



1-1-2005

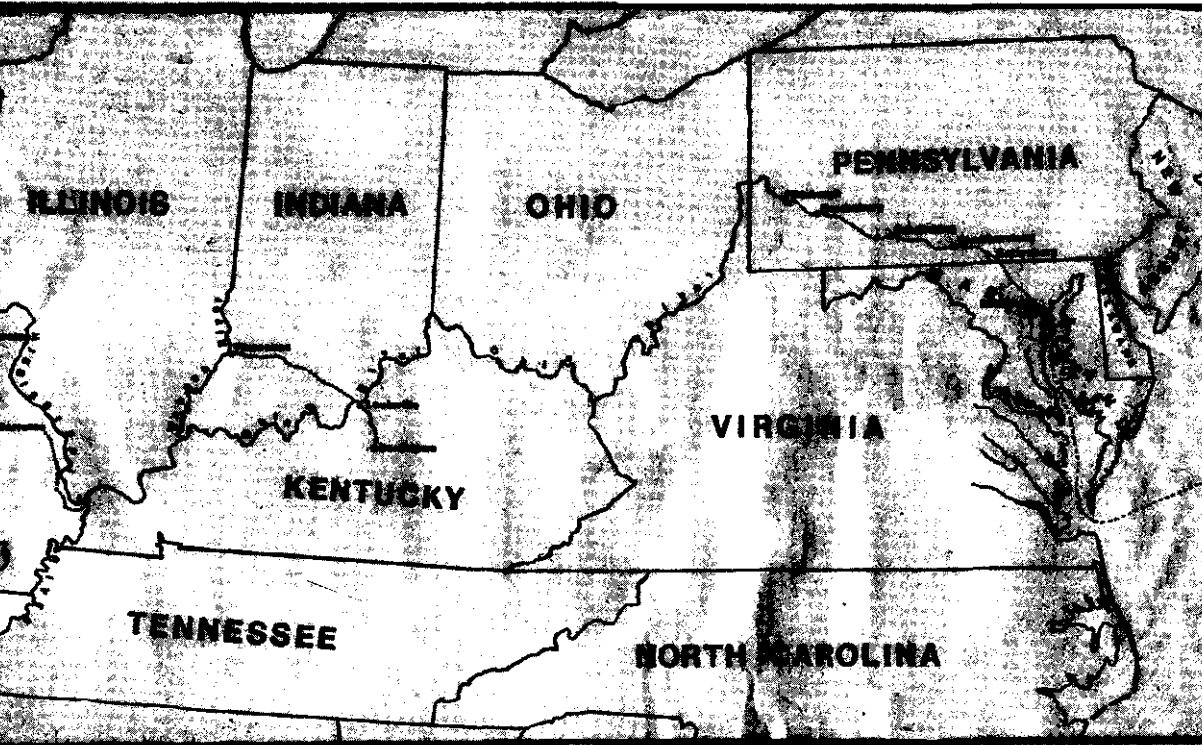
Correspondence: before 1816

Recommended Citation

"Correspondence: before 1816" (2005). *Frontier Missionary: Felix DeAndreis, C.M.*. Paper 9.
http://via.library.depaul.edu/frontier_missionary/9

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Vincentian Studies Institute Monographs & Publications at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Frontier Missionary: Felix DeAndreis, C.M.* by an authorized administrator of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact mbernal2@depaul.edu.

I
CORRESPONDENCE



This map depicts the overland journey taken by the first Vincentians from Baltimore to the Barrens. They navigated down the Ohio River to Louisville, and from there to the Mississippi.

Collection of the Vincentian Studies Institute

BEFORE 1816

The earliest letter, now disappeared, was an assignment to China. Felix treasured this document. His brother Vincenzo also treasured the letters he received from Felix, which speak of his love and reverence for his father and for the other members of his family. Felix commonly included brotherly exhortations to Vincenzo to take good spiritual care of himself, something he probably was not doing. Two documents have been included which are not strictly letters but, being dated, give good information about Felix's concerns: as a teacher (number 3), and as an author of a spiritual book (number 6). His letter to the vicar general in Rome begins the narrative of his missionary life in America.

1. TO FELIX DE ANDREIS, C.M.¹

(Between 1801 and 1803)

Be prepared to leave for the mission you desire so much. You are destined for China, and you and your companions will be able to see in these circumstances the designs of divine providence. To accomplish its purposes it makes use of truly unforeseen means.²

(François Brunet)³

¹ **Letter 1.** Cited in *Raffaele Ricciardelli, Vita del servo di Dio Felice de Andreis. Fondatore e primo superiore della Congregazione della Missione negli Stati Uniti d'America (Roma: Industria tipografica Romana, 1923), 17.*

² Rosati noted that a group of Russian Orthodox women in Saint Petersburg used to raise funds to support the travel of Catholic missionaries to China. For reasons unknown, the mission was called off. (Also see the complete version in Joseph Rosati, C.M., "Life of De Andreis," in the "Summarium super dubio," in *Sacra Rituum Congregatione. Sancti Ludovici. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Felicis de Andreis. Positio super introductione causae* (Rome: Guerra et Mirri, 1918), 99. (Hereinafter cited as Rosati, "Life," *Summarium*.) The original of Rosati's "Life of De Andreis" can be found in the Archives of the Postulator General of the Congregation of the Mission, Rome (De Andreis papers), 60 pages, in Rosati's own hand. The manuscript features two title pages: *Quelques souvenirs touchant la vie et les vertus de M^r Felix De Andreis Prêtre de la Congⁿ de la Mission et 1^{er} Supérieur de la Mission des Etats Unis d'Amérique mort à S' Louis*; and *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la Vie de M^r Félix De Andreis Visiteur de la Congⁿ de la Mission aux Etats Unis et Vicaire General du Diocèse de la N^{lle} Orléans mort à S' Louis*. The second, less accurate, title was probably added later, as it refers to him as a Visitor.

*Correspondence before 1816***2. TO VINCENZO DE ANDREIS, DEMONTE⁴**

Rome
29 July 1812

My dearest brother,

I still remember the promise I made you a year ago in my last letter, that I would give you timely notice of my departure from here to our native region.⁵ I had, so to say, pen in hand ready to fulfill this promise. I had my traveling clothes ready and my trunk packed, and the time limit set for my departure in my passport, which I still have, was about to expire. Although I did not realize it, Providence, on which I rely completely, made use of a student of mine, a Chaldean from

³ François Brunet, French vicar general (12 February 1800 - 15 September 1806). No reference to Brunet's appointment of De Andreis has been found in Brunet's extant papers. De Andreis's name is given in letters from Brunet and others during that period, but nothing refers to his China assignment. Rosati, however, claims to have seen the letter. (Rosati, "Life," *Summarium*, 42.)

The reasons for not going to China are unclear, but seem to be that Felix was not French, and perhaps did not have the requisite skills to satisfy the emperor's wish for European scientists and mathematicians in his court (although De Andreis had studied mathematics at Piacenza). Brunet proposed three French Vincentians to Napoleon in February 1803, but their mission did not take place.

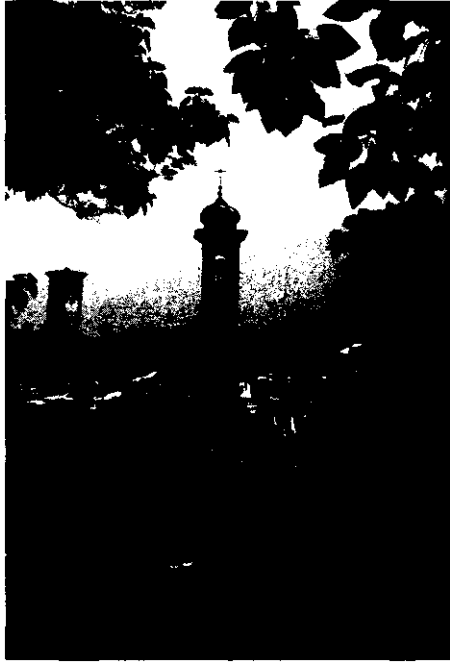
⁴ Letter 2. *Autograph letter, Italian, four pages with address, in provincial archives, Turin, De Andreis papers; copy in the archives of the General Curia, Rome; De Andreis collection, Volume XVI. Cited in Ricciardelli, Vita, 48-49, 105.*

Vincenzo was the half-brother of Felix, as he mentions in his Itinerary. From Vincenzo descended a numerous family.

⁵ The reason for his departure was a decree from the Napoleonic government demanding the removal of foreigners to their native countries. Since De Andreis was a Piedmontese, he had to leave. He put off his departure since he was teaching the foreign students of Propaganda Fide, such as the Chaldean from Nineveh mentioned below, who otherwise would have had no place to live. (Rosati, "Life," *Summarium*, 49.)

Correspondence before 1816

Nineveh, to cause a delay until the end of the academic year.⁶ There might even be some further delay. So, since my departure had been postponed, I thought I should just delay telling you of my coming as I had promised. Then this morning, quite unexpectedly, your dear letter of the 21st of this month was delivered to me. To my surprise, you informed me in it of your daring determination to undertake a trip to Rome in the near future. You can imagine how I felt at such news. It



The Parish Tower of Demonte.
Courtesy of the author

delights me greatly to know that I will have the joy of embracing you here after nearly ten years without our seeing each other. I was

⁶ This student is identified as Isaias di Giacobbe (using the Italian form of his name), who entered Monte Citorio in 1805 and left, after ordination, 29 May 1815. "He behaved himself very well in all things. Always humble, meek, obedient, devout, and a young man of the highest expectations, who made great progress in studies, especially in theology." ("Catalogus in quo praeter Convictorum nomina, eorum etiam qualitates adnotantur," Register of Students at Monte Citorio, 1720-1870, Archives of the Roman Province, 3.5.11, 35.)

Correspondence before 1816

particularly delighted with the possibility of enjoying your company on your return home. This would bring me unspeakable relief and comfort on the journey.

Since you have asked for my advice about undertaking this journey, I must admit to being perplexed and doubtful. What should I tell you? On the one hand, God knows how much I want to see you and embrace you. But on the other hand, although I love you greatly, I would not want to deceive you and have you regret risking a journey like this on my account. I realize that the trip is long—by public coach it would take you about twenty days, and so it would be very expensive. Besides, it would take place amid very critical circumstances. Because of them I could not show you the hospitality that I would do at other times. You would not be able to see the beautiful sights of this city, but only its misery and desolation. The mule, which you are counting on to finance your trip, would fetch only a pitiful price, since business is depressed here. Because of the great miseries, sellers are many and buyers are few, such that what is worth twenty goes for five or six. To give you at least some sense of these miseries, I will tell you only that I found I had to get rid of my pocket watch to be able to help some very fine people reduced to extreme poverty and begging. My heart could not bear having anything superfluous while my neighbors lacked even the bare essentials. There is another strong reason that I cannot tell you, but you will understand it through this note, at least in general outline. It would at least delay your planned departure. Lastly, if you came to Rome you might not find me here if I had already left, and this would greatly disappoint us both. Yet in spite of all this I don't intend to dissuade you from making your journey. Since you are looking for my agreement, however, let us do this: we will place the question in our father's hands. He should examine these issues with his well-known prudence, and he will be able decide what is to be done. You should accept his opinion as if it were my own.

I am greatly astonished and surprised that, in the detailed description you make in your letter about our people at home, you did not mention our sister Margherita, and you leave me in doubt whether this happened through forgetfulness or through some news that I don't know about.

Correspondence before 1816



M. FÉLIX DE ANDREIS

Prêtre de la Congrégation des Missionnaires de S. Vincent de Paul
Premier supérieur de cette Congrégation
aux États-Unis
et Vicaire général du diocèse de la Nouvelle-Orléans.

Engraving of Felix De Andreis.

Courtesy of De Andreis-Rosati Memorial Archives

Give my hearty regards to your brother-in-law, and my dear confrere [Filippo] Giriodi,⁷ and tell him that I long to embrace him

⁷ Filippo Giriodi was born in Demonte, 26 August 1781. Following De Andreis by a similar path, he entered the Congregation of the Mission in Mondovi, 29 September 1797, but left because of the government decree, 8 February 1799. He re-entered 9 December 1799, and moved from Turin, 21 December 1799, to study philosophy in Piacenza. After his ordination, he returned to Piacenza in November 1815 to teach theology, where he became the superior there, 13 February 1824. He died in Piacenza, 28 November 1842. (See a biographical notice in *Annales de la Congrégation de la Mission* 110-111 [1945-1946]: 382-83.)

Correspondence before 1816

once again. Who knows, if you put off your trip to Rome somewhat, perhaps he might be able to come with you. But for now, no. To tell the truth, I cannot understand why those two religious you spoke to me about want to come to Rome, where all [religious] corporations have been suppressed and foreigners have been expelled, and are still being expelled. Once they reached here they would perhaps even regret making the trip.

Please give our father, in my name, the most tender and respectful marks of my filial love for him, and offer to all the rest of the family and relatives, friends and acquaintances my most heartfelt regards. Tell them that they have all been remembered to everyone here.

Nothing is more important to me than Religion. As much as I know how and can, I recommend it to you as a good brother and as your missionary brother. For the blind young people of our day, religion is not normally very much in fashion, nor, especially, is frequenting the sacraments. Oh, how many times have I been afflicted with this somber thought: although I keep saying that I employ all the means which my weakness allows to instruct, direct and save souls in every way, may it never be true that the soul of one of my family should perish! This thought has horrified me. For this reason I pray daily to God at holy mass for everyone individually. But my love for you makes me fear that, in an age as perverse as this, one of today's terrible maxims might attack and ruin you. Dear Vincenzo, everything ends, and does so quickly. Eternity never ends, and begins when we least expect it.

Consider this advice as brotherly love. It does not come from a bad impression of you, since I rejoice at believing well of you and of everyone. If you postpone your arrival in Rome to a better time, I will give you a book about religion that I want to have printed.⁸ It will certainly please you, since, besides being instructive, you will find it curious, pleasant and delightful. The whole forms a general antidote

⁸ This book, by Henri Marie Dudon, was *Dio solo, ovvero la sacra lega proposta agli amanti di Dio da farsi in favore degl'interessi di quest'Essere Supremo* (Rome, 1667; another printing, 1807). The introduction to this Italian translation had caused it to be placed on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1688. De Andreis's involvement in publishing the 1807 edition, whether he translated it from the original or not, is unclear. He had profited spiritually from the book while he was a novice (Ricciardelli, 10). It caused some hesitation as to his orthodoxy at the time of his selection for the American mission. His translation of *Dio Solo* is found in the archives of the Roman Province, manuscript 14.3.15, but no printed copy seems to exist.

Correspondence before 1816

to the many poisonous booklets which have been spread about, and are still being spread to give illusions to the ignorant, to the negligent and the dissolute.

You want a response at least by the tenth or twelfth of this August, and I believe that you will have it.

The school bell is ringing now, and it obliges me to stop. Believe me that with all my heart I call myself

Your most affectionate brother

Felix,

unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.

P.S. Regards to Father [Filippo] Giriodi also from Father [Simone] Ugo.⁹

Addressed: To Mr. Vincenzo De Andreis, Coní [Cuneo] for Demonte.

Postmark: 116, Rome.

3. PREFACE TO *NORME ED AVVISI*¹⁰

(1814?)

In his bull establishing our Congregation, Pope Urban VIII of happy memory deigned to write a truly incomparable commendation of it. Something greater than this could not be imagined nor desired from the mouth of a Vicar of Christ. “[It is] an institute most acceptable to God, most useful to the Christian people, and truly necessary for God’s Church.” (12 January 1632) How important, therefore, is the

⁹ Simone Ugo, born 1780, succeeded Francesco Antonio Baccari as Visitor of the province of Rome.

¹⁰ **Letter 3.** *Preface taken from the printed copy of the book. Italian.*

This booklet was printed only in 1887, after the clerical students of the Congregation of the Mission had used it in manuscript form for many years. It can, however, be dated to around 1814, when De Andreis was involved in the education of Vincentian students in Rome. *Norme ed Avvisi per formare ed eseguire le principali funzioni della Congregazione della Missione proposti ai suoi giovani studenti dal Signor Felice de Andreis, Sacerdote della medesima Congregazione. Con Appendice del Sig. Almeras, Sup. Generale, sul metodo nostro di predicare* (Turin: Giulio Speirani e Figli, 1887), 127. This volume is a printed copy of “Trattino Didascalico Pratico ossia Istruzione Concionatoria”; the original is in the archives of the Roman Province, (14.3.15), entitled “De Andreis, Parte II.”

Correspondence before 1816

responsibility of its members who have the good fortune to be called by God to such an institute, and especially of those young men who are beginning to prepare themselves to become trained in being able to preserve always that same spirit which would elicit such a commendation.

Should by some misadventure a disregard of their own duties or a lazy indifference toward the good outcome of its functions come to be introduced in its members then that commendation would soon turn into rejection and the institute would no longer be pleasing to God but displeasing. It would no longer be useful to the people, nor any longer be necessary to the Church. It would thus become harmful and deserving of being suppressed and abolished.

Woe to that person who would cause such a ruin! In various assemblies of our Congregation it has already been established and decreed that the houses of study to care for future workers should soon provide a method of education and truly virtuous training that they [the candidates] might succeed in serving the Congregation fruitfully.¹¹

¹¹ The author seems to be referring to the decrees of the 16th General Assembly, held in 1788. If so, the reason why the Congregation did not put the decrees into practice was the French Revolution. The text of the decree of session 14 reads:

The superior general proposed several matters to regulate better the method of studies followed in the houses of Saint Lazare, Lyons and Cahors. The assembly judged them to be of great importance. He proposed: (1) That in the seminaries for our men two years be given to the study of philosophy, of which the second should also be spent in the study of the physical sciences; (2) that three years be given to theological studies, and that the last six months should be given over to learning preaching by studying how to compose sermons and clerical conferences, and by learning other branches of knowledge which are necessary to form a Christian preacher; (3) that those who present themselves for examinations, to be held twice a year, should be prepared to answer questions put to them during the examination concerning one historical book of the Bible.

The assembly heartily approved the matters proposed by the superior general, especially the last two points. They are necessary to keep the word of God from growing stale in our mouths. Rather, it should grow in dignity in our apostolate and become efficacious to heal sinners. The assembly asked the same superior general to communicate immediately to our confreres other matters that he believes would improve the education for our apostolates.

(*Collectio Completa Decretorum Conventuum Generalium Congregationis Missionis* [Paris: Pillet et Dumoulin, 1882], no. 416, 146-47.)

Correspondence before 1816

For some reason, a decision of such importance has not yet had any result; and so candidates continue to be formed on their own, at random and without method. This is a disorder and occasions many other disorders for the candidates themselves, for the entire Community, and, in general, for all those who profit from our exertions.

To avoid this disorder in some way, and at the request of and moved by those who have the right to my instruction, I have determined to draw up this brief document to help our candidates, our Congregation and our dear Holy Mother Church. Amen.

F. De Andreis
of the Congregation of the Mission

4. TO VINCENZO DE ANDREIS, DEMONTE¹²

Rome
6 July 1814

My dearest brother,

Last evening I received your fine letter with the enclosed bill of exchange, for which I thank you. Please relay my deepest thanks to our father. I already assumed that our father would receive back from the restored government his former office from which the usurper had removed him.¹³ But to my surprise and extreme displeasure I learned of the calumnious opposition and aggravation that he has just suffered by being replaced by a foreigner. For me this event is nothing else than one more proof of the detestable perversity of the world in which we live, a perversity that from now on truly makes the world intolerable for me. It makes me groan every day, exclaiming with the Psalmist: *Heu mihi quia incolatus meus prolongatus est! Habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar; multum incola fuit anima mea* [*“Woe is me that my dwelling has*

¹² **Letter 4.** Autograph letter, Italian, three pages with address, in provincial archives, Turin, De Andreis papers; copy in the archives of the General Curia, Rome; De Andreis collection, Volume XVI. Cited in Ricciardelli, *Vita*, 49-50.

¹³ Napoleon Bonaparte.

Correspondence before 1816

been prolonged, I have dwelt amid the inhabitants of Cedar; all too long has my soul been a dweller”].¹⁴ So great is the pain that I experience internally that I believe the days of my pilgrimage on earth will be shortened. Meanwhile amid present hardships I have to be resigned to make my way to the life to come. Do not let yourself get too bothered by such misfortune, since Providence will certainly bring a greater good out of it for you.

By this time you have, I believe, learned of the contents of my last letter to your brother-in-law, which I wrote to him a few weeks ago.¹⁵ I gave him the consoling advice to get ready to depart for Rome with the understanding that he would accompany you. On the one hand you can imagine my great pleasure in seeing you and embracing you again, but on the other, I see how expensive it is to travel here and back, and even to stay here. So check your finances and do what God inspires you to do in this matter. The rule has been made here in our house of not receiving laity, no matter whom, unless they are making the retreats.¹⁶ But I could find you lodging in some clean private home instead of having you stay at an inn for such a long time, since whoever comes to Rome should stay for some length of time to be able to view at least the more essential sights. I regret that during September I will probably have to be away from Rome for some time for certain obligations I have already agreed to, provided my ever-increasing ailments do not stop me.¹⁷ For the last five or six months a stomach problem has bothered me, it weakens my whole body. I have tried many medicines, but they produce only ephemeral and passing improvements. I think that God no longer wants to do anything else with my deeds and wants me quickly removed from the world. I assure you that, for me, this is something more to be desired than feared. I understand well enough the vanity and evil of the world. I have no illusions about this, and I do not foresee the time when it will cease. Yet in all things, may God’s will be done.

¹⁴ Ps 120:5-6 New American Bible: “Woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell amid the tents of Kedar! All too long have I dwelt (with those who hate peace).”

¹⁵ Filippo Giriodi, C.M. The letter in question is not extant.

¹⁶ Retreats for laity were a part of the mission of the house.

¹⁷ Accounts are lacking of the missions that he might have preached in September 1814. Consequently, he probably had other obligations, such as retreats, clerical conferences, or attending to some local parish congregation.

Correspondence before 1816

You told me nothing about our father's health or about that of the others at home. I suppose this means that all are well, and I am delighted about that. Give my regards to everyone, as if I had listed them all by name; you know who should be mentioned. Continue to offer to our father those filial duties that I cannot offer in my absence. Extend my best wishes to all our relatives and acquaintances. Believe me, in all sincerity and cordial brotherly affection for you, that I have the pleasure of calling myself

Your very dear and affectionate brother,
Felix,
unworthy Priest of the Congregation of the Mission

Addressed: To the very illustrious Procurator Mr. Vincenzo De Andreis, Procurator, Cuneo for Demonte.

Postmark: Rome.

5. TO VINCENZO DE ANDREIS, DEMONTE¹⁸

Rome
15 May 1815

My dear brother,

So that you might have no further reason to complain of my epistolary silence, I now feel inspired to satisfy this duty since I have a bit of free time. Also the news I received from you just yesterday moved me to write. I was coming up from the refectory with Mr. Giovanni Pinelli from Demonte, who is here in our house for a few weeks because of some problem. The news [in your letter] disturbed me for a moment, but I was doubly consoled: by the cure obtained, as well as by your wise and Christian behavior with the innocent poisoner. I already

¹⁸ **Letter 5.** *Autograph letter, Italian, three pages, with address, in the archives of the province of Turin, De Andreis papers.*

Correspondence before 1816

realized what had happened. May eternal thanks be given for this to the supreme giver of every good. He showers me, in particular, with his grace with both hands and so abundantly that, because I am so unworthy, I am embarrassed just to think about it.

The day before yesterday I returned here after a worrisome and tiring eight-day mission,¹⁹ during which I took sick one evening. But I quickly improved, so much so that it has been many years since I have enjoyed such good health.

I wanted to send you some books that I had printed last year, but I have not had the opportunity. I will send you some when I get the chance.²⁰

Political rumors have not, we might say, disturbed us nor frightened us, since we already foresaw that, in fact, it would be only an inert passing dark cloud. Consequently we shortly expect the return of our supreme pontiff and sovereign [Pius VII] to his see.²¹ Because the former king of Naples, Joachim Murat,²² occupied the marches of Ancona, Mr. Giovanni Pinelli was unable to avoid new problems by returning to his farm where he had his patrimony. Since he had to remain in Rome to see to the outcome of these affairs, he realized that he had nearly consumed the savings he brought with him from there. Consequently, he will not have enough to make the long 300-mile trip back home. Since you wish to act ethically with Pietro, his brother—please give him my best wishes—I warmly recommend that you convince him to provide Giovanni with some helpful financial assistance, thirty or forty scudi, while he either returns to his farm or finds some timely and reliable help somewhere else. I do not doubt for a moment that you would pledge your help and that [Pietro] would agree to meet his brother's pressing need. His conduct will make this very meritorious.

Mr. Giovanni has told me so many nice things about your son Giannino, my nephew whom I have never seen, that it nearly induced me to visit him. Please give him a hug for me but on the condition that

¹⁹ There are no records of this mission.

²⁰ Probably *Dio Solo*, mentioned in Letter 2, 29 July 1812.

²¹ Napoleon abdicated 22 June 1815; the papal government was able to return to Rome 7 June 1815, just before this letter.

²² Murat was officially deposed 19 May 1815, just after this letter. He died 13 October 1815. His forces occupied the Marches of Ancona from 28 March to 7 May 1815, and was most likely the "passing dark cloud" referred to above.

Correspondence before 1816



LA MAISON DE MISSION DE ROME, DE MONTE-CITORIO

Monte Citorio, Rome, Italy.
Courtesy of the author

his mother not give him too many. Otherwise you might regret it with the passing of time. Remember what the Holy Spirit counsels in Ecclesiasticus 7:23: *Filii tibi sunt? Erudi illos, et curva illos a pueritia illorum* ["Do you have children? Teach them and mold them from their youth"],²³ and in another place: *qui parcat virga odit filium suum* ["He who spares the rod hates his son"].²⁴

I would have written to our good father, but since you would have written back for him, I felt I should just write directly to you since he is used to this procedure. Please give him my respect and affection as best you can. The same for our good mother. She really deserves that title for the love she has always shown us. We could not have expected better if she had borne us.²⁵

My regards to your wife, to dear brother Giuseppe and all his family, to our uncle and all our aunts, to our sister Margherita when you see her. Please give the same regards to all the good gentlemen of our region who remember me. I do not know if Giriodi your brother-in-law and my confrere has already left for Piacenza, as I have recently

²³ NAB: "If you have sons, chastise them; bend their necks from childhood."

²⁴ Prov 13:24 NAB: "He who spares his rod hates his son."

²⁵ De Andreis's mother died 3 March 1782, whereupon his father married a second, and then a third time, after his second wife died in childbirth. This third wife, Margherita Isaia, mentioned here, married Giovanni Maurizio De Andreis, 6 February 1791.

Correspondence before 1816

written him in the name of our vicar general.²⁶ If he has not done so yet, please urge him along, since the new superior, whom he knows well, Father [Carlo Saverio] De Petris, anxiously awaits him there. He has already complained in a letter that he has not arrived.

I constantly beg the Lord that if I do not have the good fortune of seeing my family again here on earth, he will give me the grace of rejoicing in their company forever in heaven. I am convinced of the vanity of this present life, *sic transeamus per bona temporalia, ut non ammittamus aeterna* ["... we may use the good things of this world only in passing, and not lose the treasures of heaven"]²⁷ and *inter mundanas varietates ibi nostra fixa sunt corda, ubi vera sunt gaudia* ["... that among the distractions of this world, our hearts might be fixed where true joys abide"].²⁸

I would long to be able to impress on your heart and on the hearts of all of them there firm sentiments as a sign of that sincere, cordial and fraternal affection, with which I sign myself,

Your most loving brother

Felix,

unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission

Addressed: To the Illustrious Mr. Vincenzo De Andreis, Secretary of the Council, Cuneo for Demonte.

Postmark: Rome.

²⁶ Carlo Domenico Sicardi.

²⁷ From the collect of the third Sunday after Pentecost in the calendar of De Andreis's time.

²⁸ From the collect of the fourth Sunday of Paschaltide.

Correspondence before 1816

**6. AGREEMENT WITH BARTOLOMEO COLUCCI, C.M.,
SUPERIOR, ROME²⁹**

Laus Deo, ac Beatae Virgini Mariae
[“Praise to God and to the Blessed Virgin Mary”]

I, the undersigned Felix De Andreis, about to depart Rome for the mission of America, ask Father Bartolomeo Colucci to kindly have the charity to be responsible for the matter of the book printed last year on the imitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, as follows.³⁰

The printer for Propaganda, Signor Francesco Bourli , has most recently acknowledged having 700 copies of the book still unsold. They are to be sold for the published price of 20 bajocchi. This should produce the sum of 140 Roman scudi.³¹ A certain number of copies can be sold by the bookseller on the left side of San Marcello, and by the other bookseller at Pasquino, located to the right of the bookstore of Signor Pietro Attini.

Father Colucci is free to reduce the published price somewhat to make it [the sale] successful.

Out of the income from the copies already sold, 42 scudi should be paid back to Father Maestro Alimenti to satisfy the loan he made for the printing with the stipulation that he would be reimbursed on the resulting sale of the copies.

From the remaining copies either for sale or for trade all the remaining income is to be spent for religious goods, or holy cards of Saint Vincent, of Blessed Mary, of the Crucifix, etc., and other devotions, rosaries, medals, etc., for the American mission.

²⁹ **Letter 6.** *Original document, Italian, three pages, in the files of the Roman province, Rome, Colucci papers, file 11.4.11.*

³⁰ *Dalla Imitazione della Ss. Vergine Maria, Madre di Dio, sul modello delle Imitazione di Cristo detta volgarmente l'a Kempis.* (Rome: Bourli , 1814). This volume was probably based on the work written by Alexandre Joseph Rouville (1716-1793 [?]), *Imitation de la tr s Sainte Vierge, sur le mod le de l'imitation de J sus-Christ ...* (Avignon, 1766), and many other editions. It was a large work, running 250 to 400 pages. No copy of this Italian translation is known to exist.

³¹ A bajocco, a papal coin, was worth 1/10 of a scudo.

Correspondence before 1816

The undersigned intends, by this present document, to grant to Father Colucci every right, both personal and real, concerning this matter as indicated above.

Rome, 8 October 1815.

Felix De Andreis

Unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission

Direction for sending the religious goods mentioned above:

At Rome, go to Signor Giovanni Battista Agesso, Strada Papale, near Santa Maria in Monterone, number 38, third floor, in the building of Signor Reppetto, to send them to Marseilles to the Carsamiglia Brothers, business agents, for Father Giovanni Battista Acquaroni.³²

[In Colucci's hand]

On the first of August 1825, there remained details about the accounts for the property of Father De Andreis described on the previous page, which he wanted me to administer. I made the request to Signor Francesco Bourlié, who gave me very exactly all the copies in his possession. Part of them have been used to pay 42 scudi to Father Maestro Alimenti, loaned by him for the printing; and 4 scudi to Signor Don Raffaello Umpierres by order of Father De Andreis; and the rest, according to the wish of the above-mentioned [De Andreis] have been exchanged for all sorts of various holy pictures, which at various times have been sent to America. These amounted to the sum of 99.4 scudi. [Total of] 145.4 scudi.

By God's grace I think that I have satisfied the commission, *non de bono et equo* ["not in every respect"] but otherwise well enough, for one who died so young, since I willingly put some of my own money into this.

[signed] Bartolomeo Colucci

Priest of the Congregation of the Mission

In San Silvestro on Monte Cavallo

Notice on cover page: Memorandum of Father De Andreis, and a clear account of the expenses and income, as the administrator of his copies.

In another hand: Received from Father Alimenti.

³² Leonardo Carsamiglia was a cousin of Acquaroni.

Correspondence before 1816

**7. TO CARLO DOMENICO SICARDI, C.M.,
VICAR GENERAL, ROME³³**

Piacenza

29 December 1815

Since this is really my first bit of free time, I am now reporting to you about our trip, and, although it will be late, I offer you my humble wish for a happy new year. I thought that I would find my departure from Rome very bitter. Instead I discovered that it was very sweet, as if I had entered upon an ocean of perfume. I cannot thank the Lord enough for such a special grace, which is my destination [in America].

³³ **Letter 7.** Copy, Italian, in the archives of the General Curia, Rome. De Andreis collection, Volume I, Part I, Section D, #1a, 5-6. Cited in Ricciardelli, Vita, 215.

Carlo Domenico Sicardi (1729-1819) was elected fourth assistant to the superior general in 1788, but had to flee France at the Revolution. Later, because the superior general had died and no election was possible, the pope named Sicardi vicar general, with responsibilities for the Congregation outside of France (1804-1819). In his annual New Year's letter for 1816, Sicardi wrote the following to the members of the Congregation on the beginnings of the American mission:

Lastly, in all probability, full success is assured for the new foundation that will take place in New Orleans, a city in North America, in the province of the Two Floridas. Its bishop, Louis William Dubourg, was consecrated here in Rome a few weeks ago by His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Doria. [Dubourg] has been living with us. He has put great pressure not only on us but also on the Sovereign Pontiff himself, Pius VII, to have some priests of the Mission to direct his new seminary for the sake of the clergy and the people. This new foundation has been accepted, and the two parties have approved and ratified it. Three of our priests, Fathers Felix De Andreis, Joseph Rosati and John Baptist Acquaroni, have already left this house of Monte Citorio for Bordeaux, France. There, they will join several other secular priests and await Bishop Dubourg. He will leave our house in a week or ten days. When His Excellency arrives, they will all set sail for America. Father Felix De Andreis, whose piety, regularity, prudence, uprightness and knowledge are well known, has been named superior of this new establishment. Besides, he has been completely equipped with all the necessary powers to found and direct other houses of our Congregation in that country.

(*Recueil des principales circulaires des supérieurs généraux de la Congrégation de la Mission*. 3 Vols. (Paris: Georges Chamerot, 1877-1880), 2: 326; hereinafter cited as *Recueil*.)

Correspondence before 1816

We arrived just the day before yesterday at the college,³⁴ and I hope in the morning to be able to remove any difficulty and be able to add a brother to our group. He will probably be Brother [Martin] Blanka.

I have some worries since I have not received word of our companions who have set sail. If you ever have news of them, I would be very happy if you would send it to me in Turin. I hope to stay there for a few days, and to have someone there forward our mail.

I have had a few bouts of anxiety about our difficult journey, but a little rest has helped me to recover quickly.

Now about the packet supposed to be left in Parma, we stopped there for only a very short time [26 December], since I was completely taken up with mass and a meal. Because of the distance from the place and being unable to open the trunk, I have had to bring it along to Piacenza, from where it will be sent on to its destination. Please convey my most humble and respectful homage, with my sincerest thanks, to the visitor, Father [Marzio] Ceracchi, and to all the confreres there.³⁵

Permit me to ask them *in visceribus Christi* ["in the affection of Christ"]³⁶ to recommend that God send me to my death before I ruin his work. To the regards from all of us to you I unite my poor sentiments with a heart full of the most cordial affection, esteem, gratitude and veneration for you,

Your most humble, respectful and devoted servant,
Felix De Andreis,
unworthy priest of the Congregation of the Mission.

³⁴ The Collegio Alberoni, a seminary founded by Cardinal Giulio Alberoni (1664-1752), which he entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission. De Andreis had studied there and later became a member of the teaching staff.

³⁵ Ceracchi became visitor on 4 November 1814, following the death of his predecessor, Romualdo Ansaloni, 13 March 1814. Ansaloni had been one of Felix's professors at Piacenza.

³⁶ Phil 1:8.