

HEADING TOWARDS ROME: THE FOUNDATION IN TAGLIACOZZO

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PREMISE: MEANING OF "SHARING THE PAST" TOGETHER

As Sr. Paola Arosio pointed out in the previous meeting: «*When we share the past, it is then transformed into a form of unity: even though we don't know each other, we "recognize each other"».*

We are here to share a fragment of the past and today we will have the occasion to visit briefly this small temporary piece, in order to recall to mind that the memory leads us to go deeply, without being superficial and to take time to reflect both personally and with others; it is very important to keep alive a collective memory on our Family history. Because there is no future without remembering the past and there is no future without having solid roots.

In reality, the memory is made up of a mosaic of already existing memories that don't need to be instilled because the memory does so automatically. It's a question of harmonising the various memories which emerge through the different paths of interpretation that each one has the possibility to introduce. More or less, history is a documented interpretation, a look at the past, which from subjective becomes collective when a full sharing of meaning occurs.

The exercise of memory is a rigorous experience which requires a lot of discipline and patience, humility and fidelity, perseverance and resistance, because it's not enough to recall just once yearly, or on and off, as it happens with the Christmas lights that cheered us during this period. Dwelling in a state of memory is equivalent to a sort of vigilance, of internal readiness, of attention to the past which unfolds gradually in order to be in the present of the attentive contemporaries and of those who build the future.

Thus, one must invest highly on memory. It belongs to us as an inheritance which stands at the roots and at the basis of our being Sisters of Charity of St. Jeanne Antide Thouret and lay Friends. We must not yield to the temptation of forgetting our past while risking our own charismatic identity. Our thanks go to the historians for what they do. They ward off our drowsiness and our indifference. They put their work at the service of the common good and give solidity to our common conscience and meaning to our existence.

We are the fruit of our past, but we are also entirely the key agents of our future, if we feel members, by vocation or otherwise, of our big and beautiful religious Family of the Sisters of Charity of St. Jeanne Antide Thouret.

Let us all feel invited together to participate in this sort of *existential archaeology* that leads us to put questions, to question events and documents and to become investigators. Let's imitate *Sherlock Holmes* in our situation (literary actor, created by A. C. Doyle, who appeared in the novel *A study in red* of 1887, and is considered by the critics as the most famous investigator in the history of detective stories), while making use of the deductive method.

Or let's simply feel like *Watson*: doctor *John*, the friend, the house-mate, collaborator and biographer of Holmes.

But we can even be satisfied that we are Sisters of Charity or Friends of Jeanne Antide who are interested and curious to make a past event or an old document speak, although two hundred years have already passed by.

Nowadays, one speaks of *Cold Cases*, because they have been kept closed and archived for many years. Perhaps they couldn't be resolved in the past, but there can exist possible solutions either in the present or in the near future.

After this unusual introduction, where I purposely wanted to create some *suspense*, I try to assume a more scientific, more historical but even a theological and spiritual outlook.

Last November we have celebrated the Bicentenary of the foundation of Sr. Jeanne-Antide in Tagliacozzo, which occurred on the 14th November 1818.

Recalling an event is our way of thanking God for his faithfulness, and our Holy Mother for her daring in extending the mission of the Sisters of Charity to answer the calls of the poor, while keeping in touch with the civil Authorities.

I hope that you have both the desire and the resistance to follow me in this itinerary while I also hope that it can be also useful to you, as it has been for me, extremely engaging.

LET'S COME TO OUR SUBJECT WHILE VISITING BRIEFLY THE PAST

We are towards the second half of 1818. We need to contextualize the epoch and therefore enter the past virtually to return stronger to the present.

Mother Jeanne Antide is in Naples, in the big Monastery of *Regina Coeli* since 1810. Eight busy years have passed by. We are aware how difficult it has been for her, a foreign Sister, French, to introduce in the Kingdom of Naples an innovative model of religious apostolic life, compared with the well known cloistered Nuns ...

In June **1818** Abbot Clement Giannantonio, chaplain of the Austrian Embassy, on behalf of Baron D. Alessandro Mastroddi, Magistrate of Tagliacozzo makes a request to the Superior General of the Sisters of Charity, Sr. Jeanne-Antide Thouret, residing in the house of "*Regina Coeli*" in Naples to have three Sisters for a girls' gratuitous school of that city.

Alessandro Mastroddi is a member of the General Council and Administrator of the heritage of the late Anna Casale, one of his family's ancestor, a Religious of the Pious workers and teachers, and who in 1749 had founded and given all her assets for the building of a school dedicated to the instruction of the girls in her city, Tagliacozzo.

Why are the Sisters of Charity called?

Because in 1816 the Pious Mistresses who were in charge of the girls' education, have presented some complains, so that the administration of that establishment become independent from Mr. Mastroddi's family. But the Provincial Bureau's Council was against the idea; thus the family Mastroddi continued to administrate fully the institution of the Girls' Pious School of Tagliacozzo (as it is described in the text of the preliminary Constitutions 1818).

Mother Thouret welcomes the request and answers on the **20th June 1818**, informing Mr. Mastroddi about the preliminary conditions which should be taken in consideration. Mr. Mastroddi resends the copy signed at the bottom while adding «I accept according to the above agreement» (cf. AG SoC Rome, Cabinet. 3, File: Tagliacozzo).

On the **15th September 1818** His Excellency, the Minister of the Interior of the Government of Naples, after having been contacted by Mother Thouret, grants the permission to send to Tagliacozzo the Three required Sisters.

Some days before, on the **12th September 1818**, as Sr. Paola Arosio hinted during the first encounter of *Saturday Mornings*, Mother Thouret forwards the official request to Pope Pius VII to be able to *present and submit to the examination and the approval of His Holiness, the book of the Rules and Constitutions which guide the Institute founded by her*. In this text, one is referring to the foundation «*in the Diocese of Marsi*» (cf. *Letter to the Holy Father Pius VII*, Naples, 12 September 1818, in *Letters and Documents*, p. 330, original copy in AG SoC Rome, Cabinet 0).

In **October 1818**, Sr. Jeanne-Antide undertakes the voyage from Naples to Rome in order to follow closely the canonical itinerary to obtain from the Holy See the Pontifical approval of the Rule of the Congregation. But at the same time she foresees to stop for some days in Tagliacozzo, to accompany the birth of the new foundation, while supporting the Sisters, chosen for this new apostolic adventure.

It's a matter of a long journey, of around two hundred km. It takes various days to cover such a distance in a carriage. It depends a lot on the climate, the differences in altitude due to the mountains, the horses' resistance as they need to stop for some rest.

Jeanne Antide is almost 52 years old. She is a mature woman and is not afraid to travel as we know well from her own life. Her readiness to *go always beyond* must drive us even today not to yield in front of the difficulties of the historical situations and circumstances. Mother Thouret knows how to read the signs of the times, she welcomes the calls and considers them, and then ... she entrusts herself to the divine Providence.

But she is surely not naive. Since 11th April 1799, she has made many experiences and she matured her ability to lead her Institute with authority.

The request of Tagliacozzo is a continuity of the mandate received by the Foundress in 1797, in Landeron to «*restore faith and morals*» (cf. Thouret J. A., *Manuscript of Pure Truths, in Letters and Document*, p. 5-6). It's an educative call in view of instructing girls between 5 to 10 years of age. The girls' formation is precious to Jeanne-Antide and it is still so actual today, if we consider how important it is to promote and defend/safeguard the woman's role in the world.

Precisely when the road robbery ravages the Roman Countryside and the Abruzzo Region, Mother Thouret courageously defiant of every danger, animated by a great zeal of God's Glory and the salvation of the neighbour, with daring and maternal spirit, accompanies the Sisters to Tagliacozzo. She is welcomed with great honours by the Clergy, by the Authorities and by the population, who wait for her at the city door and follow her in procession up to the parish Church of St. Cosma and Damian to sing the Te Deum.

On the **14th November 1818** the Foundress and the perpetual Administrator, according to the law of the Foundation of *the Girls' Pious School* of Tagliacozzo, sign the *preliminary Conventions* drawn up in a double original script. This House, being the first Establishment of the Sisters of Charity in the provinces of the Kingdom of Naples, since the school was the oldest one in this province, so this House, has the honour to be considered as the *first born* of the Community and of the Mother House of Naples.

THE EVENTS

In October **1818**, four Sisters of Charity quit the Monastery of *Regina Coeli* and travel from Naples with the coach, hence heading towards Tagliacozzo, in the Abruzzo region (today called the province of Aquila).

Two sisters, Sr. Jeanne Antide and her niece Sr. Rosalie Thouret are only accompanying the other two. In fact, after a few days, having fulfilled the administrative duties, they will continue their journey to Rome where they have an important mission to accomplish.

The other two sisters, Sr. Cecilia Guinard and Sr. Catherine, stop and constitute the first team of the educative religious community in the region of Marsica.

The Pious Girls' School will be assigned to the public instruction of the District's youths, of every social class, but in particular of the poor according to the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and of the Venerable Mother Foundress.

During the short stay in Tagliacozzo, the Foundress, hosted in the palace of the family Mastroddi, welcomes favourably the request addressed to her on behalf of the Clergy and the country's Magistrate, Mr. D. Alessandro Mastroddi, to open also a boarding school for the girls belonging to distinguished families.

The boarding school will be opened in the Ducal Palace of the Orsini princes: the young children of the best Mariscane families and of the adjacent provinces flock to this school, where, besides moral education, they also learn Italian literature according to the government's curriculum, French, music, domestic works starting from the simplest ones to the most difficult ones, including ornamental art.

Before leaving the city of Tagliacozzo to go to Rome for the approval of the Holy Rule, Mother Thouret appoints **Sr. Cecilia Guinard** as Sister Servant and entrusts to her the supervision of the school and of the small Community.

The first group of girls entrusted to the Sisters will soon be a proof of the good management of the available, educative, thorough and attentive mission. Shortly, other rich families desire that the Boarding School will be also opened to their children. They requested it repeatedly and their wish came true.

In August **1820**, having concluded the processes with the Holy See, Mother Thouret and Sr. Rosalie undertake again their journey from Rome to Naples and they pass through Tagliacozzo to see the Sisters and the School, because serious difficulties had cropped up.

In fact, Mother Thouret will then point out to the Bishop of Marsi that the House Administrator fails to respect the commitments taken and has not yet paid what had been promised in 1818 (cf. *Letter to Mgr. Bishop of Marsi*, Naples, 15 November 1820, in *Letters and Documents*, pp. 348-349). Moreover, she will write also to the Minister of the Interior of Naples about the mission in Tagliacozzo, stating that the school and the hostel are highly developing (cf. *Letter to the Minister of the Interior, Naples, 1st December 1820*, in *Letters and Documents*, p. 372).

THE ACTORS

Sr. Jeanne-Antide Thouret is born in Sancey-le-Long on the 27 November 1765 and dies in Naples on the 24 August 1826.

Sr. Rosalia Thouret - Maria Giuseppina is born in Sancey-le-Long on the 21 March 1793. In 1800 she is a boarder in Besançon. On the 3 October 1810 she will accompany her aunt in the new foundation of Naples. She is Mother Thouret's niece and secretary, besides being also her interpreter. She accompanies her aunt in her two voyages: 1818-1820 to Rome; 1821-1823 in France and Savoy. The long intimacy with her aunt, renders her a privileged witness of the Foundress's life. After her aunt's demise, she is the Assistant and the Secretary of Mother Genevieve Boucon. She is then invited to found the House of Modena where she dies on the 17 December 1853.

Sr. Cecilia Guinard - Maria Serafina is born on the 1st January 1790 and baptised on the same day in the parish Church of Guyans-Vennes, a country situated around 50 km. away from Basançon and 20 km to the South-East of Sancey. At the age of 14, she enters the Novitiate of the Sisters of Charity in Besançon on the 6 October 1804 where she receives the name of Sr. Cecilia. In 1806 she is sent to the military Hospital of Besançon, in the ancient Monastery of the Visitation. On the 15 April 1807 she is sent to Bourg-en-Bresse to teach poor children. At the helm of the community there is Sr. Paolina Bardot (and later Sr. Marta). In summer 1810 she is called once more to Besançon and on the 3rd October she departs with the coach to Naples with Sr. Jeanne Antide Thouret. In November 1818 she is accompanied by Mother Thouret to Tagliacozzo and is nominated Sister Servant of the community.

In 1826 **Sr. Cecilia** becomes the first Provincial Superior of Vercelli.
(cf. DUFFET Sr. Antoine de Padoue, Sr. Cecilia Guinard Sister of Charity. First Provincial Superior of Vercelli, Printed by the Sisters of Charity, Vercelli, 1989).

Sr. Catherine Rosso ...

Anna Casale, a sister of the Pious workers and teachers, is the foundress of the *Girls' Pious School* of the municipality of Tagliacozzo. On the 3rd November and on the 30 December 1749, she secures her assets to maintain and develop the educative mission.

Alessandro Mastroddi belongs to a wealthy family of Tagliacozzo and is a Member of the General Council and perpetual Administrator, according to the law of the foundation of the Girls' Pious School of the municipality of Tagliacozzo, in the Province of the Second Abruzzo region, in the Kingdom of Naples.

THE ARCHIVES' DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE FOUNDATION OF TAGLIACOZZO

The information that we receive from the archives' documents can provide us with many useful contents but they can also give rise to many questions which as we know cannot always get a logical and justified answer.

It is important to remember that in 1818 the documents were hand written and the copies made used to bear the saying "*copy conforming to the original*" (photocopiers and scanners didn't exist yet). Therefore, the copies were never entirely identical and they could often be rewritten by various persons.

In order to speak about the Foundation of Tagliacozzo, we can consider **two Documents** which can provide lots of information and give us some elements for reflections even for today.

1. The first Document is made up of the "*Preliminary Constitutions of Tagliacozzo*" drawn up on the 14 November 1818

It concerns a text possibly drafted by a Notary, in **two copies**, a copy for each contracting party. It carries a legal value.

Copy A, which belongs to the Sisters of Charity, bears on the cover sheet *“Foundation of Tagliacozzo. 14 Nov. 1818”* (cf. original text in AG SoC Rome, Cabinet. 0, File *“St. Jeanne Antide and the Civil Authorities”*, D’, p. 28).

Copy B, which belongs to the Municipality of Tagliacozzo, bears on the cover sheet *“Conventions with the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity – regarding the Establishment of the Pious School of Tagliacozzo – 1818”*, dated also 14 November 1818 (cf. new original copy conserved in the Historical Archives of the Municipality of Tagliacozzo, in Cat. V, Class 1, Envelope 2, File 5).

The copies A and B contain a different text order, namely, they aren’t identical and they don’t overlap.

The sheets of A aren’t numbered, it’s an autonomous document, it hasn’t been registered within a civil authority.

Copy B has numbered sheets from n. 9 to n. 18. It has been registered in Avezzano.

1.a Description of the Document “Conventions with the Congregation”

Its **format** is 18,5cm by 26,00cm.

The analysis proves that it is made up of pages, numbered on the right hand side, from n. 9 to n. 18, which is an evident sign that these pages were part of a more extended document in which other issues were also dealt with.

The pages marked n.10,11,13,14,16,18, on the front of the page, have the stamp of the Kingdom of the two Sicilies, both in ink and dry.

The pages marked n. 10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18, on the front, in the left margin, have the signatures of the two contractors who have undersigned the preliminary conditions of the convention :

- * one signature is of *Jeanne Antide Thouret*, Superior general of the Sisters of Charity;
- * the other one is of *Alessandro Mastroddi*, Administrator of the *Girls’ Pious School of Tagliacozzo*.

The signatures are nine, but we must also add those that have been made inside the same document on the pages marked n. 12 – on the back of the page, n. 13 – on the front and at the bottom of the page, n. 13 – on the back, n.14 – on the front, n.15 – twice on the front.

Besides, the page marked n. 18, the last written page, on the back, on the left hand side, near the signatures of the two contractors (where the role is pointed out), has two stamps in ink:

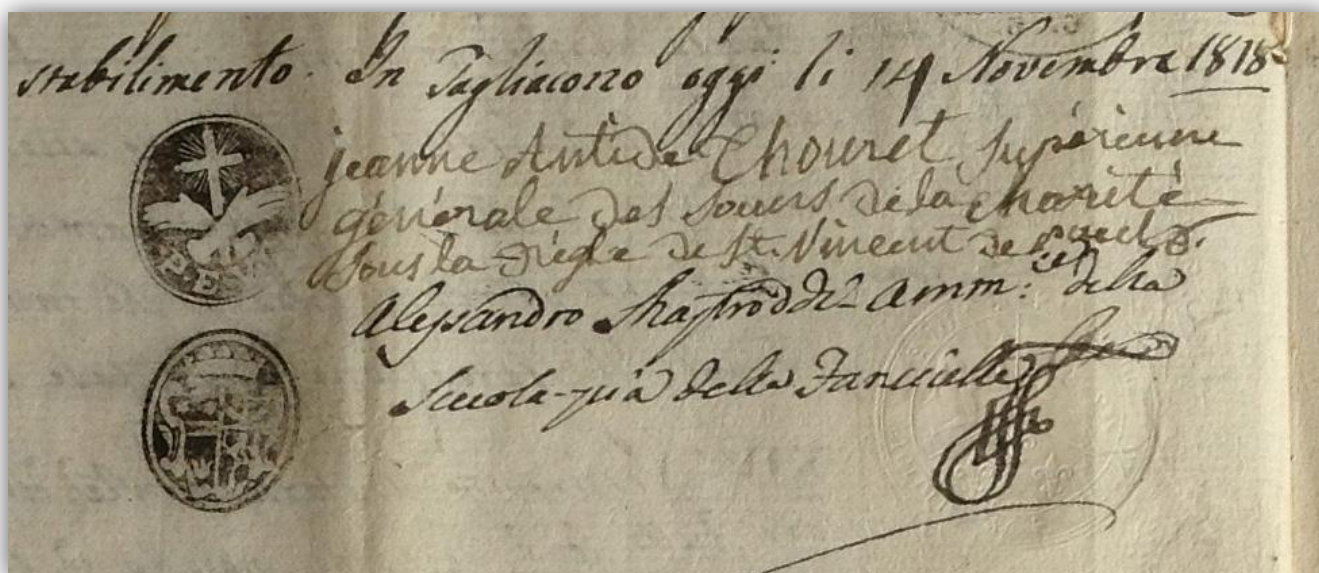
- * one is the personal seal of Sr. Jeanne-Antide Thouret who signs : *Superior General of the Sisters of Charity under the Rule of St. Vincent de Paul*;
- * the other is the seal of Alessandro Mastroddi who signs : *Administrator of the Girls’ Pious School*.

16 signatures in all: this conveys to what extent the document corresponds to a true contract, because even today, the signature’s process on every contractual sheet has been strongly maintained.

Moreover, we have the proof that the Document has been registered in Avezzano, with a dedicated number, the signature of the person in charge and the stamp of the Registrar Office of Avezzano.

If we observe closely Madre Thouret’s signatures we wonder why they are surely not the same, but differ in a certain detail. This gives rise to a question which we are incapable to answer.

Let’s look at them together:



Characteristic of the Conventions, last page dated **14 November 1818**, the signature of the contractors and their respective seals in ink.

It's interesting to observe the personal stamp-seal of the Foundress, used also in other letters, on which appears always a shining Latin cross, with two female crossed hands places on the same seal. Beneath it there are the letters/abbreviations **P.E.V.G.**.



Such a seal, whose origin and meaning are unknown to us, is found again engraved on the three gravestones : that of Sr. Colomba Thouret, who died in 1814, placed in Naples in the Church of Regina Coeli in the fourth chapel on the right hand side, dedicated to Good Jesus; that of Sr. Jeanne Antide Thouret, who passed away in 1826, and that of Sr. Genevieve Boucon, who died in 1856, and are both placed in the third chapel on the left hand side, dedicated to St. Jeanne-Antide, always in the same church.



The hands embracing the radiant cross, are found again in bas relief plaster frieze, placed on the lower border of the choir of the Church of Regina Coeli in Naples.

One of the possible and perhaps more plausible interpretations is the one that can be taken from the quotation of the Letters to the Hebrews, chapter ten, which is written, beneath the symbol, on the memorial stone of the tomb of Sr. Colomba: *PATIENTIA VOBIS NECESSARIA EST UT VOLUNTATEM DEI FACIENTES REPORTETIS PROMISSIONEM.*

The four mysterious letters could possibly mean: *Patientia Est Vobis Gloria* (your glory is in patience) or *Patientia Est Viae Glorior* (patience is the path to glory).

The Cross which is present in the personal seal of the Foundress, dominates her heart and her spiritual experience. Jeanne Antide speaks to the Canon Domenico Narni Mancinelli, her confessor, about a «*vision of the big cross*» which he mentions in two of his letters (cf. *Letter* of 12 March 1821, in *Letters and Documents*, p. 658 It.; and *Letter* of 18 January 1822, in *Letters and Documents*, p. 662 It.). In her letter to the Archbishop of Cosenza, in July 1826, Jeanne Antide has the daring to confess: «*I have always been crucified, and I shall be also to the end*» (cf. Thouret J.A., *Letter* of July 1826, in *Letters and Documents*, p. 421-422).

The Sign of the Cross will become the coat of arms/emblem of the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of St. Jeanne Antide Thouret: a brilliant Cross flanked by a double capital letter S placed at the centre of a shield (*Crux, Sola Salus, or Cross, Only Salvation*), bearing a scroll on top with the motto "God Alone!". A sample is found in the central nave of the Church of Regina Coeli in Naples and is made up of an almost oval slab, in white marble engraved in pink. The slab's border is in grey marble and bears an inscription which clearly refers to the approval of the Rule of the Institute on behalf of Pope Pius VI, which occurred on the 23 July

1819 (cf. De' Rossi F., Sartorius O., *Santa Maria Regina Coeli. The Monastery and the Church in the history of Art*, Scientific Editorial, Naples, 1987, p. 127).



Let's not forget that the main Religious Orders and the most important Congregations of active life have an emblem or a sign of acknowledgement, which is often formed gradually through small or big transformations, down the years and centuries. **The emblems**, besides being a practical necessity to deal with normal relationships in the civil and the ecclesiastical domains, **have above all the target to synthesise the history, the spirituality and the charism of the families to whom they belong**, through an emblem and a uniform or a programmatic motto.

The Sisters of Charity received from the Mother Foundress the gift of the spirituality of the Cross, with the daily devotional practice of the Adoration of the Cross, through which we repeat: «*We adore your Cross, Lord, and praise and glorify your Holy Resurrection, because joy entered throughout the world only through the Cross*». Their sign of recognition, their uniform in all the countries of the world where they serve the poor, is a simple metal cross. Thus, without needing to speak, we announce to everybody the Lord's Resurrection: the radiant Cross.

1.b Contents of the Document

In the "**Conventions**" we find in the premise:

«May it be with God's name

The most Rev. Mother Sr. Jeanne Antide Thouret, Foundress and Superior general of the Institute of the Sisters of Charity [...]

D. Alessandro Mastroddi member of the general Council and perpetual Administrator by law of the Foundation of the Girls' Pious School of the municipality of Tagliacozzo in the province of the Second Abruzzo region beyond the Kingdom of Naples.

Animated by the same spirit of charity, of love for the Nation and neighbour, and of the same commitment for the public good and for God's service;

having agreed to establish you to the acquaintance of the Sisters of Charity, to bring forth good order at the right moment, and to maintain it unchangeable as much as possible, so that with God's help, the establishment might always prosper: they came to terms with the following conventions and rules which will be observed in a saintly manner not only by them but even by their successors and by those who are destined to be there.» (cf. New Document ibid.)

Then follow:

. **The Preliminary Convention**

Art. I refers to the general *Rules and Constitutions* of the Congregation of the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, according to the edition of 1807 in Besançon and to the orders of the late Anna Casale, the School foundress.

. The contents of the Foundation Articles of 30 December 1749

On the 3rd November 1749, in the presence of the Notary Philip Bonomo of Tagliacozzo, **Anna Casale** offers all her belongings to set up a school in Tagliacozzo for the instruction of small girls. The offered assets will be administered as she likes while still alive. Later, after her death, they will be administered by the Superior of the Pious Mistresses of that place who will be temporarily replaced by the Superior General.

An individual suggested to put the document in writing, given that a woman, especially a **Pious Mistress** cannot be a business woman, especially if she is Roman or comes from the countryside, she cannot administer a patrimony, in order to assure the perpetual conservation and the good order of the pious work, to designate in Tagliacozzo an **Administrator or an Attorney** for the same affair, «*both for the administrator and to increase the assets, and also for the stable existence, the good order of the School and for the observance of the Institute*».

He moreover declared that this foundation, directed to the public advantage of the Girls of his country, which is the main aim, is to be considered as «a pious legacy of private perpetual owner, charged to maintain the school, to fulfil the laws and conditions with which it was established, ...».

... in perpetual he elects and appoints the Mr. D. Alessandro Mastroddi hailing from one of the best families of Tagliacozzo and after his death one of his successor and heirs will have the right of a perpetual administration.

... giving him all the faculty and the right **to administer the assets, to direct and govern the income, to provide teachers and to dismiss them** with due dependence and correspondence with the Superior general and with Mgr. Diocesan Bishop accordingly; ...

If there is no male offspring of the family Mastroddi, a public council will proceed to elect the Administration chosen from among the best local families, and the temporary Mistresses and the university Priors must initiate to choose another man from among the best local ones, giving preference to an ecclesiastic ...

He thus recommends his beloved **Sister, Maddalena Nardi**, who will hopefully be the superior after her death and hence monitors the observance by her companions, called to administer that “**Pious Teachers’ and Workers’ School**” or in the absence of Jesuit females ...

«... and finally, in case of total lack of either one or the other Institute, the same administrators can temporarily choose from among the best Teachers but if possible they will always prefer those of the religious Institute; what is important is that they stick to the primitive goal to instruct the girls in the best way possible ».

The extract conforms with the original text found of the acts of April 1791,
by the Royal Provincial Audience.

. Retribution decree uttered by the Local Court

. Regal message of 16 April 1791

. Decision of the Bureau Council, Aquila, 25 October 1816 – The Bureau Council – Given the Appeal of the pious Teachers of the Girls’ Primary School of the City of Tagliacozzo, with whom they complain, so that the administration of their establishment be independent from the family of Mr. Mastroddi of that Municipality.

. Preliminary conditions between the Superior General and the Administration – Articles NN. 1-4.

. Permission of His Excellency the Secretary of State, Minister of the Interior – Naples 15 September 1818

He permits the Superior General to transfer three Sisters from the Institute to send them to Tagliacozzo in order to guide and instruct the Girls in a School.

. *About the Establishment in general - Articles N. II – XV*

In these articles are collected in detail all the conditions that must be respected by both parties (Administration and Congregation) in the management of the School and the planned upkeep of the religious.

2.The second Document comprises a “List of the objects brought forth at the moment of the foundation of Tagliacozzo, in the Abruzzi region, 14 November 1818” (cf. AG SoC Rome, File S.G.A.T. Correspondence – Copies, 1818-1821, Cabinet. N. 0).

This list has been drawn up directly by Mother Jeanne-Antide Thouret, the Superior general of the Sisters of Charity who accompanied on the spot the first two Sisters.

It is written on both sides (front and back) of a page measuring cm.19,5 per 26, folded in four (it has almost the same format of the previous document, the “Conventions”).

The different listed categories are separated by horizontal lines drawn freely by Mother Thouret.

The original sheet doesn't bear any title or date. They have been added later on the document's cover.

There is a mystery regarding this “List”.

In July 1970, this authentic page was entrusted to the Institute of the Scientific Book Restoration, in 13, Rusticucci Road, Rome, to Father Colombo, to make two photocopies and to insert later the original document in the Album elaborated by the Institute: “*Sainte Jeanne-Antide et les Autorités civiles*” in the year 1818.

Unfortunately, this list has been lost, the original copy wasn't inserted as indicated in the *Writings of Mother Thouret*.

On the 19 September 1970 Father Colombo was asked to return the list and he answered that he had nothing in his office and to check in the General House. He added that “nothing goes lost in his office”.

On the 21 September 1970, Father Colombo was called telephonically to tell him that the document hasn't been found.

On the 3 February 1973, a note was handed over to Father Placido (successor of Father Colombo) with the characteristics, the format, etc. of the original document with the List of Tagliacozzo, not to abandon the research.

On the 18 March 1973, Father Placido personally assured that he took note of the document's disappearance and that he would look for it again.

The typewritten copy of the document was done on the handwritten original copy, respecting the document's order; in the transcription the orthography has been observed, even the mistakes, but it's not a photocopy of the original text.

2.a Contents of the Document

It's a private text, a sort of an initial *Inventory*. This conveys how accurate and neat was Mother Thouret in her administration.

We won't be taking in consideration the entire Document, because at this moment we are not interested in material things (the furniture, the linen, etc). We will take a part of it and dwell only on the **Book list** brought to equip the small library of the new religious community of Tagliacozzo.

In it, near every title, on the right hand side, we find even an indication of the number of copies of every text.

FRONT

état des livres, et des heures de prières

livre de la Règle	1
Imitation de J.C.	1
retraite de bourdaloue	1
vies des saints	2
méditations sur l'évangile	4

livres de sermon de bourda	2
combat spirituel	1
livres de communauté	2
heures de prières	5
office de la Vierge	1

élémenti di aritmetica	1
grammaire francaise et italienne	1
gramatica ragionata	1
nuovo metodo di lingua toscana	1
des autres petit livres de dévotion	
des lettres imprimée	
des livres de voeux	2

In this part of the *List* we have.

The books of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity: the book of the *Rule*, the one printed in Besançon in 1807; the books of the community; the Prayers' book; the *Circular Letters* written by Mother Thouret which were then printed: that of 23 December 1806; of 30 December 1808 with the *Catalogue of the dead Sisters*; of 28 December 1812 with the *Catalogue of the dead Sisters* (cf. Thouret J. A., *Letters and Documents*, pp. 169-170; 172-173; 190-205); the Office of the Virgin; the printed booklet of the *Instruction on the Vows* of 2 April 1807 (cf. Thouret G. A., *Letters and Documents*, pp. 160-168).

Then there are **the texts of some spiritual authors**: the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas da Kempis; the *Meditations on the Gospel* of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet; the *Retreat* and the *Sermons*' Book of Louis Bourdaloue S.J.; the *spiritual combat* of Lorenzo Scupoli; the Lives of the Saints; and some other devotional books.

Hence, **the necessary texts for the educative activity** : the Elements of Arithmetic; French and Italian Grammar; rational Grammar; and the New method of Tuscan language.

This *List* shows us the tools that our Foundress considers necessary to the spiritual and cultural nourishment of a community of Sisters of Charity, religious of active life, at the beginning of 1800.

So many reflections could be carried out starting precisely from this datum, but we have no time to do it at this stage!

What appears to be evident is that Mother Thouret wants to give solid roots to the vocation and the professionalism of her daughters, through a serious and constant formation. The work in view of obtaining the pontifical approval of the *Rules and Constitutions*, which she will receive on 14 December 1819, with the Brief of Pope Pius VII, is precisely accomplished with this aim in mind.

This is a strategic and therefore a political choice in order to give a future to God's *work* that has been entrusted to her and of which Mother Jeanne-Antide considers herself an unworthy instrument. But God wanted to use her as his tool.

What have we learnt from this historical reconsideration? Each one has surely a personal answer to this question. But we could also open a debate for a constructive dialogue and would discover how topical the contents that we have encountered are!

Conclusion .

On the **14 November 2018**, as we have already pointed out at the beginning, we celebrated the Bicentenary of the foundation of Tagliacozzo.

On the **25 November 2018**, in the Church of St. Cosma and Damiano, His Excellency Mgr. Pietro Santoro, Bishop of Avezzano, presided over the thanksgiving Eucharistic Celebration for the 200 years of presence of the Sisters of Charity in the small city of Marsica.

Let's thank God, because through Jeanne Antide and the Daughters who have followed her, He has accomplished wonderful deeds and we hope that he will continue to accomplish them even today for the future of the Congregation and the service of the poor.

SOME TEXTUAL REFERENCES FOR FURTHER DEEPENING

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