

CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS

ARCHDIOCESE OF MILAN

CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION

OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

ANGELO RAMAZZOTTI

Patriarch of Venice

FOUNDER OF THE PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE FOR THE FOREIGN MISSION

(1800 – 1861)

DECREE REGARDING VIRTUES

“Great soul of a perfect priest, of an evangelical apostle, of a distinguished prelate of the Church of God.”

With these words, the patriarch Cardinal Angelo Roncalli (Saint John XXIII) defined the Servant of God Angelo Ramazzotti, his predecessor on the seat of St Marc in Venice, delineating the spiritual profile of a shepherd profoundly rooted in his people and generously open to the world.

The Servant of God was born on August 3, 1800 in Milan. He was baptized the following day and was given the names of Angelo Francesco. His years of formation culminated with a degree *in utroque iure* at the University of Pavia in 1823. Two years later he gave up his forensic career in order to undertake theological studies. He was ordained a priest in Milan on June 13, 1829. On that very day he was accepted into the Missionaries of Rho, a community of diocesan priests devoted to preaching retreats and parish missions. He was elected Superior of the community for three times.

The passion for the Gospel and for the sanctification of souls drove him to transform the immense Ambrosian diocese into his mission field. He was reaching

out to the remotest and most difficult corners of the mountainous regions, for not only preaching and the administration of the sacraments, but also in order to offer social aid and, when the occasion arose, to be a peacemaker thanks to his juridical formation.

He was particularly attentive to the needs of the youth. It is for them that he transformed the former convent of St. Francis into a Sunday 'oratorio' for boys and into an orphanage. He had inherited the convent in Saronno, the town where his parents were born. It is here where in 1848 he welcomed also some of the children of the Austrian soldiers after the fighting of the so-called 'Five Days of Milan'.

Elected Bishop of Pavia, he was consecrated in Rome on June 30, 1850. Before taking possession of the diocese, on the 30th of July he founded the seminary for the Foreign Missions gathering the first group of candidates for the missions in the former convent which was his property. One of the candidates was Giovanni Mazzucconi who will be the first martyr of the Institute. He was beatified in 1984.

He succeeded in involving the Bishops of Lombardy in the foundation of the new Institute. On December 1st of the same year they signed with him the act of foundation of the seminary for the Foreign Missions. In this manner, the Servant of God who had been unable to fulfill personally his mission vocation in obedience to his superiors, became the instrument of Divine Providence for the foundation of the first Italian Institute of diocesan priests and lay people consecrated to the mission *ad extra* and *ad gentes*.

In 1858 Pius IX promoted Bishop Ramazzotti to the patriarchal seat of Venice. The Servant of God remained there only three years, during which time he carried out an intense and multiform pastoral activity. In 1859, he convoked and presided over the first Venetian Provincial Council.

In 1860, Bishop Ramazzotti effectively took care of the first mission departure of the Sisters of Charity, popularly known as 'the Sisters of Mary Infant', to Bengal (India) and of the Daughters of Charity, commonly called 'Canossians', to Hong Kong.

Humility and charity marked the Servant of God all throughout his life along with the spirit of sacrifice that made him defy the rigors of winter cold without ever accepting that his room be heated.

He radically lived the evangelical poverty and loved the poor for whom he implemented welcoming structures both in Pavia and in Venice. He took great care of the deaf mute girls for whom he opened schools, which he maintained at his own expense. He was concerned about young people who had no jobs, taking them out of the streets and opening evening schools in order to offer them an adequate formation.

When the terrible cholera epidemic broke out in 1855 devastating the whole region of Lombardy, he wanted to personally assist the sick confined in lazarettos. In 1857, he visited by boat the fields flooded by the rivers Po and Ticino to bring comfort and help to the inhabitants blocked in their houses.

His ardent faith was of the greatest good example for the faithful: he spent many hours in prayer; he was visiting the churches where the Blessed Sacrament was exposed spending long time in adoration; he was tenderly devoted to the Blessed Virgin whom he particularly venerated under the titles of Our Lady of Sorrows and Queen of the Apostles. He loved giving spiritual retreats to all, clerical and lay people, and even to people in jail.

In his pastoral endeavors, the Servant of God was revealing great wisdom, even mindedness and fatherly care. He spent all his energies in trying to win back the priests who were contrary to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. He offered his prayers and sufferings for them even on his deathbed. He instituted the 'Family Priests'. They were priests committed above all to preaching missions in various parishes, living in community life with him in the Bishop's House. Even while serving as a Bishop, he continued to guide and accompany with affection and prayers, through the various parts of the world, the missionaries of the Institute he had founded.

He died on the 24th of September 1861, three days before being able to receive from the hands of Blessed Pius IX the cardinal's hat.

On the 23rd of May 1926 Pius XI decreed the union of the Institute for the Foreign Missions in Milan with the Pontifical Mission Seminary of the Saints Apostles Peter and Paul in Rome, giving birth to the 'Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere' (PIME).

In virtue of the fame of holiness enjoyed by the Servant of God, the Diocesan Process was celebrated in the ecclesiastical Curia of Milan from February 13, 1976

to February 18, 1978. The juridical validity of this Process was recognized by this Congregation with the Decree dated the 4th of December 1998.

After the *Positio* was prepared, in accordance with the norms, debate was conducted as to whether the Servant of God had lived the virtues in a heroic manner.

Both the peculiar Congress of the Consultors Theologians on the 3rd of March 2015, and the ordinary Session of the Fathers Cardinals and Bishops, presided by me, Cardinal Angelo Amato, on December 1 of the same year, were completed with positive result.

Finally, after having presented an accurate report of all these things to the Supreme Pontiff Francesco on the part of the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, His Holiness, welcoming and confirming the votes of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, today has declared: *In the present case and for the pre-determined purposes, it has been ascertained that the Servant of God Angelo Ramazzotti, Patriarch of Venice, Founder of the 'Pontificio Istituto per le Missioni Estere', has exercised to a heroic degree the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity both towards God and towards his neighbor, and he has exercised in the same manner the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude and those virtues connected with them.*

Moreover, the Supreme Pontiff has mandated to draw up this decree and to keep it in custody among the acts of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Given in Rome, December 1st 2015

ANGELUS CARD. AMATO, S.D.B.
Prefect

+ MARCELLUS BERTOLUCCI
Titular Archbishop Mevaniensis
Secretary