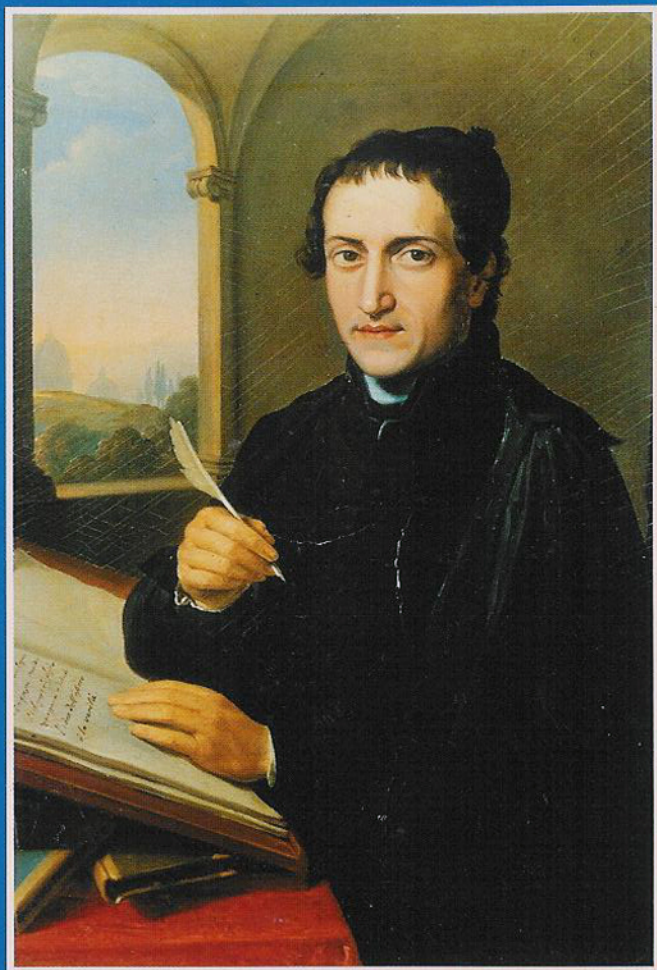


THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ROSMINIAN STUDIES



ANTONIO ROSMINI

His Life, His Friends, His Works, His Thought

Index

Preface	<i>page</i> 3
1. The origins	<i>page</i> 5
2. The Palazzo Rosmini in Rovereto	" 6
3. Infancy and adolescence	" 7
4. University of Padua	" 8
5. Manzoni and Milan	" 9
6. Monte Calvario, Domodossola	" 10
7. The Brothers of Charity	" 11
8. Sisters of Providence	" 12
9. The Mother House at Borgomanero	" 13
10. The philosopher	" 14
11. Piedmont, second Homeland	" 15
12. England	" 16
13. Ireland	" 17
14. Rosmini's writings: growth of his thought	" 18
15. Turin: the political mission	" 19
16. The political storm in Rome	" 20
17. Gaeta and Naples	" 21
18. Peace at Stresa	" 22
19. The master and the testimony	" 23
20. Illness and death	" 24
21. The long wait	" 25
22. Rosmini's monument	" 26
23. Rosmini's thought	" 27
24. His friends	" 28
25. Rosmini and the Popes	" 29
26. The educator	" 30
27. Rosmini in the world	" 31
28. Stresa: the centre of rosminian studies	" 32

Preface

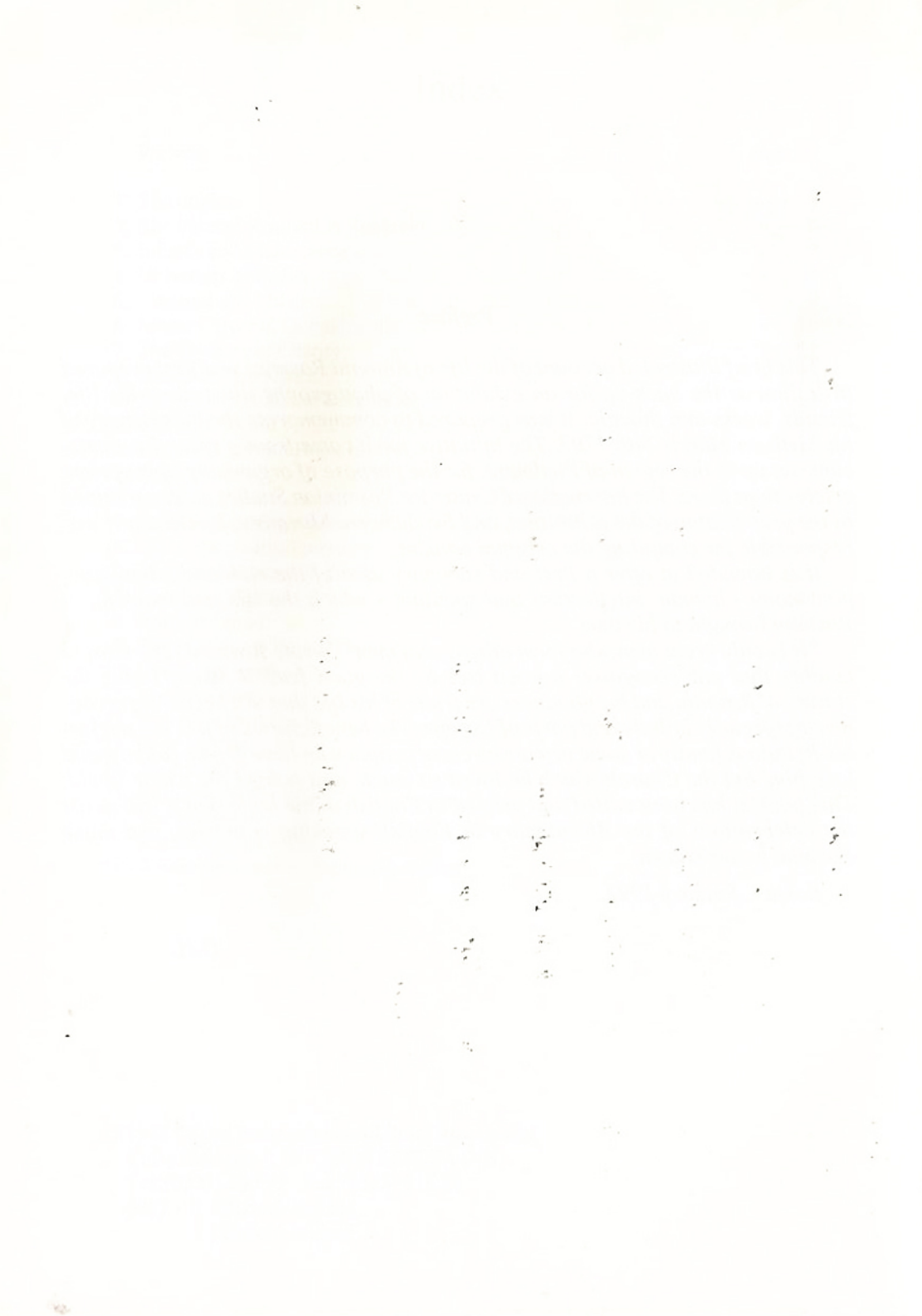
This brief illustrated account of the life of Antonio Rosmini was first prepared in Italian as the back-up for an exhibition of photographs illustrating his life, friends, works and thought. It was prepared to commemorate the bicentenary of his birth on March 24th 1797. The initiative for it came from a special commission, set up in the region of Piedmont, for the purpose of organising appropriate celebrations there. The International Centre for Rosminian Studies at Stresa helped in the preparation of the exhibition, and Fr Umberto Muratore, its Director, was responsible for compiling the original booklet.

It is intended to offer a first and summary idea of the rich and stimulating patrimony - human, intellectual and spiritual - which the life and teaching of Rosmini brought to his time.

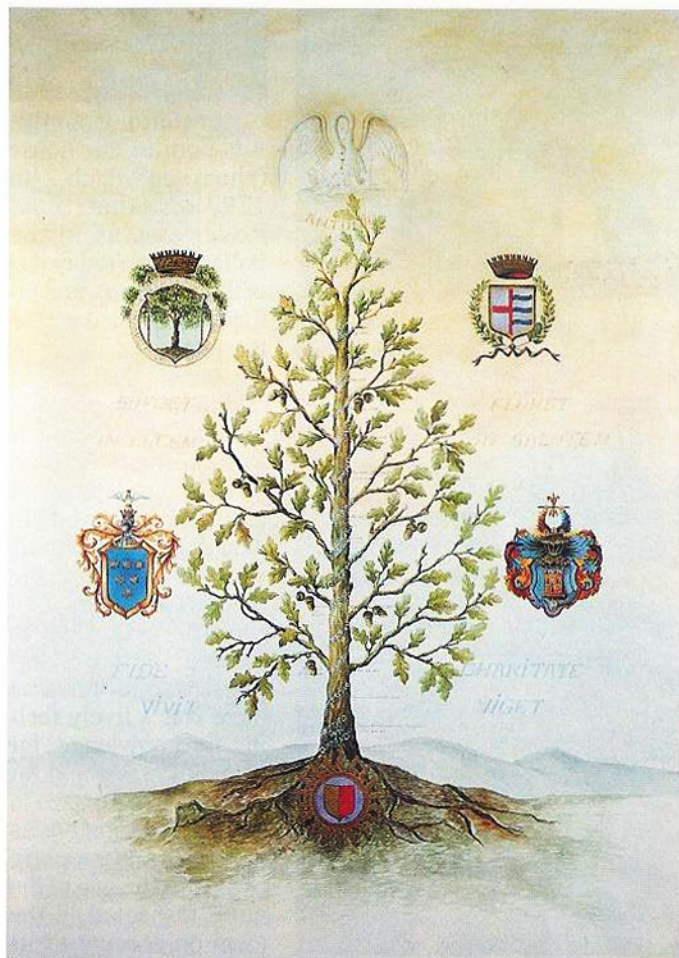
"It is only great men who form other great men", wrote Rosmini. The Gospel teaches that one recognises a good tree by the good fruit it bears. Today the stature of Rosmini and his goodness are fruits of his life that are becoming recognised especially in Italy and parts of Europe. The beneficiaries of this are not just his Religious family or some private circle of people who have grown to know and love him, but the Church which he loved so much, and indeed the whole world. This booklet has been edited and printed in English in the hope that it will assist the celebrations of the Bicentenary in English speaking countries, and make Rosmini better known.

Rome. January 1997.

D.H.



1. THE ORIGINS



The Rosmini family is very ancient and the family tree (photo) contains the names of many people who were illustrious in their time in the fields of the arts, the Church and the military. The progenitor on the father's side was one Aresimo, the son of Pietro degli Aliprandi, who came from the valley of Brembana in the province of Bergamo. He was a soldier in service to the Republic of Venice, and lived first in Verona and then at Rovereto. Here he was made Constable of the city, an office of considerable responsibility. As a reward for the services rendered by

the family at that time, in 1574 the Emperor Maximilian II conferred on its members in Rovereto the title of "Patrizi Tirolesi" and "Nobles of the Holy Roman Empire". The second surname, Serbati, came from Antonio's grandfather Giannantonio. He had two sons: Ambrogio, who never married and lived with his brother, and Pier Modesto who was the father of Antonio.

The mother of Antonio was Giovanna who came from the family of the Counts Formenti di Riva. She was born at Biacesa on Lake Garda, and had four children by Pier Modesto.

None of these children carried on the family name. Margherita became a Cansossian nun, Antonio a priest, Giuseppe married but had no children, and Felice died when he was only one year old. However, if one considers that Antonio founded two Religious Congregations, one could say that although the genealogy of the human family of Rosmini ceased with this generation, there has been grafted on to the family tree a scion of a spiritual family which has survived and grown.

2. THE PALAZZO ROSMINI IN ROVERETO



Antonio Rosmini was born in this house (photo) on March 24th 1797. At that time, Rovereto was in the Italian Tyrol (today it is in the Trentino), and although it formed part of the Austrian Empire, it was “ultra Italian” in tradition, literature and learning. At the time of Rosmini, the population of Rovereto was about 9,000 people who, in their dialect and culture, were very close to the Venetians. They had flourishing academies of study, theatre, and public schools, and there was a lively feeling for knowledge, for the cultural arts and for religion. The Palazzo in which Rosmini was born was the property of the family, one of the more respected in the town on account of its wealth and the fame of its noble descent. Inside

the house, there were large rooms with many pictures and prints, a well stocked library, a small family chapel, an apartment occupied by the brother of Pier Modesto, affectionately known as Uncle Ambrogio, and rooms for the servants and the family tutors. The family enjoyed literature. The mother was cultured and a keen reader. Pier Modesto, a very keen hunter and devoted to Austria, would enjoy composing poetry and playing the zither. Uncle Ambrogio was a jovial man who was an architect, artist and a collector of prints. He was a connoisseur of the various schools of architecture and painting. Also part of the family circle were a certain Master Ruck, the nursemaid Teresa Tacchelli and the tutor Don Francesco Guareschi. Life inside the Palazzo was of that a loving family, united and relaxed who shared their ideas on religion and ethical subjects. The children addressed the adults very formally, and were accustomed to kiss the hands of their parents. Today the Casa Natale (as it is called) contains a Rosminian Library. Here many Rosminian cultural initiatives have their origin, and are co-ordinated throughout Italy and are making the person of Rosmini known to German speaking people.



3. INFANCY AND ADOLESCENCE

On the 25th March 1797, the day after his birth (the photo shows the room), Rosmini was baptised in the parish church of St Mark. He was given the names Antonio, Francesco, Davide and Ambrogio; later when he was confirmed, he took the name Gianbattista. These were names of his antecedents, whose gifts Antonio would equal and even exceed.

He had a very peaceful and happy childhood. His tutors and the family servants surrounded him with every care; he played with his brother and sister and cousins, all of a similar age. He lived in surroundings that were affectionate in their warmth and sincere in their religious outlook. In these years, Antonio absorbed this model of life which was harmonious and good, and in later life he sought to recreate it among his friends and spiritual children.

In Rovereto he completed his schooling up to entry to University, with a notable brilliance in his work. He studied all subjects with enthusiasm, but his greater love was for Italian language and literature, and - when he discovered it - for philosophy. There were several at this time who noted his exceptional gifts for learning.

While he was still young, he would invite to the house young people about his age who were interested in literary composition and philosophy. It was at this time that his vocation to the priesthood first appeared and from then on became ever clearer to him. He conceived the idea of dedicating his entire life to the service of his neighbour and to the glory of God. "If only I could be useful to my dear brothers (what a lovely thought)!".



4. UNIVERSITY OF PADUA

In order to study for the priesthood, Antonio decided to attend the University of Padua, where he took up residence in November 1816. His rooms were near the Basilica of St Anthony (photo), which he frequented every day.

At the University he came to know Nicolo Tommaseo, and there started a great friendship that, through many “ups and downs”, was destined to last throughout his life. His gentle character, his immense curiosity for knowledge, his kindly interest in everything that was beautiful and good, won him a tightly knitted circle of friends among both his fellow students and the professors.

These were years in which he rejoiced in intellectual research and courageous projects which went far beyond the bounds of theology. Amongst these, the most impressive was an Italian Christian Encyclopedia, which was intended to reply to the French Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment and men like Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot e D’Alambert.

He visited the stalls that sold antique books, codices and miniatures, and frequently bought these to enrich the family library.

In 1819 he finished his studies and returned to Rovereto. A year later his father died. On April 21st 1821 he was ordained to the priesthood at Chioggia. St John Bosco wrote thus after seeing him celebrate the Mass: “I cannot remember seeing a priest celebrate Mass with such devotion and piety as Rosmini”.

Aware of the spirit of his age (it was the time of many revolutionary movements) Rosmini, as well as carrying out his priestly duties, plunged himself into the study of politics.



5. MANZONI AND MILAN

Rosmini finished his study and research into politics, and in February 1826 he went to Milan (photo Milan Cathedral). He soon became acquainted with the important personalities and families of the city. He was warmly welcomed amongst them on account of his abilities as a thinker and as a priest. Here he met for the first time Alessandro Manzoni (photo) and the Count Giacomo Mellerio with whom he formed a friendship which was to grow deeper as the years passed.

Manzoni frequently invited him to lunch and to meet people from his very select circle of cultural friends. On these occasions Rosmini had the opportunity to put forward some of his own ideas, and to form a balanced judgement on some of the more pressing ideas of the time, such as moral questions, economics and politics, philosophy, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Manzoni gave him the proofs of his novel "Promessi Sposi" to read; Rosmini was filled with admiration and said it was assured of great success.

It was in Milan at the house of Mellerio in June 1827, that Rosmini met Giovanni Lowenbruck, a priest, 30 years of age, who came from Lorraine. He asked Rosmini to help him to found a Religious Society; Rosmini saw the invitation as a sign of Providence that he would have to consider for a while. They decided to pass the coming Lent together at the Sacro Monte Calvario, a hill behind Domodossola, where in solitude and prayer they would seek to know what the Lord wanted of them.



(Photo C. Pessina, Domodossola - Milano)

6. MONTE CALVARIO, DOMODOSSOLA

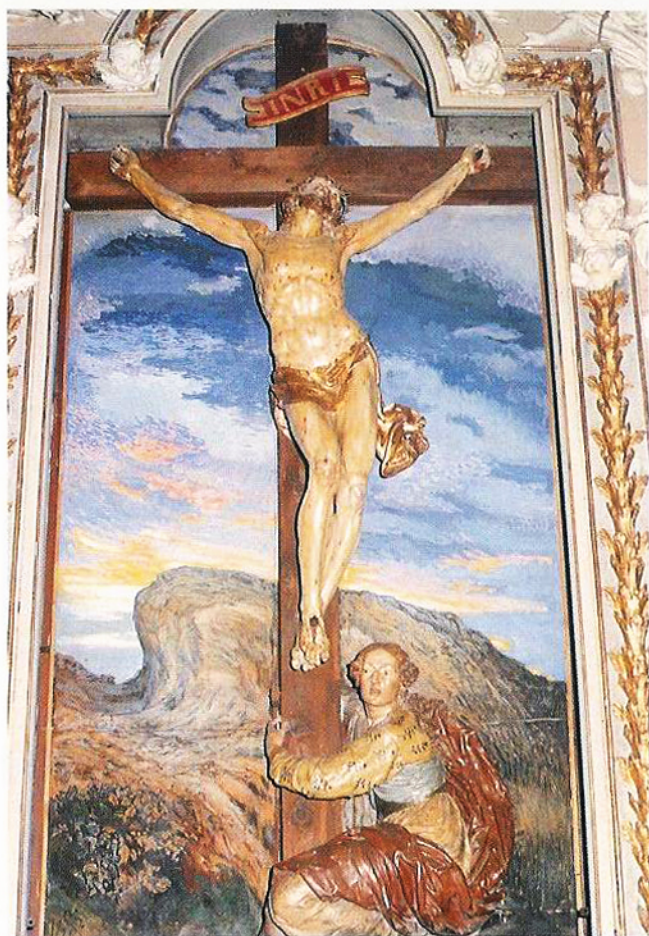
Rosmini left Milan and arrived at Monte Calvario (photo) on the 19th February 1828. His companion, Lowenbruck, who agreed to meet him there, did not arrive until much later. The following day was Ash Wednesday. Rosmini decided to carry on alone, occupying a small room that was damp and cold and passing the time in fasting, prayer, study and meditation, but above all in silence, awaiting the guidance of the Lord. Many of his friends were alarmed at this sudden move on his part, which they considered to be very foolish.

In the following days, the nature of the new Religious Congregation which the Lord was asking him to found became very clear, even to the smallest details. The society would be called the Institute of Charity. Its members could be priests or laymen, as the will of God called them under obedience. In addition to the Religious, who would profess the three evangelical counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, anyone who wished to share in the spirit and end of the Society could join.

The end of the Institute would be simple - each member would seek the salvation of his own soul by the practice of love for God and for his neighbour in whatever way Providence should decide in the circumstances of each day.

Monte Calvario has become the fountain and heart of the spirituality of all Rosminians from that time, the cradle where, close to the room where Rosmini founded the Institute, they have been able to rediscover from time to time the very root of their special vocation. Today it houses the Novitiate of the Italian Province, and is a centre for Rosminian Spirituality.

7. THE BROTHERS OF CHARITY



New companions began to arrive at Calvario to join Rosmini, and the Institute of Charity began to grow. The building had been more or less aban-

doned in the past, and Rosmini arranged for rooms on the ground floor to be made habitable for the use of his religious and himself.

Alongside the house stands the sanctuary of SS.Crocifisso, which even at that time was open to the public. Rosmini's first companions started the celebration of the full liturgy with the Mass, meditations, confessions, catechism, instruction for converts etc. The Brothers of Charity (Lowenbruck, Molinari, Gentili and others) chose Rosmini as their first superior, and in this church they sought to learn and to bring to the world some of the spiritual concepts that their founder had described in his "Constitutions of the Institute of Charity". It was here also, in front of the statues of the Crucifixion (photo) that they listened to the passionate sermons of their Father, some of which are recorded in his book "Discorsi della Carita" (Sermons on Charity).

The symbol of the Institute of Charity is a pelican feeding its young with its own blood; this is a clear indication to those who wanted to belong that they should be ready even to lay down their lives as a witness to their love for God and their brethren.

8. SISTERS OF PROVIDENCE



Shortly after the foundation of the Institute of Charity, the Sisters of Providence were founded as the female part of those living the Rosminian consecrated life. Rosmini took over the direction of the Sisters towards the end of 1833. He gave them a Rule similar to that of the male branch, and watched over the spiritual growth of each one of them, guiding them in their choice of works of charity. The two Congregations are each completely independent, but have the same end and follow the same style of life.

They flow in the Church like two neighbourly streams, sometimes joining in works of charity, at others acting independently but drawing their strength from the same source and spirituality of their common Founder.

In 1837 at Domodossola, Rosmini established a central house for the Sisters with a novitiate, and appointed their first Mother General in the person of Sister Giovanna Camilla Antonietti (photo).

Giovanna Antonietti was 28 years old when she received this appointment. She came from the valley of Baceno, one of those in the Ossola region on the border with Switzerland. She was a mountain dweller with a strong religious tradition. Despite frequent bouts of ill health, she directed the Sisters with great humility and a certain trepidation. She sought advice from Rosmini frequently and meekly accepted his help, regarding his word as indisputable. She died in 1872 aged 63, of which she had spent 35 guiding the Sisters as Superior General. At the time of her death, there were 500 Rosminian Sisters, working in 50 different religious houses.



9. THE MOTHER HOUSE AT BORGOMANERO

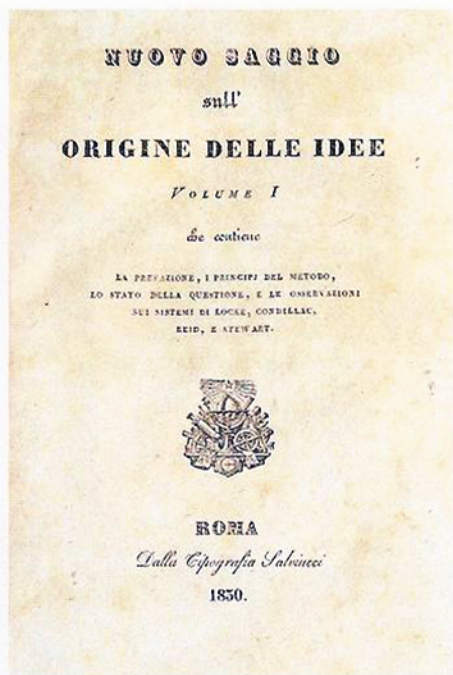
Opened in 1856, the house at Borgomanero became the official residence of the Mother General of the Rosminian Sisters - the Sisters of Providence - in the following year. It was from this base that the Sisters went out to work in various parts of Italy and abroad, and here they returned for spiritual refreshment.

The Sisters fulfilled a role which had been determined by the style of spiritual life and thought handed down to them by Rosmini. They used the educational teaching of their Founder in the formation of the young girls and teenagers entrusted to their care. They managed infant schools, orphanages, schools and colleges, especially in Piedmont. Their services in the fields of spiritual, intellectual and temporal charity in 18th century Piedmont were exceptional, at a time when such services were sadly lacking.

Today, the Sisters run schools and colleges in Italy where they are held in high regard, and they work in schools, parishes, missions and other activities (in some cases alongside the Fathers and Brothers) in England, Ireland, Tanzania, Venezuela, Colombia and Kerala in India.



Portrait of Rosmini (G. Craffonora)



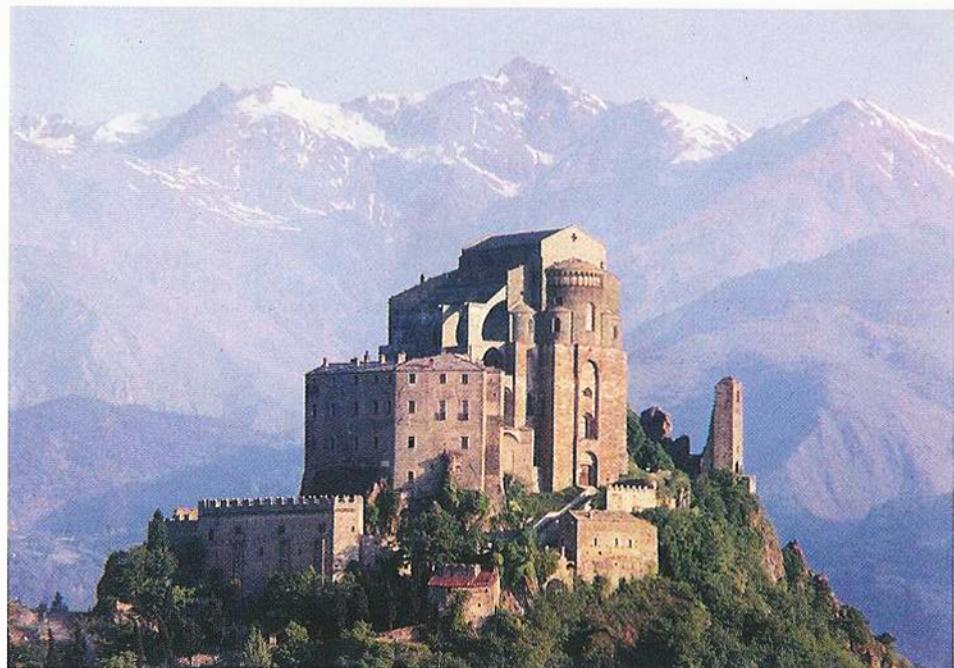
Nuovo Saggio sull'Origine delle Idee

10. THE PHILOSOPHER

In 1830, Rosmini published his first large philosophical work in Rome - "Nuovo Saggio sull'Origine delle Idee" (The Origin of Thought). In this work, he laid the foundation for the development of traditional ways of thought into new and original fields. The work was immediately acclaimed.

The "Nuovo Saggio" brought to the public attention of the time the advent of a powerful thinker. Many of those who read the work became convinced that they were witnessing the rising of a new star in the philosophical heavens. It seemed that faith and reason, tradition and modern thought could develop in harmony with considerable advantage to both. The author was able to see the truth in some of the writings of his opponents, and his clarity of thought, the solutions he proposed and his method of exposition all found favour. But above all, his readers were impressed by the solid philosophical base of this work, which had scope for further development that would be of great value.

The "Nuovo Saggio" soon became a classic in the history of philosophy. It went to several editions even during Rosmini's lifetime, and was taken up widely in seminaries and in centres of culture and study. Vincenzo Gioberti read it to his friends and students.



11. PIEDMONT, SECOND HOMELAND

From the time he left Trent until his death in 1855, Rosmini made Piedmont the principal place for his work. He called it his second homeland. It was in Piedmont that his two religious congregations found their roots, and it was Piedmont that welcomed him so generously when he was forced to leave Trent in 1836, due to the hostility of the Austrian authorities. In Piedmont he found that indispensable freedom which enabled him to confront and to develop his thought in the fields of politics, ecclesiology, education and religion.

In 1836, Rosmini visited King Carlo Alberto of Savoy at Turin - a man for whom he had a great admiration. They talked about the Sacra di San Michele (photo), an abandoned Benedictine monastery over 1,000 years old, situated in the Val di Susa. The king had two projects in mind for it, and wanted Rosmini to take charge of them. He wished to make it the mausoleum for the House of Savoy, and secondly to make it a place where people could come who wished to finish their days in prayer and peace. Rosmini accepted this request, and sent twelve of his brethren there.

Since then, the Rosminians have looked after this ancient abbey, often in difficult times, welcoming visitors and offering hospitality to those requiring time for prayer and reflection; it has become the mausoleum for the House of Savoy, whose tombs are in the main church.

In 1994, the Region of Piedmont adopted the abbey as its symbol, and named it as a centre for the revival of the cultural and religious heritage of St Benedict and Rosmini.



12. ENGLAND

In June 1835, three Italian Rosminians disembarked at Tilbury. They had been sent by Rosmini at the invitation of Bishop Baines to teach in his seminary at Prior Park, near Bath. Seven others joined them and soon they were receiving English vocations. Within a relatively short time they were being offered parish work, had opened a school and were becoming well known for their missionary work.

Rosmini followed their work with great interest and love, recommending them to “adopt the English way of life little by little in all that was not sinful”. He entertained the idea of founding a College for Missionaries in England, with the intention of preparing men for mission work in India, at that time an English colony. His death prevented this idea from reaching fruition.

The first novitiate was opened at Ratcliffe (photo) in 1844, and in 1847 it became a College. The brethren were entrusted with parishes in South Wales and the Midlands, from which they founded others. Grace Dieu Manor (small photo) was the home of the De Lisle family, to which Fr Gentili, one of the first three priests, was chaplain in the early days. It is now a Rosminian school.

Today the schools and parishes flourish. In 1961, the brethren from England went to New Zealand, where they opened two schools. More recently, a community in Durham is engaged in the translation and diffusion of the works of Rosmini in English.

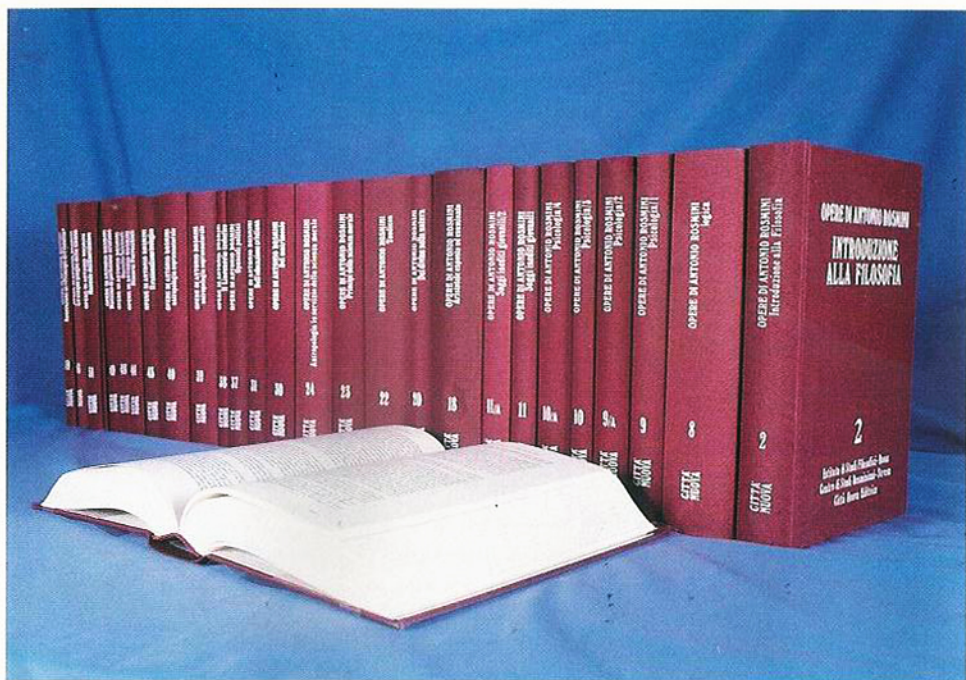


13. IRELAND

Rosmini approved of his religious going from England to Ireland. Here they distinguished themselves in preaching missions. Their arrival in 1847 coincided with the great potato famine and cholera epidemic, in which over 800,000 people died of hunger and disease, and a further 400,000 were forced to emigrate. Rosmini was deeply moved by the reports on this tragedy, and wrote to his brethren urging them to spare neither themselves nor their funds in helping this stricken people. He himself collected large sums of money from his family and friends and sent this to Ireland.

The Institute flourished in Ireland. At one time, the Irish members were the biggest ethnic group. In this century they have branched out again to the United States, which is now a Province on its own, and to Tanzania which has just celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the mission work there.

Today in Ireland, the brethren are involved in work with boys from dysfunctional families at Clonmel, the deaf in Dublin and people who are mentally handicapped at Upton (photo), as well as having charge of several parishes.



14. ROSMINI'S WRITINGS: GROWTH OF HIS THOUGHT

At the same time as he watched over the growth of his two Religious families, Rosmini continued to study, dictate and write in all the free time he had available. Some of his more important works were on subjects such as Moral Science, Anthropology, Political Philosophy, the History of Philosophy, an Introduction to Philosophy, the Philosophy of Law, Psychology and Logic.

At his death, some of the works were unfinished, among which was his Theosophy, the largest he wrote. This reaches to the height of philosophical speculation, and takes into account all his other works, setting them in the ambit of his most profound intuitions in the widest possible field of thought.

He also wrote some 8,500 letters to every type of person, and these have been published in 13 volumes under the title "Epistolario Completo". A selection of his ascetical letters is being translated into English, and so far three volumes are in print. It has been calculated that if all Rosmini's writings were to be published, they would fill some 100 very large volumes. In 1975 in Italy, the work of publishing a critical edition of his works was started, and so far some 27 volumes are completed (photo).

15. TURIN: THE POLITICAL MISSION



In 1848 Milan waged war against Austria. King Charles Albert of Savoy came with his troops to the aid of the Lombards, but after a few months he realised that on his own he was no match for the Austrian army. He saw the necessity of sending someone of repute to Rome to persuade Pius IX to support their Italian cause. On the advice of Vincenzo Gioberti, the government of the king in Turin (photo) chose Rosmini for this mission. He arrived in Rome on 15th August 1848 armed with a letter from the king explaining the political situation. He immediately set to work on his mission - to negotiate a concordat between the Papal States and the Kingdom of Savoy, and to form a federation or alliance of the Italian states.

Pius IX had wanted Rosmini to come to Rome for sometime. He received him with great kindness and accepted his advice. He enjoined him to prepare to be created a Cardinal; in fact there were rumours that he wanted to make Rosmini his Secretary of State.

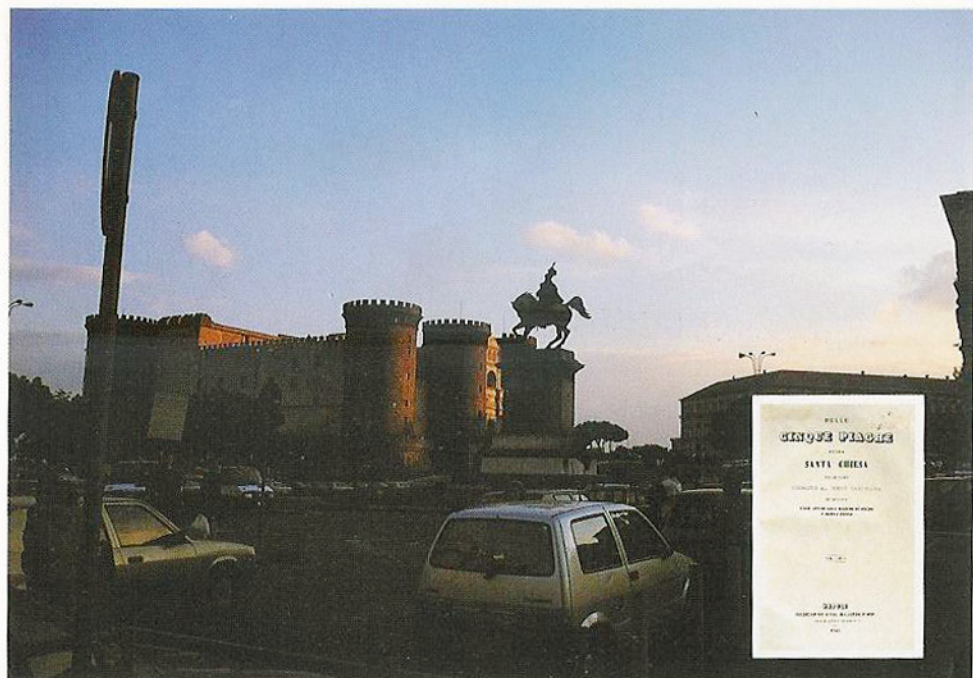


16. THE POLITICAL STORM IN ROME

The attempts to form an alliance between the Kingdom of Savoy, Tuscany and the Papal States seemed to be going well when a new government in Piedmont changed the initial project. Rosmini found that he could not agree with the new policy, and resigned his mission.

In Rome, revolution was in the air, and on November 15th 1848, the Pope's new Prime Minister Pellegrino Rossi was assassinated. The following day, in an attempt to calm the confusion that ensued, a new government was proposed with Rosmini at its head with the portfolio of Education. However, Rosmini sensed that this was an attempt to "set up" the Pope and refused to accept.

The confusion continued until November 24th when Pius IX decided to leave Rome incognito, and fled to Gaeta. The following day Rosmini followed him, thinking that the Pope wished to have him near to himself. The Pope's brother, Gabriello Mastai travelled with him in the same coach and they joined the Pope at mid-day on November 26th 1848.



17. GAETA AND NAPLES

Pius IX, persuaded by those around him, decided not to change the constitution of the Papal States. Meanwhile there were political and ecclesiastical opponents of Rosmini who sought to break his relationship with the Pope, and to stop his proposals becoming public knowledge. At the same time, the Bourbon and Austrian authorities moved against him.

To avoid all this hostility, Rosmini left Gaeta in January 1849, going first to Naples and then to the Capuchin friary at San Efreem Nuovo. When he returned to the Pope, he sensed that he was no longer welcome. Thus in June 1849, he left for Piedmont. He travelled through Albano, where he learnt that two of his works had been placed on the index of forbidden books - "The Five Wounds of the Church" and "The Constitution according to Social Justice". He submitted humbly. Continuing his journey, he joined his brethren in Stresa on November 2nd. There was never another word about the Cardinalate, but the "Five Wounds of the Church" was something of a prophecy, being widely acclaimed at the time of Vatican II (1964).



18. PEACE AT STRESA

At the time of Rosmini's return in 1849, Stresa was a peaceful fishing village on the shore of Lago Maggiore (photo). In a house left to him by Anna Maria Bolongaro he lived with his brethren and his guests until his death in 1855.

His guests were many. Friends, religious, people from all walks of life, the famous and learned, and ordinary folk too - all came to seek his advice. Everyone had to follow the timetable of a normal religious community. On some days, such well known Italian figures of the time as Ruggero Bonghi, Gustavo Cavour and Alessandro Manzoni would be there together. They came to meet the "sage" of Stresa. Likewise, famous ecclesiastical figures - Lacordaire, Wiseman, Newman - nobility who had villas on the lake, professors from universities and seminaries, abbots, priests - they all sought counsel from the saintly and learned priest. When the time permitted, there would be long discussions in the garden of the house, against the background of the magnificent scenery of the lake and mountains. These talks covered a multitude of topics - literature, politics, philosophy, morals etc, and some were recorded by Ruggero Bonghi and published under the title "Stresiani".

19. THE MASTER AND THE TESTIMONY



This picture of Rosmini (photo) was painted in oils by the Venetian artist Francesco Hayez in 1853, just two years before his death. It was the last painting to be made of him. Rosmini is seated in conversation. It is said that the artist had great difficulty in depicting Rosmini's face, as his looks kept changing as different thoughts passed through his mind. A biographer relates that in order to avoid this, the artist had recourse to a stratagem: "whilst Rosmini sat for him, he regaled him with stories and jokes in his charming Venetian manner, and this pleased his subject so much that it prevented him from becoming too immersed in distracting and profound thought".

After the misadventure in Rome, Rosmini became even more admired by his friends, and many came to visit him. Above all they admired him for his humility and docility in the face of his recent experiences. In this way he taught them, not only by his words and his writings but also by the way he accepted his sufferings, that they must love the Church and always be obedient to the Will of God.



20. ILLNESS AND DEATH

After a journey to Rovereto in the autumn of 1854, Rosmini returned to Stresa a sick man, and retired immediately to bed(photo). From this time onwards, his health problems gradually worsened and gave considerable cause for alarm.

When they heard of this rapid decline, his friends and disciples started a veritable pilgrimage to his sick bed, and this had all the signs of a last farewell. Tommaseo, whom he had not seen for several years, the Mayor of Rovereto, Gustavo Cavour, the Mother General of the Rosminian Sisters Sister Giovanna Antonietti, bishops and friends from all walks of life - all came to greet their sick friend whom they admired and loved.

In the final days, Alessandro Manzoni came. Seeing that the end was near, he exclaimed to Rosmini: "*What are we to do when you have gone?*". Rosmini replied: "*Adore, be silent and rejoice*". In these words, he left behind a spiritual testament that has lived on.

He died at half-past one on July 1st 1855. He was 58 years of age. Ruggero Bonghi, when announcing this sad event to the Italian people, said: "One of the greatest minds and the holiest men to have lived in Italy in this century has left this world. He has left us a legacy of affection and ideas; his brethren and his friends will take care of the one, it falls to the Italian people to cultivate the other. All of us feel uplifted as we recall his memory".



21. THE LONG WAIT

The Collegio Rosmini (photo) in Stresa is situated on a hill at the back of the town, enjoying a magnificent view over Lago Maggiore and the Borromean Islands to the mountains beyond. Adjacent to the college is the church of SS.Crocifisso, and it is here in the crypt that the body of Rosmini rests. He waits patiently on the will of God for that recognition which was denied to him not only during his life but even more actively after his death, but which is slowly coming about.

In the college at the beginning of this century the first Rosminian archives and library were collected, and it was here that the first conferences to study his thought and culture were held. Here too was born the Italian review "Charitas", which seeks to diffuse the ascetical and spiritual teaching of Rosmini to a wide audience.

During Rosmini's life, the college housed the novitiate; after his death it became a boarding school for boys. Today there is still a school, and the college houses a community of aged priests and brothers of the Italian Province who have worked hard and long in the service of the Lord and lived to the full their religious consecration.

22. ROSMINI'S MONUMENT

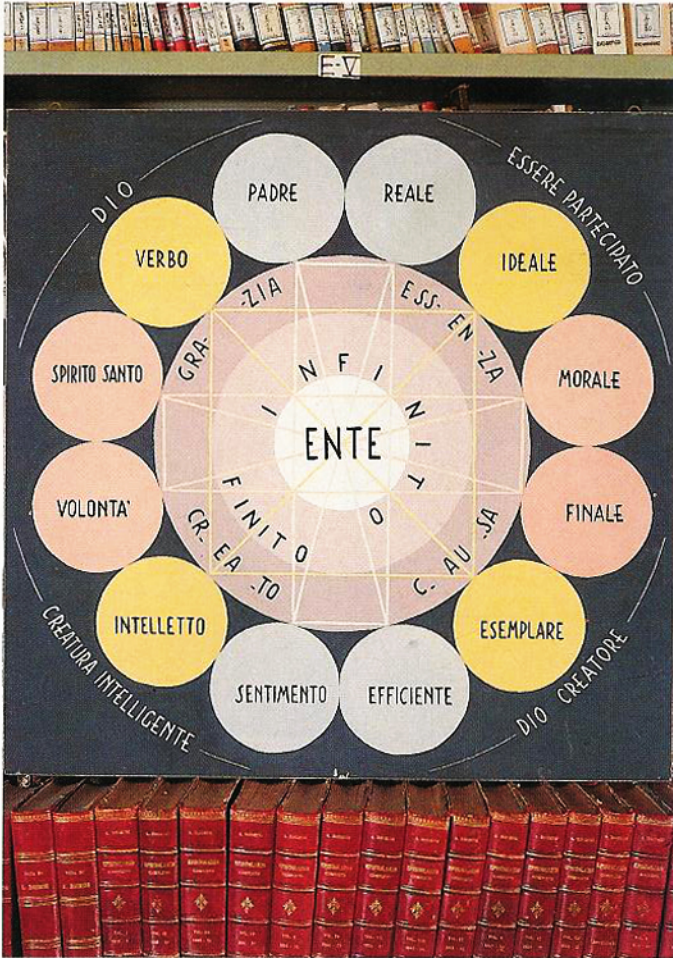


As one enters the church of the College, on the left hand side stands the monument to Rosmini (photo), over the place in the crypt where he rests. Sculptured by Vincenzo Vela, it was unveiled on 14th September 1859. It is in white marble and depicts Rosmini the priest and scholar. He holds a book in his hands, symbolic both of the Gospel and of his many writings. He kneels in prayer to depict the man of prayer, the priest who recognises his helplessness before God and the philosopher in awe before the Divine Truth. The three books at the base of the sculpture signify Rosmini's work for the renewal of philosophy.

The inscription beneath quotes the allocution of Pope Gregory XVI, written when Rosmini was still alive:

"To Antonio Rosmini, a man of eminent intellect, adorned with noble qualities of soul, exceedingly famous for his knowledge of things human and divine, outstanding for his remarkable piety, religion, virtue, probity, prudence and integrity, conspicuous for his wonderful love and loyalty to the Catholic religion and to this Apostolic See".

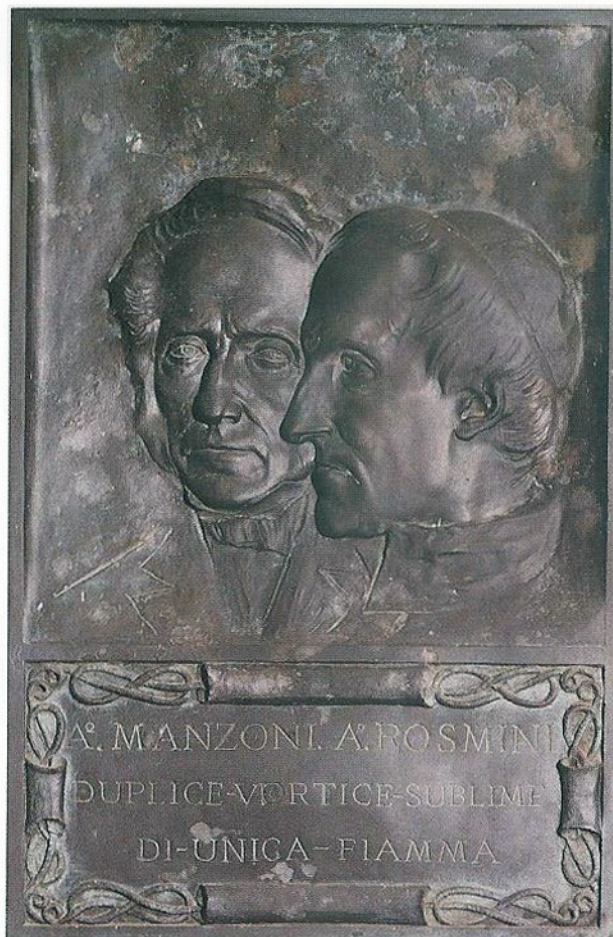
23. ROSMINI'S THOUGHT



The photo shows a diagrammatic explanation of Rosmini's philosophical system. This diagram was prepared by one of the Italian brethren. Starting at the centre and working outwards through the various circles, we see that Being (Ente) in its broadest terms is everything that we can know. In its turn, Being can be finite (Finito) or infinite (Infinito), and is understood by man in three forms or modes - Ideal Being (the ideas he entertains), Real Being (the things he sees around him) and Moral Being (his free and intelligent actions). For

Rosmini, a philosopher is a person who loves the truth unconditionally; he contemplates Being in all its vastness without adding or subtracting anything.

Rosmini's thought embraces many areas, forming a sort of encyclopedia of wisdom. From philosophy, his studies embraced politics, mathematics, theology, law, education and many other sciences. During his life, the solutions and theories he proposed met with both enthusiastic affirmation and considerable opposition. After his death there was a long period of hostility during which a small band of his disciples kept his doctrine alive, but not without much suffering through being misunderstood. Since the commencement of this century, his thought has started to gain favour, and little by little he has become better understood and accepted, as much as anything due to the prophetic nature of so much of his writing. Today his texts are read throughout Europe and much of the rest of the world, and have become the subject of many university theses. Many in his field today consider Rosmini to be the greatest Italian thinker of the last century, if not the greatest in Europe.



At the entrance to the International Centre for Rosminian Studies at Stresa, there is a bronze plaque (photo) by Pietro Canonica. It depicts the heads of Rosmini and Manzoni, and the inscription reads: "*A. Manzoni. A. Rosmini. Two sublime peaks of a single flame*".

This plaque can be taken as a symbol of the friendships enjoyed by Rosmini. From his childhood to his death, he knew how to surround himself with an ever increasing group of friends who became very close to him. They were many whom he knew and loved, who were his frequent visitors. They came from every walk of life, but especially from the two families of Religious that he founded.

There were many reasons for this affection. He was a man who encouraged everyone to realise his full potential; he had a great respect for a person, for that person's word, and he had an inexhaustible wish to help anybody, especially those in need. Any promising new initiative drew his enthusiasm. He had a capacity to adapt himself quite naturally and spontaneously to the people he met. He was known for his sincere love of the good, the beautiful and the truth. He loved silence and interior peace and sought always to be with his religious communities and friends. When a new religious entered one of his communities, he would be welcomed with the words of the psalmist - "How good and joyful it is for brethren to live together".

25. ROSMINI AND THE POPES



Among the noteworthy people who have esteemed the work of Rosmini both during his life and afterwards, one can count many Popes. Pius VII was the first that Rosmini knew in 1823, and it was he who encouraged Rosmini to study philosophy. Six years later he met Pius VIII and this meeting set the scene for the whole of his future life. Practically speaking, the Pope gave him a personal mission in the Church when he said: "It is the will of God that you occupy yourself in writing books; such is your vocation There is no way more useful to influence people than to start from reason and by this means to lead to religion".

Rosmini's great friend and protector was Gregory XVI (photo). He greatly appreciated the works which Rosmini sent to him, and encouraged him to love study above all the other priestly duties. It was Gregory XVI who approved the Institute of Charity by his Apostolic Letters, and he was greatly saddened to witness the later hostility which developed against his friend and his work.

Pius IX had a great esteem for Rosmini throughout his pontificate. In 1854 he was happy to see him cleared of heresy in his works, and until he died the Pope refused to reopen any case which would question Rosmini's orthodoxy.

With Vatican II the Popes once again publicly showed their appreciation of Rosmini. John XXIII made a retreat based on Rosminian spirituality, and quoted him in his autobiography "The Journey of a Soul". Paul VI hailed him as a learned priest and prophet. John Paul I promised to restore him to the place of honour he merits in the Church, and in February 1994, Pope John Paul II opened the way for his beatification.



(Photo C. Pessina, Domodossola - Milano)

Education is one of the fields where the two Religious Congregations of Rosmini have continued to develop the work of their Founder. In Domodossola, at the northern frontier of Italy with Switzerland (near the Simplon), the Collegio Mellerio Rosmini (photo) was the forerunner in Italy in promoting Rosmini's thought and

educational theory. Count Giacomo Mellerio, a great benefactor of the town and a firm friend of Rosmini, gave him the site of the original college. As it developed, it had to move to the larger site where it is located today. The Rosminian Sisters have a large College alongside, and two other junior schools in the town. The school in Stresa has already been mentioned (21), and there is a further College in Turin. Outside Italy, the brethren and sisters have taken the educational mission to England (12), Ireland, New Zealand, the United States and Venezuela.

All these schools bear living witness to the soundness of Rosmini's principles of education, which have stood the test of time. There are literally thousands of expupils throughout the world who have received their early education at the hands of brethren, sisters and teachers who have tried and succeeded in communicating the way of life and the ethic of their common master. Many of these former students, especially in Italy, have become learned and ardent followers of Rosminian thought and spirituality.



27. ROSMINI IN THE WORLD

The development of Rosminian thought has flourished in Italy in recent years, and promises to do the same in Europe if not the rest of the world. There are Rosminian communities of brethren and sisters in various parts of the world (photo) and they bring with them the religious teaching, reflection and the writings of their Founder.

It is in those countries where foundations were made whilst Rosmini was still alive that one finds the greatest number of communities - Italy, England, Wales and Ireland. Here there are parishes, schools, centres of spirituality, novitiates and houses of study. After the death of Rosmini, Fr Joseph Costa went to the United States and opened the first house in Galesburg (IL). He was joined by brethren from Ireland and the present Province has parishes in Illinois and in Florida. In 1945 the Irish Province sent missionaries to Tanga in Tanzania. In addition to the mission stations, the brethren have a novitiate and have opened a scholasticate in Nairobi. Today there is a flourishing diocese, and the sisters who have been working with the brethren for many years, have put down their roots and are opening a novitiate. The English Province sent men to New Zealand in 1961, where they founded two flourishing schools in Auckland and Gore, and are now involved in various projects for the Church there. The Italian Province sent missionaries to care for the Italian immigrants in Venezuela and have established parishes and schools there. Most recently, all the provinces have co-operated with the Italian Province in the establishment of two houses in Kerala (India).

In all these places, save for the United States and New Zealand, the Rosminian Sisters have opened houses, and frequently work alongside the brethren. The sisters are also working in Columbia.

**28. STRESA:
THE CENTRE
OF
ROSMINIAN
STUDIES**



The photo shows the International Centre for Rosminian Studies at Stresa. This is the Villa Bolongaro, which was left to Rosmini (18) and where he lived and died (20). It is here that many initiatives have their beginning - initiatives designed to promote and deepen Rosminian thought. The centre was founded in 1966 at the suggestion of Professor Sciacca, a philosopher well versed in Rosminian thought. It houses a library of some 100,000 books, the archives of the Institute of Charity and a museum of artefacts from Rosmini's life. It can offer accommodation to some of the students who come there for research and study. From there several Rosminian Italian reviews are published, and the critical edition of Rosmini's works (14) is edited. During the course of each year, various conferences and courses are held, the largest of which is the Cattedra Rosmini which takes place each year in the last week of August, and attracts a large number of students from various parts of Italy and abroad.

BACK COVER:

*Rear view
of the International Centre for Rosminian Studies*

