 Reading time: 10 min.

(continuation from previous article)

Graces obtained through the intercession of Mary Help of Christians.

I. Grace received from Mary Help of Christians.

It was the year of our Lord 1866 when my wife, in the month of October, was struck by a very serious illness, namely a severe inflammation combined with great congestion, and a parasitic infection. In these painful circumstances, we first turned to the experts of the art, who quickly declared that the illness was extremely dangerous. Seeing that the illness was getting much worse, and that human remedies were of little or no use, I suggested to my companion that she recommend herself to Mary Help of Christians, and that she would certainly grant her health if it was necessary for the soul; at the same time I added the promise that if she obtained health, as soon as the church was finished, which was being built in Turin, I would take us both to visit her and make some donation. She replied that she could recommend herself to some Shrine closer so as not to be obliged to go so far away; to this I replied that one should not look so much at convenience as at the greatness of the benefit one hopes for.

She then prayed as recommended and promised what she proposed. O power of Mary! Barely 30 minutes after she had made her promise I asked her how she was, and she said: “I am feeling much better, my mind is clearer, my stomach is no longer oppressed, I feel an aversion to ice which I had so craved before, and I am more inclined to have broth which I previously found so distasteful.”

At these words I felt myself born to new life, and if it had not been at night I would immediately have left my room to publish the grace received from the Blessed Virgin Mary. The fact is that she passed the night peacefully, and on the following morning the doctor appeared and declared her free from all danger. Who healed her if not Mary Help of Christians? In fact, after a few days she left her bed and took up domestic chores. Now we anxiously await the completion of the church dedicated to her, and thus fulfil the promise made.

I have written this, as a humble son of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, and I desire that all such publicity be given to it as will be judged good for the greater glory of God and the august Mother of the Saviour.

Luigi COSTAMAGNA
of Caramagna.

II. Mary Help of Christians Protectress of the countryside.

Mornese is a small village in the diocese of Acqui, province of Alessandria, of about one thousand inhabitants. This village of ours, like so many others, was sadly plagued by phomopsis cane (a grape disease), which for over twenty years had devoured almost the entire grape harvest, our main wealth. We had already used many kinds of things to ward it off, but to no avail. When word spread that some peasants from neighbouring towns had promised a portion of the fruit from their vineyards for the continuation of the work on the church dedicated to Mary Help of Christians in Turin, they were wonderfully favoured and had grapes in abundance. Moved by the hope of a better harvest and even more by the thought of contributing to a work of religion, the people from Mornese decided to offer the tenth part of the harvest for this purpose. The protection of the Holy Virgin made itself felt among us in a truly merciful way. We had the abundance of happier times, and we were very happy to be able to scrupulously offer in kind or in money what we had promised. When we invited the construction manager for the church to come and collect the offerings, there was a feast of true joy and public exultation.

He appeared deeply moved by the promptness and selflessness with which the offerings were made, and by the Christian words with which they were accompanied. But one of our patriots spoke loudly in the name of all of what was happening. He said that we owe great things to the Holy Virgin Help of Christians. Last year, many people from this area, having to go to war, placed themselves under the protection of Mary Help of Christians, most of them wearing a medal around their necks. They went bravely, and had to face the gravest dangers, but none fell victim to that scourge of the Lord. Moreover, in the neighbouring districts there was a plague of cholera, hail and drought, and we were spared all of that. Hardly any of our neighbours' harvests survived, and we were blessed with such abundance, more than for or twenty years. For these reasons we are happy to be able to manifest our indelible gratitude to the great Protectress of mankind in this way.

I believe I am a faithful interpreter of my fellow-citizens in asserting that what we have done now, we will also do in the future, convinced that we will thus make ourselves ever more worthy of heavenly blessings.

25 March 1868

An inhabitant of Mornese.

III. Prompt recovery.

Young Giovanni Bonetti from Asti in the College at Lanzo had the following grace. On the evening of the 23rd of December last, he suddenly entered the director's room with uncertain steps and a distraught face. He approached him, leaned his body against the pious priest, and with his right hand rubbed his forehead without saying a word. The priest, astonished to see him so distressed, supported him bidding him sit down he asked what it was he wanted. In response to the repeated questions, the poor man could only sigh more laboriously and deeply. The priest then looked more closely at his face and saw that his eyes were motionless, his lips pale, and his body, succumbing to the weight of his head, threatened to collapse. Seeing then in what life-threatening danger the young man was, they immediately sent for the doctor. Meanwhile, his condition worsened by the moment; his face became distorted and no longer looked the same as before, his arms, legs, and forehead were cold, phlegm choked him, his breathing grew increasingly shallow, and his pulse could barely be felt. He remained in this state for five agonising hours.

The Doctor arrived, applied various remedies, but always to no avail. No hope, the doctor said sorrowfully, before morning this young man will be dead.

Thus, in defiance of human hopes, the good priest turned to heaven, praying that if it was not his will that the young man should live, he would at least give him a little time for confession and communion. He then took a small medal of Mary Help of Christians. The graces he had already obtained from invoking the Virgin with that medal were many, and increased his hope of obtaining help from the heavenly Protectress. Full of confidence in her, he knelt down, placed the medal on his heart and, together with other pious people who had come, said a few prayers to Mary and the Blessed Sacrament. And Mary listened to the prayers that were raised to her with such confidence. Little John's breathing became freer, and his eyes, which had been as if petrified, turned lovingly around to look at and thank the onlookers for the compassionate care they were giving him. Nor was the improvement short-lived; on the contrary, everyone held his recovery to be ensured. The doctor himself, astonished at what had happened, exclaimed: "It was the grace of God that wrought his recovery. In my long career I have seen a great number of sick and dying people, but I have never seen any of those who were at Bonetti's point recover. Without the beneficent intervention of heaven, this is for me an

inexplicable fact. And science, used nowadays to breaking that admirable bond that unites it to God, paid humble homage to him, judging itself powerless to achieve what God alone had accomplished. The young man who was the object of the Virgin's glory continues to this day to be very well. He tells and preaches to all that he owes his life doubly to God and to his most powerful Mother, from whose valid intercession he obtained this grace. He would consider himself ungrateful of heart if he did not give public testimony of gratitude, and thus invite others and other unfortunates who in this valley of tears suffer and go in search of comfort and help.

(From the newspaper: *La Vergine)*.

IV. Mary Help of Christians frees one of her devotees from a severe toothache.

In an educational institution in Turin, there was a young man of 19 or 20 years who had been suffering from severe toothaches for several days. All the usual medical treatments for such cases had already been tried without any success. As a result, the poor young man was reduced to such a state of agony that he aroused the pity of all who heard him. While the day seemed dreadful to him, the night appeared eternal and most wretched, during which he could not close his eyes to sleep except for brief and interrupted moments. What a deplorable state his was! It continued like this for some time, but on the evening of April 29th, the pain seemed to become far worse. The young man groaned incessantly in his bed, sighed and cried out loudly without anyone being able to relieve him. His companions, concerned about his unhappy condition, went to the director to ask if he would come and comfort him. He came and attempted to soothe him and his companions with words, essential for him to regain calm and for his companions to find rest. However, the intensity of the pain was so overwhelming that, despite being obedient, he couldn't cease his lamenting. He expressed that he doubted if even in hell itself one could endure more excruciating agony. Recognising the severity of the situation, the superior decided to place him under the protection of Mary Help of Christians, whose honour is upheld by a majestic church in our city. We all knelt down and said a short prayer. And? Mary's help was not long in coming. As the priest bestowed the blessing on the desolate young man, he was instantly calm, and fell into a deep and placid sleep. At that instant a terrible suspicion flashed into our minds; that the poor young man had succumbed to illness but no, he had already fallen deeply asleep, and Mary had heard the prayer of her devotee, and

God the blessing of his minister.

Several months passed, and the young man subject to the toothache was no longer troubled by it.

(*By the same*).

V. Some of Mary Help of Christians' wonders.

I believe that your noble periodical will take a good look at some of the events that have taken place among us, which I set out in honour of Mary Help of Christians. I will only select a few that I witnessed in this city, omitting many others that are recounted every day.

The first concerns a lady from Milan who for five months had been consumed by pneumonia combined with the fact that her whole life was ebbing away.

Passing through these parts, Fr B. advised her to have recourse to Mary Help of Christians by means of a novena of prayer in her honour, with the promise of some donation to continue the work on the church which was being built in Turin under the title of Mary Help of Christians. This donation was only to be made once the grace had been obtained.

How marvellous! On that very day, the sick woman was able to resume her ordinary and serious occupations, eating all kinds of food, going for walks, entering and leaving the house freely as if she had never been ill. When the novena was over, she was in a flourishing state of health, such as she never remembered having enjoyed before.

Another Lady had been suffering from palpitations for three years, with many of the problems that go hand in hand with this illness. A fever and a kind of dropsy had rendered her immobile in bed. Her illness had reached such a point that when the aforementioned priest gave her his blessing, her husband had to holder her hand so that she could make the sign of the holy cross. A novena in honour of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and Mary Help of Christians was also recommended, with the promise of some donation for the aforementioned sacred edifice, but only after the grace had been given. On the very day on which the novena ended, the sick woman was free of all illness, and she herself was able to compile the narrative of her illness, in which I read the following:

"Mary Help of Christians has cured me of an illness, for which all doctors' advice and ministrations has been useless. Today, the last day of the novena, I am

free from all illness, and I can join my family at table, something I had not been able to do for three years. As long as I live, I shall not cease to glorify the power and goodness of the august Queen of Heaven, and I shall endeavour to promote devotion to her, especially in the church that is being built in Turin."

Let me add yet another fact, which is even more marvellous than the preceding ones.

A young man in the prime of life was in the midst of one of the most luminous careers in the sciences when he was struck down by a cruel illness in one of his hands. In spite of every treatment, every solicitude of the most accredited doctors, no improvement could be achieved, nor could the progress of the disease be halted. All the conclusions of the experts in this skill concurred that amputation was necessary to prevent the total ruin of the body. Frightened by this judgement, he decided to have recourse to Mary Help of Christians, applying the same spiritual remedies that others had practised so fruitfully. The acuteness of the pains ceased instantly, wounds were mitigated, and in a short time the healing appeared complete. Whoever wished to satisfy his curiosity could admire that hand with the indentations and holes of the healed sores, which recall the severity of his illness and the marvellous healing of it. He wanted to go to Turin to offer his donation in person, to further demonstrate his gratitude to the august Queen of Heaven.

I have many other stories of this kind which I will tell you in other letters, if you judge this to be appropriate for your periodical. I beg you to omit the names of the persons to whom the facts refer, so as not to expose them to importunate questions and observations. However, may these facts serve to revive trust in the protection of Mary Help of Christians more and more among Christians, to increase her devotees on earth, and to have one day a more glorious crown of her devotees in heaven.

(From the *Vera Buona Novella,* Florence).

With Ecclesiastical approval.

End