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TITLE

SAINT CAMILLUS DE LELLIS:

FROM SOLDIER OF FORTUNE TO NURSING REFORMER

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## INTRODUCTION

This research entitled “ **Saint Camillus De Lellis from soldier of fortune to nursing reformer**” was developed by following a historical method with the aim of knowing Saint Camillus’ role in the Italian nursing field’s development. Regarding the bibliography a narrative literature review was conducted, in particular history books through the use of the web but also by visiting libraries.

The work is divided in four chapters plus the final conclusions.

In the first chapter: Historical Panorama between XVI and XVIII century we talk about the European historical situation between XVI and XIII century. This time is characterized by many wars with an increasing number of poor. The Catholic Church, torn by the Protestant crisis, tried to rebuild its unity with serious commitments. After Trento’s Council we assist to the new Congregations’ birth, such as Camillus De Lellis’ Order of the Ministers of the Sick .

In chapter two: Camillus De Lellis: Life we make a chronological excursus on this saint’s life pointing out the four main moments: from his birth to his military experiences, his conversion, his vocation and his death.

The third chapter: History of the Ministers of the Sick explains how the Order was born, from Camillus’ conversion to the many Papal Bulls which gave this Religion an official role in society.

The fourth chapter: Camillian Reforms describes Saint Camillus’ reforms to the hospital and to the way of caring for the sick, it presents the Rules which represent the bases of Camillus and his religious’ actions. It contains also a critical view about the saint’s role in the history of nursing.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **HISTORICAL PANORAMA BETWEEN XVI AND XVIII CENTURY**

In this first chapter we talk about the European historical situation from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. A period characterized by many wars with the consequent increase of poverty and misery.

#### **1.1 *A century of crisis.***

The period between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century was marked by several wars that saw involved almost all European countries, with different characteristics to those of the medieval period, there was a greater use of mercenary troops that became even more cruel after the Protestant Reformation.

The list of these wars is long, but is symptomatic to understand the extent of the problems to which they led to:

- Religion wars
- Wars between the Habsburgs and France
- The Thirty Years' War
- The war between France and Spain
- The War of Devolution and the Anglo-Dutch conflict in the second half of 1600
- The Succession wars of: Spain, Austria, Poland
- The Seven Years' War.

These wars ravaged almost the entire eighteenth century. Every war with its passage of troops meant destruction of crops, increased poverty and mouths to feed. What followed inexorably were diseases and plagues.

By the proliferation of wars arose the need to create military hospitals, to assist wounded and disabled soldiers. It should also be emphasized that in Western Europe in 1500 and 1600 there were, because of the climate changes that occurred in those years, acute food crises that made the most extensive and serious process of poverty.

Bad harvests were made in 1521-22, 1528-29. Venice, Paris and Lyon saw pouring into the city a mass of hungry people looking for food and work. No less dramatic were the years between 1530 and 1534. From Spain to England, from Germany to Italy there were several urban riots. Those who found themselves most at risk were primarily sick people to whom followed teens and children.

Another class in trouble were the elderly who, no longer being able to support themselves by their labor, were forced to beg. No less tragic were the conditions of widows or women abandoned by their husbands.

Among the poor were the blind and the lame, that in most cases, because of their illness, they were forced to beg to survive.

In 1613 in Rome was established a “Company for Blind, Lame or Crippled” receiving material and spiritual assistance.

### ***1.2 New attention for the poor.***

In Europe the figure of the poor and the concept of poverty seen in the sacral aura, which instead had characterized much of the Middle Ages, were no longer considered.

Next to a Protestant, patristic and medieval interpretation that saw in the poor the image of Jesus Christ: poor, humiliated and suffering as the Son of God’s representative on earth, another one affirms itself which saw in the poor a disturbing presence, a disturbing element, an antisocial being, a troublemaker and a treat for the established order.

This concept was one that tended to prevail between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that in a few words “poverty was considered a curse and the poor was considered a danger to society“(Gutton). The poor frightened.

It was believed that they, living by their wits and idleness, would get away from work and production and were therefore considered bad, useless, a burden to society and potential criminals.

Faced with the growing mass of poor, the traditional means of charity were no longer sufficient. On that occasion, there was the idea that the poor should be segregated from the rest of society, because they were instigators of riots and importuning, disease carrying, therefore feared and marginalized.

### **1.3 *De Subventionem Pauperum*: Manifesto for a new mindset.**

From 1525 to 1530, in several European countries, measures of various kinds, which began in the countries of northern Europe and later extended to other countries, were taken for the poor.

In 1526 it was released in Bruges, a lively city in Flanders (Spain), a text entitled *De Subventionem Pauperum*, who was the manifesto of the new mentality that was spreading in Europe and that imposed itself in a short time.

The author, Juan Luis Vives (1492 - 1540), a learned humanist and friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Thomas More, in the first book violently attacked the poor and the rich, accusing the first to simulate disease, disturbing the religious functions and lost in vices and the second one to build lavish graves instead of giving alms. In the rich's interest as the poor imposed themselves, the author proposed a reform in his second book.

The city's magistrates had to take responsibility of care by administering for this purpose charitable foundations' profits that already exist, by resorting to the use of this centralization of care and, where possible, to a single large community hospital.

This action required a prior and exact census of the poor. It was necessary to secure a job at all the poor beggars, but those "incorrigible" ones could be imprisoned.

The poor disabled were assisted in their homes. Vives clearly distinguished the "good" poor the "bad" poor: the first to be cured, the second to be punished.

In this context, it was propagated and exalted the construction and maintenance of hospitals. Everything needed to separate the poor from the rest of society in order to fight sins, vices, and to have the virtue's triumph, at least this was the moral justification that was often adopted.

This can be considered one of the first interventions for public health care.

The church, torn by the Protestant crisis, was trying to rebuild its unity through concrete commitments such as the Council of Trento and especially by the new growing number of saints and religious orders dedicated to charity works: the construction of the Hotel Dieu, the assistance of the companies of Divine Love or of the brotherhoods of Mercy.

The spiritual renewal contributed to the revival and consolidation of a more humane and ethical approach towards the needs of the sick and the poor, thanks to the birth of new congregations: the *Hospitaller Order* of Saint John of God (1495 – 1550), the *Canossians* of Vincenzo de' Paoli and the *Ministers to the Sick* of Camillus de Lellis (1550 – 1614).

The new orders' birth explicitly dedicated to caring for people is historically considered not only as one of the most obvious signs of this desire for reform in the Catholic Church, but also as a genuine link between the medieval charity's system and the next one.

The Renaissance's pride (the genius' pride) that glorified the man as being excellent and as the center of the universe, clashed with the look on the poor, the powerless and ill treated without consideration. The man who then sought the humanities was not the man *tout court* but the ideal man, the genius, the creative artist, Prince strong and cunning, the invincible soldier of fortune, the discoverer of new worlds: a forerunner aristocratic elite of the superman. The consequence is that we can say that the man without prestige was nameless and voiceless, ignored and marginalized by the culture of the Renaissance. But it is precisely this "man", the unknown reduced to the misery of the Roman caves, hospitals, abandoned on the margins of society that has attracted the gaze of Camillus de Lellis, who discovers his beauty and his dignity.

The camillian vision of man develops in a context in which the dream of Renaissance humanism of the body's charm contradicted the popular unconscious that feeds a rigorous attitude towards the body seen as the seat of sin. Penances were mainly for the body, due to a strong dualistic perception of the human being divided against itself: the sinful part of the body, the one to punish or discipline, and the spiritual part, that is to be redeemed, object



of attention and care from the afterlife's perspective. It is a sort of Gnostic anthropology combined with a medieval-style ecclesiology, which would provide a kind of theological justification to the birth of the Inquisition and the torture inflicted on the body, until the sentencing to death of a sinner or heretic. "The possibility of such a justification lay in the fact that (...) the man's body was not really his, he could be tortured as long as the soul would convert to the faith and would be saved."

As a result Crusades, the floggings, the penitential processions, the bodily penance, indulgences and the development of individual confession, private masses and the privileged altars intensified. It is in the wake of these penitential movements that the Protestant Reformation's pessimism engages claiming the man's "false righteousness of works" in the name of a justification for "grace alone", for "faith alone" and "scripture alone" with the rejection of any possibility for the man's positive response. The man has then no ability or capacity to cooperate in the redemption's work, everything is Christ's merit. It is precisely in this situation of human condition's devaluation, especially when it is burdened with the limits of its contingency, that Camillus de Lellis practices under the Lord's enlightenment, recognizing the human dignity as a value relative to the whole person (body and soul) and seeing the experience with the patient as a chance encounter with Christ.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.camillianum.com/rivista/n25/05-favi.pdf>

## **CHAPTER II**

### **CAMILLUS DE LELLIS: LIFE**

#### **2.1 From his birth to his military experience**

Camillo De Lellis was born in Abruzzo, in Bucchianico, by the Marquis Giovanni De Lellis and Camilla Compelli on May 25, 1550, on Withsunday's day. He is the couple's second son and he was born at least thirty years after the death of their first child, when his fifty five years old mother had lost all hopes of having another baby. One night, during pregnancy, the woman had a dream that there and then gave her anxiety. She saw a young boy leading a bevy of other boys who was holding a white flag in his hands on which was painted a red cross. Even the guys who followed the flag bearer had reproduced the red cross on their chest. The old woman was then assaulted by a series of disturbing omens. Perhaps she thought about pirates from the sea, perhaps bandits and criminals. In those days, in fact, at times it was used to lable criminals led to the gallows with a cross mark. The village priest, her husband and her friends tried to calm her down, after all the Red Cross also represented the symbol of perfection until the point of martyrdom, in the Redeemer's footsteps that by offering his blood had attracted to itself all sinful humanity.<sup>2</sup>

The day of his birth Camilla had gone to great effort towards the church to attend the Mass that opened the festivities in honor of St. Urban, the patron of the town. Shortly after the consecration, however, she began to feel the pangs of birth and decided to go home. Here, some friends had advised her to go down to the barn and give birth in a place similar to where the Lord was born. Tradition tells how that child came into the world on the straw of the family's stable, just at the very instant in which the consecrated host was elevated by the priest. That son, donated to life in such an advanced age, was a godendo: a miracle. His

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.libertaepersona.org/wordpress/2009/10/la-vita-di-san-camillo-de-lellis-1345/>

father decided to call him Camillus in honor of the woman he loved so much. John De Lellis was a man with a big heart but in love with the art of war, in fact, he served under the orders of the king of Spain, achieving the rank of colonel. The father's passion was soon passed to his son, a child much more robust and taller than its peers, that no one was able to educate. He attended school for a short period of time and barely learned how to read and write, but he already managed to juggle the use of weapons. When he was only thirteen years old his mother died. He began to accompany his father around the world, growing among the soldiers and developing a passion for the game of cards, dice and other forms of mundane entertainment. He was in Ancona to enlist in the League with his father who was about to sail to Lepanto against the Turks when his father became seriously ill and died, leaving Camillus in deep distress no longer having neither father nor mother. He returned home in time to put in order the paternal inheritance, and then, used to the busy life of arms, dispelled all his possessions by gambling and was reduced to poverty.

If before being a soldier was a passion for him, now it became a hard necessity. In this particular period of discontent, he developed a sore on the instep that led him, in 1571, to Rome, to St. James of the Incurables hospital.

Since he had no money, he agreed with the administrators to pay his cures by working as a servant. Soon enough, though, he was raised from that job a month later due to his belligerent behavior towards other servants and for his constant habit of the game that made him turn away from the obligation to assist the sick. In addition, the wound was not at all improved, but hospital administrators, considering Camillus' behavior, decided to remove him as incorrigible. As soon as it was deemed cured, he decided to enlist in the Second League before fighting in Dalmatia and then to Tunis, and for some years he lived the soldier of fortune's life, risking to die in brawls and battles just to be able to spend the money earned gambling and in the taverns. During those years, he nearly died more than once. He was always vowing to change his life if he would be saved, but regularly he betrayed the promise. With similar punctuality he put aside the dream of becoming a monk which periodically re-emerged in his mind, especially in times of danger. During his wanderings he stopped in Naples, where he lost everything betting his liquidation of the leave, the sword, and even his shirt. He began to beg.

## *2.2 The turning point*

One day Camillus met a Capuchin friar and after talking to him he repented of his sins. Thanks to him Camillus came to know that, in Manfredonia, labor was needed for the building of a Capuchin monks' convent. After winning yet another temptation to enlist once again as a soldier, he knocked on Father Francis Modica's door, the convent's guardian, and so it was that Camillus began to bring stones and rubble to the workers, but the work, shortly, had to wear him down. In addition from his heart resurfaced the wounded soldier's pride in the love and passion for the game and the lure of easy money. The environment and the Capuchin Fathers' patience defeated the last resistance of a nature which was now ready for the meeting solver.

It was February 2, 1575, Father Francis asked Camillus to trace the trail that climbs on Mount Gargano to go to the convent of S. Giovanni Rotondo to exchange fresh noodles with good wine. In the early afternoon Camillus came to the convent and met father Angelo who welcomed him, and perhaps thanks to his intuition, he realized that something original was shaking Camillus' heart. In the morning Camillus left for Manfredonia. While thinking through tears about his failures, when he was in a place called the hell valley, because of its barren and stony landscape, a light dazzled him penetrating his mind and warming his heart. He lived a similar experience to S. Paul on his way to Damascus, came down from the mount, fell to his knees and beating his chest asked forgiveness for his sins, promising to give himself completely to God.



Camillus will always remember that day as the time of his second birth. He was reborn from the spirit by winning the "flesh." At that moment he knew that God loved him immeasurably in spite of everything. Arriving at the convent, he asked the monks to be able to don St. Francis' habit, and was sent for his novitiate at Trivento, in Molise region, where he was valued for his commitment, the willingness and ability to sacrifice, to the point that he was nicknamed by his brothers humble friar; but the joy did not last long. The wound on his foot reopened and the brothers sent him back to the hospital in Rome, where he remained for four years but with a different spirit than the previous hospitalization, in fact, he was more attentive to the others' needs than worried about his wound. When he recovered, he returned to the Capuchins' convent, but his wound reopened again and for this reason he was dismissed from the Order forever. He returned again to St. James Hospital, where he remained for three more years as a patient, nurse and valet, being more and more considered by those responsible for the hospital because he showed efficiency in care and attention for the sick. At that time also had the opportunity to meet and to take as his spiritual father the future St. Philip Neri, who advised him, among other things, to give up the dream to

become a Capuchin and to continue serving the sick. Camillus didn't listen to Philip and since the sore wasn't bothering him anymore, he decided to leave the hospital. Thus he began his novitiate at the convent of Tagliacozzo again, but, as Philip Neri had expected, the wound in his leg reopened and the religious life was discouraged once again. Camillus then had to leave his novitiate. Only four months have passed, and there he was again walking through S. James Hospital's door. It was probably at that time that the future saint realized that the will of God wanted for him a different destiny than to wear the Capuchins' habit.

### ***2.3 The vocation***

It was at St. James hospital that Camillus saw more and more mature his vocation; he was appointed steward and treasurer, and with these new roles, as well as to manage the available resources wisely, he began to reform the hospital organization, placing the utmost care for the sick. He introduced, to improve the state of the sick, the custom of washing them, feeding them, but above all to accept them lovingly so they would find in nurses and doctors sensitive people able to comfort and sustain them humanely. In 1582, during the night of the Assumption, while he was praying, Camillus felt like a fire in his chest and spoke these words: *"Love is needed, not just the salary! Only love can raise these poor members of Christ. I want to organize a company of pious and good, that is not for reward, but voluntarily and for the love of God, serve the sick, with charity and kindness that mothers have for their sick children."*

That night in Camillus' soul was clearly defined the core of his vocation. The company was born with the participation of five people who would meet in a small chapel located in a hospital room and who were fully aware that everything would depend on God's will. The group was viewed with suspicion by some of the hospital administrators who demanded Philip Neri's intervention. This man immediately tried to dissuade Camillus from wanting to found a religious congregation for the service of the sick in the hospital, but soon Philip, highly esteemed in Rome, had a vision that troubled him: he saw some of Camillus' fellow around a dying man's bed who assisted him with love, and behind him, like a shadow, there were many angels who suggested them the right words for appropriate exhortations. After this vision was the same Philip Neri to recommend him to continue in

his intentions and urged him to study theology in order to receive priestly ordination, which took place May 26, 1584 in the Lateran Basilica.

On September 8 of the same year, he was authorized to give the habit to his first followers. The new group started each morning, with great gladness, to go from the house to the hospital to serve Jesus in the sick.<sup>3</sup>

He decided at this point to leave St. James hospital directing his work to S. Spirit hospital, the first hospital in Rome that Pope Innocent III had founded in 1204 as *Apostolorum Hospitium* and that Sixtus V had later renovated. In that hospital, beside the sick, poor, pilgrims, people coming from the countryside found a temporary shelter.

When Camillo walked in, he immediately noticed the lack of hygiene and proper care, besides the efforts made by paid staff and volunteers. Every day, Camillus and his companions went to the hospital to assist the sick and decided to call his fraternity "Servants of the Sick's Company." He gave to his companions a sketch of the Statute, a first set of rules for inspiration and turn.

Love is the main rule which is followed by a duty to extreme diligence in every need expressed by the sick who had to be considered as they were the Lord. Camillus and his companions became more and more known, so that on March 18, 1586 was formally born the religious congregation of the Ministers of the Sick and Camillus was immediately elected superior for three years. Even Pope Sixtus V wanted to meet him and it was on that occasion that Camillus submitted to the pope the idea to put on the congregation's dark robe the red cross as an expression of Redemption brought by the Precious Blood of Christ's gift.

Now the prophetic dream that had his mother so upset was on its full meaning. On September 21, 1591 the Congregation of the Ministers of the Sick obtained the status of a religious order: The Order of the Ministers of the Sick.

On December 8 Camillus, with his twenty-five companions, pronounced the perpetual profession's formula. The camillian community was growing more and more, and with it the commitment of the Ministers of the sick at the Romans' hospitals. Their fame grew to the point that their presence was requested all over Italy. They began to work in Naples', Milan's and Genoa's hospitals.

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<sup>3</sup> (Pepe, 2002, p. 357)

In 1590, the city of Rome was hit by a severe famine which claimed the lives of over sixty thousand people. Camillus was feeding more than 400 people per day and buying clothes for those who were dying of cold. Upon the Pope's request, Camillus sent his religious to Hungary to treat wounded and sick soldiers.



In this way, we can say that the camillians were the forerunners of the International Red Cross, whose founder was inspired just seeing them at work, rescuing the wounded from the many wars in Europe in the nineteenth century.

On the occasion of the Tiber's flood in Rome, Camillus worked day and night trying to rescue the sick at Holy Spirit's Hospital. In 1607 for some disagreement with his brethren Camillus gave up the Order's government and returned to care for the sick, the poor, the dispossessed full-time. On December 29, 1600, a papal bull granted the religious to live within the hospital.

## **2.4 Death**

The ulcer on his leg never left him, and after the onset of renal and gastric disease Camillus knew that his death was near.

Camillus was not aware of the immense good procured to thousands human beings, he kept thinking about the many sins and omissions committed. When he would feel weak, he used to meditate on Jesus' saint wounds crying and praying.



He decided to write a will where he left in heritage all of himself:

*Io Camillo de Lellis indegno sacerdote della mia Religione de Ministri degli Infermi ritrovandomi costituito in estremo dei miei giorni infermo, debole, e mal condotto in quanto al corpo; ma pronto per pagar il debito, che devo, non solo come Religioso e Cristiano ma ancora come vero Catolico, voglio valermi del tempo, e della commodità, che Iddio per sua misericordia mi ha dato per disponermi, ed apparecchiarmi à fare la sua santa volontà, ed anco à far viaggio all'altra vita se così fosse servito S.D. M., e però fò testamento, e donatione, e promissione con tutta la volontà di me stesso, e tutte le cose mie in questo modo, che segue.<sup>4</sup>*

*In primis lascio questo mio corpo di terra alla medesima terra, di dove è stato prodotto, accio mancando in parte facci la penitenza delli peccati che per sua sensualità, e di Iui causa l'Anima ha comesso.<sup>5</sup>*

*Item lascio al Demonio tentatore iniquo tutti i peccati, e tutte le offese, che hò comesso contro Dio, e mi pento sin dentro l'anima d'aver offeso S. D. M., e vorrei più presto esser morto, che averlo offeso in un minimo peccato, siccome iniquamente ho fatto, e questo pentimento intendo, che sia principalmente per l'amor di Dio, e non per qualche mio interesse, ò timore, e se non avessi quel perfetto dolore, che si conviene à miei peccati, me ne dolgo sin dentro al Cuore, e vorrei averlo in quel che mi manca per poter ritornare in grazia di Dio, accio lui suplisca ad ogni mio mancamento, e difetto d'una perfetta contritione, e prego Dio che facci vendetta de miei peccati nella persona dell'istessi Demonij, che m'anno tentato, e se il Demonio mi metterà scrupoli a non essermi ben confessato, ò che non merito mi sijno perdonati, ne di ottener misericordia, io ad ogni modo spero fermamente in Dio, che al sicuro mi perdonerà, ancorche io avessi fatto falsamente tutte le confessioni, mentre io non Io sò, atteso che Iddio mi puo salvare senza i Sacramenti, e se io mi ricordassi cosa della Confessione, mi confessarei, e non ricordando*

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<sup>4</sup> I Camillus de Lellis unworthy father of my Ministers of the sick's religion, being sick, ill and at the end of my days; but ready to pay my dues, which I owe, not only as a Religious and Christian but also as a true Catholic. I want to take advantage of time and comfort, that God gave me with His grace to follow His will, and also to make my journey to the other life if this would serve the Lord and I promise with all the strenght that I have left in me and all of my things what follows.

<sup>5</sup> First of all I leave this body made of dirt to the same dirt, from where it was made, for this reason i make penance for all the sins that the Soul committed for its sensuality.

*me ne pento sin dentro dell'Anima, e spero salvarmi sicuramente non per mio merito, che son degno di morte, ma per merito del Sangue di Cristo.<sup>6</sup>*

*Item lascio al mondo tutte le vanità, tutte le cose transitorie, tutti i piaceri mondani, tutte le vane speranze, tutte le robbe, tutti li Amici, tutti li Parenti, e tutte le curiosità, ma mi contento, e voglio conformarmi con il divin volere in lasciar il Mondo, e desidero cambiare questa terrena vita con la certezza del Paradiso queste cose transitorie con le eterne, li mondani piaceri con la gloria del Cielo, le vane speranze con la certezza dell'eterna salute, confidato però nella misericordia di Dio, tutte le robbe cambiare desidero con li eterni beni, tutti li amici con la compagnia de Santi, tutti li Parenti con la dolcezza delli Angeli, e finalmente tutte le curiosità mondane con la vera visione della faccia di Dio, e spero andare per sua divina misericordia, e con il S. Giobbe dirò:*

*Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium.<sup>7</sup>*

*Item lascio alla mia Carne questo poco tempo che viverò, tutti i dolori, infermità, affanni, e che Iddio le manderà, accio purghi in parte i suoi peccati e voglio, che non viva, ò scampi se non tanto, quanto à Dio piacerà, e mi protesto di soportare, ed aver pazienza in ogni cosa aversa per amor di Colui, che sopra una Croce volse morire per me, e voglio soportare non solo l'inaipenza del mangiare, e mal dormire, e cattive parole; ma anche voglio obbedire à chi mi governa per amor di Dio, e con pazienza intendo comportare ogni amara medicina, ogni doloroso rimedio ed ogni fastidio sino all'Agonia della morte istessa per amor di Gesù, che Lui una maggiore ne patì per me; anzi quando io stessi fuori*

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<sup>6</sup> I leave to the tempting Devil all the sins, all the offenses that I made against God, and I repent my soul for offending the Lord, and I would rather die as soon as possible, because offending Him with a minimum sin as I did, and this repentance I intend to be mostly for the love of God, and not for some sort of interest, or fear from my side, and if I wouldn't have that perfect pain for my sins. I am sorry from the bottom of my Heart, and I would like to have it for whatever I'm missing to go back to His grace, and I pray God to take a revenge for my sins against the Demons, who tempted me, and if the Devil will make me think that I didn't have a good confession, or I don't deserve to be forgiven, nor to obtain His mercy, I strongly trust in God anyway, who will surely forgive me, even if I would have lied in each confession, considering that God can save me without Sacraments, and if I would remember something about Confession, I would confess again, and not remembering makes me repent in my Soul, and I surely hope to save myself not because of my credit, I deserve to die, but because of Christ's Blood.

<sup>7</sup> I leave to this world all sorts of vanity, all the transitory things, all the pleasure that this world can offer, all the vain hopes, all the things, all Friends, all Family, all curiosities, but I'm happy, and I want to conform with the divine's will to leave this world. I have the desire to change this earthly life with Heaven's assurance, these transitory things with the eternal ones, worldly pleasures with Heaven's Glory, the vain hopes with the certainty of eternal health, confiding in God's mercy. I wish to change all the goods with the eternal ones, all the friends with the company of Saints, all the relatives with the angels' kindness, and finally all the worldly curiosity with the real vision of God's face, and I hope to go with His divine mercy, and to Saint Job I will say: Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium.

*di me, e patissi qualsivoglia travaglio, e dolore nel Corpo, intendo di patirlo volontariamente per amore del mio dolce Gesù, e mi pento di tutti i peccati, che avessi fatto in amare disordinatamente me stesso, e la mia Carne, mi pento di quanti odij, oltraggi, ingiurie avessi fatto al mio prossimo, e ne addimando perdono a chi in qualsivoglia modo avessi ingiuriato, ovvero offeso, e ne chiedo perdono, e chi m'avesse ingiuriato, ovvero in altro modo offeso, con tutto il Cuore gli perdono, e prego Dio, che gli perdoni, e dia la sua santa grazia, come desidero sij fatto da S. D. M. per me.<sup>8</sup>*

*Item lascio, e dono l'anima mia, e ciascheduna potestà di quella al mio amato Gesù ed alla Sua SS. Madre, ed à S. Michele Arcangelo, ed all'Angelo mio custode in questo modo, cioè, lascio al mio Angelo custode la memoria, restando, e conoscendomi obbligato à Dio di quanto ho, e di quanto spero, essendo tutto mero beneficio, e grazia sua, e tutto quello, che in me è stato, ò fosse, tutto è stato ed è per grazia di Dio, et non per mio merito; anzi prego S. D. M. si voglia degnare non giudicare, ò discutire quello, che mi pare essere stato opera bona, atteso mi sarebbe occasione di castigo in cambio di premio, come diceva David: non intres in iudicium curn servo tuo Domine, quia non iustificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens. Se questo diceva David, che devo dir io misero Peccatore; pure Sig.re à voi tutto mi dedico, e tutto à voi mi dono, et tutto à voi mi offerisco, ed in voi spero, e di tanti aiuti vi ringrazio specialmente di tanti Sacramenti, e di tante buone ispirazioni, e di tanti favori fattimi, ed in particolare avendomi favorito con la custodia di un sì bellissimo Angelo, che mi guardi, e custodisca d'ogni pericolo dell'Anima e del Corpo.<sup>9</sup>*

*E voi ò Angelo mio Santo ancor vi ringrazio di tanti favori fattimi, e vi prego adesso più che mai vogliate favorirmi dandomi animo, aiuto, e forza, acciò pervenga all'ultimo mio*

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<sup>8</sup> I leave to my flesh this little time that I will live, all the pains, diseases, worries, and everything that God will send, to wash my sins away, and to respect God's will, I will bear everything for the love of Whom, on a Cross died for me, and I want to endure hunger, sleepless night, and bad words; but I also want to obey to whoever rules for the love of God, and with patience I want to take every bitter medicine, every painful remedy, and every little uncomfortable thing until the Agony of death itself for the love of Jesus, Who suffered a bigger one for me; I repent for all my sins, which I committed for loving myself, and my Flesh, I repent for all the hate, offenses, insults toward others, and I ask for their forgiveness, and I forgive from the bottom of my heart whoever offended me, and I prey the Lord to forgive them, and to give them His grace as I wish for myself.

<sup>9</sup> I leave and donate my soul, and every power of it to my beloved Jesus and to His Saint Mother, to St. Michael the Archangel, and to my guardian Angel in this way, I leave to my guardian Angel the memory, thanking God for what I have, and everything that has happened is because of His grace, and not for my credit; instead, I pray God not to judge whatever I think has been benefaction, as David would say: non intres in iudicium curn servo tuo Domine, quia non iustificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens. If David would say that, what can I, a poor sinner, say, Lord I dedicate and donate all myself to You, I trust in you, and I thank you for all the help especially for the many Sacraments, and for the many good inspirations, and in particular for giving me such a beautiful guardian Angel, who watches over me for every danger for the Body and the Soul.

*felice fine, che voi possiate avere gloriosa vittoria dell'anima mia appresso Dio della custodia fattami in tutta la mia vita. Item lascio tutto l'intelletto mio à S. Michele Arcangelo, protestando, che non intendo discutere, ne disputare con il demonio nelle cose della fede; ma intendo credere fermamente tutto quello, che crede la S. Madre Chiesa Cattolica Apostolica Romana, e tutto quello, che si contiene nel Credo con tutte le cattoliche espositioni, decisioni, e determinazioni fatte da SS. PP., e Dottori confirmate da SS. Concilij, ed in quella stessa fede intendo vivere, e morire, nella quale sono vissuti tanti Santi, e Sante di Dio, è vivere e morire sempre confessando d'esser soldato di Gesù Cristo Crocifisso, e caso che il Demonio mi tentasse, non intendo volere acconsentire è niuna sua tentazione, e caso che per curiosità d'animo titubassi ò aconsentissi, nunc pro tunc intendo che sia nulla, ed adesso, che sono di retta mente casso, ed annullo, ne voglio, che detto consentimento sia d'alcun valore, e prego te S. Michele Arcangelo, che vi degniate rispondere per me, e pigliar la difesa dell'Anima mia, e dell'onore di Dio, scacciando i maligni, e cattivi spiriti al profondo dell'Inferno. Item lascio la mia volontà nelle mani di Maria Vergine Madre dello Onnipotente Dio, ed intendo di non voler altro, se non quello, che la Regina delli Angeli vuole, e fò Lei mia Protettrice ed Avvocata, e prego per la sua clemenza si degni di accettare questa mia elezione, ed ammettermi sotto la sua tutela e protezione.*<sup>10</sup>

*Finalmente lascio a Gesù Christo Crocefisso tutto me stesso in anima e Corpo, e confido, che per sua mera bontà, e misericordia riceverà, (benché indegno sia da tal Divina Maestà esser ricevuto), come già una volta ricevette quel buon Padre il suo Figlio prodigo, e mi perdonerà, come perdonò alla Maddalena, e mi sarà piacevole come fu al buon Ladro nell'estremo di sua vita stando in Croce; così in questo mio estremo passo riceverà l'anima mia, acciò con il Padre e Spirito Santo eternamente si riposi, e per testimonianza di questo ultimo mio testamento, volontà, e donazione, chiamo li infrascritti testimonij, quali non solo prego, m'abbino d'aiutare, e difendere dalle tentazioni dei*

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<sup>10</sup> And to you, my Saint Angel, I thank you for all the favors that you have done to me, And I pray you more than ever to give me help and strenght for my happy ending, I hope for your glorious victory on my soul next to God for the custody that you have done for all my life. I leave all of my intellect to saint Michael the Archangel, protesting, that I don't want to discuss, nor argue with the Devil about faith; but I intend to believe in everything that our saint Roman Catholic Church believes in, and in that same faith I intend to live and die, the same faith in which a lot of Saints of God lived, is to live ad die confessing to be Jesus Christ Crucified's soldier, in case of the Devil would tempt me, I don't intend to fall in any of his temptations, if in case of curiosity I would hesitate or agree, I pray you Sain Michael the Archangel, to answer for me and to defend my soul and God's honor, sending the evil spirits away in the depths of Hell. I leave my will in the Virgin Mary Mother of God's hands, and I want to do whatever the Queen of the Angels wants, She's my protector and advocate, and I pray her clemency to accept me under her protection.

*Demonij nel mio transito, ed agonia; ma ancora doppo morto con le loro orazioni:  
Amen.<sup>11</sup>*

On the evening of July 14, 1614 Camillus' brothers asked him if he wanted a little bit of broth, he replied: "Wait fifteen minutes and I will be refreshed." Fifteen minutes later, when father Mancini repeated the prayers, Camillus spoke in a whisper the names of Jesus and Mary. Meanwhile, the brothers pronounced these words: " may you see the mild and merry face of Jesus Christ." At that precise moment Camillus died at the age sixty four. His remains are buried in the small church of Santa Maria Maddalena in Rome. He was beatified in 1742 and four years later proclaimed a saint by Pope Benedict XIV who recognized him publicly as "the initiator of a new school of charity." Leo XIII declared him, in 1886, the patron saint of the sick and the hospitals, Pius XI proclaimed him the patron saint of nurses and Paul VI in 1930, a few decades later, the particular protector of the Italian military health.

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<sup>11</sup> Finally I leave all of myself, body and soul, to Jesus Christ crucified and I trust in His mercy , (although unworthy to be received by His Divine Majesty), as already once received the good Father his prodigal Son, and he will forgive me, as he did with Mary Magdalene, and it would be nice as it's been for the good Thief on the cross; so in my extreme step my soul will be received, with the Father and the Holy Spirit it will rest forever, and as a proof of this will, I call all the witnesses who I beg to help and defend me from the demons during my transit, and agony; and even after death with their prayers: Amen.

## CHAPTER III

### HISTORY OF THE MINISTERS OF THE SICK

#### 3.1 *Youth and conversion*

Camillo De Lellis, lived the life of a soldier of fortune, fighting for his life in battles, in fights, in order to gamble all the money that he earned.

He ended up as a stray dog, wandering aimlessly, with shame, begging in front of churches with "infinite redness." Eventually he had to adapt to working for the construction of a Capuchin monastery conducting two mares laden with stones, lime and water for the bricklayers. But those brothers' closeness was not indifferent. In the Holy Year 1575, during a trip to the monastery of St. Giovanni Rotondo he met a monk who took him aside to tell him these words:

*"God is everything. The rest is nothing. You have to save the soul that never dies ... "*



In the long journey home, Camillo was meditating. Suddenly he fell on the ground crying: *"Lord, I have sinned. Forgive this great sinner that for many years didn't know and didn't love you. Lord, give me a long time to cry for my sins. "*

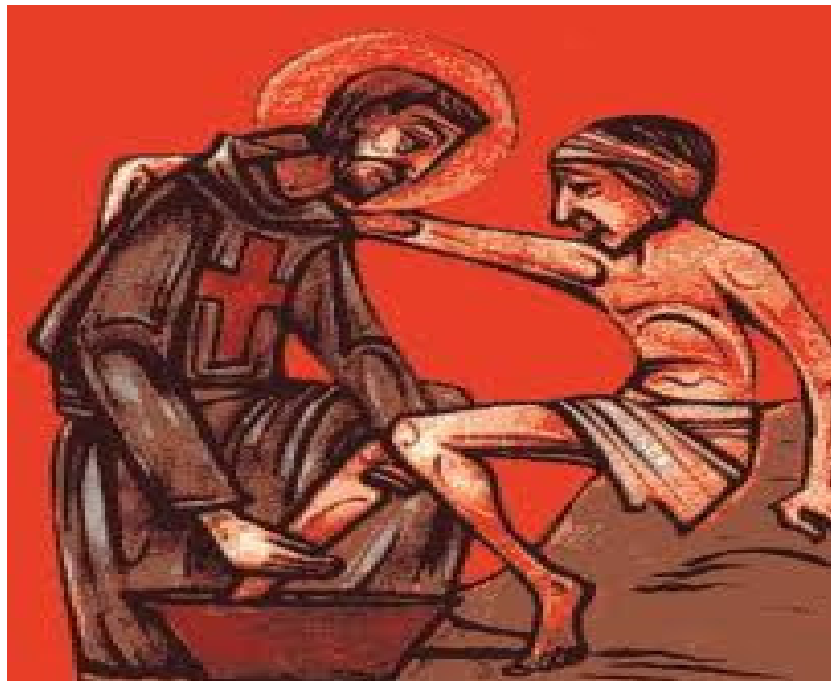
Asked to become a Capuchin friar, but was dismissed from the convent, for a wound that never ceased to fester in his right foot. He went to St. James Hospital, and had a clear awareness that what was to be his final work camp:

*"The Lord wants me here to serve these poor sick."*

At the Hospital of the "Incurable" came the most repugnant sick, the dregs of society, often horrible to look at, that were actually left at the entrance door of the building.

### **3.2 The first inspiration**

While he was tormented by many difficulties and miseries, Camillus reflected on the various ways to solve them and the night that preceded or followed the feast of the Assumption in 1582, he had his first intuition to organize a company of pious men, which for no reward, but for the love of God, voluntarily would serve the sick with all that love and kindness that mothers has for her sick child. Camillus and his friends worked at S. James Hospital for thirty years gradually becoming a new religious congregation: The Order of Ministers of the Sick. For them, the hospital was everything, and the service began to leave the mark of the charisma that Camillus was transmitting to his brothers: the charismatic quality of tenderness.



It was not unusual to meet him in the aisles in the attitudes of true worship of the sick, such was the respect that he had.

A witness reported seeing him:

"Kneeling near a sick man who had such an evil and stinking cancer in the mouth, it was not possible to tolerate as much stench, Camillus was next to him breath to breath, told him words of great affection, he seemed to be crazy in love with him, especially calling him, My Lord, my soul, what can I do for your service? Thinking that he was his beloved Lord Jesus Christ ... "

On March 18, 1586, the "company of the good monks" won the approval of Pope Sixtus V with the short "Ex omibus" where the pontiff recognized an official title to the foundation as Company of the Ministers of the Sick. In short it was stated that the members of the congregation lived in common, poverty, chastity and obedience, without being tied to the vote and that their purpose was to serve with special enthusiasm of charity for the sick. It was also provided for the congregation to be governed by a superior, who had to be a priest, to be elected every three years by a majority of votes, it was given power to beg and to exercise the ministry in all the hospitals of Rome.

In addition, with another short "Cum nos nuper" of June 26 of the same year, Camillus and the members of the company were entitled to wear a red cross to the right side of the dress. A few days later, on June 29, Camillus, and eight of his comrades, awarded the Cross, went to the Vatican basilica, between faithfuls' curiosity and admiration.

On September 21, 1591, Gregory XIV, gave him the status of "Order of the Ministers of the Sick" by signing the bull "Ilius qui pro gregis."

This bull is the "Magna Carta" of the Order of the Minister of the Sick and consists of two parts: the first gives the "formula of life" proposed by Camillus, examined, and at some point revised and amended by the Congregation, the second part is the real papal approval, which gave dispositions to erect the Order and give it privileges, immunities and exemptions.

The formula of life determines the general and specific purpose of the institution:

*“Qualunque persona haverà deliberato darsi in perpetuo a questa opera di carità pensi di essere morto al mondo, et a tutte cose di esso et vivere solo a Christo et uniscasi con noi, acciò possi far penitenza de suoi peccati sotto il soavissimo giogo di perpetua povertà, castità, obbedienza et ministerio dell’Infermi, ancorchè fussero appestati, et questo non*



*solo per gli Hospedali, ma ancora per le infermerie delle prigioni, dove gl'infermi patiscono gran necessità di tutte le cose sì corporali come anco spirituali".<sup>12</sup>*

In the second part privileges, pardons and indulgences are granted to religion just like other orders and congregations. However, the bull and its enactment is one of the most important events in the Order's history.



**Pierre Hubert Subleyras, S.Camillo de Lellis salva gli ammalati dell'ospedale di S. Spirito, Pal. Braschi, Roma**

### ***3.3 The hospitals' issue***

In a short time the Order grew, increasing the number of its religious workers and not ... in fact many of them were students. With the entry of a number of new aspirants, the two houses of Rome and Naples were at the limit of their capacity. Camillus after mature

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<sup>12</sup> Whoever wants to dedicate himself to this kind of charity has to think to be dead for this world, and for all of its things and live only for Christ, so that he can repent for his sins through poverty, chastity and obedience and ministry of the Sick, even if they would have the plague, and this is not only for Hospitals, but also for jails, where the sick suffer from physical and spiritual illnesses.  
(Sannazzaro, 1986, p. 50)

reflection and repeated consultations, decided to make new foundations in Milan and Genoa. In Milan hospital administrators demanded to have some religious to the spiritual service of the pious place. Camillus, proposed the assumption by the Order of the full service of the sick. It is thus initiated, with thirteen religious, priests and brothers, the "full service": bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick.

It started the so-called "question of the hospitals," which will bother the institute for almost six years. Such a provision was new, although this did not seem to Camillus. Until then, indeed, fathers and brothers went from the religious house, morning and evening, to the hospital and devoted themselves totally at the sick's service, always ready to care day and night, especially for the dying ones. Their service was complementary and not a substitute for the hospital staff. In modern terms we could call it a voluntary service. With the new method, accepted for the hospital of Milan, the men would have to carry all services, even heavier ones, which were routinely exercised by the fatigue staff, replace the nurses, and reside in hospitals. When the news reached each house the reaction was unanimous. This seemed, in fact, in the eyes of a religious decision, not consistent with the nature and obligations of the Institute (the bull in fact didn't mention it), and it tended to offer benefits to the hospital administrations rather than to the sick. This would have destroyed the religious' strength and spirit in a short period of time by forcing them to work too hard.

Camillus insisted that the new commitment was the pure fulfillment of his first inspiration. No one better than he did, as the founder, could define the Institute's nature and obligations, with the sick's benefit to be cared for by a better service offered by the Order, with the replacement of the existing mercenary personnel. The saint tried in every way to get participations in this project, but found no positive results. It was not a decline of the religious' spirit who did flee from certain hardships, but rather a realistic view of the fourth vote's commitments.

For Camillus, any concern about the poor and the sick was sacred to accept. Three general chapters took place in 1596, 1599 and 1602. During the second chapter (1599), while studying these fundamental issues for the Institute, with a significant joint work, the Laws of the Order were written. On December 29, 1600 with the bull "Suprema Dispositione" is distinguished the exercise of the various ministries by the priests and brothers, also, there is the emission of two simple vows: one to maintain the way of serving the sick, and the second to refuse the possession or administration of hospitals.

On April 15, 1602 the third general chapter began. In the various sessions were revised constitutions, common rules and decrees consultation. Camillus was committed to have canceled some central government's constitutions, in which it was requested the advisory consent by the general under certain circumstances, such as for the service in the hospitals. His religious, acknowledged his character of charismatic founder and voted for the constitutions' repeal that restricted the the General's authority. Camillus is now implementing his project.

In order to cope with so many commitments, which required the use of more and more religious, the period of training was significantly shortened, it was authorized the admission of religious from other religions, the dress was given to the Oblates after a year of training (instead of six years prescribed by the general chapter), it was obtain from the Holy See the power to reduce the novitiate to one year.

In September 1607, Cardinal Domenico Ginnasi ordered the diet of Rome with the aim of studying the remedies to those difficulties that impeded the religion's path and troubled minds . Camillus thought that it was the appropriate occasion to relinquish all responsibility of government and communicate his resignation. To this end, he went twice in audience by Pope Paul V, who promised to talk about the topic with the protector.

On the morning of October 2, the diet began. Camillus announced his resignation. The cardinal, after some attempts at deterrence, claimed to be authorized by the pope to accept his resignation. The Cardinal praised the decision and ensured that from then on his religious would bring double love and reverence to him because he was the universal religion's Father. On October 3, the diet proceeded with the election of father Biagio Oppertis as general vicar.

In twenty-four years of the institution's government, of which sixteen as a general, he had established homes in Rome, Milan, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Ferrara, Messina, Palermo, Mantua, Viterbo, Bucchianico, Chieti, Borgonovo and Caltagirone. Had established the service in nine hospitals:

- Maggiore Hospital in Milan
- Pammatone Hospital in Genoa
- Saint Anne Hospital in Ferrara
- Viterbo Hospital

- Annunziata Hospital in Naples
- Incurables Hospital in Naples
- Saint James degli Spagnoli in Naples
- Mantova Hospital
- Chieti Hospital

He admitted 311 religious to the profession of which 69 were dead. That 242 left professed, of which 88 priests and more than half of the remaining destined for the priesthood. 80 novices.

From the beginning of the company there were 170 deaths, impressive mortality compared to the other orders.

The truest and most precious inheritance came from the charity examples and teachings given by the Founder, from the sacrifice of many Ministers of the Sick who had offered their lives to the sick's service, especially during epidemics and from the good spirit which animated undoubtedly most of the Order's religious.

## CHAPTER IV

### CAMILLIAN REFORMS

#### 4.1 *Hospital and Care Reform*

In a time where everyone was talking about reforms, but not all then passed to facts, Camillus gave his brothers this rule:

*“Ognuno si guardi di non fare del riformatore, o sindaco, o correttore per gli hospitali, ma si sforzi di insegnare con opere più presto che con parole, e conservarsi amorevoli tutti quelli che servono nelli hospitali”*<sup>13</sup>

At that time hospitals were the last refuge for poor, desperate and society outcasts. The care was characterized by incompetent doctors who preferred more to devote themselves to the experiments rather than to care and attendants, common criminals and prisoners, who mistreated patients leaving them to fend for themselves.

Here is a page of a 1600 chronicler:

“They were forced to be served by the worst people in the world, ignorant Servants, criminals or indicted for some crimes, who were confined in those places for penance and punishment...It was certain that those poor agonizing people would have to stay two or three whole days starving and suffering without having anybody to talk to or who would comfort them... How many times... because of the lack of help they would spend entire days without eating or drinking anything?... How many sick in critical conditions would rot in worms because their beds had not being changed for weeks? How many poor weak would fall and die or get seriously injured when getting out of bed? How many of them who were really thirsty couldn't have any water to drink or to rinse their mouths?”<sup>14</sup>

The special conditions of hospital care of those times were demonstrating the serious decay resulting from the Council of Trent's provisions, in fact hospitals had been stripped of the religious assistance personnel's majority which was replaced by lay personnel recovered

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<sup>13</sup> Everyone has to be careful not to act as a reformer, or manager for the hospitals, but you have to make an effort to teach with facts more than words, and you have to try to have a good relationship with whoever serves in those hospitals.

<sup>14</sup> (Sicari, 1997, p. 272)

from the lower social strata, lacking of a true vocational spirit and especially of the appropriate education.

The service personnel's education, both religious and secular, was generally poor or inexistent, in the best cases, the new staff was trained during the service from the older workers. Camillus instructed his order's members with the basics about health care, through the study of monastic rules, giving them information about patients' care at bedside and laying the foundation of a nursing school. He often tested his brothers' learning abilities through practical exercises:

“Asking to each one of his religious how to feed a sick person, how to clean their tongues, and how to make their beds. Sometimes he would make them bring tables and benches, mattresses, linen and blankets to see if they would make the bed the way he taught it should have been made”<sup>15</sup>

Even the way the assisted person was addressed had to change, in fact Camillus added that it was necessary to use gentle words and an appropriate tone of voice when talking to the sick. In his tireless passion for the sick Camillus encountered everything: from sweet men who surrendered to their disease progresses, to angry, violent and ungrateful men.

He showed everybody a sweetness that stemmed from the constant "frequentation of Christ" and the daily intake of His body in the consecrated species of bread and wine. This sacramental frequency had gradually transformed Camillus making his life more holy.

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<sup>15</sup> (Cicatelli, 1837)



Once a patient after being lovingly cared for began to inveigh against Camillus who quietly said:

*“ My brother, I beg you for forgiveness if I didn’t understand you earlier, but every time you desire something, call me and I’ll serve you in the best way.”*

Other times to a patient who thanked him, he replied almost with embarrassment:

*“ Son, why do you thank me? I have to thank you for giving me the chance to serve you: you have to know that I made a vow to serve you, so please, don’t thank me.”*

Another time a high prelate called him while he was next to one of his patients, but Camillus declining the invitation said:

*“Please tell him that I’m busy with Jesus Christ: but as soon as I’ll be finished with my charity I’ll be there.”*

Camillus often served the sick on his knees, kissed their hands and feet and exhorted them to pray for his soul, which he considered never adequately purified. He always taught of himself as a debtor against Christ and his brothers . He constantly lived on himself the



patient's condition. He walked the path of evil in the world of atonement through the daily and tireless service, forgetting himself and suffering physically. He was constantly harassed by multiple physical complaints: first of all, the sore, a "life partner" which dug his foot to the bone, to the point that he, at times of greatest pain, would feel as if his flesh would have been torn by barnacles.

Then, there were the inguinal hernia, the calluses on his feet and renal colics. Camillus' spirituality was also fostered by this, hardened by the suffering, he was able to sympathize, that is share the condition of the patient who, in this way, could feel the brother's love in suffering; the same man who often lavished wandering the aisles at any time of the day and night.

Knowing that it is useless to speak about God's love without the aid of those in need of practical help, he established a hierarchy on which to base their work: to provide the body before the soul, the body for the soul, the one and the other for God, and do so knowing that it is directed to the person of Jesus. Camillus finds its own way to live life in the Spirit and in the merciful love. For him, the privileged place where to experience God is the hospital ward, the pest of plague victims, every home that welcomes the poor and suffering. In the practice of ministry to those suffering the dynamism of faith, hope and charity activate.





The convergence of Camillus' whole being towards the merciful ministry to the sick is already present in the 1581 Formula Vitae. The Formula of Life has been subject to rework and the most important happened in the General Chapter of 1599. Here is a part of the modern Italian version:

*“Se ispirato dal Signore Dio, uno vorrà esercitare le opere di misericordia corporale spirituali secondo il nostro Istituto, sappia che deve essere morto al mondo, ... per vivere solamente per Gesù crocefisso sotto il soavissimo giogo della perpetua povertà, castità e ubbidienza e servizio dei poveri infermi anche appestati, nelle necessità corporali e spirituali, di giorno e di notte, secondo ciò che gli sarà comandato. Farà questo per vero amore di Dio, per penitenza dei propri peccati, ricordandosi di quanto la Verità, Gesù Cristo, dice:’ ciò che avete fatto a uno di questi minimi miei fratelli, l’avete fatto a me’ e altrove: ‘Ero infermo e mi avete visitato: ...’”<sup>16</sup>*

The element that attracts the most attention in this document is the centrality of merciful charity towards the sick. Through charity towards the sick, it is possible to settle and unite in God's love. According to Camillus, the charitable assistance to the sick is not the mean to achieve perfection, but the end.

The care of the sick sums up the whole Christian and evangelical perfection. Associated with it is God's love, which is a natural consequence. The sick's care is the crux of perfection, it creates, that is, the genuine and perfect religious. In this, his attitude is different from the other saints.

St. Ignatius, for instance, sent the novices in hospitals because through serving the sick they would reach religious indifference. St. Camillus, however, considers the ministry of care the end and the ideal of holiness for himself and his religious. In other words, serving the sick with a merciful heart is already loving and serving God with all their heart and with all their strength. St. Catherine of Genoa went to the hospital to get distracted by the spiritual fire that was burning inside of her. Her inner conversation with Christ had no correspondence with her surroundings. While serving the sick with every care and delicacy, she was absorbed in God and she was almost absent. Indeed, the sick's infirmities were making her nauseous. She felt sorry to break the conversation with God when going

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<sup>16</sup> “If inspired by our Lord, one will want to perform corporal works of mercy according to our spiritual Institute, he has to know that he has to be dead to this world,... to live just for Jesus crucified under the sweet yoke of perpetual poverty, chastity and obedience and service to the poor sick, in spiritual and bodily necessities, day and night, according to what is commanded. Will do this for the true love of God, repentance of their sins, mindful of what the Truth, Jesus Christ says: ‘what you have done to one of my brothers, you have done it to me’ and elsewhere: ‘I was sick and you visited me’...”

to the hospital to serve the sick. For Camillus instead, the entire existence of the Minister of the Sick - votes, methodical prayer, conscious control, asceticism ... - must tend to flourish in charity and service to the sick. Having placed the center of his life in the spirit of the sick's service and having indicated in the exercise of the same means par excellence to experience God is the originality of St. Camillus' spirituality.<sup>17</sup> He wanted his sons to be prepared even humanly to help the human being in its entirety. The sick often, in addition to physical injuries, bring hidden in their hearts far deeper wounds that only true love can heal. He loved to repeat, therefore, that we must all serve the sick with exquisite charity<sup>18</sup> and with

*“un affetto materno verso il prossimo acciò possiamo servirli con ogni charità così dell'anima, come del corpo, perché desideriamo con la gratia di Dio servir a tutti gl'Infermi con quell'affetto che suol una amorevole Madre al suo unico figliuolo infermo.”*<sup>19</sup>

His first visit, when he arrived at the hospital, was for the most seriously and terminally ill, and he was attentive to the barely whispered wishes. The disease severity, in fact, should be an incentive to commitment and care, and not an obstacle.

When he took care of the sick "it seemed not to remain anything else in the world", he would comb their hair, cut their nails, clean their mouth, medicate and bandage their wounds, warm their feet, offer aromatic herbal teas or sugary drinks or fruit to the weakest ones, he would go into the kitchen and prepare delicate dishes himself for someone ill; gave baby food to children "doing charms as a compassionate mother" (if he had the milk without a doubt he would have pulled it out from the heart to give it to them) also he took off his robe to cover someone who was cold, he was very skilled in giving delicate cleaning baths; he offered his slippers if he had to get someone up who didn't have them ; he put to good use his language skills "for some poor sick strangers who didn't understand Italian: he spoke Latin, French or Spanish, and also greek to make himself understood."

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<sup>17</sup> (Milazzo, 2011)

<sup>18</sup> (Pepe, 2002, p. 358)

<sup>19</sup> "a motherly affection toward others to serve them with every charity in the Soul and in the body, because we desire, with God's grace to serve all the sick with the same affection that a mother has for her sick son" (Vanti, 1964, p. 67)

He had the same concern for the spiritual welfare. *“Quanti n’aiutò a ben morire ai quali dopo la morte e dopo avergli i debiti salmi et orazioni recitate, esso con le proprie mani serrò gli occhi, la bocca e coperse il viso.”*<sup>20</sup>

The ministers of the sick, in fact, are also called the Fathers of the beautiful dying . Great attention was paid to the dying that were cared for up to the end with the assurance that no one would die without having received the sacrament of Extreme Unction.

Arrived at the Grande Hospital (Ca 'Granda) in Milan, Camillus took charge of architectural interventions aimed primarily at improving the hygienic aspects, trying to give the wards more air and light as possible, ensuring clean restrooms and shelter from the weather for the sick. At that time there was the prejudice that water and air would not benefit the sick. The windows were always kept closed. The water was almost never used to wash the patient nor for the ward’s floors. It has been reported that St. Camillus, to scrape the layer of filth at Grande hospital in Milan, used an iron blade of his invention "every day with it he would clean and scrape the floors so that the sick wouldn’t get their feet dirty when rising from bed. "<sup>21</sup>



The saint establishes the need for continuous support both day and night, he starts to the daily report which enables Ministers and doctors to stay up to date on the sick’s health. In addition, he also brings innovations to the practical level such as the stretcher to carry the sick, the bell to call the nurses and the technique of changing the sheets without moving the patient from the bed.

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<sup>20</sup>“He helped many people to die in peace, and after saying prayers for them he would close their eyes, their mouths and covered their faces” (Casera, 1993)

<sup>21</sup> (Vanti, 1986, p. 289)

## **4.2 The Rules**

The charisma of mercy is manifested even more in the way Camillus assisted the sick and in his Regulations as he prepared to serve them with all perfection. In 1584 the rules of the Company are drawn . The latter are composed of 51 Rules: 26 of which for the good government of the house according to the time patterns which were heavily influenced particularly by the Jesuits' ones and 25 relating to *Ordini et modi che si hanno da tenere nelli Hospitali in servire li poveri infermi* completely written by San Camillus, they are a veritable code of conduct to serve the sick. The practical arrangements are accurate and up to date marked on the human person. These are the rules that he asked at the "Venerable Chapter of the Hospital" Maggiore in Milan in 1594, to be able to apply for assistance to the sick:

*“ ... umilmente expone alle Signorie Vostre come li giorni passati sono venuti in questa Città di Milano quattordici di detta Religione a fine di esercitare il loro Istituto che è servire li poveri Infermi dell’Ospedali nelle corsie spirituali et corporali et anco in raccomandar l’Anime alli Morienti per la città et di più in caso che occorresse tempo di peste ( quod obsit) è obbligata de servire alli appestati dei che ne fa voto solenne.”*<sup>22</sup>

### ***Societas Servientium Infirmis***

*I S'alcuno ispirato dal Signore vorrà esercitare quest'opera di charità, sappia che ha d'osservare Povertà, Castità, e Obedientia, et Hospitalità perpetua, ma senza voto per hora, non intendendo però di privar' alcuno della libertà della sua volontà che non possa privatamente se vorrà far' voto, perché vogliamo in questo lasciare operare alla gratia del Spirito Santo da sé stessa.*

*II Ognuno ch' vorrà entrare nella nostra Compagnia, prima ch'entri, ò, vero, in termine d'un Mese faccia una Confessione generale di tutt'il tempo della vita sua con il Confessore che parerà al Superiore, acciò in questo modo si rinovi, e, si faccia più atto per servir' all'infermi.*

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<sup>22</sup>“ I humbly expose to whoever it may concern how in the past few days fourteen of my Religious came to this city of Milan to serve the sick in the hospitals, to recommend the city’s Dying souls but also in case of plague (quod obsit) they are obligated to serve those sick because they made a solemn vow.” (Vanti, 1965)

**III** *Nissuno possederà cosa propria, ma ogni cosa sia commune, et in commune non possiamo haver' altro di stabile che la casa dove habitaremo, e nissuno ardirà di haver dinari eccetto il Superiore, et il Procuratore li quali terranno tutti li danari in una cassa sola che habbia due chiavi tenendone una per uno, ma il nostro vivere sia di elemosine, perché speriamo che la santa povertà aiuterà molto per acrescere, et conservare questa Compagnia in spirito, et devotione.*<sup>23</sup>

**IIII** *Nissuno terrà alcuna cosa senza licentia dei Superiore et di quello che con licentia terrà sia sempre apparecchiato privarsene quando piacerà al detto Superiore, Havendo però bisogno di qualsivoglia cosa la dimanderà al medesimo Superiore et se esso non gliela darà habbi patientia, et pensi quest'essere più utile a l'anima.*

**V** *Ognuno obidirà al Superiore con ogni humiltà, et, riverenza, et se alcuno non vorrà obedire per la prima volta detto Superiore li faccia la debita corretione, la seconda li dia qualche penitentia, et questo si faccia con la charità possibile, et se alla terza il medesimo non vorrà obedire sia mandato fuori di detta Compagnia, il medesimo si tenghi in mandar via quelli che daranno scandalo in casa o fuori di casa.*

**VI** *Ognuno si confessarà et comunicherà almeno una volta la settimana cioè la Domenica, et tutti à un Confessore se sarà possibile ma se ciò non si potrà ognuno habbia il suo Confessore et non si confessi d'altri senza licentia dei Superiore.*

**VII** *Ogni giorno tutti insieme faranno nel' Oratorio un hora di oratione, et questo sarà la matina se sia possibile, ma se ciò non si potrà fare ciascuno fra 'l giorno quando haverà tempo farà la detta Oratione, et poi la sera tutti faranno l'esame della conscientia. Di più ogni giorno tutt'insieme quelli che staranno in casa diranno le letanie e chi non si troverà*

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<sup>23</sup> I If someone inspired by the Lord wishes to exercise this grace, he must observe Poverty, chastity and obedience, perpetual hospitality, but without vow for the time being, however, I don't intend to deprive anyone of his will's freedom to take a private vow, because I want to leave the Holy Spirit's grace to operate.

II Those who want to join our company have to confess the sins of a lifetime to a Confessor before they come in order to serve the sick better.

III We won't own our own things, but everything will be in common, and we can't have more in common than the home where we live in, and no one will dare to have money except for the Superior, and the Prosecutor which will hold all the money in just one case with two keys, one for each, but our living will be of halms, because we hope that the holy poverty will help us to grow and to save this Company in spirit and devotion.

*all'ora in casa dirà poi da se le letanie, e se non sa leggere dirà cinque Pater nostri, et cinque Ave Maria.*<sup>24</sup>

**VIII** *Tutti quelli che non saranno occupati per servitio dell'infermi, et anco per servitio della casa si sforzino di andar' almeno ogni quindici giorni alla Predica, ma nella Quadragesima almeno due volte la settimana dove piacerà al Superiore, et ogni Mese si procuri che qualche padre spirituale faccia qualche esortatione a tutt'insieme, se si potrà che serva per esortarli a osservare li nri ordini.*

**VIII** *Ognuno ascolti la Messa ogni mattina se sarà possibile, e però anco ne i giorni feriali non si lasci se non fusse per qualch'occupation' d'importantia che per all'ora si stimi più grata al Signore che non saria il sentir la Messa.*

**X** *Ogn'otto giorni si sforzino di comunicarsi tutt'insieme, et anco pranzare quando sarà possibile, e facciano conferentia delli bisogni dell'infermi, e trattino anco delle cose che giovano alla lor perfettione, et emendatione intendendo però di non incomodar tanto li Hospitali che restino senza alcuni delli Nostri.*

**XI** *Ognuno attenderà alla mortificatione interiore et esteriore facendo volentieri quelle cose dove sentiranno maggior ripugnantia quando li sarà comandato e questo servirà a far la charità più facilmente a quelli Infermi che saranno più aggravati et che haveranno infermità più difficili a curarsi.*<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> **IIII** Nobody will keep anything without the Superiors' permission and he must always be ready to lose it when the Superior will say so, but if he would need anything, he would ask it to the same superior and if he will not give it to him he will have to be patient, and he must think that this is more useful to his soul.

**V** Everyone will obey to the Superior with humility and reverence, and if someone doesn't want to obey, the first time the superior will make him face the proper correction, the second time he will give him some penance, the third time he will be kicked out of the company, the same Superior will send away those who give scandal inside or outside of the house.

**VI** Everyone will confess and take communion at least once a week, that is on Sundays, and will have the same Confessor but if this will not be possible, everyone will have his own Confessor and will not be able to confess to others unless he has the Superior's permission.

**VII** Everyday they will pray together in the morning, if possible, if someone will not have the time to do it in the morning he will do it as soon as he has a chance during the day, and then in the evening everyone will make the conscience's examination. In addition, each day all of those who will stay in the house will say Litany together and whoever goes out will say Lithany by themselves. If someone doesn't know how to read, will say five Our Father and five Hail Mary.

<sup>25</sup> **VIII** All those who will not be employed to seve the sick and also for the house's service should strive to go to the sermon at least once every two weeks, but in Lent at least twice a week, and every month a spiritual father has to be called to exhort all of you to observe the orders.

***XII** Essendo ricercati di governare qualch'infermo per le case de' particolari, non sarà contra nostro istituto ad andarci, purché vadino, et stiano in duoi insieme, che l'infermo sia confessato se li serva per l'amor di Dio, et che per questo non si manchi alli poveri delli Hospit.*

***XIII** Venendo la peste (il che Dio non voglia) tutti quelli ch' vorranno conformarsi a questa vita debbiano promettere di servire a detti apestati, se però li sarà comandato dal Superiore, ma la Compagnia sia tenuta a dar aiuto a detti apestati così di Sacerdoti come di Laici.*

***XIII** Nissuno vada fuori di casa senza licentia del Superiore e nel andare vadino con il compagno dove parera al Superiore.*

***XV** Ognuno così in casa come fuori di casa si diano all'osservantia del silentio quando sarà possibile massime al tempo della messa; oratione, esame di conscientia, e, quando sarà dato il segno di andare a dormire, il che tutti devono fare al medemo tempo, acciò tutti anco a un tempo possino levare.*

***XVI** Ognuno l'un con l'altro si porti quell'honore, et rispetto come si conviene fra servi di Dio tenendo ciascuno il compagno come si fusse suo Superiore.*

***XVII** Quando si magna così la mattina come la sera si legga qualche letione spirituale la quale spesso sia di libri ch'esortino alla patientia et al ben morire, acciò li fratelli essendo versati in questo siano più atti in aiutare, et confortare gi'Infermi nelle loro necessita di, et in tavola si osservi il silentio.<sup>26</sup>*

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**VIII** Everyone has to listen to Mass every morning if possible, and even on week days it shouldn't be left any work the time more grateful to the Lord, that is to hear the Mass.

**X** Every eight days they strive to take communion and have lunch together if possible, having a conference on the sick's needs regarding all the things that could be good for them.

**XI** Everyone will wait for the interior and exterior mortification, willingly doing those things for which they feel repugnance when it is eventually commanded and this will serve to make charity easier for the sick who have more difficult illnesses to treat.

**XII** If someone will call us to go to their private home to take care of a sick person, you are allowed to go, as long as you go in pair, the sick is to be confessed if this is useful for the love of God, but this can be done as long as the poor people in the hospitals are not missing anything.

<sup>26</sup> **XIII** If the plague will come (which God forbid) all those who wish to comply with this life must promise to serve the lepers, only if it will be commanded by the Superior, but the Company is requie to give aid to the plague victims regardless if they are Priests or Lay people.

***XVIII** In casa non si magnerà carne il Mercoledì, et il Venerdì né cacio né ova, ma negli Hospitali o vero in altri lochi magneranno che li sarà messo avanti.*

***XIX** Nissuno si occupi nell'offitio dell'altri senza licentia et ognuno osserverà le buone usanze, et modo di vivere che trovarà nella Compagnia.*

***XX** Nissuno deve riprender con autorità l'altri fratelli eccetto il Superiore ma sapendo alcuno qualche mancamento notabile o grave tentatione d'alcun fratello ne dia avviso al Superiore acciò ch'egli charitativamente ci possa provvedere, et tutti debbano haver a caro che tutti i suoi mancamenti siano detti al Superiore da ciascuno li sapesse fuori di Confessione.*

***XXI** Ognuno si guarderà d'adirarsi l'un con l'altro, ne di mostrare faccia turbata, anzi per il contrario mostrar amorevolezza et charità come si conviene fra servi di Dio.*

***XXII** Circa l'ordine del magnare, et dormire si osserverà quest'ordine si dorma sette hore, da' l' levare la mattina insino al pranzo si stia sei hore, e sette quando si digiuna, dal pranzo sino alla cena passino otto hore, et quando sarà l'hora di mangiare, debbino mangiare senz' aspettare nissuno ancora fusse il Superiore.<sup>27</sup>*

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**XVIII** Nobody is allowed to go out of the house without the Superior's permission, when you go out you always have to be with one of your brothers and you have to go where God wants you to go.

**XV** Everyone has to comply with the observance of silence inside or outside of the house when it will be possible at the time of mass, prayer, examination of conscience, and, when given the sign to go to sleep, which all have to do at the same time, and when getting up.

**XVI** You have to respect and honor one another as it is amongst God's servants considering your brother as if he would be your Superior.

**XVII** When you eat in the morning as well as in the evening read some spiritual lessons to exhort to patient and to die well, so that the brothers are more likely to help and comfort the sick in their needs, and at the table silence must be observed.

<sup>27</sup> **XVIII** We will not eat meat on Wednesdays, cheese or eggs on Fridays, but in the hospitals we will eat whatever it's given to us.

**XIX** Nobody is allowed to take care of others unless it is ordered, everybody has to live according to the Company's rules.

**XX** No one should talk to another brother with authority except for the Superior, but if anyone knows about one of the brothers' serious temptations must alert the Superior who might charitably provide for the person's failings.

**XXI** Everyone has to be careful not to get mad at one other and not to show a troubled face, instead you have to show love and charity as it is amongst God's servants.

**XXII** About eating and sleeping patterns, this order must be observed: you must sleep seven hours, from when you get up until lunch have to pass six hours, and seven when you fast, from lunch to dinner have to go by eight hours, and when is time to eat, you have to eat without waiting for anybody even if it is the Superior.



**XXIII** *Ognuno accetti et faccia molto volentieri le penitentie che li saranno imposte dal Superiore con desiderio di aiutarsi nel spirito ancorche li paresse di non meritarse.*

**XXIII** *E se bene tra noi non ci sono penitentie d'obligo nondimeno chi farà qualche mancamento, et desidera caminare per la strada della perfettione non resterà di adimandare spesso al Superiore la penitentia delli suoi defetti, di farle volentieri in presentia di altri fratelli acciò li diano edificatione, e buono essemplio.*

**XXV** *Ognuno quando andarà fuor di casa vadino modesti e mostrando haver zelo dell'honor di Dio et se troverà alcuni che giocaranno a carte, ò, vero à dadi, ò, vero altri che biastemino, ò, giurino il nome di Dio, della Madonna ò altri Santi, ò, vero faccino altra cosa scandalosa pubblicamente contro à l'honor di Dio, vedano di farli la correzione con charità, et humiltà et mansuetudine sempre dimostrando di haverli compassione.*

**XXVI** *Nissuno si occupi a far negotio di forastieri ancorche sia pio senza licentia dei Superiore acciò si possa dar tutto al servitio dell'Infermi.<sup>28</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> **XXIII** Everyone has to accept the penitence assigned by the Superior with the idea to help the soul even if they think that the penitence is not fair.

**XXIII** Even if there are not mandatory penitences between us, if someone wants to walk on the perfection's road can ask the Superior to assign him a penitence for his faults which has to be done in front of his brothers so that he can give good example.

**XXV** When you see people playing cards, or dice or you see other people who swear against the love of God, the Virgin Mary or of other Saints, you have to correct them with charity and humility always showing them compassion.

**XXVI** Nobody has to give hospitality to strangers without the Superior's permission so that you can dedicate all of your time to serve the sick.

**ORDINI ET MODI CHE SI HANNO DA TENERE NELLI HOSPITALI IN SERVIRE LI  
POVERI INFERMI**

*XXVII* Prima ognuno domandi gratia al Signore che gli dia un affetto materno verso il suo prossimo acciò possiamo servirli con ogni charità così dell'anima, come del corpo, perché desideriamo con la gratia di Dio servir a tutti gl'infermi con quell'affetto che suol una amorevol Madre al suo unico figliuolo infermo.

*XXVIII* Perché le cure, maneggi delle cose temporali impediscon lo Spirito et charità verso il prossimo, pero ognuno si guarderà di non lasciarsi indur da nissuno ad haver' simili maneggi in detti Hospitali come sono maneggi di danari e d'altre robbe, havere cura al governo della casa et maneggiare entrate di Hospitale. Pertanto ogn'uno si guarderà con ogni diligentia di non fare contro detto ordine, et se alcuno presumerà di fare o vero procurare il contrario per se ò vero per altri subito s'intenda quel tale esser fuori della Compagnia ancorché fusse il Superiore di tutti.

*XXIX* Si usi diligentia di trovarsi quando li Medici fanno la visita poter poi cibarli all'hora, e con li cibi che haveranno ordinato massime quelli che staranno più aggravati, et anco per pigliare informatione di altre cose per servitio dell'infermi.<sup>29</sup>

*XXX* Quando mangiano detti Infermi ognuno habbia cura d'aiutar alli più gravi usandoci molta diligentia in farli magnare, e poi debbia referirlo à l'infermiere, o, altro Superiore di quello che haverà magnato massime quando alcuno non havesse magnato a sufficientia.

*XXXI* Stando presente à dett'infermi quando magnano ogn' uno cerca con charità incitarli con parole amorevoli a farli magnare accomodandoli la testa alta, et altre cose

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<sup>29</sup> **ROULES AND WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF THE SICK IN THE HOSPITAL**

**XXVII** First of all everyone has to ask for God's Grace in order to take care of the sick with maternal affection and to serve their body and soul with charity, because we desire to serve the sick with the same affection that a loving mother has toward her sick child.

**XXVIII** Nobody has to have financial responsibilities in the Hospitals because these temporal things prevent charity toward others. If someone will disobey this order, has to consider himself out of the Company even if this someone is the Superior.

**XXIX** You have to be present when doctor are visiting the sick to keep yourself updated with the food that was ordered, who has to fast and everything that can be useful for their care.

*secondo che lo Spirito santo gl'insegnarà, et questo si faccia tutto con volontà delli Infermi.*

**XXXII** *Quando si medicaranno le piaghe tutti quelli che non saranno impediti, o, occupati per altri servitij dell'infermi ò vero per servitio, suo proprio con licentia dei Superiore si troveranno ad aiutare à detti Infermi con charità procurando di sovvenire alli più aggravati, cioè alli più bisognosi.*

**XXXIII** *Ognuno quando aiuterà così nel magnare, come nel medicare procuri di ricordare à dett'infermi qualche cosa spirituale esortandoli alla patientia, et confessione.<sup>30</sup>*

**XXXIII** *Nel rifare delli letti ognuno procuri con diligentia et charità di rifarli procurando di fare mutare le lenzuola, et camise quando saranno molto brutte, avvertendo al Superiore di detti letti con modestia et piacevolezza, et ognuno si guardi di non far del riformatore, ò, sindaco, ò, correttore per li hospitali, ma più presto si sforzi di insegnare con opere che con parole, et di conservarsi amorevoli tutti quelli che servano nelli hospitali, e quando l'Infermi che haveranno bisogno di esser levati con le braccia, ognuno avvertisca di levarli con la charità possibile, procurando di non farli far troppo moto, e non farli pigliar freddo, coprendoli subito che li levaranno dal letto, e che stiano con la testa poco alta, et più procurando che quando starà alcuno molto aggravato, et quasi per morire non li si faccia il letto senza licentia del Medico, acciò non li abbrevij la vita, ma se il letto sarà brutto si procuri di nettarlo senza levarlo dal letto con diligentia di non travagliarlo, et quando sarà abandonato dal Medico ò sarà in agonia si metta la diligentia possibile in aiutarlo à ben morire.*

**XXXV** *Nel far della guardia così la notte come il giorno ognuno procuri di farla con charità et diligentia possibile havendo la mira alli più aggravati visitandoli spesse volte confortandoli con quelle cose che li sarà imposto dall'infermiere, ò, vero altro Superiore et più dandoli tutte l'altre cose che gli farà bisogno con charità piacevolezza et*

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<sup>30</sup> **XXX** When the sick are eating you have to help whoever is seriously ill and make sure that they eat, then you have to let the nurse or the Superior know how much they ate or if they didn't eat at all.

**XXXI** Encourage the sick to eat with loving words and fix their heads in a high position according to their will.

**XXXII** When you are medicating the wounds everyone who is not busy in other chores will come to help, with the Superior's permission, and they will take care of whoever is more in need.

**XXXIII** When you are feeding or medicating the sick, remind them of something spiritual urging them to patience and confession.

*principalmente haverà cura nelle cose dell'anima, cioè che nissuno mora senza olio santo et raccomandatione dell'anima.*<sup>31</sup>

**XXXVI** *Quelli fratelli à quali sarà imposto di far la guardia la faccia tutto quel tempo che gli sarò ordinato, così di giorno come di notte, ma se alcun fratello si troverà presente che non sarà di guardia, et vederà che alcun infermo haverà bisogno di qualche cosa non resti di servirlo subito quando non ci sarà presente il fratello che haverà la cura di detta guardia.*

**XXXVII** *Se alcuno gli sarà imposto qualch'officio particolare in servitio dell'infermi procuri con charità e diligentia possibile farlo, et obedisca non solo alli Superiori delli Hospitali come à Christo ma ancora a tutti li Offitiali et servitori di quello per amor di Dio.*

**XXXVIII** *Quando si faranno li servitij communi ognuno procuri di fare il debito suo, et non restar di farlo salvo che per occupatione che gli sarà imposta dal Superiore ò vero per indispositione corporale, et altri impedimenti, ma altri fratelli che si troveranno à far detti servitij chi vedrà che alcuni manchano, non ardiscano di mormorare, ma si persuada piu presto chè quelli siano occupati in altre cose, è, così habbino legitima scusa.*<sup>32</sup>

**XXXIX** *Ognuno con ogni diligentia possibile si guarderà di non trattar' li poveri infermi con mali portamenti, cioè usandoci male parole, et altre cose simili, ma piu presto trattare*

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<sup>31</sup> **XXXVIII** When making the beds you have to make sure to change the sheets and let the Superior know that you did it, have the sick change their gowns if dirty, and everybody has to be careful not to act as a reformer, or mayor or corrector for the Hospital, you have to teach with facts instead of words and when you have to help someone to get up do it with charity and make sure not to move them too much or that they get cold covering them as soon as they get out of bed, also, their heads don't have to be positioned too high. If someone is very sick don't make his bed unless the doctor orders it, or if you really have to, make it without getting the person up making sure not to bother him too much and when he's in agony, help him to die well.

**XXXV** Make rounds at night and during the day with charity and diligence visiting more often whoever is sicker reporting changes to the nurse or to the Superior, also, take care of their souls, that is nobody has to die without receiving the Holy oil or the soul's recommendation.

<sup>32</sup> **XXXVI** Those brothers who are told to make rounds have to do it for the time that was ordered, either day or night, but if another brother who is not responsible for rounds is walking by and he sees that someone needs to be helped, he has to help.

**XXXVII** If someone is told to do some special chore for the sick he has to go ahead and do it with charity and diligence, also, he has to obey not only to the superior but also to the rest of the hospital's servants for the love of God.

**XXXVIII** Everyone has to do his own chores unless there is a reason approved by the Superior such as an illness or other obstacles, but the other brothers who have to do those chores don't have to complain, instead they have to make sure that the brother will be busy doing something that he is able to do, so that he can have a legitimate excuse.

*con mansuetudine et charità, et haver riguardo alle parole che il Signore ha detto, Quello che avete fatto à uno di questi minimi l'havete fatto a me, però ognuno risguardi al povero come à la persona del Signore.*

***XL** Tutto quel tempo ch'avanza da servitij communi, et particolari ognuno che non sarà impedito procuri se non in tutto almeno in parte spenderlo fra li poveri infermi con aiutarli in qualche cosa della quale haveranno bisogno nel corpo et nell'anima ricordandogli qualche cosa spirituale insegnandoli il Pater noster, Ave Maria, Credo, et altre cose appartenenti alla salute, et principalmente havendo cura di dar qualche ricordo di ben morire a quelli che saranno vicini alla morte.*

***XLI** Circa la diligentia et cura che si ha da tenere de l'anima dell'infermi la prima sarà questa, Ognuno procuri quando visita qualch'infermo saper da lui se è ben confessato, cioè con le circostantie necessarie alla buona confessione et quelli che si trovarà che non saranno ben confessati esortarli a confessarsi ben quanto prima, insegnandoli le dette circostantie, et dandoli altri ricordi spirituali, et esortarli à far la confessione generale, et se conoscerà che ne habbiano bisogno avvertirà il Padre Confessore quanto prima con consenso però dell'infermo.<sup>33</sup>*

***XLII** Quelli fratelli che si troveranno nelli Hospitali procurino diligentemente che detti Infermi quando si haveranno da comunicare vadino ben preparati insegnandoli come si hanno da apparecchiare prima della Communion e come si hanno da portar poi, et più avvertischino che molti Infermi si trovano che non mandano il S.mo Sacramento a basso che li resta attaccato nel palato, et questo suole avvenire all'infermi gravi che hanno la bocca secca, et à huomini semplici; Però in questo s'usi molta diligentia essendo cosa di tanta importantia, et avvertino che non sputino di poi della Communion così presto.*

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<sup>33</sup> **XXXIX** Everybody has to be careful not to use bad words with the sick or treat them unpolitely, instead treat them with charity always remembering the Lord's words: Whatever you did to one of those sick you have done it to me. You have to look at the poor as you would look at God.

**XL** All the time left from one chore to another has to be spent helping the sick in their body's and soul's needs. Teach them Our Father, Hail Mary and other things pertaining to their health, but most of all, try to leave good dying memories to those close to death.

**XLI** About the diligence and care that you have to have for the sick's soul the first thing will be this: Everyone has to ask the sick they received confession and if you notice that someone of them is not well confessed, encourage them to do so as soon as possible by contacting the Confession's Father.

*XLIII Quando alcuno infermo sarà in transito, et vicino al morire si procuri con la diligentia possibile ch'alcun Sacerdote, ò vero laico li stia sempre à ricordar alcune cose spirituali per servitio di quell'anima senza partirsi senza altra necessità, et partendosi cercare di lasciare alcun'altro et tornare subito, et detta diligentia si usi così la notte come il giorno.*

*XLIIII Nissuno esorti ad alcun infermo a lassar alcuna cosa à la nostra Compagnia ma se alcuno Infermo di quelli che starà nelli Hospitali lassasse alcuna cosa alla nostra Compagnia per niun modo si possa accettare et se pur alcuno facesse testamento in util nostro si applichi subito à l'hospitale dove lui morirà. .<sup>34</sup>*

*XLV Non si riceva nissuno nella Compagnia di quelli che servano nelli Hospitali senza che ne sia pregato d'alcuni delli Superiori, cioè Governatori dell'Hospitale dove lui serviva*

*XLVI Quando alcuno delli nostri fratelli dormiranno nelli Hospitali la notte, nissuno dormirà solo nelle Camere, ma almeno debbino dormire doi delli fratelli insieme, cioè aver li letti l'uno appresso all'altro et dormire uno per letto et il medesimo si facci dentro delli Hospitali quando non haveranno camere particolari.*

*XLVII Ognuno procuri di saper queste regole alla mente insieme con quelle del ben vivere se non le parole, almeno la sustantia, et almeno due volte il mese si leggerà in tavola, e si sforzino di osservarle tutte con ogni diligentia, perché dall'osservantia delle Regole dipende tutt'il bene della Compagnia.*

*XLVIII Non intendiamo però che dette Regole oblighino ne à peccato mortale, ne veniale, ma solo à far la penitentia che li sarà data per la lor trasgressione.<sup>35</sup>*

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<sup>34</sup> **XLII** Those brothers who are in the Hospitals have to make sure that the sick are prepared to receive Comunion, also they have to be careful to those who can't swallow it such as the ones with a dry mouth and simple men. It is very important that they are told not to spit it out.

**XLIIII** When a sick person is close to death, a priest or a lay person has to be close to him/her reminding spiritual things. Never leave that poor alone at night and during the day.

**XLIIII** Nobody has to encourage a dying sick to leave anything to our Company and if one of them who is in the Hospital will leave something to our Company it can't be accepted for no reason even if it is written in their will. In this case, everything will be devolved to the Hospital where he will die.

<sup>35</sup> **XLV** Nobody has to be received in the Company unless he's told by some of the Superiors, that is Hospitals' Governors.

**XLVI** When some of our brothers will sleep in the Hospitals at night, nobody will sleep alone in the rooms, instead it has to be two brothers sleeping in one room, one for each bed and with a bed next to the other.

*XLIX Quando alcuno delli nostri fratelli si amalasse di qualch' infirmità d'importantia subito ne dia avviso al Superiore acciò si possa rimediare à tutto quello che si conviene, perché sia governato con quella charità et diligentia possibile ò, in casa, ò nell'Hospitale secondo che piacerà a l'infermo, ma desideramo che dett'infermo nella sua infirmità dia bono essemplio d'humiltà et patientia lasciandosi curare secondo l'ordine del Medico che parerà al Superiore.*

*L E quando alcuno delli nostri morirà se li darà honorevol sepoltura, et ogni Sacerdote sia obligato a dirli Cinque Messe per l'anima sua, et quelli che non saranno Sacerdoti siano tenuti a dirli Cinque corone, ò, vero Cinque volte la terza parte dei Rosario.*

*LI Se piacerà alla divina bontà del Signore che questa minima Compagnia vada avanti, et che sia approvata dalla santa Sede Apostolica si farà tra Noi altre Regole, cioè del modo di vistire, dell'eleggere li Superiori, del ricevere i Novitij et dell'approbatione di essi, et altre cose che occorreranno.<sup>36</sup>*

A careful reading of this document leads us to detect some significant features of our Saint's spirituality:

- *The patient's centrality.* In the health field, the sick plays the role of the lord and master. Everything must be aimed at his care, avoiding any manipulation. The patient's dignity comes from his being the sacrament of the Lord's presence. Serving the sick person is equal to serve Christ: "Everyone look at a poor as if he would look at the Lord" (Rule 13).
- *The patient care's totality.* Directions and rules that Camillus gives to his group always express this constant: the body and the soul are inseparable in the patient,

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**XLVII** Everyone has to know those rules by heart, and if you can't remember them word by word at least you have to know the concepts. You will read them at least twice a month and you have to make an effort to observe them diligently because from these Rules it depends the Company's good.

**XLVIII** These Rules don't obligate to mortal or venial sin, but only to make penitence if they are disobeyed.

<sup>36</sup> **XLIX** If a brother is seriously ill, he must tell to the Superior so that he can be appropriately taken care at home or in the Hospital according to his will, but we desire that this sick brother will give good example of humbly and penitence, letting the doctor and the superior take care of him,

**L** And when some of ours will die every priest will have to celebrate five Masses for his soul, and the ones who are not priests have to say five crowns, that is five times the third part of the Rosary,

**LI** If the Lord will want this Company will go on, and that it will be approved by the Holy Apostolic See we will make other Rules for the way we dress, we elect our Superiors, we receive the novices and other things that will take place.

(Vanti, 1964, p. 63-66)

and his spiritual and physical needs must always be expected in a unitary vision of the person. First, the minister of the sick must use every charity in the care of the sick's body, encouraging them with the right words to eat, ... Care of the body that must be concomitant aimed at spiritual well-being of the patient, using all means ... Especially if he is the terminal phase (Rule 17).

- *The emotional involvement.* The Minister of the sick must not only meet the patient in the totality of his person, but they also have to approach him with the totality of one's being: knowledge, affection, technique and heart. Famous phrase of Camillus to his collaborators: "Brothers, more heart in those hands." (Rule 1).



- *Respect for the the patient's religious freedom.* Camillus' attitude deserves special attention because it shows his ability to overcome the limitations of that time's pastoral, namely the prohibition of curing the sick before they had the sacraments. The Second Lateran Council justified this prohibition like this: "The bodily illness comes sometimes from sins. The Lord said to the paralytic, 'as you can see you are healed, do not return to sin because it wouldn't happen something worse'. For this reason we decide and command physicians of the bodies that when they are called from the sick, first warn them and lead them to call the doctors of the soul so that once they have been expected in the spiritual health, they may carry more salutary remedy to the corporal medicine, in a manner that once the cause has disappeared the effect will also cease. (Rule 1)

This provision is repeated several times during the following centuries. When in Rome, in the sixteenth-century, many doctors are opposed to these rules considering harmful to the



the omission of charity health care to the sick by the mere fact that they refused to confess, there is a strong reaction to S. Ignatius of Loyola, which affirms the validity as an effective tool to ensure the eternal salvation of the sick. In 1566, Pope Pius V extends to the whole church that salutary precept, with an apostolic constitution in which it is noticed an incomprehensible penalty: "Physicians who do not comply with the above precepts, ... will be totally deprived of their degree and will be expelled from the physicians' board, also they will be fined with penalties to be determined by the local Ordinary where they commit the crime. "

This practice will disappear in 1925. Among those who disregarded this requirement, historians include St. Camillus. In the *Rules to serve the poor sick with all perfection*, he argues that the sick's confession must be the Minister of the sick's first concern. However, patients should be instructed ... only when the sick will be well prepared, "and if it is known that they need it, the Father Confessor will be called as soon as possible with the invalid's consent " (Rule 15).<sup>37</sup>

From the Ca' Granda of Milan's experience the following Rules originated in 1607 *Note of some things that our brothers should do when they are on duty in the Hospital* (25 rules) and in 1613 *Rules that our brothers have to observe in the Grande Hospital in Milan, To serve the sick with all perfections* (71 rules) which include the first rules of 1584.

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<sup>37</sup> (Milazzo, 2011)

**NOTA D' ALCUNE COSE CHE I NOSTRI HANNO A FARE NELL HOSPIDALE  
IN-FAR-LA GUARDIA DATA DAL REVERENDISSIMO PADRE NOSTRO GENERALE**

- 1* *Quelli tre o quattro che-faranno la guardia un di-loro sarà capo et per quanto staranno in-guardia gl'altrj gli darano obediensa.*
  
- 2* *La-prima sera quando saranno entrati doppo che-saranno spartiti ogn'un di-loro starà nel quartier dove-lo ponerà il capo servendo l'infermi di tutte-le-cose che gl'occorreranno con ogni Charità et humiltà come si convieni al nostro obliigo trattandoli con parole mansuete et modeste guardandosi di non alzar la voce troppo et visitando spesso, i gravi et quando-si sentisse molto stracco sia-lecito per un poco di tempo sedere ma in mezzo del-quartiero.*
  
- 3* *Ogn'uno si guardera di dormire in-guardia et non sia lecito mai di star tutti insieme se non fosse per advertire alcuna cosa per servitio di detti Infermi.<sup>38</sup>*
  
- 4* *Nel fine della guardia il capo darà raguaglio all'altro di-tutte le-cose che-saranno occorse all'infermi accio ne-dia raguaglio al-Medico nel tempo della visita eseguendo quel tanto che il medico ordinerà.*
  
- 5* *Dato che havrà il raguaglio all'altro di tutte le cose che bisognerà referire al medico ma anco de gravi et altre cose necessarie ringraziando il-Signore et chiedendo perdono de-difetti commessi nella guardia si ritiraranno tutti insieme con-santo-silenzio guardandosi di far strepito alcuno acciò non conturbino gl'altri.*
  
- 6* *Nel principio della guardia tutti s'ingenochiaranno avanti l'altare pregando il-Signore che sia fatta puramente la sua santissima volontà et in servitio dell'anima et del corpo de poverelli. fatto questo tutti si partiranno come di sopra.*

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<sup>38</sup> **NOTE ABOUT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT OUR BROTHERS SHOULD DO WHEN THEY ARE ON DUTY IN THE HOSPITAL**

**1** From those three or four who are on duty, one will be in charge and the others will have to obey.

**2** On the first evening everyone will be in the ward where the one in charge decided for him to be serving the sick in everything they will need with Charity and Humbleness and treating them with nice and modest words being careful not to raise the voice and visiting them often, and when he will feel very tired he is allowed to sit down for a little while in the middle of the ward.

**3** It is not permitted to sleep when on duty nor to be all together unless is for something regarding the sick's service.

*7 Finito la guardia il capo anderà a chiamare i fratelli et levati che saranno quegli a chi toccherà a mutare sieno presto et tutti insieme vadino a mutare i compagni.*

*8 In quel tempo che il capo chiamera la guardia raccomandandi il suo quartiere ad un' de soi compagni sino al ritorno acciò non naschi qualche disordine nell'Hospitale.<sup>39</sup>*

*9 Quando accadesse che alcun'Infermo dimandasse la guardia e non vi-fosse il fratello che ha cura di detto quartiere overo fosse impedito sopra qualche infermo non manchino à-supplire quelli che saranno presenti anchor che non fossero di guardia.*

*10 Nel far li letti tutti faranno la-sua-parte con molta Charità et diligenza procurando che gi'Infermi non piglino freddo coprendoli conla veste o coperta se non vi-fosse veste dandogli ancora i zocculi agiutandoli a-levar di-letto quelli che non potranno et quelli che haveranno bisogno esser levati con-li braccia procurino di non farli danno mettendoli sopra il letto piu vicino coprendoli in-sin-che sarà fatto il letto.*

*11 Tutti i letti massime de gravj avanti d'entrar nel letto si scaldaranno et quando saranno bagnati i matarassi procurino di farli mutare.*

*12 Ogn'uno si guardera nel rifar de-letti o altri servitij di contrastare, irritarsi o burlare tra di loro o con gl'infermi ma-procuraranno fargli con-silentio recitando alcuni salmi o altre devocioni.<sup>40</sup>*

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<sup>39</sup> **4** At the end of the shift the brother in charge will give report to the new shift which will proceed to report the informations to the doctor during rounds and will follow the new doctor's orders.

**5** After report everybody will go on with their duties with holy silence being careful not to make noise which would disturb others.

**6** At the beginning of the shift everyone will kneel down to pray the Lord to serve the sick's body and soul according to His will, then everybody will go on with their duties.

**7** At the end of the shift the one in charge will call the brothers who will be releaved by others.

**8** During report the one in charge will call one of his brothers to take care of his ward until he comes back to avoid disorders in the Hospital.

<sup>40</sup> **9** If a sick needs help and the brother assigned to that ward is taking care of someone else, the ones who happen to be there have to take care of that person even if they are not on duty.

**10** When making beds, everyone will help with Charity and diligence making sure that the sick won't get cold by covering them with the gown or a blanket giving them sleepers when helping them to get up. When helping the ones who are not able to get up by themselves be careful not to hurt them, transfer them on another bed and cover them while they wait for their bed to be made.

**11** All the very ill's beds will be warmed before they will get in it and if the matress will get wet make sure that it will be changed.

**12** Everybody ha sto make sure not to complaint, get mad, or joke with the other brother or the sick when making beds, instead they have to be in silence and praying.

**13** *Nel mangiare tutti si troveranno procurando con ogni diligenza che tutti massime i gravj mangino et referendo al fratello che-ha la-cura se-non haveranno mangiato a-sufficienza.*

**14** *Quando alcuno Infermo haverà bisogno di qualche cosa da mangiare la-potrà domandare al fratello che-la' haverà.*

**15** *Nessuno darà cosa alcuna da mangiare all'infermi nel tempo che-si mangia oltre di quello che-li sarà dato.*

**16** *Tutto il servitio così spirituale come corporale che-sarà fatto da nostri in servitio de-poveri Infermi procureranno che sia-sia fatto con quella maggior Charità et sollecitudine possibile considerando essere quella la-volontà del Signore et obliigo del nostro Instituto.*

**17** *Tutti procureranno di dar buon esempio in tutte le sue attioni non solo alli Signori Protettorj dell'hospitale honorandogli come si convienj ma anco al Sig.re Rectore, Infirmiero et a tutti gl'officiali guardandosi di non pigliar familiarità ne-prattica con loro.<sup>41</sup>*

**18** *Quando saranno nell'hospitale tutti procureranno di fugir l'otio ma si spartiranno tra-li poveri aiutandoli in tutte le-cose che dovemo si nelle spirituali come corporali.*

**19** *Ogn'uno quando sentirà la Campanella per-andare all'hospitale subito andranno a-basso nel luoco deputato dal sup.re aspettando-sino che gli sarà ordinato dal detto et arrivati diranno un Pater Noster et un'Ave-Maria con ogni modestia et-finita ogn'uno andera a fare le-sue facende.*

**20** *Et perche-quelli che-faranno la-guardia di notte et nel tempo dell'oratione non trovandosi a quella per-questo si ricordino che nel tempo che stanno nell'hospitale di*

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<sup>41</sup> **13** During meals make sure that everybody eats and if you notice that somebody didn't eat make sure to report it to the brother in charge of that person.

**14** When some sick will need something to eat he can ask for it to the brother who's taking care of him.

**15** During meals nobody will give the sick anything more to eat other than what it was given to them.

**16** All the spiritual and corporal services done to serve the sick will be done with Charity considering that to be God's will and our Company's obligation.

**17** Everyone will give good example by respecting the hospital's Protectors, Administrator, Nurses and all the officials being careful not to get too friendly with them.

*farla se non tutta almeno in-parte o mentale o vocale o ingenocchioni o passeggiando senza-però di mancare alli servitij de poveri Infermi.*

*21 Ogn'uno si guardira nella guardia massime di notte di non far ragionamenti lunghi ma se pur si parla si parlj di cose necessarie per-servitio de-poveri Infermi.*

*22 Ogn'uno quanto sia possibile fugirà la-prattica de-figlioli ma solo quanto occorrerà di fargli qualche sorte di charità che haveranno bisogno et subito spedirsi et questo si facci della-guardia et-per-sempre et-per tutti.*<sup>42</sup>

*23 Quando nel tempo della guardia di notte saranno morienti non si mancherà di dargli quell'aiuto che-si conviene assistendo con-loro sempre avicenda mettendoli il lume et ricordandogli qualche cosa spirituale et altre cose conforme all'uso, ma chiamando alcuni Infermi vadi con-prestezza et torni al moriente. morto che sarà dia in-nota il nome di detto morto al caporale quando saranno più morienti si farà il simile.*

*24 Ogn'uno nel-suo quartiere visiterà spesso i-gravi et guarderà che nessuno moia senza i santi sacramenti in-particolare dell'Extrema Untione et della Raccomandatione dell'anima.*

*25 Tutti i sopradetti servitij ogn'uno li farà con-diligenza ad honor di nostro Sig.reet profitto dell'anima sua ricordandosi di quelle parole dell'Evangelio Quamdiu uni ex-minimis meis fecistis mihi fecistis il-che facendo si consegirà vita eterna.*<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> **18** When in the hospital everyone has to stay active by helping the poor in all their spiritual and corporal needs.

**19** Everybody after hearing the Bell ringing will go and wait for the Superior in the place ordered by him, then they will say an Our Father and a Hail Mary and after that everybody will go to do theyr chores.

**20** For those who are on duty during the night, when it's time to pray and they are in the hospital they have to remember to say all or a part of the prayers mentally or vocally, by kneeling down or walking without forgetting to serve the sick first.

**21** When on duty during the night you have to avoid long talks unless is something regading the sick's service.

**22** Everyone will take care of the sick when they are in need as soon as possible and this has to be done when on duty forever and for all.

<sup>43</sup> **23** When during night shift there will be some dying sick, you have to help them and assist them by lighting a candle and reminding them of something spiritual. If other sick are calling for help you have to take care of them but right after that you have to go back to the one who's dying. Once the person passed away, give their name to the superior, the same thing has to be done when more than one person is dying.

**24** Everyone will visit more often the ones that are not doing well and will make sure that no one will die without receiving the Sacraments in particular the Extreme Unction and the Soul's recommandation.

**REGOLE CHE S'OFFERUANO DA NOSTRI FRATELLI NELL' HOSPITALE  
MAGGIORE DI MILANO PER SERVIRE CON OGNI PERFETTIONE I POUERI  
INFERMI.**

- 1 *Quelli fratelli, che non hanno fatto la guardia, subito che saranno svegliati si vestino, accomodino il loro letto, et dato il segno dell'oratione mentale vadino al loco perciò deputato.*
- 2 *Finita l'ora dell'oratione ciascheduno vadi nella sua crocera, et ivi facci quel tanto, che li tocca secondo il suo officio.*
- 3 *Quel fratello, che va in guardia à qualche crocera, prima vedi se vi è da dare à mangiare à qualche infermo anticipatamente per la febre, et in tal caso gli dia quel tanto, ch'il fratello infermiere corporale haverà ordinato. Di poi dij à recentare la bocca à poveri usando diligenza nel nettare le lingue, osservando quel tanto, che perciò è ordinato, dando anco alli poveri i vasi di vetro per l'orina, è stia in detta crocera per insino un'ora, è mezza avanti il desinare de poveri.<sup>44</sup>*
- 4 *Quel fratello, che starà in guardia in quella crocera de fratelli, quali la notte hanno vigilato, li sveglij all'ora deputata dai superiori, et ritornato à basso rivolti la mezz'ora.*
- 5 *Nissuno si parti dalle crocere quando stà in guardia, se prima non avisa un'altro fratello, quale in suo luogo habbia cura; acciò i poveri non patiscino.*

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**25** Everybody will do all these services with diligence to honor our Lord and remembering the Gospel's words "What you have done to him you did it to me", by doing so you will gain eternal life.

(Vanti, 1964, p. 301-304)

<sup>44</sup> **RULES TO SERVE WITH PERFECTION THE SICK FOR THE BROTHERS AT MAGGIORE HOSPITAL IN MILAN**

**1** Those brothers who were not on duty, as soon as they wake up have to get dressed, make their bed, pray and go where they are told.

**2** After prayer time everyone has to go back to their ward and finish what they were doing.

**3** That brother who is in charge of rounds has to check if there is someone who needs to be fed ahead of time because of the fever, in such case he will have to give the sick only whatever the corporal nurse ordered. After feeding them he will clean their mouth and rinse their tongue, then he will distribute the urinals, he will stay in that ward for an hour and a half to take care of the povers' desires.

- 6** *Nel tempo ch'il medico fa la visita tutti li fratelli si trovino in crocera per i bisogni, ch'occorrono in tal tempo.*
- 7** *Aprosimandosi l'ora del desinare de' poveri ogn'uno facci quel tanto, che secondo il suo officio deve, et dopo che haveranno desinato si levino le scudelle, quando si darà il segno, avertendo d'andare spesso à torno quando si mangia per agiutare i gravi ricoprendoli l'inverno per ripararli dal freddo, e levando le tavoline si ponghino fra i letti.*
- 8** *Finito il pranso de poveri, è dato il segno d'andare in Sacrestia, subito vadino tutti, osservandosi l'istesso ogni volta, che si da detto segno, et da quest'ora insino al tempo di fare i letti staranno in guardia sei fratelli tre per ogn'ora, et divisi uno per crocera; e questi saranno quelli quattro ch'hanno fatto la guardia quella notte, et quelli doi, che fecero la prima notte antecedente dividendosi conforme il solito.*<sup>45</sup>
- 9** *Quando si darà il segno di fare li letti per i poveri ogn'uno vadi con prestezza alla sua crocera, et facci i letti con il compagno datogli dal superiore con il quale farà anco la guardia la notte, et nel fare i letti s'osservi il modo solito.*
- 10** *Accomodati che saranno i letti ciascuno stii nella sua crocera, et nissuno si parti senza prima avisare il fratello Infermiere corporale, et dandosi il segno della cena de' poveri s'osservi il modo sopradetto del desinare.*
- 11** *Finita la cena de poveri, et dato il segno si vadi in Sacrestia, et ivi li fratelli infermieri corporali avisino quelli, che vanno in guardia di quello, che ci è da fare.*

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<sup>45</sup> **4** The brother who is in charge of the rooms has to wake the brothers who were on duty up at the time decided by the Superior and turn the hour glass.

**5** No one is allowed to leave the ward unless he lets one of his brother know who will cover the ward for him so that the sick won't suffer.

**6** When the doctor makes rounds all the brohers have to be in the ward to take care of the various needs.

**7** When taking care of the sick, everyone has to do the chores assigned, after meals, when the sign is received, the dishes have to taken away paying attention to the ones who have trouble eating, in the winter time you have to cover the sick to protect them from getting cold .

**8** After the poors' lunch, the sign is given to go to Sacristy and everybody has to go, and from this time until the time to make the beds six brothers will be on duty, three for each hour and one for each ward; and these will be the four who have been on duty the night before, and two who were on duty the night before them.

- 12 Dandosi il segno di benedire i cibi de poveri vadino al luogo deputato, et ivi rispondino con devotione.*
- 13 Nissuno dij minestra all'amalati, ne altra cosa da mangiare eccetto quel tanto ch'haverà ordinato il medico, et ne anco le dia il Fr. Infermiero corporale.*
- 14 Quando si stà in guardia bisognando ponere à letto qualch'amalato venuto di nuovo, si chiami il fratello infermero corporale di quella crocera. Et parimente non si mutino l'amalati dall'uno all'altro letto senza consentimento del detto fratello.<sup>46</sup>*
- 15 Non si pigli dall'altre crocere cosa veruna senza licenza del fratello infermiero Generale.*
- 16 Quando il P. Sacerdote amministrarà il Santissimo Sacramento dell'altare ai poveri sarà accompagnato da quattro fratelli havendo le cotte, con quattro torce accese ponendo la tovaglia il fratello infermiero Generale, et l'altri fratelli con una candelina accesa dia la purificatione, et usino diligenza acciò non resti il Santissimo Sacramento in bocca alli amalati, à quali anco ricordino qualche cosa spirituale.*
- 17 Nissuno de nostri ardischi di domesticarsi con qualsivoglia ufficiale dell'Hospitale, ò altri secolari, ne parli con essi, ò tratti eccetto di cose appartenenti al servizio de gl'infermi, ma se li dia quell'edificatione, che si conviene à servi di Dio.*
- 18 Tra il giorno habbi cura dell'Horologio: et di suonare il campanello il fratello Infermiero corporale, ò spirituale di quella crocera, ch'ha fatto la guardia quella notte.<sup>47</sup>*

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<sup>46</sup> **9** When the sign to make the beds is given, everyone has to go to their ward and has to make the beds with the brother assigned by the Superior with whom he'll be on duty at night; when making the beds you have to observe the usual.

**10** Once te beds are made everyone has to stay in the ward, and nobody has to leave unless they let the corporal nurse know, and when it is time for dinner it has to be followed the way explained before.

**11** After the poors'dinner, you have to go to Sacristy and here the brothers who are corporal nurses will tell the ones on duty what to do.

**12** After blessing the poors's food you have to go where you are told and there you will act with devotion.

**13** No one will give the sick broth or other food unless it is ordered by the doctor or by the corporal nurse.

**14** When you are on duty and you have to put a new sick person to bed, you have to call the brother who is the ward's corporal nurse. The sick don't have to be moved from one bed to onother without that brother's consent.



*19 Quando si dice la Messa, et le Letanie nissuno stij fuori della feriatata, eccetto il fratello Infermiere Generale, è i giorni, che si communicano non si partino dall'altare fin che non sij dato il segno, quale sarà dopo un quarto d' hora.*

*20 Essendo alcun povero in agonia di morte vi stij sempre uno de nostri facendo oratione, et dicendoli alcune cose spirituali osservando in ciò il modo solito, et in caso che detto moriente andasse alla lunga vi stia un' hora per uno tenendo il crocifisso, l' aqua benedetta, il libro per la raccomandatione dell' anima, et il lumino acceso, et dopo che sarà morto se li facci il funerale essendovi il P. Sacerdote accompagnato da tre fratelli, de quali uno porti la croce, et gl' altri li ceri accesi.*<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> **15** Nothing has to be taken from other wards unless the General nurse said so.

**16** When the Priest will give the poor the Holy Sacrament from the altar he will be accompanied by four brothers with four lighted torches, the General nurse will put the table cloth on the table, and the other brothers with small candles will give purification, also they will use diligence to avoid that the Holy Sacrament will stay in the sick's mouth and they will remind them of something spiritual.

**17** None of our brothers has to be close or talk to the hospital's officials or others unless is something regarding the sick's service.

**18** During the day the ward's spiritual or corporal nurse who's been on duty during the night will take care of the clock and of ringing the bell.

<sup>48</sup> **19** During Mass and prayers nobody must be outside of the gate, except for the General nurse, and during the days of confession you are not allowed to leave the altar until you receive the sign which will be given after fifteen minutes.

**20** If somebody is dying one of us has to be there praying all the times and saying spiritual things as usual, and in the case the person is in agony for a long time you will be relieved by another brother after one hour. You will hold the cross, the holy water, the book for souls' recommendation and a lighted candle, and after he passes away the funeral will be celebrated by he priest and three brothers: one will carry the cross and the others the lighted candles.

## II. Regole per li fratelli, che fanno la prima guardia di Notte

- 1 *Quelli doi fratelli, à quali tocca fare la prima guardia anderanno à basso l'ora deputata dal superiore, et ivi staranno fin mezza notte secondo la diversità de tempi.*
- 2 *Gionti in crocera vedino se vi è il brodo consumato, et l'ova con tutto ciò, che è necessario per reficiare i poveri la notte pigliando anco la minestra per i tardanti, à quali daranno da cena dopo la declinatione della febre, regolandosi in ogni cosa secondo le liste, quali troveranno nella credenza fatte da gli fratelli Infermieri corporali.*
- 3 *Vadino spesso d'intorno per tutto, et visitino i gravi, et nel parlare, et camminare non faccino strepito.*
- 4 *Vedendo alcun'amalato gravarsi di modo che bisognasse darli l'olio Santo, subito avisino quel Padre Sacerdote, che è di Settimana.*
- 5 *Levino l'aqua mezz'ora avanti mezza notte à quelli amalati, che la mattina seguente s'hanno da comunicare, e questo s'osservi quando il P. Sacerdote l'ordinerà.<sup>49</sup>*
- 6 *Nell'estate subito gionti in guardia diano un poco d'aqua à tutti li poveri avvertendo da dare della ferrata à flussanti, et della dolce à quelli ch'hanno mal di puntura, et rivedino spesso i lumi, che sono accesi per tutto l'Hospitale.*

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### <sup>49</sup> RULES FOR THE BROTHERS WHO ARE ON DUTY ON FIRST SHIFT AT NIGHT

- 1 Those two brothers, who are on duty will go in the wards at the time decided by the Superior and they will remain there until midnight.
- 2 At the beginning of the shift they have to check that there is some soup, eggs and everything necessary for the sick who couldn't eat until their fever went down following the corporal nurses' lists.
- 3 They have to make ronds very often and when walking and talking they have to be careful not to make noise.
- 4 If they see that a sick is getting worse, they have to call the priest on duty during that week.
- 5 They have to take the water away from those sick who will receive comunion the next day, and this has to be respected when ordered by the priest.

- 7 Dopo che saranno reficiati i poveri, et dato à mangiare à tardanti, se li resta tempo facciano l'oratione mentale della mattina un'hora per uno, overo mezza hora, conforme il tempo che resta.*
- 8 Quando vi è alcun moriente supplisca con esso il fratello Infermiere Generale, et questo s'osservi alla prima guardia.*
- 9 Bisognandoli lenzuoli per li gravi li piglino dalli letti acconci della istessa crocera, nella quale sono detti gravi.*
- 10 Finalmente sveglino la seconda guardia all'hora deputata dal Superiore andando per la scala del fosso, et gionti abasso quell'altri fratelli l'informino de quanto haveranno fatto, et delli accidenti avvenuti circa febricitanti, et gravi, acciò essi la mattina n'avisino i fratelli in fermieri corporali.<sup>50</sup>*

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<sup>50</sup> **6** In the summer time at the beginning of the shift they have to give the poor some water and they have to check the lights all over the hospital.

**7** After taking care of the sick and feeding the laggard, if there is some time left they have to pray one or half an hour each, according to the time left.

**8** When somebody is dying, the General nurse will stay with him.

**9** When they need sheets for the very ill ones, they have to take them from the beds already made.

**10** They have to wake the second shift up at the time decided by the Superior walking from the ditch's steps, letting the other brothers know what happened and what it was done so that they can inform the other brothers and the corporal nurses in the morning.

### III. Regole per li fratelli, che fanno la seconda guardia

- 1 *Quelli fratelli della seconda guardia si ritirerano all' hora deputata dal Superiore per riposarsi, è subito che saranno chiamati si vestino, è scendino abasso informandosi di quanto li reterà di fare in servizio de poveri.*
- 2 *Vadino rivedendo spesso i gravi, è se vi sarà alcun moriente vi stiano un' hora per uno attendendo l' altro alla cura di tutte le crocere.*
- 3 *Levino li siropi solamente à coloro, che la mattina seguente hanno da fare la Santa Communione, è restandoli tempo si facci l' oratione mentale della mattina seguente.*
- 4 *Vedendo alcun' amalato aggravarsi di modo che bisognasse darli l' olio Santo, subito avisino quel Padre Sacerdote, che è di settimana.*
- 5 *Gionta l' hora di svegliare tutte li nostri, mezz' hora avanti sveglino il sottobarbiero della loro crociera acciò dij siropi, et medicine à poveri, la qual finita vadi il fratello infermiere ò corporale, ò spirituale per la scala del fosso à svegliare tutti dando il lume prima al Padre superiore di poi al fratello infermiere generale, et all' altri, et nell' inverno accendi le lampade della scala, et de luoghi communi ricordandosi di spegnersi quando si ritira.<sup>51</sup>*

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<sup>51</sup> **RULES FOR THE BROTHERS WHO ARE ON DUTY ON SECOND SHIFT**

**1** The second shift's brothers will get some rest at the time decided by the Superior and if they are called they have to get dressed and go to serve the sick.

**2** They have to do rounds often and if somebody is dying they have to stay next to that person one hour each and covering all the wards.

**3** They have to take the syrups away only from those who have to take comunion the next day, and if there is some time left they have to say the next day's prayers.

**4** If they see that a sick is getting worse, they have to call the priest on duty during that week.

**5** When it's time to wake the other brothers up, they have to wake the brother in charge of giving syrups and medicine to the poor half an hour earlier. After that they will proceed to wake the others up living the candle to the Superior Father first, then to the general nurse and then to the others, and during the winter they have to light the candles on the stairs and in the other rooms remembering to turn them off when they leave.

- 6 *Finito ch'haverà di svegliare vadi è basso, et volti la mezz'ora, la quale parimente finita dij il segno con il campanello dell'oratione mentale, et volti l'ora per detta oratione.*
- 7 *Finalmente discesi i fratelli infermieri corporali dij minuto raguaglio di quanto sarà accaduto la notte nelle loro crocere, et in particolare se fosse ad alcun grave, ò altro amalato venuto qualche nuovo accidente accioche la mattina detti fratelli possino del tutto fare consapevole il medico, et data si fatta informatione si ritirino in camera.*<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> 6 Once they are finished to wake everybody up, they will turn the hour glass and when this is finished they will ring the prayer's bell making sure to turn the hour glass one more time.

7 Once the corporal nurse arrives in the ward, they have to give them report so that they can let the doctor know about any changes regarding the sick's health. After this, they can go back to their room.

#### IV. Regole per il fratello Infermiere corporale

- 1 *Primieramente procuri con diligenza di cibare i poveri, et reficiarli secondo quel tanto, ch'ordina il medico la mattina, et nell'hore determinate.*
- 2 *Subito che vengono amalati nella sua crocera li ponghi à letto senza farli aspettare, ponendoci le lenzuola netta, et nelle cariole accompagni chi ha rognà insieme, et di poi scrivi l'amalato alla lista della confessione.*
- 3 *Dia le prune, aranzi, et brodi è quell'hora ch'ordina il medico.*
- 4 *Ponghi il segno à flussanti, idropici, et à quelli, ch'hanno il vomito, ò pontura.*
- 5 *La sera avanti la cena de poveri, facci la visita, facendo tardare quelli che stanno nell'eccesso della febre, li scrivi poi alla lista per la guardia notandovi anco quello, che se li deve dare, et se vi è qualche grave, che non habbi havuto l'olio Santo lonoti nella lista.*
- 6 *La mattina quando viene il medico l'informi d'ogni cosa minutamente et di quanto, è occorso il giorno antecedente.*
- 7 *Quando ha posto al letto qualch'infermo li dimandi della sua infirmità del tempo, se è purgato, et à che hora viene la febre per poterli anticipare il mangiare, et avisarne il medico.<sup>53</sup>*
- 8 *Ogni Domenica pigli dal consegniero quattro sciugamani, et quattro zenali et li ritorni brutti, et l'istesso facci il giovedì.*

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<sup>53</sup> **Rules for the Corporal nurse Brother**

1 First of all he has to feed the poor in the morning and during the other times based on doctor's orders.

2 As soon as the sick arrive in the ward he has to put them to bed without having them wait, covering them with clean sheets; he has to carry the ones with plague on the stretcher, and then he has to write their names on the confession's list.

3 He has to give prunes, oranges and soup at the time ordered by the doctor.

4 He has to mark the ones who are vomiting, have a fever, are dehydrated.

5 In the evening, before dinner he has to visit the sick and he will make the ones who have a fever wait, he will write them on the list for the next shift writing down what they have to take, also if there is someone who's dying and who didn't receive the Holy Oil, he has to write them on that list.

6 In the morning he has to give the doctor a detailed report on what happened during his shift.

7 When he puts somebody to bed he has to ask them about their illness, if they received a purge, and at what time their fever raises so that they can be fed earlier but also to make the doctor aware of that.

- 9 Bisognandoli manuschristi, stillato, ò altro, cose di speciaria le dimandi al barbiero della sua crocera.*
- 10 Quando s'approssima l'ora del pranso, et cena de poveri avisi i fratelli che s'apparecchi.*
- 11 Scopi la sua camera una volta lui, et l'altra il suo compagno, è que sto il Mercordi, et il Sabbatho.*
- 12 Il giorno appresso à quello ch'ha fatto la seconda guardia nell'ora dell'oratione stij in guardia nella sua crocera, et l'istesso osservi il giorno che la notte seguente li tocca la prima guardia restando una volta lui, et un'altra il compagno.*
- 13 Tenghi chiusa la cassa dove sono riposte le cose da reficiare i poveri.*
- 14 Bisognandoli alcuna cosa per servitio de suoi infermi ne facci avisato il Padre Superiore, et non la dimandi alli Signori Priore, ò deputati di settimana, ne ad altri ufficiali.<sup>54</sup>*

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<sup>54</sup> **8** Every Sunday he has to take four clean towels and four aprons and has to return the dirty ones; the same thing he has to do in on Thursdays.

**9** He has to ask the ward's barber for supplies when he needs them.

**10** He has to let the brothers know when it's lunch or dinner time so that they can set the tables.

**11** On Wednesdays and Saturdays him and his roommate have to take turns and clean their room.

**12** During prayer time he has to take turns with his brother to stay in the ward.

**13** He has to keep the case where the things for the poor are kept locked at all times.

**14** If he needs something to serve his sick he has to let the Superior know, he doesn't have to ask to anybody else.

## V. Regole per il fratello, che fa il sotto Infermiere corporale

- 1 *Il principale suo pensiero sij in assenza del fratello Infermiere corporale d'attendere, che s'osservi quanto da quello sarà stato ordinato.*
- 2 *Non ponghi à letto alcun povero, quando l'infermiere è in casa, ne similmente distribuischi alcuna cosa all'infermi senza licenza del detto fratello infermiere.*
- 3 *Avanti il desinare, et cenare de poveri li dij à lavare le mani ponendo l'inverno è scaldare l'acqua, et ponghi i tavolini con li mantini sopra è ciascun povero.*
- 4 *Quella mattina, che la sua crociera è di guardia, se lui ha fatto la seconda nell'ora dell'oratione mentale stij nella crociera di quelli, ch'hanno fatto la guardia insin un'ora, è mezza avanti il desinare de poveri.*
- 5 *Finalmente sveglj li fratelli, ch'hanno fatto la guardia all'ora deputata dal Superiore, et volti poi è la mezza hora.<sup>55</sup>*

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<sup>55</sup> **Rules for the vice Corporal Nurse**

1 His first thought is to make sure that the corporal nurse's orders are followed if he's not around.

2 He doesn't have to put anybody to bed or he doesn't have to feed anybody unless the corporal nurse tells him to.

3 Before meals he has to wash the sick's hands, during the winter time he has to warm the water; also he has to set their tables.

4 In the morning, when he's on duty he has to stay in the ward when the other brothers are praying.

5 Finally, he has to wake up the brothers who were on duty according with the time established by the Superior, then he has to turn the hour glass.



## **VI. Regole per il fratello Infermiere Spirituale**

- 1 La sua principal cura sarà in preparare, et disporre i poveri è ricevere i Santissimi Sacramenti cioè della penitenza, della comunione, dell'olio Santo, et perciò gionti, che sono l'amalati a letto li prepari.*
- 2 Vedendo ch'alcun'amalato s'agravi nella sua crocera li facci le proteste, et avisi il Padre Sacerdote per l'Olio Santo ricordandosi di fare che guadagni la Indulgenza Plenaria per mezzo della Medaglia, et ponendosi alcun in agonia vi ponghi il Crocifisso, il libro del raccomandare l'anima, il vaso dell'aqua Santa con il lumino acceso, et sij lui il primo ad assistervi per un'ora.*
- 3 Insegni il Pater noster, l'Ave Maria, et il Credo, et li dieci Comandamenti à chi non li sà nella sua crocera.*
- 4 Prepari il tavolino per la Santissima Comunione, et dell'Olio Santo per la sua crocera, quando è bisogno.*
- 5 Quando il fratello sotto Infermiere corporale da à lavare le mani à poveri esso porti sciugamani, et dij i cucchiari à ciascuno numerandoli ogni volta, che sarà finito il mangiare.<sup>56</sup>*
- 6 Quella mattina, che la sua crocera è di guardia dij è recentare la bocca alli poveri in quella nettandoli le lingue, et dispensando i vasi di vetro per l'orina.*

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<sup>56</sup> **Rules for the Spiritual Nurse brother**

**1** His major duty is to prepare the sick to receive the Sacraments, that is penitence, comunione, Holy oil.

**2** If he notices that one of the sick is getting worse, he has to call the Priest for the Holy oil remembering to have him gain the Plenary Indulgence, and when someone is in agony he has to put the cross, the book to recommed the soul, the vase with holy water with the lighted candel next to him. He has to be the first one to assist him for one hour.

**3** He has to teach Our Father, Hail Mary and the ten Commandments to those who don't know them.

**4** He has to prepare the Holy Comunione and the Holy Oil's table, when needed.

**5** When the vice Corporal Nurse is washing the sick's hands he has to bring towels, and give them spoons counting them each time and collecting them again after meals.

- 7 *Havendosi da fare la Santissima Comunione nella sua crocera avisi i poveri da Comunicarsi la sera avanti, che passata la mezza notte non bevino, et s'essaminino se son ben confessati, acciò la mattina si possino ben riconciliare.*
- 8 *In quei giorni, che nella sua crocera non si fa la Santissima Comunione rasetti i letti alli poveri con il fratello, che e sotto Infermiere corporale.*
- 9 *Tutte le feste di precetto avisi i poveri svegliando quelli, che dormono acciò si preparino a sentire Messa.*<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> **6** When he is on duty in the morning, he will clean the sick's mouths and he will distribute urinals.

**7** The night before comunion he has to let the sick know so that they can confess, and after midnight they have to fast.

**8** During the days in which the sick don't take Holy Comunion, he has to make their beds with the vice corporal nurse.

**9** During Holy days of obligation he has to let the poor know, waking the ones who are sleeping up, so that they can ge ready to listen to Mass.

## VIII. Regole per il fratello sotto Infermiere Spirituale

- 1 *Habbia pensiero d'accendere le lampade nella sua crocera per tutto mantenendole nette, et nell'inverno ancora riponere le candele di sevo in mezzo della crocera, cosi anco levi i vasetti d'orina de poveri, et lavati li ponghi in consegna.*
- 2 *Suoni l'esame di coscienza quella sera appresso il giorno, ch'ha fatto la guardia facendola durare un quarto d'hora, et riponghi l'Horologio, et il campanello nella finestra di quelli, che fanno la guardia l'istessa notte.*
- 3 *Quel giorno, che è franco rispondi alla prima messa, et quando la notte ha fatto la guardia la mattina seguente rispondi alla seconda; perliche dato il segno della messa vadi subito in Sacrestia.*
- 4 *Quel giorno, che la sua crocera è di guardia vadi in quella di coloro, che in quel giorno sono franchi recentando la bocca à poveri, nettandoli le lingue, et dia i vasetti di vetro à febricitanti, et ivi dimori insin'un'hora, è mezza avanti il desinare de poveri.*
- 5 *Quel fratello, che è sotto Infermiere Spirituale del fosso habbia cura del lume, che stà in Sacrestia, et l'accomodi, et quel del Prato habbi cura del lume della scala, et de luoghi communi.*
- 6 *Finalmente i giorni di festa alla prima Messa risponderanno quelli doi fratelli sotto infermieri spirituali, delle due crocere, che sono basso.*<sup>58</sup>

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### <sup>58</sup> Rules for the vice Spiritual Nurse brother

1 He has to light his ward's lamps keeping them clean, and in the winter time he will keep spare candles in the ward, also, he will collect the full urinals and after washing them he will put them away.

2 He has to ring the bell for the conscience exam and he will make it last for fifteen minutes, then he will put the clock and the bell on the window of those who will be on duty that same night.

3 On his days off he will attend the first Mass, when he's on duty during the night he will go to the second mass and after that he will go to the Sacristy.

4 When he's on duty he has to cover the wards of those brothers who are off, clearing the poor's mouths, distributing the urinals. He has to stay there for one and a half hour.

5 The brother who's in charge of the ditch is responsible for the Sacristy's lamp and the one who's in charge of the Grass is responsible for the stairs' lamp.

6 Finally, on holidays the two vice Spiritual nurses who are on duty in the first floor's wards will attend the first Mass. (Vanti, 1964, p. 406-412)

In these regulations, which may be regarded as the precursors of the nursing code of ethics, there are the first signs of the turning point in the assistance concept; the generic care is no longer sufficient, it must be a specific and qualified assistance: the nursing assistance.<sup>59</sup>

Camillo's reform was based on the fact that medicine, the hospital and all the staff had to be at the sick's service and not the sick who had to be subject to the crew's interest of scientific and economic convenience.<sup>60</sup>

Camillo de Lellis' rules acquire an important relevance because they identify already in the seventeenth century the need for prepared nurses, capable of performing the necessary care in a continuous manner even in the physician's absence - that is, in most part of the day- and who are able to report the patient's health conditions "Fast in helping the sick, valuable doctor's collaborator, complementary actor to his work, Camillus de Lellis is the figure of the 'ideal nurse."<sup>61</sup>

The one outlined by Camillo de Lellis, is a nurse who, at this point, has professional and psychological autonomy against the doctor and is not yet characterized by the attitude of servility, ancillary function to the doctor, who will develop with the professional claim of the latter, which in turn will assume a more authoritative behavior.<sup>62</sup>

### ***4.3 A forgotten innovator***

Despite being the precursor to all those who have studied medicine and hospital organization, Saint Camillus is not mentioned when talking about the innovations that have been made to the history of medicine and nursing. Giorgio Cosmacini, philosopher and historian of medicine and health, explains that "His intuition - referring to Camillus-is that the patient must be taken care of in the body according to the best and most modern medical knowledge and must be assisted in the soul so that he can cope better with the suffering and, in the case, the passage through death. " Camillus realizes that the ideal nurse must have a good culture for the latest hygienic and medical knowledge, talk with the doctors and be a mediator in their relationships with patients. Even today, these

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<sup>59</sup> (Manzoni, 2011)

<sup>60</sup> (Sironi, 1993)

<sup>61</sup> (Cosmacini, 1989, p. 198)

<sup>62</sup> (Dimonte, 1993, p. 28)

principles are present in the nursing code of ethics drawn up by the National Federation of Boards IPASVI in 2009:

**Chapter III Article 11** The nurse bases his/her actions on validated knowledge and updates his/ her knowledge and skills through lifelong learning, critical reflection on experience and research. He/ she designs, develops and participates in training activities. Promotes, activates and participates in research and ensures the dissemination of the results<sup>63</sup>.

In addition to the body's assistance, the nurse must be able to take charge of the spirit's assistance. Something radically different from what was happening in hospitals at that time, where the sick were left to themselves and the nurses were rude and ignorant. Camillus defines an overall assistance. An assistance which takes care of the patient physically, morally and spiritually. An Holistic care that does not divide the man, but it holds together his whole being, a humanistic conception of care inspired by the Christian vision of the man. The Ministers of the Sick address the care of the sick as a mission, with care and efficiency. These, as a congregation, are able to assume fully the hospitals organization giving birth to what we now know as nursing management. Today, we talk a lot about humanization. We have to think that this is a concept that Camillus already applied in 1500: patients are not just the objects of a therapy, but they are part of their own plan of care. Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross, and Florence Nightingale, modern nursing's inspirer, based their own innovative thinking on what Saint Camillus said three centuries before. In Italy nursing's evolution before the "Lady of the Lamp", which will resume Camillus' concept of hygiene, a proper diet, light and silence, has been largely underestimated or even ignored. The attention that has been given to the outstanding experience of this English nurse has brought down the oblivion on everything that happened before. It has started increasingly spreading the idea that we could just talk about nursing from Florence Nightingale and that before her there was only one set of caring figures without any training and motivation. This can be explained by the fact that the Italian nursing history does not conform to Nightingale vision of the profession or because, compared to her model of perfection, it should be reduced to a minor phenomenon and so not conformable.

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<sup>63</sup> (IPASVI F. n., 2009)

## CONCLUSIONS

*"While the hands are doing their part, the eyes must check that the sick is not missing anything, the ears are open to hear commands and desires, the tongue has to urge the poor to be patient, the mind and the heart have to pray God for him. "*

Camillus was a saint of charitable activity and overwhelming deep interior life. Of him it has been rightly said that he was a contemplative in action. Very well known are his expressions: *"The hospital is my garden fragrant and delicious!", "I don't think that there is so fragrant field of flowers, which delights me so much, as the hospital smells" "I like the music the poor sick make in the hospital when they call me and say: Father, rinse my mouth, make my bed, warm my feet."*

Francesco Agnoli in his book " La grande storia della carità" writes:

"It can be basically said that Camillus was the the modern nursing true inventor "<sup>64</sup>

St. Camillus' reforms in the history of medicine and nursing's panorama are proof that in Italy, before Florence Nightingale, a part of the world of culture and science reserved a significant attention to the need for adequately educated nurses and the quality of work that they provided. The search for articles on nursing history in the major databases regarding this " Italian nursing's Pioneer " has proven to be poor. There was, in fact, no historical method's research that talked about him and his contribution to the nursing profession. In light of the research work carried out for the writing of this thesis, it can be said that Camillus' reforms are proof that when Florence Nightingel's nursing theory arrived to Italy there wasn't an empty space, but already a traditional nursing training that deserves to be rediscovered and re-evaluated by historians of our time.

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<sup>64</sup> "The big story of charity" (Agnoli, 2013, p. 122)

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