

HISTORICO-SPIRITUAL SOURCES OF THE INSTITUTE

OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF SAINTS
BARTOLOMEA CAPITANIO
& VINCENZA GEROSA

Series I

Fr Luigi Mazza's six volumes comprise:

- I. Life of Venerable Bartolomea Capitanio
- II. (Early) history of the Institute
- III. Letters (*Scr I*)
- IV. Notes and practices of life-of-perfection (*Scr II*)
- V. Devotional practices (*Scr III*)
- VI. Life of Venerable Sr. M. Vincenza Gerosa

Father Luigi Mazza sj wrote the life of the Foundress and early history of the Institute (Volumes I, II) and compiled Capitanio's "*Spiritual Writings*" in three Volumes (III, IV, V); he then wrote a sixth volume on the life of the Co-foundress Sister Vincenza Gerosa.

The return to the “*spiritual sources*” of religious Institutes recommended by “*Perfectae Caritatis*” (No. 2), gave rise to a new edition of Volumes I-VI for two reasons:

1. because the copies of the first edition (“*Spiritual Writings*” 1904. “*Life of B. Capitanio*” 1905. “*Life of M. V. Gerosa*” 1910) were since long out of stock, and so, many communities were left without;

2. because Fr Mazza, one of the most accurate scholars on the Foundresses and on the first sixty years of the Institute, remains, in particular concerning the figure, spirituality and apostolic activity of Bartolomea, the most reliable and rich source, especially because he deliberately made it a point to let documentary evidence speak for itself («*Bartolomea’s Spiritual Writings*», Processes for the Beatification and friends’ manuscripts still available at the Archives of the Generalate) by quoting abundantly from such sources.

I have to point out that the contents of the “*Spiritual Writings*” vol. I and vol. III of the Foundress and precisely the volume of the “*Letters*” and that of “*Notes and practices of life-of-perfection*”, prove to be quite certain that they are authentic. The original scripts are still preserved of the whole of the former and of a large part of the latter.

Serious doubts are, instead, cast on the authenticity of “*Spiritual Writings*” vol. II. It would take some serious research-work (a good topic of a thesis for higher studies) to check how much of it was original and how much had been taken from a large supply of manuals of piety and devotion very much in use in the nineteenth century.

NOTE prepared in 1968 for the anastatic reprinting of the six volumes of Mazza.