

III CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF CARDINAL LEANDRO COLLOREDO

Leandro Colloredo was the third child born to Count Fabio Colloredo and his wife Laura, who was also from the Colloredo family. Count Fabio held an important position in the court of Ferdinand II of Tuscany.

Leandro was born in the ancestral castle of Colloredo di Montalbano in Friuli on 6 October 1639. He studied first in Pistoia and then in Rome. He joined the military as a member of the Sovereign Order of Malta, but left in 1675 to enter the Congregation of the Oratory in Rome. He lived there very simply as a worthy son of St. Philip Neri, and dedicated himself to the ministry of hearing confessions and preaching "with true evangelical freedom, without pretense, putting on no false show of learning"¹. He had such a reputation of piety and goodness that Pope Innocent XI, a friend of the Oratory who held Colloredo in great esteem and had often stayed with him in the past, named him to the board of examiners for candidates for the episcopacy, and consultor to the Congregation of the Index. He repeatedly refused nomination as archbishop of Avignon, and only out of obedience did he accept being made a cardinal on 2 September 1686², receiving the title of cardinal priest of San Pietro in Montorio. In 1689 he was transferred to SS. Nereo & Achilleo, and in 1705 he was named to Santa Maria in Trastevere. He continued to live the Oratorian lifestyle, although he was obliged to reside in a house befitting his rank. He found a suitable place near the Roman Oratory, where he took his meals with the brethren and often served at table.

Named Major Penitentiary on 28 February 1688, he exercised this office very diligently until he died, assisting many who were dying, including a number of cardinals and Pope Innocent XI himself.

He participated in the three conclaves that elected Alexander VIII, Innocent XII and Clement XI, and committed himself to voting for the worthiest cardinals. Soon after Alexander VIII was chosen for the pontifical throne, Cardinal Colloredo expressed his candid regret that the new pope had named Tussano de Fourbin³ a cardinal. Fourbin had signed the five Propositions of the Gallican Clergy, which Colloredo had fiercely opposed⁴.

In 1697, he was elected Camerlengo of the College of Cardinals. He was named Cardinal Protector of the first monastery of Visitation nuns in Rome, and was also Cardinal Protector of the Order of Friars Minor and attended their General Chapter in Loreto.

He died on 11 January 1709, respected for his virtue and wisdom and greatly lamented by the poor because of his constant dedication to works of charity and generosity toward them. On 14 January of that year his body was taken from his home to the church of Santa Maria in Vallicella, where he was laid to rest beneath the sanctuary.

In 1738, Fr. Pier Maria Puccetti of the Congregation of the Mother of God published the Cardinal's biography: *Vita del Cardinale Leandro Colloredo della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Roma, scritta da Pietro Maria Puccetti C.R. della Congregazione della Madre di Dio e dedicate all'Ill.mo e Rev. Fabio Colloredo Arcivescovo di Lucca e Conte*. Rioma, Stamperia Rosati e Borgiani, 1738.

The cardinal's nephew, Fabio Colloredo (1672-1742), also joined the Oratory of Rome, in 1692. He served as Provost of the Congregation for three years, 1725-1728, before being named archbishop of Lucca in 1731. He and his family⁵ paid to have the sanctuary floor of Santa Maria in Vallicella adorned with precious marble, and 'in memory of Cardinal Colloredo' they had his coat-of-arms placed there.

Among Colloredo's published works there remains an *Epistola Jo. Mabillonio de obitu Josephi Saenz Card. de Aguirre*⁶, which was reprinted in Edmondo Martene's *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus* (Rotomagi, 1700). Colloredo also published a *Vita di S. Luigi Bertrando*⁷ in Rome in 1671 under the pseudonym of Odoardo Collerno. In the Biblioteca Vallicelliana in Rome there is also a manuscript of his *Vita del servo di Dio Mariano Sozzini, Prete della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Roma*⁸ from which Fr. Carlo Massini drew material for his biography that was published in Rome by Paglierini in 1747.

Numerous works were dedicated to Cardinal Colloredo, bearing witness to the esteem in which he was held. Among these we should single out the *Vita del Beato Giuseppe Maria Tommasi, Chierico Regolare* that was dedicated "to the illustrious Cardinal Leandro Colloredo, who Tommasi has diligently followed because of his singular integrity of life and of doctrine and has never stopped admiring and honoring both his writings and his merits"⁹.

As the III Centenary of the death of Blessed Sebastiano Valfré (1629-1710) of the Oratory of Turin approaches, let us also remember Cardinal Colloredo for the good offices he performed at the request of his confrere from Piedmont regarding the founding of the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics¹¹ for the training of diplomats for the Holy See (today it is called the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy). A valuable book was published by the Tipografia Vaticana in 2003 to celebrate the third centenary of the Academy's founding (2001), in which Cardinal Angelo Sodano recalls the "worthy house of ecclesiastical formation instituted by Blessed Sebastiano Valfré and blessed by Pope Clement XI in 1701 at the beginning of his pontificate". There are also pages written by Mons. Giuseppe de Marchi about the *Storia della Pontificia Accademia Ecclesiastica* citing archival documents that give further evidence of the participation of Blessed Valfré and the support of his confrere Cardinal Colloredo¹².

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¹ VILLAROSA, A. di, *Memorie degli scrittori filippini o siano della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri*, Napoli, 1837, pp. 44-45.

² In the same consistory a close friend of the Fathers of the Roman Oratory was also named a cardinal, the Servant of God Marco Antonio Barbarigo (1640-1706). Born in Venice, he came to Rome in 1676 and taught catechism to the poor and to children in the Parione quarter, as he had done in Padua and in Venice. In June 1678 he was consecrated bishop by Gregorio Barbarigo, and he chose to have the liturgy celebrated in Chiesa Nuova because of his great devotion to St. Philip Neri. Afterwards, whenever he came to Rome "he never forgot to celebrate a Mass at the altar over the holy remains of the Saint as soon as possible".

³ Tussaint de Janson Fourbin (1631-1713), bishop of Beauvais, handled matters between the King of France and the Holy See.

⁴ In the State Archives of Lucca there are documents from Cardinal Colloredo's personal archives, probably brought to Lucca by the cardinal's nephew, Archbishop Colloredo (see above). Among these are the Acts of the Congregation concerning affairs of the Gallican Church, 1678-1690: *Rerum Gallicarum de Regalia, Propositionibus Cleri, Appellatio ad Concilium; Bullis concedendis aut negandis illis qui Comitibus gallicis interfuerunt; deque aliis rebus ad differentiarum compositionem spectantibus, etc. Volumen primum signatum hoc numero XXXXII (42)*: an important meeting about writings pertaining to innovations introduced among the Gallican clergy, held by a special Congregation of Cardinals and nine theologians chosen by Pope Innocent XI in August 1682. Colloredo took part, and we have a number of pages of minutes written in his own hand.

⁵ Archives of the Congregation of the Oratory in Rome (ACOR), C.I. 29, p. 287.

⁶ José Saenz de Aguirre (1630-1699), Counsellor and Secretary of the Holy Office, devoted himself to refuting the 1682 Declaration of the Gallican Clergy. Innocent XI esteemed him highly and created him cardinal in the same consistory at which Colloredo was raised to the purple. The intense work that he imposed on himself sapped his strength and led to his death. He was buried in Rome in the church of S. Giacomo degli Spagnoli; at his request, his heart was sent to Monte Cassino as a sign of his love for the Order of St. Benedict, of which he was a member.

⁷ St. Luis Beltrán, 1526-1581, was a Spanish Dominican missionary who labored among the indigenous peoples of Central and South America. While in Spain, he corresponded with St. Teresa of Avila, and encouraged her project of the reform of the Carmelite Order. In 1562 he left Spain to work as a missionary in the Americas. He dedicated himself to evangelization in the Caribbean islands and in the Spanish colonies of New Grenada (today Columbia, of which he is patron saint). He was famed as a preacher and miracle-worker. He returned to Spain in 1569 and continued his dedication to missionary activity in that country. Paul V beatified him in 1608, and he was canonized by Clement XII in 1671.

⁸ Father Mariano Sozzini was born in Siena in 1603 and was admitted to the Congregation of the Oratory in 1641. In 1676 the Pope named him a member of the Congregation for the Selection of Bishops. He was noteworthy among the priests of Vallicella for his exemplary life, and the *Pregi dell'Oratorio* ("Esteemed Members of the Oratory") often mention him. He died in the odor of sanctity on 7 September 1680 and has the title of Venerable.

⁹ St. Giuseppe Maria Tommasi di Lampedusa (1649-1713). After renouncing the princely dignity and a rich inheritance, he joined the Order of Clerics Regular (Theatines) and lived in Rome, where he dedicated himself to piety, to the humble and persevering exercise of virtue, and to diligent study. To the knowledge of Latin and Greek that he had acquired as a young man, he added other languages: Hebrew, Syriac, Chaldean and Arabic. He published many books about biblical and patristic studies, but especially liturgical studies. He gave good example to all of a life lived in deep humility, in a spirit of mortification and sacrifice. He was faithful in his religious observance, meek in manner, dedicated to poverty, piety and generous assistance to the poor. Clement XI knew him personally and admired his virtue and the widespread acclaim given to his teaching and so, in the Consistory of 18 May 1712, he named him Cardinal with the title of SS. Silvestro & Martino ai Monti. Pius VII beatified him in 1803, and John Paul II canonized him in 1985. His body lies in the Basilica of S. Andrea della Valle in Rome.

¹⁰ He was born to a humble family in Verduno, in the diocese of Alba, on 9 March 1629. Despite hardships and privations, he finished his studies successfully in Alba, Bra, and Torino (where he was awarded a doctorate in theology in 1656). In 1651 he entered the young Congregation of the Oratory in Torino, which was in a precarious state due to the death of the founder, Fr. Defera. He lived in the spirit of St. Philip, attaining the age of eighty. When he died on 30 January 1710, after having tramped the streets and squares of Turin for sixty years, teaching catechism and helping all kinds of poor people, and even serving with equal dedication as confessor to the Royal Family. On 15 July 1834, Gregory XVI inscribed his name among the Blessed.

¹¹ The Academy was first located in Palazzo Gabrielli a Monte Giordano (now Palazzo Taverna) in the immediate neighborhood of S. Maria in Vallicella. In 1703, Clement XI decided to take the Academy under his immediate oversight and moved it to Palazzo Gottofredi in Piazza Venezia. Then, on 2 June 1706, the Academy moved to the old Palazzo Severoli in Piazza della Minerva, where it remains to this day.

¹² Other followers of St. Philip Neri who were raised to the purple in the course of the centuries surround Cardinal Colloredo:

Cesare Baronio	Oratory of Rome	1596
Francesco Maria Tarugi	Oratory of Rome	1596
Alfonso Visconti	Oratory of Rome	1599
Orazio Giustiniani	Oratory of Rome	1645
Leandro Colloredo	Oratory of Rome	1686
Pier Matteo Petrucci	Oratory of Jesi	1686
Luis Belluga y Moncada	Oratory of Cordoba	1719
Filippo Giudice Caracciolo	Oratory of Naples	1833
John Henry Newman	Oratory of Birmingham	1879
Alfonso Capecebatro	Oratory of Naples	1885
Sebastián Herrero y Espinosa de los Monteros	Oratory of Seville	1903
Giulio Bevilacqua	Oratory of Brescia	1965

For their biographical profiles, see G. TESSERIN, *Cardinali e Vescovi oratoriani lungo i secoli*, in “*Annales Oratorii*”, 2 (200-3), pp. 157-199.

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