

ANTHONY AUGUST INTRECCIALAGLI (1824-1924)

Servant of God, archbishop (D)

Born at Montecompatri (Rome) on Feb. 18, 1852, Anthony August Intreccialagli joined the Discalced Carmelites while still a youth; he had known them well from his early childhood. He was clothed with the habit in Rome, at St. Mary of the Stairs, on Jan. 19, 1868, and on Jan. 20, 1869, he made his religious profession there, in the hands of Father Dominic of St. Joseph, one of the restorers of the Order after the great suppressions of the preceding century. August did his philosophical and theological studies at Caprarola (Viterbo), and was ordained a priest at Civita Castellana on May 22, 1875. Upon the completion of his studies at Caprarola, he taught there for a short time, after having spent some years in Rome in the two convents of Our Lady of the Stairs and of Victory. In these latter places he exercised a fruitful priestly ministry, especially in the confessional. He was to remain in Rome steadily thereafter, excepting the two years (1883-85) during which he resided at Montecompatri as vicar of the convent of St. Sylvester. Elected for two successive three-year terms as prior of the convent of St. Mary of the Stairs (1885-88, 1888-91), he was afterwards repeatedly elected provincial of the Roman province of the Order (1891-94, 1897-1900, 1903-06), offices that he filled with care and zeal for observance. He infused new life into the religious families that had been hard hit in their personnel and reduced to living in makeshift places after the suppression. He fixed the studentate for theology at Montecompatri; he opened a new convent at Ceprano (Frosinone, 1893); he prepared the return of the friars to the old basilica of St. Valentine of Terni (1906); he issued the norms for the organization of the school for aspirants at Monteverginio (Viterbo). From 1900 until 1903 he was also a provincial counselor, and from 1902 till 1907 postulator general for the causes of beatification and canonization of the Order.

An authentic religious, he was a man of prayer and of recollection, known for his fidelity to the regular life and to study. A man of few words, he knew, however, how to communicate the spirit of God, by which he lived, and he transmitted this spirit to many souls who crowded his confessional and always considered him a secure and enlightened guide.

Meanwhile his talents and his merits had become known outside the monastic circle. Named a consultor of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (1896) and a member of the commission for the revision of the constitutions of new religious institutes, he was able to meet and have contact with many servants of God by reason of his office; he very quickly became their friend and confidant. Among them were St. Frances Xavier Cabrini; Bl. Mary of the Apostles, foundress of the Salvatorian Sisters; the Servant of God, Teresa Mary of the Cross, foundress of the Carmelite Sisters of St. Teresa, of St. Martin at Campi Bisenzio; and the Servant of God, Francis Mary Jordan of the Cross, founder of the Salvatorians. He was also an apostolic visitor of the Salvatorian priests and Sisters, prized and loved for his charity and an extraordinary supernatural balance which animated him. These same qualities he also demonstrated on his apostolic visitations to the dioceses of Nepi and Sutri, Civita Castellana, Orte and Gallese, Aquino, Sora and Pontecorvo, Monte Cassino, Gubbio, Perugia, Tortona, Trapani,

Tuscania and Viterbo. In the latter place he met and recognized the worth of the priest Peter la Fontaine, whom he presented to Saint Pius X as a cleric fit for an episcopal see. Meanwhile he also visited many seminaries, especially in Liguria, while as early as 1904 he was a consultant of the commission for the codification of canon law.

Rather than diminish his appreciation for the religious life, such activity increased it; his work constantly recalled him to fidelity to his Carmelite obligations and to the life of prayer and of penance of Carmel, where he hoped to hide himself and renounce all the other functions that, little by little, the Holy See imposed upon him. Just as he was dreaming more than ever of a regular life of silence and of recollection in God, St. Pius X, who loved him and esteemed him very much, named him (July 24, 1907) bishop of Caltanissetta and presented him to the clergy of that diocese as «a precious gift ... of heaven». Anthony arrived there on the following Nov. 1, and immediately set to work for the sanctification of the clergy — he constructed a new seminary for this purpose — and for the holiness of the people of God, by his frequent pastoral visits. Poor and humble, ever at the disposition of all, even as bishop he continued a way of life of uncommon mortification, never allowing himself more than four hours of sleep. In 1911 Pope Pius X named him apostolic administrator of Monreale as well, and in 1914 archbishop of Sardica and coadjutor, with the right of succession, of the same Monreale.

For ten years (1911-21) he had to care for Monreale and for Caltanissetta, with a life of dedication that only continual prayer could sustain. He became archbishop of Monreale in 1919, and there he continued his customary style of action: never thinking of himself, praying much, living in poverty, being always at the call of all. Pastoral visits, the reflowering of the seminary, catechetics, the missionary apostolate, the establishment of Catholic action and, above all, the sanctification of the clergy were the grand objectives to which he dedicated himself. He favored and supported Mary Diomira Crispi at the birth and establishment of the Congregation of the Oblates of Divine Love, which venerates him as a co-founder and now has some thirty houses, with more than four hundred religious. An apostolic man, he always sought in his Carmelite vocation the unifying and fruitful force of his life; the more he was engaged in the service of the Church, so much the more immersed in God did he become. He loved the Virgin Mary with filial piety; he was zealous for her cult in every way and offered everywhere an enlightened devotion to the Rosary and to the Scapular of Carmel as means of adhering to Our Lady in the following of Christ and in fulfilling our duty of being clothed in the virtues that she practiced. It was Our Lady's humble service of Christ and of souls that he sought to reflect in simplicity and poverty of life as a true servant of the Lord and of the Church. He worked untiringly, smiling and without thinking of himself even to the end. He died on Sept. 19, 1924, after having renewed his religious vows and made an act of pure love of God.

The remains of the servant of God, buried first in the cemetery chapel of the Daughters of St. Anne, in 1936 were transferred to the cathedral, where they received veneration on the part of the faithful, ever devoted to their shepherd. Between 1952 and 1954 the

ordinary informative processes took place; and on Nov. 14, 1966, Pope Paul VI signed the decree of introduction of the cause for beatification (AAS, LIX/1967/, pp. 523-25).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: /Francis Evola/, *Il Servo di Dio Antonio Augusto Intreccialagli...* Rome 1956 (Spanish vers. Pastor, Ciudad Trujillo 1958); *Positio super causae introductione*, Rome 1962; *Articuli /for the Apostolic Process/*, Rome 1971.

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