and severe of character, but having a firm spiritual formation, he knew how to transmit and instil in the Franciscan sisters those values and principles that are the foundation of their congregational charism. Eloquent testimony of his work as founder and formator of the Franciscan Sisters are the numerous writings he addressed to them: cf. *Collection of some writings of Don Giuseppe Diacono and other documents of the primitive Community (Victoria - Gozo 1994)*.

An expert architect, he built and restructured various churches. Sensitive to social problems, he made himself meritorious by establishing industrial works to teach the poor girls the art of weaving and lace.

For further information about his life, cf. *J. Bezzina, Don Giuseppe Diacono, founder of the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus: 1847-1924 (PEG, Rabat-Gozo 2000)*.

GALEA Mgr Anton (12.06.1881 - 01.01.1960)

He was born in Valletta (Malta). After having obtained a degree in law at the university of Malta, he consecrated himself to the Lord in priesthood.

He was for some years in charge of St Philip's church in Senglea (Malta) and director of the '*Opera Pia dei Tabernacoli*' established in the church of the Adoration in Valletta.

He was a member of the "*Missionary Society*", and preached the "*Popular Mission*" in many parishes in Malta and Gozo. He was sought out as director of spiritual exercises, particularly for consecrated persons.

As an assiduous confessor, he was appreciated for his prudent spiritual direction.

For various years he was Mother Margherita's spiritual director and her consultant in the guidance of the Congregation. Mother Margherita turned to him with trust in her spiritual needs and in her personal difficulties.

**CHRONOLOGICAL AND PROGRESSIVE
ORDER OF MOTHER MARGHERITA DE
BRINCAT'S LETTERS**

A) CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

The numbers on the right side indicate the progressive order in which the letters are arranged in this volume.

1) Dated letters

1.	14 June 1891	to Sr Giovanna Fenech	n. 130
2.	16 April 1892	to a sister	n. 138
3.	28 May 1895	to a sister	n. 139
4.	13 May 1896	to Sr Nazzarena Gouder	n. 105
5.	6 May 1907	to a sister	n. 140
6.	12 May 1917	to her confessor	n. 1
7.	5 June 1917	to her confessor	n. 2
8.	20 June 1917	to her confessor	n. 3
9.	21 June 1917	to her confessor	n. 4
10.	30 June 1917	to her confessor	n. 5
11.	28 August 1917	to her confessor	n. 6
12.	26 October 1917	to her confessor	n. 7
13.	5 August 1918	to her confessor	n. 8
14.	6 September 1918	to Fr Diacono	n. 157
15.	19 December 1918	to her confessor	n. 9
16.	27 November 1919	to her confessor	n. 10
17.	6 April 1920	to Mgr De Piro	n. 158
18.	27 August 1920	to her confessor	n. 11
19.	13 September 1920	to her confessor	n. 12
20.	2 November 1920	to Sr Luisa	n. 107
21.	4 November 1920	to a sister	n. 141
22.	22 December 1920	to a community	n. 64

23.	23 December 1920	to her confessor	
24.	7 January 1921	to her confessor	n. 13
25.	26 March 1921	to a sister	n. 142
26.	28 March 1921	to her confessor	n. 14
27.	8 June 1921	to her confessor	
28.	12 August 1921	to her confessor	n. 15
29.	11 October 1921	to her confessor	n. 16
30.	10 December 1921	to a community	n. 65
31.	12 January 1922	to her confessor	n. 17
32.	17 March 1922	to a community	n. 66
33.	2 April 1922	to her confessor	n. 18
34.	16 April 1922	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 80
35.	5 May 1922	to a sister	n. 143
36.	1 August 1922	to a sister	n. 144
37.	2 August 1922	to her confessor	n. 19
38.	21 September 1922	to her confessor	n. 20
39.	9 October 1922	to a sister	n. 145
40.	5 November 1922	to her confessor	n. 21
41.	20 December 1922	to her confessor	n. 22
42.	26 January 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 81
43.	14 April 1923	to her confessor	n. 23
44.	25 April 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 82
45.	25 April 1923	to a community	n. 67
46.	17 May 1923	to her confessor	n. 25
47.	16 June 1923	to her confessor	
48.	9 August 1923	to her confessor	
49.	8 October 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 83
50.	20 December 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 84
51.	7 May 1924	to a community	n. 68
52.	11 June 1924	to a community	n. 69
53.	6 August 1924	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 85
54.	20 November 1924	to a community	n. 70
55.	5 December 1924	to a community	n. 71
56.	5 December 1924	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 86

57.	22 November 1925	to a community	n. 72
58.	25 March 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 87
59.	8 June 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 88
60.	13 July 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 89
61.	20 November 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 90
62.	8 February 1927	to her confessor	n. 26
63.	7 January 1930	to a sister	n. 146
64.	28 January 1930	to Sr Giuditta Zammit	n. 128
65.	8 March 1930	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 91
66.	24 March 1930	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 92
67.	10 May 1930	to her niece	n. 159
68.	2 December 1930	to Sr Nazarena Gouder	n. 106
69.	15 December 1930	to her niece	n. 160
70.	14 April 1931	to her niece	n. 161
71.	22 July 1931	to her niece	n. 162
72.	15 October 1931	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	
73.	28 October 1931	to a sister	
74.	3 December 1931	to a sister	n. 147
75.	15 February 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 93
76.	4 May 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 94
77.	24 May 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	
78.	30 August 1932	to a sister	
79.	30 August 1932	to a sister	
80.	11 October 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 95
81.	14 November 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 96
82.	24 February 1933	to her niece	n. 163
83.	25 February 1933	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 115
84.	2 April 1933	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 116
85.	2 October 1933	to the novices in Rome	n. 73
86.	2 January 1934	to her niece	n. 164

87.	11 January 1934	to Sr Geltrude Gatt	n. 126
88.	26 January 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 97
89.	23 February 1934	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 117
90.	3 April 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 98
91.	10 April 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 99
92.	2 April 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 100
93.	21 June 1934	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 108
94.	31 October 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 101
95.	25 November 1934	to a superior	
96.	4 May 1935	to her confessor	n. 27
97.	28 March 1936	to her niece	n.165
98.	19 August 1936	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 103
99.	25 August 1936	to her niece	n. 166
100.	9 September 1936	to her niece	n. 167
101.	27 September 1936	to Sr Marta Galea	n. 131
102.	9 October 1936	to Sr Giuditta Zammit	n. 129
103.	28 October 1936	to her niece	n. 168
104.	25 November 1936	to her niece	n. 169
105.	24 December 1936	to Sr Geltrude Gatt	n. 127
106.	3 April 1937	to her niece	n. 170
107.	9 April 1937	to Sr Rebecca Muscat	n. 132
108.	29 June 1937	to her niece	n. 171
109.	17 December 1937	to her niece	n. 172
110.	27 March 1938	to a sister	n. 148
111.	9 December 1938	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 109
112.	28 July 1939	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 110
113.	9 October 1939	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 111
114.	20 December 1939	to a sister	n. 149
115.	14 January 1940	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 112

116.	14 January 1940	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 122
117.	28 March 1940	to her confessor	n. 31
118.	12 April 1940	to Sr Luisa Busuttill	n. 113
119.	8 August 1940	to her confessor	n. 32
120.	9 October 1940	to her confessor	n. 33
121.	20 October 1940	to her confessor	n. 34
122.	3 December 1940	to her confessor	n. 35
123.	2 February 1941	to her confessor	n. 36
124.	8 April 1941	to her confessor	n. 37
125.	27 April 1941	to her confessor	n. 38
126.	7 May 1941	to her confessor	n. 39
127.	3 June 1941	to her confessor	n. 40
128.	10 September 1941	to her confessor	n. 41
129.	7 October 1941	to her confessor	n. 42
130.	13 October 1941	to her confessor	n. 43
131.	12 November 1941	to her confessor	n. 44
132.	19 December 1941	to her confessor	n. 45
133.	26 January 1942	to her confessor	n. 46
134.	22 February 1942	to her confessor	n. 47
135.	22 February 1942	to her confessor	n. 48
136.	30 March 1942	to her confessor	n. 49
137.	30 April 1942	to her confessor	n. 50
138.	9 June 1942	to her confessor	n. 51
139.	19 July 1942	to her confessor	n. 52
140.	4 August 1942	to her confessor	n. 53
141.	21 September 1942	to her confessor	n. 54
142.	28 October 1942	to her confessor	n. 55
143.	20 December 1942	to her confessor	n. 56
144.	10 January 1943	to her confessor	n. 57

145.	15 March 1943	to her confessor	n. 58
146.	16 May 1943	to her confessor	n. 59
147.	17 July 1943	to her confessor	n. 60
148.	28 July 1943	to her confessor	n. 61
149.	12 September 1943	to her confessor	n. 62
150.	7 August 1944	to a community	n. 74
151.	13 March 1945	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 114
152.	21 July 1945	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 118
153.	22 October 1945	to a sister	n. 150
154.	14 December 1945	to a community	n. 75
155.	7 February 1946	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 119
156.	10 February 1946	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 120
157.	10 February 1946	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 124
158.	14 April 1946	to a sister	n. 151
159.	16 August 1946	to her niece	n. 178
160.	20 October 1946	to Sr Filippa Bezzina	n. 134
161.	22 October 1946	to Sr Cornelia Cassar	n. 135
162.	10 January 1947	to a sister	n. 152
163.	12 September 1948	to a sister	n. 153
164.	14 September 1948	to a community	n. 76
165.	14 September 1948	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 121
166.	14 February 1949	to her niece	n. 175
167.	8 September 1951	to Sr Martina Vella	n. 136
168.	17 September 1951	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 104

2) Letters with approximate date

169.	April 1923	to her confessor	n. 24
170.	December 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 102
171.	Spring 1940	to Sr Paola Cilia	n. 133

172.	December 1941	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 173
173.	1945	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 123
174.	August 1946	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 174

3) Letters without a date

175.		to her confessor	n. 28
176.		to her confessor	n. 29
177.		to her confessor	n. 30
178.		to her confessor	n. 63
179.		to a community	n. 77
180.		to the novices in Rome	n. 78
181.		to a community	n. 79
182.		to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 125
183.		to Sr Amata Vella	n. 137
184.		to a sister	n. 154
185.		to a sister	n. 155
186.		to a sister	n. 156
187.		to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 176
188.		to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 177

B) PROGRESSIVE ORDER

Each letter published in this volume is here listed in chronological order.

1) Letters to her confessors

1.	12 May 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 6
2.	5 June 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 7
3.	20 June 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 8
4.	21 June 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 9
5.	30 June 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 10
6.	28 August 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 11
7.	26 October 1917	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 12
8.	5 August 1918	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 13
9.	19 December 1918	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 15
10.	27 November 1919	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 16
11.	27 August 1920	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 18
12.	13 September 1920	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 19
13.	7 January 1921	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 24
14.	28 March 1921	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 26
15.	12 August 1921	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 28
16.	11 October 1921	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 29
17.	12 January 1922	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 31
18.	2 April 1922	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 33
19.	2 August 1922	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 37
20.	21 September 1922	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 38
21.	5 November 1922	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 40
22.	20 December 1922	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 41
23.	14 April 1923	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 43
24.	April 1923	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 169
25.	17 May 1923	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 46
26.	8 February 1927	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 62
27.	4 May 1935	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 96
28.	without date	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 176
29.	without date	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 177

30.	without date	to Mgr Anton Galea	n. 178
31.	29 March 1940	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 117
32.	8 August 1940	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 119
33.	9 October 1940	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 120
34.	20 October 1940	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 121
35.	3 December 1940	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 122
36.	2 February 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 123
37.	8 April 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 124
38.	27 April 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 125
39.	7 May 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 126
40.	3 June 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 127
41.	10 September 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 128
42.	7 October 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 129
43.	13 October 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 130
44.	12 November 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 131
45.	19 December 1941	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 132
46.	26 January 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 133
47.	22 February 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 134
48.	22 February 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 135
49.	30 March 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 136
50.	30 April 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 137
51.	9 June 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 138
52.	19 July 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 139
53.	4 August 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 140
54.	21 September 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 141
55.	28 October 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 142
56.	20 December 1942	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 143
57.	10 January 1943	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 144
58.	15 March 1943	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 145
59.	16 May 1943	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 146
60.	17 July 1943	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 147
61.	28 July 1943	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 148
62.	12 September 1943	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 149
63.	without date	to Mgr Alfonso Agius	n. 178

2) to the sisters

64.	22 December 1920	to a community	n. 22
65.	10 December 1921	to a community	n. 30
66.	17 March 1922	to a newly-professed sisters	n. 32
67.	25 April 1923	to a community	n. 45
68.	7 May 1924	to a community	n. 51
69.	11 June 1924	to a community	n. 52
70.	20 November 1924	to a community	n. 54
71.	5 December 1924	to a community	n. 55
72.	22 November 1925	to a community	n. 57
73.	2 October 1933	to the novices in Rome	n. 85
74.	7 August 1944	to a community	n. 150
75.	14 December 1945	to a community	n. 154
76.	14 September 1948	to a community	n. 164
77.	without date	to a community	n. 179
78.	without date	to the novices in Rome	n. 180
79.	without date	to a community	n. 181
80.	16 April 1922	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 34
81.	26 January 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 42
82.	25 April 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 44
83.	8 October 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 49
84.	20 December 1923	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 50
85.	6 August 1924	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 53
86.	5 December 1924	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 56
87.	25 March 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 58
88.	8 June 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 59
89.	13 July 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 60
90.	20 November 1926	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 61
91.	8 March 1930	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 65
92.	24 March 1930	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 66
93.	15 February 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 75
94.	4 May 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 76
95.	11 October 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 80
96.	14 November 1932	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 81

97.	26 January 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 88
98.	3 April 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 90
99.	10 April 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 91
100.	26 April 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 92
101.	31 October 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 94
102.	December 1934	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 170
103.	19 August 1936	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 98
104.	17 September 1951	to Sr Pacifica Xuereb	n. 168
105.	13 May 1896	to Sr Nazarena Gouder	n. 4
106.	2 December 1930	to Sr Nazarena Gouder	n. 68
107.	2 November 1920	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 20
108.	21 June 1934	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 93
109.	9 December 1938	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 111
110.	28 July 1939	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 112
111.	9 October 1939	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 113
112.	14 January 1940	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 115
113.	12 April 1940	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 118
114.	13 March 1945	to Sr Luisa Busuttil	n. 151
115.	25 February 1933	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 83
116.	2 April 1933	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 84
117.	23 February 1933	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 89
118.	21 July 1945	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 152
119.	7 February 1946	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 155
120.	10 February 1946	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 156
121.	14 September 1948	to Sr Dionisia Thomis	n. 165
122.	14 January 1940	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 116
123.	1945	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 173
124.	10 February 194	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 157
125.	without date	to Sr Rosaria Sotera	n. 182
126.	11 January 1934	to Sr Geltrude Gatt	n. 87
127.	24 December 1936	to Sr Geltrude Gatt	n. 105
128.	28 January 1930	to Sr Giuditta Zammit	n. 64
129.	9 October 1936	to Sr Giuditta Zammit	n. 102
130.	14 June 1891	to Sr Giovanna Fenech	n. 1

131.	27 September 1936	to Sr Marta Galea	n. 101
132.	9 April 1937	to Sr Rebecca Muscat	n. 107
133.	Spring 1940	to Sr Paola Cilia	n. 171
134.	20 October 1946	to Sr Filippa Bezzina	n. 160
135.	22 October 1946	to Sr Cornelia Cassar	n. 161
136.	8 September 1951	to Sr Martina Vella	n. 167
137.	without date	to Sr Amata Vella	
138.	16 April 1892	to a sister	n. 2
139.	28 May 1895	to a sister	n. 3
140.	6 May 1907	to a sister	n. 5
141.	4 November 1920	to a sister	n. 21
142.	26 March 1921	to a sister	n. 25
143.	5 May 1922	to a sister	n. 35
144.	1 August 1922	to a sister	n. 36
145.	9 October 1922	to a sister	n. 39
146.	7 January 1930	to a sister	n. 63
147.	3 December 1931	to a sister	n. 74
148.	27 March 1938	to a sister	n. 110
149.	20 December 1939	to a sister	n. 114
150.	22 October 1945	to a sister	n. 153
151.	14 April 1946	to a sister	n. 158
152.	10 January 1947	to a sister	n. 162
153.	12 September 1948	to a sister	n. 163
154.	without a date	to a sister	n. 184
155.	without a date	to a sister	n. 185
156.	without a date	to a sister	n. 186

3) Letters to other recipients

157.	6 September 1918	to Fr Joseph Diacono	n. 14
158.	6 April 1920	to Mgr Joseph De Piro	n. 17
159.	10 May 1930	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 67
160.	15 December 1930	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 69
161.	14 April 1931	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 70

162.	22 July 1931	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 71
163.	24 February 1933	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 82
164.	2 January 1934	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 86
165.	28 March 1936	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 97
166.	25 August 1936	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 99
167.	9 September 1938	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 100
168.	28 October 1936	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 103
169.	25 November 1936	to Sr Antonia Abela	n. 104

