

signor *pievano* ordered me to take off the rings I usually wore, and when I went to Chiaramonte and he saw me without rings, he asked me why I wasn't wearing them. I told him that the signor *pievano*, my confessor, had ordered me in obedience to take them off. He retorted, "Why in the world did he let you wear them for nine whole years and now doesn't want you to wear them?" Very fearful, I went back to the signor *pievano* and told him this. He replied that I should do what [Chiaramonte] ordered, and for the next three or four months I went first to one of them, then to the other. Then the *pievano* told me that he had sent me to Chiaramonte to talk to him, not so that [Chiaramonte] would remove or abduct me from himself. Having heard what the *pievano* said, Chiaramonte ordered me not to go back but always to come to him for confession, as I did until another [Jesuit] father came—I don't recall whether it was Casati or Father Rodengo—after Chiaramonte was made provincial.

I remember now that after the plague, before I was put into Signora Cuccina's house, I was placed by order of Signor Molin in the house of Signor Antonio Maffei, who is still living. And I stayed with one of his sisters, Ippolita, a *dimesa*, who welcomed me very affectionately, and we were together for about a month and a half when she died. A week earlier, however, I'd foreseen her death. Because she flattered me and hugged me and praised to the skies everything I did, one night I got up out of bed very quietly so that she wouldn't hear me, for she always wanted me with her at night, and I began to pray, saying the Rosary of the Most Holy Mother and begging Her to free me from that woman's flattery. The Most Holy Mother of the Rosary, extremely beautiful, appeared before me and said, "Cecilia, don't worry that your purity will be compromised because this woman who is keeping you will very shortly be taken out of this world, so pray for her." The Most Blessed Virgin disappeared, leaving me very much consoled. Two hours after I had this vision, that woman woke up, weeping and fearful, and called me, looking for me in bed, but I was kneeling on the ground behind the curtain of the bed praying for her. I told her I was there and asked what she wanted. And she said, "Alas, what strange news! We must leave each other." I replied, "If it's God's will, we must have patience. We're born to die and go to enjoy Lord God." And thus, attacked by a light fever, she died within four days.

I remained alone in the house except for the maid because her brother was away from Venice. And since there was another brother in Venice who went out at night, I had to wait up to open the door when he came home and knocked at five, seven, or nine hours after dusk. But many times the Devil, not he, came to knock at the door. And going downstairs to open

the door, assuming that it was he, I met the Most Holy Mother, a beautiful creature. Who told me, "Daughter, don't go open the door because you're mistaken. Go back to your prayers." And I immediately returned to prayer and heard the Devil yelling and beating at the door, making a great deal of noise. And this ruse of the Devil occurred four or five times. It made me very much afraid, but since I trusted in the Virgin Mary and my guardian angel, the fear passed.

Then Signor Antonio Maffei and his wife, who are both still living, came to Venice. And they had a little boy about five years old, a mute. In the morning when I dressed him and in the evening when I undressed him, I taught him prayers and asked God's grace that, if it were good for his soul, He deign to give him speech, and I prayed also that the Most Holy Mother do me this favor and not deny it to me. And I felt a great inner confidence that I'd receive it, as in fact I did, for he began to speak, to the astonishment and delight of his father and mother. He became a friar, I believe of San Giorgio, and he is still living.

Many times the Most Holy Mother appeared to tell me that I must distribute to [adult] sinners, boys, and girls the insignia of the Passion of Jesus Christ.²⁷ Who died for sinners. And with the consent and obedience of all the confessors I had at that time, three years before the plague, I had printed and made from wood, wax, and brass many [images of] Christ, which I gave away whenever the opportunity arose so that people would wear them—through which I've seen marvelous consequences of conversion and piety.

While I was in the Cappuccine [of San Girolamo], the priest Polacco ordered that I refrain from prayer, not say other prayers or do pious exercises that they [the nuns] wanted to do, and not even take communion. All I did was sleep on bare boards, as they did. But when I was in my cell while they were taking communion, St. Philip Neri, to whom I was particularly devoted, came vested for Mass to bring me the Most Holy communion. And when he put the sacred Host to my mouth, I didn't want to take it, not did I, in order to fulfill the precept of holy obedience, for Polacco had ordered, as I've said, that I not take communion. That happened to me three times, and when the saint disappeared, I was left greatly consoled.

After leaving the *pirozzeria* of San Martino, I was placed at the priest Polacco's order in the house of a gentlewoman at San Barnaba. And while I

27. Prints or medals representing the instruments of the Passion: the cross, the nails, the placard and reading, "Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews," the crown of thorns, the sponge, the straw and the lance.

was in a room praying for the souls of the dead, having gone into a trance, the Mother Vicar of the Cappuccine appeared before me sitting on a marble chair with a great flame resembling the mouth of a furnace in front of her. Seizing hold of my garment, she said, "Pray for me because I'm in great difficulty." I replied, "How can this be, Mother?" She answered, "Because of negligence in governing my novices." Then she took me by her hand, which was frozen, so that for two weeks my hand remained cold. I promised never to cease praying for her and ordering Masses until she was liberated. And shortly thereafter, word came to me that she was dead, which I hadn't known anything about.

After I'd been tormented for years by the stone, as I said before, as if gangrene had developed in those parts [of my body], Signor Dr. Michelangelo [Rota], who was a great friend and thought of me as a sister, consulted with Dr. [Francesco] Donadoni about injecting various oils into me with a syringe.²⁸ But when I refused, not wanting anyone to see me or touch my body, he asked my confessor, Father Alvise Zonati, to order me to do it. And when the confessor ordered it, I begged him not to command this, and he told me that God didn't want me to let myself contract gangrene. And Dr. Michelangelo having come in person to inject those oils with the syringe in the presence of the women, I begged him to be kind enough to wait until I'd asked the Lord. He left and returned the next morning to see whether I'd decided to let myself be treated. And I had my confessor summoned and recounted truthfully the following vision: that is, while I was praying about my difficulty, I saw at my bedside the Most Holy Mother with Her baby in Her arms. Who told me, "Cecilia, tell your confessor to refrain from making you obey this order, and to examine his cases of conscience," for one can even die in order to avoid losing one's purity and one's virginity at the same time, and this is my dear Son's preference." She disappeared immediately, leaving me much consoled.

Having heard this, the confessor told Signor Michelangelo [Rota] not to do anything else. He [Rota] came to see me and found me entirely reassured. And I promised him that if he were to die before me, I would ask the Lord's favor to suffer for his sins and mitigate them with prayers and holy sacraments during the time the Lord made him worthy of suffering the pains of purgatory, and he promised to do the same for me if I died before he did. Signor Michelangelo died recently while I was in Padua in a state of great suffering and affliction, for the Devil was frequently beating me with chains.

28. That is, to administer an enema.

29. Theological manuals for confessors that explain how to handle particular instances of sin

I learned from my confessor, who was the Jesuit Father Alessandro Zampi, that Signor Dr. Michelangelo had died. After several months during which I was praying for his soul, I saw a very beautiful and luminous young man carrying a limpid crystal vase in the form of a heart, as big as a *bozza* and full of the clearest water. Over its mouth was a golden ribbon and above that a flame of fire. He told me that he had appeared to me on God's behalf so that I would accompany him, and he led me along a very beautiful and charming road, and then he took me into another one so dark that it seemed like night, but the vase emitted such a glow that it was sufficient to light it. And he said to me, "Do you see this heart? Our conscience must be as clear as this water, this gold be the purity of our heart, and this fire be the great love we must have, persevering until the end of our life in order to receive this greater glory you'll see." Once he had said this, the road ended, and a great door swung open, behind which was Signor Dr. Michelangelo in an enormous fire carrying flowers. And then I saw a large table full of roses and fruits, surrounded by all my people—father, mother, siblings—and spirits who were singing and praising the Lord with the greatest thanks. Signor Michelangelo said, "O Cecilia, if I could come back to life, if the Lord allowed me to do so in order to improve my conduct, I'd be glad to leave Glory itself." While he was saying this, I very joyfully asked, "What do these flowers and fruits signify?" The young man replied, "These are the fruits of his good works, the flowers testimony to his virginity." Then he disappeared, and I thanked the Lord with the greatest satisfaction, telling Him that I, a sinner, was not worthy of this.

While I was living in Cannaregio, I was overcome by a most cruel illness with such atrocious pains all around my waist that I felt all the bones in my midsection breaking and a very hot fire burning within, so that I cried aloud day and night, which lasted for forty days. The physicians Michelangelo, [Pietro] Caffi, [Nicolò] Alberizzi, Donadoni, and [Pietro] Camo attended me and prescribed various remedies that tormented me without providing any relief. Signor Caffi told the other physicians that they were all crazy because it was an infirmity sent by God, not a natural malady. They paid many visits, during which they told me I was going to die. Finally, on their last visit, they concluded that I couldn't last more than an hour, and therefore the signor *priano* of San Geremia [Giovanni Conti], the *priano* of San Giovanni di Rialto [Antonio Grandi], and Father Zuanne the Slav [Giovanni Andreis], confessor of the girls, came to me. The Most Blessed Virgin appeared at my bedside and told me, "Get out of this bed and go to the Sovereign Physician" showing me a large crucifix on the wall across from my bed. Right away -- alone in the room while the priests, physicians,

and noblemen were walking about on the porch weeping—I jumped out of bed with the great energy given me not by my nature, which in fact was destitute, but by Blessed God, and I put my mouth on His side, from which I sucked a water so precious that it spread throughout my body, cooling everything, and I was entirely free of illness.

And while I was praying that He give me the strength to support such great torments, I heard inside myself a voice that said, "Cecilia, I delight in this suffering of yours, but it is my will that you will feel these pains for three more days." And so it happened, for at midnight the same pains seized me again and lasted for three whole days. The physicians and priests who saw me attached to the crucifix and so rapidly restored to health were amazed, and a servant who was assisting me named Marietta [Elisabetta Bonardi]³⁰—now a nun of St. Teresa with Sister Eufrazia her superior in Conegliano—came to put a mantle over me while I was attached to the crucifix, and then she called in those on the porch mentioned above, who saw me healthy when before I had been all twisted and pale. They all rejoiced with me, but I told them not to celebrate so much because I had to suffer three more days, as happened.

Before the plague came, my sister who is still living, then called Maria, put a needle shaped like a fishhook into her mouth and swallowed it, holding it in her stomach for a whole week and feeling great pain. Many remedies, including holding her upside down, were tried, but none of them worked. At last turning to prayer, I prayed to God for my sister, who was in danger of dying. And I heard an internal voice that told me to take some lasagna noodles with a few greens and cook them in a pan with a little butter. That's what I did, my sister ate it right away, and two hours later she evacuated the needle, which was stuck in her intestine. I pulled out the needle, but because [part of] the intestine was outside and bleeding heavily, they summoned the barber, who touched the intestine with a hot piece of iron, and she was safe and sound.

At San Lorenzo I was keeping a girl whose name doesn't come to mind—she's alive, however, and is a lay sister in Santa Caterina [Chiara Poli]—and took another, a decayed gentlewoman from the Morosini family called Giulia, both of them very poor, who escaped from the house one morning at dawn. The night before they fled, as I was praying, an internal voice told me, "Watch out, Cecilia, you are about to suffer a great tribulation, but be prepared to follow the will of God, for you will be relieved." A

30. When the transcript of her dictated autobiography was read back to her, Ferrazzi corrected this name.

very beautiful young woman appeared before me and said that I must prepare myself because what I had heard during prayer was about to occur.

That morning, half an hour after sunrise, a girl came to me and said, "Signora, Giulia isn't here." And then a little later she told me, "That other one is missing, too." I was much afflicted by the loss of two virgins, who in addition had stolen some things, that is, gold and silver. Because they had no money of their own, they gave some of the silver to the boatman who took them to Fusina, and the rest they pawned at the loan bank of Padua.

I commended their virginity to the Most Holy Mother in order that She maintain them intact until I found them. I heard an internal voice that said, "Go toward Padua and you'll find them," and this I reported to my confessor, Father Alvise, so that he'd let me go. He didn't want me to, saying that they were in Venice and I'd find them, but I wept and told him that they were on the road, and so it was, for I saw them in my mind's eye. A gentleman came to see me, for in an office at the Palazzo Ducale he had encountered a boatman who turned in a silver fork and spoon that he said he'd received from two pretty, well-dressed girls who appeared to have escaped from a convent. The officials took the silver, and the nobleman, Sebastiano Barbarigo, brought me the boatman, who told me what had happened and said that they were waiting at Fusina for one of their uncles to come and take them away.

Immediately after obtaining my confessor's permission, I got into a boat with an old woman and went to Fusina to find them. At Fusina I rented a carriage, in which I went around looking for them. Everywhere I went, people told me that they'd seen them going by, and I had myself taken to the bridge at Noventa. After the bridge, their trail went cold. The next morning Father Alvise, my confessor, and the aforementioned noble came after me and found me on the other side of the Noventa bridge in the house of a friend of the woman who was with me. But since we couldn't find the girls, we returned to Dolo, where someone dressed as a pilgrim appeared—I don't know whether he was St. Anthony of Padua, whom I continually invoked—and asked me why I was so downcast and almost lifeless. My woman replied that I was going in search of two girls and couldn't find them. I said the pilgrim, "am here to find them." I took him right into the carriage, and we returned to the Noventa bridge. Arriving at an inn where there was a steward's wife, we asked her whether there were two girls there, which she adamantly denied. The pilgrim who had shown us that place disappeared the moment we got out of the carriage.

I went into the courtyard and saw the slippers belonging to one of these girls, as well as a handkerchief with lace edging which they'd taken from

me, and from this I realized that they were there. After many requests and threats to the steward's wife, as well as giving her money, which she took, she still wouldn't admit that she had them. Finally, seeing the door of a granary, I said, "They're in here," and she retorted that it held her employer's grain. But on opening the door, I found one girl hidden under the haystack and the other behind a big canvas bag. They promptly begged my pardon, and I accepted them lovingly, led them to the boat, and took them home, where one stayed with me two more years and the other a year and a half.

One day I was at the house of Signora Marietta Cappello, who had removed me from the convent of Santa Teresa, where I was living; I remained with her for three days because she was resentful.³¹ Her brother, Giovanni Morosini, had also come to stay with her. The evening before my departure, he engaged me in a conversation about the miracles of the Most Holy Mother that lasted two and a half hours. Hearing him discuss spiritual things greatly amazed Signora Marietta and her husband, for by no stretch of the imagination was that his habit. The next day I went back to the convent and commended him day and night to the Lord and the Most Holy Mother, intending to offer his soul to His Divine Majesty, as I did, so that He would give the man grace to change his life.

During the night, while I was making this request, my room filled with devils in the visible form of horrible animals breathing fire, who beat me, but I also saw the Most Holy Mother and the saints to whom I was devoted, who defended me. But the devils said that I shouldn't interfere with that soul, which was already theirs, or they'd take my life. With great confidence and living faith in the Most Holy Mother giving me strength, I prayed even more fervently. The devils disappeared, leaving me with bruises, pains, and a thirst so great that it lasted until daybreak. In a weak voice, I summoned one Madonna Chiara, who was in the convent, to bring me water to drink because I was unable [to get it myself]. Shortly the Devil in the form of this woman came into the room holding a little bucket, which she gave me, and when, before drinking, I said, "Jesus Mary," the Devil ran away, yelling and screaming so noisily that it seemed as if there were four or five carriages in the dormitory. The water only got as far as my lips, for the little bucket broke in my hands, and my head and lips swelled as if they'd been burned by fire. I knelt right down in the middle of the cell, thanking God and His Most Holy Mother and commending that soul even more strongly to God with the offer to suffer for his sins. And in the morning the news reached me that two hours after sunrise the noble, who'd been perfectly healthy,

31 Cappello was jealous of Maria Ferraizzi, who was trying to keep her sister at Santa Teresa

had died suddenly. For this reason Signora Marietta sent someone to summon me, but I couldn't go because I was all battered by the Devil. The next day I went with great faith to San Nicolò, where I made my confession to the *pénitencier* [Giovanni Araneo] and took Communion, and as soon as I'd received the Most Holy Communion, I was completely free of all ills.

When I first went to stay with Signora Marietta Cappello, she decided to take me to Padua to the house of the deceased just mentioned [her brother], and while we were there, she summoned two of those fathers of St. Philip Neri, one named Father [Antonio Maria Corsino de'] Santi and the other Father Giovanni Battista Polacco from Feltre, who is still alive. She talked with them about me and what had happened to me; the fathers said they wanted to test me with a mortification. Signora Marietta had me called into the room where these fathers and her husband were, and the fathers asked me whether I was the one Signora Marietta had told them about. And they had two prayer stools put one on top of the other under the fireplace in that room. They told me to spit on my hands and ordered me to climb up on the prayer stools, get my hands thoroughly covered with soot, and then rub it all over my face. Without a second thought, I obeyed. Once I'd gotten down off the prayer stools, completely black, they took the chain of the fireplace, put it around me, and commanded me to go into the salon and pay my respects to some gentlewomen who were there. I did so. But as I was on my way, I saw near those ladies a foreign woman covered with jewels holding a baby by the hand, who beckoned me to pay my respects to her. I went to them, curtsied to them all, and left. On the way back I staggered a bit because of the chain, but a footman helped me. No one but that footman saw me—not the gentlewomen to whom I curtsied, for they told Signora Marietta that they hadn't seen me at all, although they certainly would have if I'd been there.

After all the trouble I had in Padua, I obligated myself to do all the good I could, especially to the poor, for the grace I'd received from St. Anthony when I called on him to let me find those two virgins. And when people came to me to ask that I take in girls, I took them willingly for the love of God without any compensation, and they have made themselves virtuous, having learned the way of the divine precepts.

The priest Polacco decided to put me in the convent of Santa Maria Maggiore and had me escorted there by three of the principal gentlewomen of the city, but those nuns all ran to the door of the convent, screaming that they didn't want me. When they persisted in their refusal and proved unwilling to yield to Polacco's persuasion and orders, he started shouting at them, saying, "I'm putting in a saint, one who lives on communion, one who

has the stigmata!" Since they wouldn't obey, he told the nuns. "Unveil the Abbess [Maria Caterina], remove her from office!" but the nuns still wouldn't obey. Finally he began throwing some little slips of paper into the convent and told them, "I'm excommunicating you!" and the nuns threw them out, saying that they wouldn't accept his excommunication and that he had no authority to excommunicate them. And so we all returned home.

That night, while I was praying for that Mother Abbess on account of the improper names Polacco had called her, like "hussy," "rash," "insolent" and similar terms, I commended myself to the Most Holy Mother and heard a voice inside me that said, "Cecilia, obey blindly, because that's the will of your Spouse, and you must go get new crosses to bear that will be useful to those nuns' souls. Don't you aim at the salvation of souls? Don't bother about Polacco's having been offended when those gentlewomen hurt him by saying, 'You old madman, go learn how to dust your books;' and other inappropriate things, for this happened with God's permission. There wouldn't have been martyrs if there hadn't been tyrants. Go now, and carry on bravely. I let all your affection be for your Spouse and not for others."

The next day I was taken to the convent again by Polacco, Father Stella of the Friari, and those three gentlewomen. Patriarch Corner had written telling the nuns to obey because he knew whom he was putting in. Going inside the door, I knelt on the ground and kissed the Mother Abbess's feet. As I went in, Father Stella told me not to uncover my face or let those nuns see me until they'd escorted me to my room. Because of that order, Polacco had words with Father Stella, telling him that he mustn't interfere with me by giving me orders. When I was inside, the nuns said and did many injurious things to me, but when they got to know me, the Mother Abbess and all her nuns frequently caressed me and desired to spend time with me, although Polacco forbade them to seek me out. But when I prayed and asked God to remove the many signs of affection those nuns were showing me, twice the Most Holy Mother appeared to me, saying that although my purity and modesty were not at risk, I should still resist those caresses.

One day while I was there, Father [Giovanni Francesco] Priuli of the Somaschi came to the parlor, had the Abbess summoned, and told her abruptly to have me brought to him right away, for the Devil had made him come there. That's what the Abbess told me. I was led down; it was early in the morning on the day before Christmas, and I was in bad shape from the blows the Devil had inflicted on me that night. Without even saying good morning, he began, "Possessed one, bewitched one, the Devil brings you here! Did he hear the expense of your coming from so far away?" Then he told me to raise my head, asking me what I was feeling inside. I replied that

although I wasn't worthy of that insult, I deserved worse for my sins. He added that I had nothing better to do than come from the Devil, that I was playing the holy woman to fool the world and waste poor clerics' time with ecstasies and apparitions. And he began to repeat, "Possessed one!" and stopped. Then he said, "Come on, I'll help you, and don't doubt God's goodness, and I promise to go to Vicar Polacco and come here every feast day." He left and went to Polacco and told him everything he'd done, asking that he be allowed to supervise me. But Polacco gave him a sharp reprimand, telling him that he was brainless and only wanted to take me away from him and that he himself hadn't given any such order.

It has come back to me that when Signora Marietta Cappello first took me into her house, she took me a number of times to the Giudecca to the Discalced Carmelite fathers, who then had a hospice there,⁴² and she had me talk with Father Ferdinando, who came to the church of Sant'Eufemia and asked me to tell him everything that was happening to me. After he had examined me many times, Signora Marietta called him to the house, and that father, seeing a little gold chain with thirty-three links⁴³ on my right arm, yanked it off. And I thought my heart had broken, with such great pain that I fell to the ground in a faint. The father never returned that chain, saying in Signora Marietta Cappello's presence that he had discovered the Devil and that I was possessed. After the father left, I gave myself to fervent prayer, in which the Virgin appeared and told me, "Cecilia, don't be disturbed because this isn't the Devil, but you felt such pain when that chain was removed because you've made yourself the slave of Christ's Passion. Don't you remember when I gave it to you? A great outpouring of love produces gold and fire." I was left in great stillness, without any temptation, thanking God for having lifted that torment, and I felt so strong that I would have suffered any ill.

This gold chain was given to me in the following way. One day, under the obedience of Father Master Bonaventura the Carmelite, while I was in prayer at the hour of prime, "St. Bernardino of Siena, to whom I was particularly devoted, appeared to me with a basket in his hand that looked like gold, in which there was a gold packet of the mysteries of the Passion of Christ, but sprinkled with blood, and in the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin he put it in my hands. And I clutched it to my breast with great

42 By 1664 the Discalced Carmelites had moved to a new house. Santa Maria de Genoa remains next to the present railroad station in which they still reside.

43 The number thirty-three symbolizes Jesus Christ's years on earth.

44 At 6:50.

tenderness, thanking His Divine Majesty that those instruments had been the salvation of the entire human race. And at the same time, the Most Holy Mother pulled that chain out of the basket and put it on my heart, but I wasn't aware of having it.

The next morning I went to the confessional and told the father confessor what had happened. He told me to touch my chest, and putting my hands on it under the veil, I felt that chain. And he, shouting, said, "These are temptations of the Devil! Go pray to the Most Holy Mother of the Carmine to remove these external things from you." While I was praying to the Most Holy Mother in obedience to my confessor, I heard internally, "You do well to follow holy obedience and pray for the souls of the dead so that they will be your advocates and witnesses of the truth." I took communion that morning and found that I didn't have the chain any longer. After communion I went back to the confessional, and the father inquired whether I had obeyed. I said yes, even though I was a sinner. I prayed to the souls in purgatory that whatever I could not obtain, they would supply, with this promise, that all the good I could do for those souls [I would do], that I would make myself the slave of their suffering, requesting a little of the pain of their punishments. And nothing else happened then.

One night before I went to the aforesaid Discalced Carmelite [Father Ferdinando], while I was praying at the hour of matins,³⁵ the Enemy came to me visibly in the form of a woman, who brought me some oranges and apples,³⁶ telling me that I should take them. I told her that obedience didn't allow me to eat them and that since I was about to take communion, this was no time to eat. She became so angry that, having changed from a woman into the Devil, he began to give me a tongue-lashing, saying that my confessor was a devil who would make me lose my soul and body and that I should leave him, and that he himself would not depart unless I promised to do so. And he showed me a bundle of iron rods, saying, "This will be your torment, and you'll remain in my hands." I replied that he could do what God permitted,³⁷ that I would do neither more nor less, and that God was the master, not he. He began to beat me with an iron rod until I was breathless and bleeding. And the Mother of God collected the blood, and I begged her not to do so but to keep everything hidden so that Signora

35. In the middle of the night (in convents and monasteries, 3 AM).

36. In seventeenth-century Venice, where oranges were an exotic luxury item, this was no ordinary plate of fruit.

37. Here Ferrazzi echoes the orthodox, antidualist position on the Devil: he is not an independent force of evil but acts only with God's sanction.

Marietta Cappello wouldn't see it. She replied that these [drops of blood] would in time become so many blooming roses. In the Virgin's presence the Devil disappeared, and going back to prayer in such bad condition, I acknowledged that I received everything from the hands of Jesus Christ, from whom I requested the favor of feeling a tiny spark of His Passion.

After that, a mob of devils came and threw a chain over me, tied me up, and dragged me repeatedly around the room as far as the door. Hanging on the back of the door was a thick hemp cord, which the Devil tied so tightly around my neck that I felt myself suffocating, and my throat was all swollen and my face black. Hearing the loud noise, Signora Marietta Cappello and her husband jumped out of bed, came running, and found me in that condition. They untied me and laid me on the bed, practically dead. And since I had a whip in my hand,³⁸ because the cord wasn't enough for the Devil, he took the whip from me and added it to the cord, twisting them together. They sent for Signor Father Alvise, my confessor, who had me tell what had happened and gave me a quarter of an hour to commend myself to the Lord. During that quarter of an hour, I went into rapture, during which the Most Holy Mother appeared and brought me the previously mentioned chain and put it on my right arm, welded in such a way that it couldn't be removed without breaking it. It was then broken and taken by the aforesaid Discalced Carmelite, causing me a great deal of pain, as I've said.

One day when I was at table with the said Signora Marietta Cappello, unable to hold food in my stomach as usual, she had me get up from the table and ordered me to take a walk under the portico. Doing so and looking down from the window at the *fondamenta*, I observed passing along it a young priest with chestnut hair, who fixed his eyes on me. Sitting down on a chair and going into a trance, I saw him in shadows that inspired a combination of fear and pity. For the next three days all I did was pray to the Lord for him, whom I didn't know, and perform penitential exercises—in obedience, however, to my confessor, Father Alvise, who gave me communion three days in a row for this soul. When the three days had passed, the confessor asked me who this priest was, and since I didn't know, he ordered that I pray to the Most Holy Mother to give me information about this man who was causing me so much difficulty. After communion I heard an internal voice that told me, "This is Abbot [Zuane] Moro, who finds himself in the shadows of damnation." Three times another voice repeated, "Cecilia, pray for him without ceasing, for he will be given Glory." I was so consoled

38. In order to flagellate herself.

nurses] had lost their milk, they gave her to me when she must have been eight or nine months old. I took her and, commending her to the Lord, made her some pap with holy water. The little girl ate and slept well, and so I kept on giving her the same food. With her left leg twisted in such a way that the foot was turned to the left side and the calf of the leg came around in front, she was bereft of human aid, for none of the many remedies that were tried did any good. On the morning of Corpus Domini⁴¹ when she was around two or three years old, after I had commended her to God at vespers, I was called by Signora Marietta and left the little girl sitting on a chair. She got up by herself and began to run around the room, to the surprise and delight of everyone in the house.

One day while I was going to Mass at San Giovanni di Rialto, I ran into a nobleman, who asked me for alms.⁴² I told him that I had no money, as in fact I didn't. Immediately I heard an internal voice saying, "That's not how your father behaved." And it crossed my mind that for many years a noble came to our house at night to ask for alms, and my father brought them to him secretly; he even got out of bed at midnight to do so. Then I was told, "Look into your purse," and sticking my hand in, I found many silver coins. Turning back, I gave all of them to that nobleman. I went into church to confess, telling the *pizano*, my confessor, what had just happened. He dressed me down, saying that the Devil was leading me astray and I shouldn't have given [the man] those coins. Then he had me recount the incident again, and when I had done so, he said that I had done right, but that another time I shouldn't give the man the coins without showing them to him first. And he sent me to the feet of a [picture of] St. Catherine the Martyr,⁴³ telling me to stay there with my face on the ground for two Miserees⁴⁴ because I had given that money outside of obedience. The Most Holy Mother with St. Catherine appeared to me there, and they ordered me to ask my confessor's pardon and give him the message from them that charity brooked no delay. So I did.

One day while I was praying near a window overlooking the tiled roof of the church of San Severo, in through it came a young nobleman with long hair, dressed in red silk garments, who intended to assault me. Immediately I was called by the Most Holy Mother. Who said, "Cecilia, beware of

that dragon, that rapacious wolf, who seeks to devour the virgin's blood." And the young man pleaded for his life, begging me to let him leave the house quietly. And having escorted him, with the Virgin's help, down the stairs, which he descended on his knees without my seeing his face, I opened the door for him, and he took my skirt and kissed it, crying for pardon and mercy. This fellow went to confess to Signor Father Alvise, told him what he had done, and became good, leaving the woman he was keeping. The confessor told Signora Marietta this. Going back upstairs, I thanked the Most Holy Mother for the favor She had done me.

While I was living in Cannaregio, I was assaulted by a most cruel illness, beyond the one I've already mentioned, for which I commended my soul [to God]. And Father Chiaramonte, who was my confessor, came to my bedside to assist me and stayed with me all night. He noticed, I don't know how, that I had on a chain as thick as a finger and a half with links the length of half a finger attached in the back and fastened with a padlock. He asked whether I would remove it if he commanded me to do so for holy obedience. I asked him to give me a little time because I could not take it off except with great pain. He had recourse to prayer, and on returning he told me that he was giving me three days to take it off. Not knowing what to do, not wanting others to lay their hands on me and not being able to do it myself because of the extreme pain I felt, for it had grown into the skin. I called on the Glorious Virgin Mary, went into a trance, and three days later found myself with the chain detached from my flesh without any pain at all. When the father confessor came, I gave him the chain with the greatest embarrassment and shame, for I had never allowed anyone to know about it, and truly I don't know what he did with it, having paid no attention because I was much preoccupied by illness.

That chain was given me by a hermitess who lived at Santa Marina across from my house when my parents were still alive and I was about eight years old, and I took pleasure in watching her, pecking at her very often through a hole in our upper porch, through which I saw her in her room, which was in the attic of the house of a gold-leaf maker, and I often heard the angels sing in the greatest harmony. One morning when I was with my mother at Mass in the church of Santa Marina, so was this hermitess, who took communion every day and died in the odor of sanctity.⁴⁵ Leaving my mother, I went to her side, commending myself to her with great submission and embarrassment so that she would pray to the Lord for me, who was so

41. A movable feast celebrated in mid- to late June.

42. Not all Venetians of noble rank were rich.

43. Probably Domenico Tintoretto's *St. Catherine with Angels*.

44. The time needed to recite the penitential Psalm 51. *Absterge me Deus: "Lord, have mercy upon me!"*—in this instance, twice.

45. That is, with the reputation of having been a living saint and possibly a candidate for beatification.

bad and disobedient to my mother, and telling her that it was my most ardent desire to serve God. She welcomed me with great tenderness and told me, "Daughter, don't worry, for I've been observing your soul for a long time, and look what I've brought you." And she showed me the chain, saying, "This is what will keep you mortified and will give you grace to obey your father and mother, but it will prick you, and therefore bear this torment for the Passion of Our Lord. Before you put it on, go to the *priamo*, your confessor, [to see] whether he is willing to give you license [to wear it]." (She had already shown him the chain.) The *priamo* granted his permission but first gave me communion. Thus, I went home and, without saying anything to my father and mother, put it on, and I always wore it until Father Charamonte noticed it. After it was taken off me, I don't know by whom or how, as I've said above, many ulcers remained on my flesh. Signor Dr. Caffi prescribed remedies to heal them, but all in vain. Later, one night I woke up with those sores healed.

The hermitess moved house at the order of that signor *priamo*, and no one knew where she was. About four years after she had given me the chain, when I was in prayer one day and went into a trance, she appeared to me in agony and said, "Cecilia, I'm leaving you. Now is the time to pray for me because I'm going to render account to God for my good and bad deeds." I returned to consciousness, and that evening, another trance having come upon me, I saw that blessed soul go to heaven, accompanied by huge crowds of angels and saints with a most beautiful melody. The next day, while I was working beside my mother, I went into a trance, and she gave me a kick in the side. I quickly jumped to my feet and rushed to lean out a little window, through which I was deemed worthy to see her corpse being carried to burial accompanied by an enormous crowd of people.

After a year had passed, while I was in prayer, the aforementioned hermitess appeared to me with her skirt full of flowers and fruits to tell me that she was praying for me and that these were the fruits and flowers of my deeds and sufferings. The hermitess disappeared, leaving behind her an intense aroma that lasted for many days.

I have always been particularly devoted to St. Catherine the Martyr, who many years ago, a week before her feast day, gave me a very beautiful ring inset with thirty-three diamonds, one more lovely than the other. While I was in rapture, she put it on the little finger of my right hand.⁴⁶ I saw it, but not everyone else did. One day when I was in church at San Giovanni di Rialto, it was seen by a girl who was there, and she pointed it

46. In this vision Catherine of Alexandria permits Terrazzi to replicate her own mystical marriage

out to a few other girls. Noticing this, I fled blushing into the confessional and told everything to the signor *priamo*, who retorted brusquely that I didn't choose to conform to the will of God and preferred to repeat what was being said in church.⁴⁷ I left the confessional all upset and with the intention of not returning home, and I went to my sister at Santa Teresa. I stayed there all day in the choir and returned home at the Ave Maria.⁴⁸ One day, in confession at San Severo with Signor Father Alvise, having the ring on my hand, I showed it to him. He told me that I should make a promise to God that when obedience demanded, wherever I might be, I would give it to Him. During communion, when I was in rapture and he [Father Alvise] was celebrating Mass, He ordered me to present the ring to the celebrant. I'm in no position to know whether I gave it to him. It's true, however, that I saw it on the altar near the chalice on top of the corporal,⁴⁹ and the whole altar shone. When I had come out of rapture, he called me into the confessional and asked whether I had obeyed. I replied that I had, and he added that I should thank God that obedience had been executed. And so I did. That ring had remained on my finger for a week before and a week after the feast.

Since some proclaimed that I was a saint and others that I was possessed, the priest Polacco decided to have me exorcised. The first exorcism, from which he removed me saying that [the exorcist] didn't know his business and was afraid of spirits, took place at the Cappuccine. The second was at San Martino at the house of the Dominican Tertiaries in a little courtyard. He was present, though a bit removed, and he ordered a certain priest named Domenico, a man of great fame, to put the stole on me. In attendance as well were a friar from San Giobbe, one from Santo Stefano, and one from the Frari,⁵⁰ all of whom stood around me and exorcised me, and I was sitting on the knees of the friar from San Giobbe, and all of them whispered in my ear that God give me patience and exhorted me to suffer willingly for the love of God. After this exorcism, which lasted an hour and a half, they decided that I should kneel at Polacco's feet, kiss his hand, and tell him, "Sir, this spirit of mine wants Most Holy Communion every day to deliver me from this torment." He gave me the benediction, saying, "The Lord bless you, I understand everything." During the exorcisms I felt the

47. Translation based on a conjectural reading of a difficult passage. Apparently Gandhi was rebuking Terrazzi for using the confessional encounter to report what others were saying, rather than concentrating on her own sins.

48. Around 6 p.m.

49. The cloth on which the priest places first the chalice, then the host.

50. Identified in the first interrogation, above.

greatest consolation and throughout, I saw the Most Holy Virgin nearby, for it seemed to me that I was in paradise.

When I was at San Lorenzo, alone in my room, someone appeared to me dressed in black in a Jesuit habit, though I didn't know who these fathers were because there were none of them in Venice.⁵¹ Appearing beside my bed, he began to console me, exhorting me to suffer those pains mixed with contempt for myself, which would be a liquor exceedingly efficacious for purifying my soul, and he told me that until the end of my life I'd have to suffer these mortifications, which would continue to grow. A girl, still alive, whose name doesn't come to mind (she was related to a servant at Ca' Canal), entered my room, and seeing that Jesuit, she ran upstairs to tell the other girls that I was doing evil with a gentleman. And hearing this, I rejoiced and prayed to the Most Holy Mother to reveal to me who this person was. She appeared and told me that it was Ignatius [Loyola]. Her adopted son, whom She had sent me for my consolation, and that I shouldn't worry because he wouldn't be seen. And thus I was consoled.

In the confessional at San Giovanni Evangelista with the signor *pievano* of [San Giovanni di] Rialto, who was reprimanding me as usual, I told him, "Sir, let me leave, because a great tribulation is about to occur," but he wouldn't allow me to depart. Though I asked him three times to let me go, he said that I must stay there for obedience. And while I was with him, a great fire broke out below ground and burned the entire section of the house where the oven was without burning the bread, which was outside in baskets and also in the oven. The girls went forward, and the signor *pievano* began to distribute communion, but seeing the fire, which was spreading, he began to tremble with the pyx⁵² in his hand and wanted to leave. I told him fervently that he should remain firm and have faith in the Most Holy Sacrament, for this was a temptation of the Devil. Communion proceeded without the fire harming anyone because it stayed within bounds until the service was over. When I'd put all the girls in a room and the said signor *pievano* had gone out of the house, I had him come and give a benediction to that fire, which having been blessed, went out immediately. Meanwhile a crowd had gathered.

I recall that when I was in the Cappuccine [of San Girolamo], I took a pair of scissors to cut off my hair, for I desired to put on the habit and stay

with them. And when I was about to start cutting, the Most Holy Virgin appeared and took the scissors from my hands, saying, "Is this the express obedience you promised Me?" I bowed, asking her pardon and telling her that I'd be content to stay there not as a nun but as a slave if that pleased Her. She repeated the aforesaid words and disappeared.

One time when I was taken to Murano by Signora Marietta Cappello, she took me to the Capuchin mothers, who were busy with the conservation of their church.⁵³ Seeing me, the Abbess [Maria Benedetta Rossi] persuaded me to go into the convent, telling me that she'd leave the door open so that I could flee inside, but first she'd draw Signora Marietta aside so that she wouldn't notice or try to stop me. Agreeing readily, I went through the door, but as I passed through it I was held from behind. Turning to see who was holding me, I saw that it was the Most Holy Mother, Who said, "Is this obedience to your superior?" and disappeared. I went right to Signora Marietta, revealed my error, and was much relieved. The Abbess called me, complaining that I hadn't fulfilled my promise, and I told her that such was the will of God.

While I was with the said Signora Marietta at San Severo, in prayer around midnight, I heard internally [someone] telling me to commend the soul of a religious who was about to pass from this life. I prayed to the Most Holy Mother that Father Alvise wake up and go help that soul, if this were the real voice of God. The third time I prayed, the priest who was called to help the soul awoke. Not knowing who had called him or where he was supposed to go, he went out of his house and knocked on the door of Ca' Benzon. Told that no one there needed anything and that they didn't like having their door knocked on at that hour, he was at last sent downstairs to see whether an abbot staying there or any of his servants, who had all been fine that day, needed anything. They found the abbot dying. Hence, Father Alvise confessed him and gave him extreme unction, and he died immediately. After that prayer I was assailed by the fiercest of illnesses, during which I heard an internal voice telling me, "Cecilia, suffer, for these sufferings of yours will save that soul." And I was completely consoled.

This is what I want to reveal to the judicial authorities in order to obey, although with very great embarrassment, for I've always tried to hide every thing, holding myself to be a great sinner, as in fact I am, with no merit before His Divine Majesty, and considering myself unworthy even of being on this earth. And whether the aforementioned things I've deposed were illusions of the demon, as I've always suspected and feared, I leave to the

53. Terrazzo or her scribe mistakes islands. The "Capuchin" convent of Santa Maria della Salute recently established at the time of her visit was on Burano.

51. Expelled from Venice in 1606 during the confrontation between the government of the Republic and Pope Paul V known as the Interdict Crisis, the Jesuits were officially readmitted in 1656.

52. A round box with a hinged lid that holds the large host used in the benediction section of the Mass.

appropriate people to judge, submitting entirely and forever to their will and judgment. At the urging of the Most Illustrious Monsignor Patriarch, while I was on my deathbed at Sant'Antonio I made my last will, leaving what little I had to be distributed to the girls, except those who chose to leave without either becoming nuns or marrying.⁵⁴ I had no money, nor do I have any at present, but rather debts, as one can understand, since unfortunately I've had to spend for the girls, trusting only in God. Who provided as necessary in ways that stunned and amazed me. And if I've left anything out through a lapse of memory, for I'm in bed with a continual fever, I protest that I never want to transgress against the obedience I have always desired to pay to all my superiors. I have governed my girls in accordance with the rules or constitutions I wrote with the approval of the Jesuit Fathers Zampi and Casati, which they thought over very carefully, as one can see.⁵⁵

At the order of the Most Reverend Father Inquisitor General in the entire Most Serene Domain of the Venetians, the aforesaid Cecilia dictated all this to me, Friar Antonio da Venezia, Reader in Sacred Theology and Consultant to the Holy Office, which, read to and, as she affirmed, well understood by her, she confirmed and signed with her own hand.

[signed] I Cecilia Ferrazzi⁵⁶ confirm.

Friar Antonio da Venezia, as above, deputy.

[Tuesday,] 15 July 1664. In the presence of the Most Excellent Lord Procurator Morosini. Before the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord Apostolic Nuncio and the Most Reverend Father Inquisitor General and the Vicar of the Most Reverend Lord Patriarch of the Venetians, the aforementioned Reverend Father Friar Antonio da Venezia, deputy as above etc., presented the above, written by him and dictated to him by the aforementioned Cecilia Ferrazzi, swearing and touching etc. [to confirm that] he had faithfully written down everything she had dictated.

[signed] Andrea Vescovi, Chancellor, etc.

54. In this will, written on 1 July 1661 but never probated, Ferrazzi also left some clothing and furniture to her sister and requested burial in the church of the Gesuiti, provided that the Patriarch agreed. VeAS, Notarile, Testamenti, busta 65 bis (Andrea Bronzini), no. 250.

55. A copy of regulations for her house, in which it is given the name *Seminary of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary*, is inserted in the Trial Record.

56. Again, notice Ferrazzi's vacillation in the spelling of her name.



APPENDIX 1

PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Letters and numbers in parentheses indicate locations on the map of Venice, pp. xxx–xxxI

Alberti, Nicolò (b. c. 1627) Physician, native of Bergamo. He testified during the defense phase of Ferrazzi's trial on 27 January 1665.

Alberto degli Abbati, St. (d. 1307) Sicilian Carmelite saint, canonized in 1475. His name was frequently invoked for assistance in exorcisms.

Aldrovandi, Giovanni Battista, S.J. (1609–67) Jesuit, Venetian provincial of his order from 1663 to 1664. Ferrazzi uncharacteristically mangles his surname. On 6 April 1665, at the central headquarters of the Holy Office in Rome, he responded to questions framed by the defense. Like the testimony furnished by his fellow Jesuits, Aldrovandi's was decidedly favorable to Ferrazzi.

Altoviti, Iacopo (1604–93) Native of Florence, papal nuncio in Venice from 1638 to 1666. The abbreviation etc. alludes to his benefice, the archbishopric of Athens, a see in Ottoman territory often assigned to high-ranking curial bureaucrats.

Andreis, Giovanni (c. 1615–1683) Born in Traù (Trogir) on the Dalmatian coast; staff member at the church of San Marcuola (I-5) and confessor to its hermitesses there. He testified on 24 July and 12 August 1664, during the prosecutorial phase of Ferrazzi's trial, and again on 27 January 1665, during the defense phase. Named bishop of Lesina (Hvar) in 1667, he was transferred to the see of Traù in 1676.

Angelo of Jerusalem, St. (1185–1225) Carmelite martyr who met his death at the hands of a Sicilian heretic, canonized in the fifteenth century.