Germano di San Stanislao

(born Vincenzo Ruoppolo)

(1850-1909)

He was born on January 17th. 1850 in Vico Equense, on the Sorrento peninsula, by Francesco and Carmela Tozzi. Having moved to Naples with his family, he attended the courses of the Amato religious institute and the activities of the spiritual congregation of the students, which oriented him towards a religious choice opposed by his parents. In the summer of 1865 he left Naples to reach the Passionist Congregation in Rome. Admitted to the Passionist novitiate at the sanctuary of the Scala Santa, he took the religious name of Germano di San Stanislao and, after his profession of vows (October 1866), he passed as a student to the retreat of Saints John and Paul.

The canonization of the founder of the Passionists Paul of the Cross, solemnly celebrated in St. Peter's on 29 June 1867, had enormously strengthened the community and reinvigorated both the Christological vow of the Congregation and its commitment to loyalty to the Pope. The capture of Porta Pia by the Roman Republic army produced an even more marked cohesion of the religious community in defense of the Curia and had a profound impact on the mentality of the younger people. In fact, with twenty-one other students from the Roman house, Germano abandoned Italian territory - and "that terrible storm that made so many cry" - and, to escape the laws that made military service obligatory for clerics and religious, took refuge in Belgium.

After his ordination to the priesthood (November 1872, in Tournai), Germano was assigned to the apostolate in France, but in October 1876, considering the risks of the military service to be over, he returned to Rome as a teacher at the Scala Santa. He began in these years to work on three substantial volumes in Latin, published in Rome between 1903 and 1908, in the series Praelectiones philosophiae scholasticae: I, Logica et ideology; II, Ontology and cosmology; III, Psychologia et theologia.

Transferred to the area of the Cimini mountains between the Passionist houses of Vetralla and Soriano, Germano, reader-director of the philosophy student house, began the first research in Christian archeology around the sanctuary of S. Eutizio in Soriano, obtaining the volumes S. Eutizio of Ferento and its sanctuary located in the territory of Soriano. Historical memoirs (Rome 1883, Tonneins 1886) and Archaeological and critical memoirs on the deeds and cemetery of S. Eutizio di Ferento, preceded by brief information on the territory of the ancient via Ferentana (ibid. 1886).

These monographs, enriched with a vast critical apparatus, reconstructed the original physiognomy of the sanctuary, highlighting its history and legend, cult continuity and "invention of relics", and earned the self-taught Germano the first recognitions from the scientific community. Appointed honorary member of the Academy of Sciences and Letters of Viterbo (1883), member of the Commission of Sacred Archeology and of the Pontifical Roman Academy of Archeology between 1887 and 1895, he established close scientific relationships with the protagonists of Roman archaeology, O. Marucchi, G.B. De Rossi, M. Armellini.

From the end of 1883 Germano was back in Rome as a teacher of theology, canon law and ecclesiastical history for the professed of the Passionist retreat, and then as secretary of the Congregation; wanted again by the police station for his old conviction as a draft dodger, he took refuge in Paris and Bilbao. Having returned to Rome (after having resolved the problem of military conscription at the military tribunal of Salerno), he systematically dedicated himself to the search for the tomb of Saints John and Paul, which a vast yet weak Christian tradition placed in the hypogea of the basilica entrusted to the Passionists. The results of his long research, published in Rome in 1894 and 1907 (The Celimontan house of the holy martyrs John and Paul discovered and illustrated...; The memory of the holy John and Paul, Roman martyrs...), would have been confirmed in the lines essential from the excavations led by A. Prandi in the following 1950s. Protagonist of a scientifically founded sacred archaeology, Germano was appointed consultant to the Congregation of Indulgences in 1902.

Postulator general of his institute since 1890, Germano prepared the causes of beatification of some Passionist religious, including Gabriele dell'Addolorata, of whom he published a successful biography (Life of the Blessed Gabriele dell'Addolorata, Passionist student..., last ed. complete, ibid. 1908), and took care of the recovery of the Passionist retreat of Isola del Gran Sasso, where the blessed was buried and venerated.

The name of Germano, is above all linked to the story of Gemma Galgani. Germano, who had been her advisor and confidant from 1900 to her death (1903), published the first edition, much reworked, of the letters (Letters and ecstasy of the Servant of God Gemma Galgani…, ibid. 1909) and the extensive Biography of Gemma Galgani, virgin of Lucca (ibid. 1907). Witness to the mystical experiences of the young woman from Lucca, he encouraged her love for Christ, her lively participation in the mystery of the Passion, her commitment to reparation and "atonement for the many sins of men" through Eucharistic worship. For this purpose Germano promoted (in memory of Galgani) the foundation of the Passionist monastery of Lucca and the association of lay and ecclesiastic Pia Union of the college of Jesus, which, even in autonomous and original forms, was part of the strategy for the commitment of the laity in favor of the Church pursued by Leo XIII.

The prestige obtained thanks to archaeological research, the extensive relations with the hierarchies of the Curia and with the environments of French traditionalist Catholicism maintained by the years of exile, finally the belonging to a religious family of full fidelity to the pope earned Germano the remembered office to the Congregation of Indulgenze, the call ad "traffiosissimi business" on behalf of Leo XIII (in Caprarola, in the same Lettereway as to the same. Cardinal Vicar of Rome, L.M. Parocchi: having the cardinal had serious suspicions about the attendance of Germano with the superior of the Roman monastery of the Turks (declared dissolved by the S. The Uffizi on the 31st Jan. 1901), the retraction of the Parocchi and the commitment of Germano to interrupt any relationship, including epistolary, with the religious and his appropriate transfer to the Passionist retreat of Corneto, closed the question.

The position of Germano was strengthened with the election of Pius X, which the Passionist knew personally (also for inspection assignments on religious suspended a divinis) and from which he obtained, with the approval of the already mentioned

monastery of Lucca, donations for the maintenance of that community. Above all, in 1905, Germano was appointed - as part of the "sacred visit" promoted by the pope in all Italian dioceses - apostolic visitor to Florence and later (between 1906 and 1907) to Fiesole, Colle di Val d'Elsa, Lucca, San Marco Argentano and Bisignano, and Cassano Ionio who considered themselves infiltrators of modernism (copy of the reports of visits to the Passionists' Historical Archives, Rome).

The inspection of the Diocese of Florence was bitterly refuted by Archbishop A.M. Mistrangelo, former general of the dipylopes, who on June 4, 1906 sent a statement to Mons. G. De Lai secretary of the congregation of the Council, denouncing the persecutory character and the inquisitorial ways adopted by the Passionist, who for his part responded with a counter-exposed to Pius X (analytical documentation in the Processes), demonstrating that he had completely respected his mandate. During the visit to the Calabrian dioceses Germano defended the action in favor of the peasants promoted by the local clergy through the Catholic leagues and the rural coffers.

Germano, who dedicated the last years of his life to the start of the process of beatification of Galgani (opened in Lucca in 1910), died in Rome in the Passionist house on 11 December. 1909; the body was later transferred to Lucca in the tomb of Gemma; in April 1957, still in the wake of the mystique of Lucca, proclaimed a saint in 1940, the process of canonization of Germano was introduced: after the development of the ordinary process in Rome and seven rogatorial processes, the heroism of the virtues was proclaimed.

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