

Fr. Anselmo Librandi C.P.

**BISHOP
EUGENE R. FAGGIANO**

The Bishop with "prodigal" hands

On April 19, 1936, Archbishop Robert Nogara of Cosenza ordained the Passionist, Fr. Eugene Faggiano, born at Salice Salentino, a bishop in the collegiate church of Manduria in the civil province of Taranto.

The event brought into the limelight a man who always preferred silence and the hidden life. Yet, he had already distinguished himself "by his priestly work, a holy life, education and ability in administration." (G. De Nisi, *Salice Terrae hidrunti*, p. 232).

He arrived in Cariati, his diocese, by train without any fanfare on May 19, but the next day, the diocese received him "as the Messiah" (R. e F. Liguori, *Cariati nella storia*, p. 245). The diocese had reason to rejoice for it had been without a bishop for ten years.

"Drapes and fancy bed spreads hung from balconies and windows; multicolor banners formed a tapestry along the walls; flowers covered the streets...." (in *La Tribuna*, May 5, 1936).

Bishop Faggiano remained ten years as bishop of Cariati and he did not disappoint his people. He deeply loved them and they sincerely loved him, for they witnessed his numerous works and his virtuous life.

To commemorate Bishop Faggiano's fiftieth anniversary of episcopal ordination in a fitting manner, it seemed only just that we publish a brief biography. We, therefore, print this sketch by Fr. Anselmo Librandi, who was his novice and later his admirer and biographer .

May this contribution be the beginning of further study and research to deepen the knowledge of Bishop Faggiano.

Among the many telegrams sent to the Passionist Provincial Curia at Manduria on the occasion of Bishop Faggiano's death, two sum up well his life as a Passionist and as a bishop. The first is from Fr. Sebastian Cerrone, at that time Provincial of the Neapolitan Province, who called the deceased bishop: "The honor of the Passionist Congregation . " The second is from the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of St. Severina. In the name of all, he expresses profound sorrow at the death of Bishop Faggiano, "a bright gem of the episcopacy of Calabria . "

As a Passionist from 1894 to 1936, Fr. Eugene was truly the honor of the Congregation. He sanctified his life by the spirit of the Founder with such perseverance that, even while still alive, this rare eulogy was said of him: "He has preserved his novitiate fervor even as a bishop . "

Bishop of Cariati (Coscenza) from 1936-1956, living always in poverty, he was excessive in charity, so much so as to merit the title "Bishop with ' prodigal ' hands" . He worked in the sacrifice he learned at the school of the Crucified, in order to renew the diocese which had been without a bishop and seminary for over ten years. Although he left the diocese in 1956 because of advanced age, he remained always in the heart of his people, clergy and lay, who never forgot his outstanding, virtuous life.

1

His family life - "Good bye, world! " from novitiate to priesthood - First assignments - His country calls - New assignments - Six years as provincial - Seminary and missions - From provincial to master of novices.

Bishop Eugene Raphael Faggiano was born at Salice Salentino (Lecce) on January 28, 1877. His parents were Donato and Concetta Leuzzi. If one judges a tree by its fruits, then we must say that little Raphael's parents were fervent Christians, who knew how to instill a deep faith in the heart of their children. Raphael was baptized on February 1, four days after his birth, and confirmed on May 16, 1882 when he was only four years old.

Regarding the religious education he received from his parents, one of his spiritual daughters writes: "Among his youthful memories is the strong teaching and readiness for sacrifice he received from his parents. In the evening his father frequently took his children for a walk ending up in church where he knelt before the tabernacle for at least one half hour without support, and he required the same of his children with one on his right and the other on his left."

Besides his religious education, his parents were anxious that their little Raphael have an adequate secular education, so they sent him to school. He possessed a quick intelligence and tenacious will. Nothing is known of his first communion.

"Good bye, world!" So began a hymn fervent Passionist missionaries had the people sing during the mission conducted at Salice in 1892 when Raphael was fifteen years old. The hymn continues: "I aspire for heaven, there to rejoice with God." This hymn really touched his heart. The sermons on the eternal truths made him tranquil for his conscience was at peace, as he confided to one he was directing. But this hymn touched him as an echo of God's voice, rather as the very voice of God who wanted to detach him from the world to set him on the heroic path Fr. Eugene would walk until the painful calvary of his death.

The Passionist vocation had flowered in his heart.

"But will it be a straw fire?" thought his sister Addolorata to whom the fifteen year old youth had confided his proposal. Raphael liked to appear elegant especially in his beautiful black hair. His sister replied: "I'll believe you if you cut your hair which you comb so carefully." Raphael silently left the house, went to the barber, and returned home with his hair cut and the joy of his first victory. His sister and his parents were convinced that religious life was God's will for him. His grandmother alone tried to convince him with gifts to enter the seminary, thus they wouldn't lose him. But his was an authentic call to the Passionist life, and he hoped for the day when he could leave the world to enter the novitiate. However, he needed a grammar school diploma, which he obtained within a few months of study. One year had passed since that holy mission. In early November 1893, he left for the novitiate at Paliano (Frosinone). His mother's parting words were: ""Be good, because if you return home, I 'll leave you outside the house. " Raphael serenely replied: "Don't worry, mother, I won't return."

As the train left his region of Puglia that line from the mission hymn which had so touched him must have resounded within him: "Good bye, world!"

On November 20, 1893, he was vested with the religious habit taking the name of Eugene of St. Raphael the Archangel. The fervent novice made marvellous spiritual progress and was admitted to religious profession on November 21, 1894, the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady .

He was sent to Airola (Benevento) to continue his studies. His director and teacher was Fr. Joseph of Jesus and Mary.

He was called to military service when he was twenty years old and spent two and one half years at the city of Bari with the medics. Fr. Peter Maddalena of Bari testifies: "We knew him when he served in the military at Bari. He was a pious youth, modest, edifying, charitable and admired by his companions and superiors." When writing to the Passionist superiors, his colonel did not hesitate to state that Raphael Faggiano "was an angel."

After military service, he returned to Airola to continue his studies, but his companions had moved on ahead. He was then sent to Pontecorvo, then Manduria and finally to Ceglie Messapico where he completed his theological studies.

He was ordained a priest on May 31, 1903 in the cathedral of Taranto by Archbishop Peter Jorio.

While still a student of Sacred Eloquence, he was appointed vice-master at the novitiate at Ceglie Messapico from 1903-06. After this, he was sent to the monastery of Saints John and Paul, Rome, for a two year theological course. When he returned to his province he filled a three-year term as director of students at the monastery of Laurignano (Cosenza). At thirty-seven years of age, he enjoyed a reputation for doctrine and virtue, so much so that in 1914 he was elected first provincial consultor. Alongside Fr. Flavian De Vincentiis, the provincial, he would guide the young province of the Region of Puglia and Calabria.

When war broke out in 1915, Fr. Eugene was again with the medics, eleventh company, at Bari. On June 2, he was transferred to Brindisi as assistant at the St. Benedict military hospital. On December 11, he was named military chaplain and served the hospitals in the environs of Brindisi. While serving there, he was a guest of the Archbishop Thomas Valeri.

If he served his country, he also served to a greater extent the spiritual needs of those entrusted to his care, especially when Brindisi was mourning the loss of the naval vessel, "Benedetto Brin". His cousin, Lt. Colonel John De Nisi, serving at Brindisi, testifies: "He assisted the wounded and dying

without any care for himself." Unfortunately, he wasn't able to assist two of his own students, Evangelist and Benedict, who were killed at St. Michele, far from his fatherly heart.

At the end of December 18, Fr. Eugene definitively returned to the province. He was stationed at Manduria as first provincial consultor.

The following year, 1919, at the chapter of the two provinces, Our Mother of Sorrows and the Sacred Side of Jesus, which were temporarily united, he was elected vice-provincial for the retreats of Puglia and Calabria.

As vice-provincial he energetically and with great sacrifices founded the retreat at Monopoli. He was the first superior when the community took up residence in 1921.

In June 1923, after a year at Borgetto (Palermo), he was made superior at Fuscaldo (Cosenza), where he was outstanding in observance, discipline and community life. Wherever obedience sent him, Fr. Eugene distinguished himself: his religious spirit, with sincerity and coherence, goodness and fortitude, so that his good example alone was sufficient for the good order of the community under his care.

On August 28, 1925, during the sixth chapter session, he was elected provincial of the reconstructed Province of the Sacred Side of Jesus. As the Chapter Acts state: "Overcome with emotion, the newly elected provincial did all in his power to have the capitulars reconsider, but once they insisted, he submitted and accepted God's will."

He quickly took up the task. One of his first acts was a circular letter to every community in which he puts the causes of so many difficulties in the post-war province "to mutual injustice...through which individuals have become petty and vile;" and he concludes with profound realism: "We will not find perfect religious in this life!...but in union and cooperation the province will find its just path." He then visited the retreats and listened to every religious. At the end of this visitation, he wrote another circular in which he masterfully indicated the fundamental lines to follow for a rapid renewal of religious and missionary life in the province.

To facilitate this renewal, he established an office at the Passionist seminary at Monopoli and gave new impulse to popular missions. Convinced that the Passionist Congregation is essentially missionary, he wished to assume personal direction of the preaching apostolate and encouraged even the most timid to engage in this apostolate. Since the war had diminished the preaching group, it was necessary to increase it, so even the timid engaged in preaching missions. Announcing this initiative by circular letter, he wrote: "I wish that a report be sent to me after every mission as to whether the missionaries, more particularly the 'preacher', fulfilled their ministry well." He insisted that, once returned to the monastery, the missionaries read good books so to be better prepared for their ministry of preaching.

Other projects can be credited to him, for example, the high surrounding wall which protects the solitude of the monastery at Manduria, and the arrival of the sisters from Ivrea who have worked so zealously in the religious education of many young people.

In the provincial chapter of 1931, Fr. Eugene was elected master of novices. Thus he left Manduria for the retreat at Laurignano. It was while there that he received the appointment as Bishop of Cariatì (Cosenza). During his five years as master of novices, he instructed forty-four cleric and brother novices in the Passionist life, more by example than by word. "A simple glance," writes a novice, "is enough to inspire us to fervor."

In addition to directing the novices, Fr. Eugene also gave four retreats to the clergy at the novitiate. He actually gave the "points for reflection" and another missionary preached the conferences. In 1933 he published the book "Il Santuario di Maria ss.ma della Catena," Laurignano, a history of the shrine for the faithful. He participated in the great mission at Bari in 1934.

He contributed to the Bulletin of the shrine, "Our Lady of the Chain." He wrote articles on Our Lady as well as a series on the cultivation of flowers using the pseudonym Antofilo. He always liked flowers and, even as bishop, grew them on the terrace of the bishop's house. However, he is Antofilo especially for the "youthful flowers" he lovingly cultivated for the Congregation of St. Paul of the Cross.

2

On the Church's candelabra - Episcopal ordination and entrance into the diocese - Reopens the seminary - Begins a summer seminary - Calls Passionist missionaries to his diocese - From Cariati to San Morello The pupil of his eye: the clergy - Wishes a Passionist house in his diocese - Renovates the bishop house and Cathedral - Celebrates his golden jubilee.

"No one lights a candle to put it under a bushel; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house" (Matt. 5:15). The torch burned from the solitary novitiate to Laurignano. How did its light reach Rome and the Pope? It remains a mystery. On November 26, 1935, Fr. Eugene receives a letter from the Vatican with a wax seal on the envelope: his designation as bishop of Cariati. It was a blow to his humility. He prayed, shed tears, begged to be relieved, writing to the Passionist General and to the Cardinal Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation. On January 21, the Holy Father responded by not accepting his resignation, but confirming the appointment. In February he was called to Rome. Not knowing God's designs, his Passionist superiors had appointed him to the mission at Rogliano (Cosenza) . On February 15 he received the official letter and the papal bull appointing him bishop.

The new bishop wanted to be consecrated in the collegiate church at Manduria. His friend and admirer Archbishop Robert Nogara of Cosenza was the consecrator and the co-consecrators were Bishop Anthony Di Tommaso of Oria and Bishop John Baptist Peruzzo, Passionist, of Agrigento. Bishop Melomo of Monopoli assisted. Naturally many religious and civil leaders of Cariati and Salice Salentino were present, as well as people of his home town and Manduria. It as a festive day for everyone, but for him it was simply a very brief parenthesis in his sacrificial life which during his twenty years as bishop configured him ever more like Christ Crucified. He tasted this on the very day of his triumphal entry into Cariati. After the Te Deum, renewed thanks and his episcopal blessing, the new bishop "felt his heart sink when he entered the bishop's house," he confessed to a fellow Passionist who had come to assist him. With horror he saw worn out floor tiles, windows and blinds broken, hardly any kitchen utensils. Nothing had been done to repair the house before the bishop's arrival. He spontaneously exclaimed: "Poor me! Where have I been sent! " But he knew that the Lord had sent him there to continue his Calvary .

His first thought was to reopen the seminary which had been closed for eight years. Mons. Cajetan Maone, the first rector, testifies: «If the bishop had not ordered a complete renovation of the rooms, the seminary could never have been reopened». July and August were months of intense work. The bishop selected the necessary equipment for the kitchen, room, parlours; he named the rector and professors. The seminarians numbered thirty-three. On October 25, Feast of Christ the King, the bishop celebrated a solemn pontifical Mass for the reopening of the seminary and

delivered a "learned and moving homily." For the occasion, Bishop Tardini of the Secretary of State, Vatican City, saw to it that the Holy Father sent his blessing.

Not satisfied with the reopening of the seminary, the bishop also thought of a vacation place for the seminarians, thus enriching the diocese with a summer seminary. A good property was offered "with fruit trees, water, and other conveniences. It was located in Umbriatico (Cosenza), center of the diocese, 750 meters from the sea." He himself informed the diocese of his project and asked pastors, priests, and authority to set up committees for collecting the necessary funds to purchase the property. The response was gratifying and the bishop was happy to spend his vacations with his seminarians at the summer seminary at Umbriatico.

When the summer seminary was opened on August 7, 1937, the bishop said that it was all God's work. He was a poor religious, not rich in natural talents, but willing to do good. "I exclude a priori any ability in this affair," he said; but in reality he is a docile instrument in God's hands to change the diocese which had been disfigured by years of abandonment. The Holy Father expressed his pleasure through Cardinal Rossi of the Consistorial Congregation and through Bishop Ruffini of the Congregation for Seminaries.

After resolving the problem of the seminary, the zealous prelate turned his attention to the needs of the diocese. To reawaken faith and devotion there is no better means than popular missions, and Bishop Faggiano called on his brother Passionists to evangelize his diocese. The monthly bulletin, *Il S. Costato di Gesù* of April 1936 states: "From the 8th of last month, five Passionist missionaries are sowing the seed of the divine Word among that population, so good but little cultivated. Missions have already been preached at Savelli, Cirò, Castelsilano and Crucoli. "Missions were preached in other towns during the following years, since the Passionists became part of the diocesan family of Cariati. The bishop was present everywhere as an assistant missionary, admonishing, correcting, exhorting by word and example.

After participating in the Eucharistic Congress at Tripoli, November 11-15, 1937, the zealous prelate made his first pastoral visit to all the towns of the diocese beginning from April 1938. He began at Cariati and ended at San Morello where he arrived seated on a donkey "after a difficult two and one-half hour journey." He doesn't have an auto, so he uses public transportation. He'll own an auto only after 1948, but even then he used it sparingly, preferring public transportation in a spirit of poverty. Whoever knows the diocese of Cariati also knows the difficulty in reaching some of the towns; but the effort did not slow him down because great is his zeal for the glory of God and his love for his people who had been abandoned for such a long time. From his "Diary" comes his feeling of sorrow for his poor people. He writes, for example: "The town is absolutely abandoned even by civil authority. There's no electricity, nor water, nor pharmacy, nor doctor, nor midwife, nor road to reach it. It's inaccessible." The only means is a donkey. He finds neglected churches everywhere, often "indecent and in disrepair," as at San Marcello, sacristies in awful condition. Repairs need to be made on the "cathedral cupola, roof, windows, walls and floor." He provides for everything. Not to be a burden to the pastors, he returned to Cariati or the summer seminary at Umbriatico every night.

In 1947, after the Second World War, Bishop Faggiano again made pastoral visits in his diocese, ever with the same zeal. He always had his own brother missionaries, or the Franciscans, or Capuchins, or Jesuits precede him with missions or other forms of modern preaching, so that Christ be glorified by the salvation of souls in this care.

Mons. Cajetan Maone, a most faithful collaborator as rector of the seminary and later as pastor of the cathedral, testifies in his voluminous and precious manuscript of the bishop's love for his

clergy: love of a father who courageously corrects when necessary, but always with charity for priests in need of material and spiritual help.

In his twenty years as bishop, he had the joy of ordaining nineteen priests. If anyone was in financial need he generously and silently helped them. He also helped sick priests. He required everyone to make a retreat at least every three years, and he led the group: thus in 1937 and 1948 at Laurignano; in 1951 at St. Andrew on the Ionian Sea near Liguorini; in 1954 at Ceglie Messapico, and always in two groups so that the parishes be ministered.

From the very beginning, he gave life to the diocesan bulletin by writing his pastoral message to his clergy. He ordered a new curial office and brought together the various departments which the preceding apostolic administrator had dispersed in various places. He also united various pastoral offices in the curial building as for catechesis, for example. He used his priests according to their capacities, himself giving the example.

"It was his dream and ardent desire," attests Mons. Maone, "to have a Passionist monastery in his diocese. He negotiated with Fr. Raymond, provincial, and the site of a small shrine on the hill of Madonna D'Itria (Ciro Marina) was selected. He immediately had work begun to trace out a road and add a number of rooms leaving to others the completion of a work so important to the spiritual life of the diocese." Bishop Orazio Semeraro, his successor, completed work on the shrine and new monastery after the Second World War.

In fact, the Passionists were actually already in his diocese, since Bishop Faggiano had already obtained permission from Bishop Baldelli, President of P.O.A., for the Passionists to care for the two mission stations at Strongoli and Savelli respectfully.

The cathedral and bishop's residence were in an abominable state. The residence was in such deplorable condition that when it rained the bishop had to move his bed so not to get wet. Thinking more of his successor than for himself, Bishop Faggiano had the roof repaired as well as the floors thanks to an extraordinary contribution from the "Fund for Worship." The cathedral needed major repairs. As Mons. Maone writes: "His work is the magnificent pavement, the interior of the cupola, repairs of the roof and the new pews for the faithful."

He also had an apartment for the sisters put in the seminary. In 1951 he began radical repairs at the seminary. At the inauguration on February 11, 1954, the rector of the seminary, uncovering the corner stone, said: "All the clergy follows the bishop in his zeal and virtue, and acknowledges his work; also all the good people acknowledge them and they venerate the bishop for his austerity and holiness of religious life, for his spirit of sacrifice. While modern man, dominated by his personal ego, wants to leave their deeds sculptured in marble, you, Your Excellency, who have always humbly lived the rule of St. Paul of the Cross, have never put your name to everything you have accomplished. Now it 's the rector of the seminary who makes bold to unveil a modest slab in the name of the superiors, professors and students, so that everyone will forever remember that His Excellency, Eugene Raphael Faggiano, C.P., on the 50th anniversary of his priesthood beautified this venerable apostolic seminary of Cariati."

1953 was the 50th anniversary of his first Mass. The diocese wanted to celebrate it with the greatest solemnity. The colored banner declared: "We wish to express our unconditional attachment to, and our filial affection for him who for seventeen years of intense work and illuminated intelligence has wisely guided our diocese." The cathedral chapter sent the diocese a general invitation which ended in these words in Latin: "Long live Eugene Raphael! Our Bishop! Our Pastor! You have merited well and done well!" The same cathedral chapter obtained from the pope the honor of "Assistant at the Papal Throne", while the Holy Father sent Bishop Faggiano his

special apostolic blessing together with a laudatory letter written in his own hand.

At the solemn celebrations which took place from September 27 to October 4, the following delivered addresses: Archbishop John Ferro of Reggio, Bishop John Dadone of Santa Severina, Bishop John Rizzo of Rossano, Bishop Raphael Barbieri of Cassano Jonio, and Bishop Peter Raimondi of Crotona. The city of Cariatì conferred honorary citizenship on Bishop Faggiano and presented him with a gold commemorative medal.

3

The Bishop with "prodigal" hands - Resignation and return to Manduria - Last years at Manduria - Holy death.

Among his most outstanding virtues was the virtue of charity. In fact, when Bishop Joseph Agostino took possession of the diocese of Cariatì in 1974, the chancellor and pastor of the cathedral, Monsignor Rizzuti, in presenting the new bishop with the good wishes and obedience of all, ended his talk with: "We pray that the new bishop will continue the example of charity left by Bishop Faggiano. "There could not have been a more beautiful eulogy for in reality Bishop Faggiano was known in the diocese as the "bishop with the prodigal hands."

Limiting himself to essentials in food and clothing, he gave to the poor, the laity and priests in need, to sisters, to the sick. He was always ready to give, fulfilling charity secretly and humbly as the Gospel wishes. Records of financial aid, recommendations and other favors were found among his papers. After his resignation and retirement to Manduria, of the monthly 50,000 lire he received from the Vatican, 25,000 lire would go to the rector of the seminary for his room and board, and the remaining 25,000 lire would usually go to individuals or institutes of sisters or nuns who were in need.

On September 26, 1956 The Osservatore Romano printed the notice that the Holy Father had accepted Bishop's Faggiano resignation because of ill health and advanced age, and had named him Titular Bishop of Musti. The diocese was profoundly saddened by the notice.

What induced Bishop Faggiano to resign? In his letter to the Holy Father he states: "The odd locations of the parishes, lack of personnel, advanced age and other sufferings;" however in his letter to Cardinal Piazza, Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation he is more explicit: "I would continue to carry the heavy cross, but the glory of God and good of souls do not permit me, for there is advanced age and sufferings, and I need a rest to prepare myself in silence and solitude for that important passage." Thus, as a matter of conscience, he asked to be relieved so that the glory of God and the welfare of souls would not suffer because of his advanced years and infirmities: he is almost eighty years old.

Cardinal Piazza replied on March 27, that "the Holy Father has accepted your resignation and has disposed that you receive a monthly check of 50,000 lire." In his own name and in that of the Consistorial, the cardinal renews his gratitude for what the bishop had done during his twenty years, "amid particular difficulties and singular economic trials," and he asks the bishop to inform him of the date he wishes all canonical effects to take place.

Bishop Faggiano fixes the date of September 25. The day following he would leave Cariatì. The notice of his resignation appeared in the Osservatore Romano on September 26, and he had planned to leave secretly for Manduria early the morning of September 26 to avoid the applause and tears of

his people. However, "although he had decided to leave at dawn," writes Mons. Maone, "the entire city of Cariati gathered outside the bishop's residence to express its esteem built up during his twenty years as bishop. A long cortege of automobiles accompanied the bishop to the train station at Sibari. Bishop Faggiano gave them all his fatherly embrace."

Upon seeing the notice of his resignation in the *Osservatore Romano*, the Passionist General Curia immediately offered Bishop Faggiano hospitality at Ss. John and Paul, but the humble bishop chose the retreat at Manduria which reminded him of so many events in his Passionist life.

For three years and seven months he prepared himself "in silence and solitude for that important passage."

"He rose at 6:00 A.M. every morning and at 6:30 he would go to the chapel for his half hour private prayer in preparation for the celebration of Mass which lasted about thirty or forty minutes. There followed one half hour of thanksgiving. For breakfast he simply took chicory and two biscuits. After breakfast he prayed part of the divine office, followed by spiritual reading. After all this, he read the *Osservatore Romano* or the *Quotidiano*. His dinner consisted of a little soup, a small piece of meat, some cooked vegetables, ending with an apple. Such was his daily regimen which never changed even on solemn feasts. In the afternoon he prayed the remainder of the divine office, did more spiritual reading and one hour of mental prayer." He had returned to being the Passionist he always was. He wanted no privileges which the rule did not grant. When his Franciscan cousin, Diomede Faggiano proposed that he ask the Holy See permission to have several close relatives enter the cloister to visit him for the last time, he resolutely replied: "No, I don't want these things. I am a Passionist and I cannot permit abuses."

Bishop Faggiano lived a saintly life as a religious and bishop. His death, then, could not but be a holy death.

"He wanted to receive the sacraments fully conscious. He followed the rite with deep recollection, responding to the prayers. Then profoundly touched, he simply said to the rector who had administered the sacrament of the sick: "Thank you!" He then turned to the religious present and with open arms said: "Pray to Our Lady for me;" and he said the same to priest who gave him viaticum.

"He had brought a candle from Rome during the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption and he expressed the desire to have it lighted during his last agony. Shortly before his death, one of the religious asked whether he wanted the candle lighted of Our Lady. He made an affirmative sign, and the candle was lighted. He was very devoted to Our Lady and, in those last hours, he uttered frequent and fervent aspirations to her as he gazed at her picture, Mother of the Congregation.

"About 2:00 A.M. on May 2, 1960, he began to perspire, his pulse beat slowly and his breathing slower. Yet, he still told the infirmarian to rest a bit. At 3:40 A.M. the infirmarian asked pardon of the bishop and asked him to pray for him before the throne of God and of Our Lady, seeing that the bishop was dying peacefully. Meanwhile the priests were at his bedside praying the usual prayers and litanies. As they prayed the bishop passed away with a smile on his lips" (related by Fr. Celestine Giannelli, Passionist).

The solemn funeral Mass was celebrated on the morning of May 4. More than a rite of mourning, it was a genuine triumph for the bishop.

Bishop Faggiano was buried in the Passionist cemetery chapel at Manduria, but even then the common opinion was that it would be only a temporary burial place. Two days after the funeral

rites, May 6, the diocese of Cariati had an article printed in the newspaper Il Quotidiano which, after mentioning that there were many flower wreaths at the funeral from the diocese and government of Cariati, stated: "The body was interred in the Passionist chapel in the cemetery at Manduria and will remain there until it will be exhumed and brought to the diocese that was his and that reclaims him."

His body is now at the shrine of Our Lady of Itria where his brother Passionists minister.

ASCETICAL JOURNEY

Brief "anthology" of sayings taken from Bishop Faggiano's letters of spiritual direction.

To Become a Saint

- Oh, my daughter, let us become saints and let us help each other become such at all costs.

- The Apostle Paul called the first Christians saints and every Christian must be such by vocation. Imagine us! But what am I saying! What should I be since I have the fullness of priesthood and a successor of the Apostles by divine right. I fear that teaching, exhorting others, that I...The lives of the saints spur us on and encourage us, but each of us has a life totally his own, designed by Divine Providence, and he wishes that we live it at times totally lacking in gratuitous gifts (miracles, ecstasies, prophecy, etc.); always rich on virtue, however, which renders us pleasing to God with an ever more ardent thirst for justice. Even if we ardently love the Highest Good as Seraphim, we will have done nothing but a small part of our duty, nothing else!

- Humble and hidden sanctity is beautiful; but it is a perfume that is not always easy to hide; but do not worry. Let us allow the Divine Spirit to work with his grace without fear of deception, having the right intention of pleasing God alone.

- We shouldn't be discouraged when reading the lives of the saints in seeing the great difference between them and us; on the contrary, we should emulate their commitment, efforts and deep trust in the goodness of God; thus we will do some good with God's grace.

- On the other hand, our most loving Creator doesn't regard how much we accomplish (as St. Gregory says), but how we do it for his glory.

- Our perfection will be complete when we are united with God in paradise: now we always have reasons and opportunities to recognize our countless imperfections. All the more reason to consider not what we have accomplished, but how much more we must do.

Doing God's Will

- True, union with God consists in doing his holy will and it is not necessary to go into ecstasy; but the soul experiences more intimate and confidential moments that cannot be expressed in words, much less in a few lines.

- Let us always do the will of the heavenly Spouse, whether for life or death. He knows what is best for us.

- Oh, how many religious, how many hidden souls, who are not priests and cannot externally work for the good of souls, are perhaps, not even perhaps, more acceptable to God; simply by uniting themselves entirely to the divine will, they are more dear to his Heart, than others who may accomplish so much for the neighbor but are not resigned to what God disposes in such circumstances! St. Augustine used to say that the ignorant will rise up and steal the kingdom of heaven, and us, with our learning, perhaps will be damned in hell!

With Simplicity

- Becoming humble with simplicity is an essential condition for the kingdom of heaven and for acquiring high places in paradise: Our Divine Master gave this special lesson to his disciples (Matt. 18:2). Every saint, every servant of God, every good person has followed and faithfully follows this teaching, which doesn't diminish their wisdom and prudence, but greatly perfects it. Therefore, my daughter, if we follow the way of the saints, if we docilely accept the lessons of the Gospels, we will be doing nothing extraordinary. It is our strictest duty. The prize we will receive indicates Our Divine Redeemer's immense liberality who pays abundantly for the little we do. If he should give us the gift of miracles: if he sets us apart by his many freely given graces, we shouldn't consider ourselves better than others; on the contrary, it should give us reason to tremble even more! Becoming little, little, in order to hide in our nothingness and remain lost in the heart of Christ is much more secure!

- Become a child; these are the lessons I give my novices to help them remain physically and morally well. You ask: Aren't children ever concerned about tomorrow? Aren't they concerned that they might lack something, or that they will become ill? No. The child is totally abandoned in its mother's arms; and so must you be totally abandoned in the arms of our heavenly Mother.

- I like, and wish, a delicate conscience, but not scrupulosity which trips the souls and renders it shabby and small in its spiritual assent. Fr. Germano wrote of St. Gemma: "She was detached, her conversation was pleasing and you would never realize, as no one ever did, of the great soul before you." And when I visited Lucca in 1917, Mrs. Cecilia Giannini told me that Gemma was at ease with religious and revealed her simple and ingenuous spirit to those who were of simplicity of spirit. Therefore I say: act with the simplicity of a child and you will always have the peace of the child.

Lesson to Learn

- For those who love and who enter into the abyss of their own nothingness, it is a real Calvary, and only this allows them to enter immediately into the glory of the blessed to sing eternally 'Gloria in excelsis Deo!' together with the angels.

- I would like to tell you so many beautiful things that our lover of Jesus Crucified (St. Paul of the Cross) knew how to say; but I cannot since I love the Cross so little! I am happy, most happy, to work for the good of souls; but am I also happy and resigned when no one appreciates the work and even when there are false interpretations by those who shouldn't act so? This is the lesson that we should learn from the suffering Jesus! He always kept silence! Let us resign ourselves, at least, and patiently support everything, without losing a minute for doing good. How precious is suffering, especially when it doesn't seem so! Then it is all in Jesus! My daughter, let us remain on Calvary in the manner and duration desired by our Loving Good; let us form a perennial Calvary in our hearts, there to embrace willingly everything contrary or little pleasing to us.!

- I would wish that all persons, all those who are distracted, would be recollected and gather on Calvary, on that mount of love and pain. But how few, how rare such individuals. Let us supply for them in everything.

The Guide

- What is very helpful for your victory and for your spiritual good is that you are open with your spiritual father. The devil is very fearful when he is discovered! And how he feels outdone when the individual reveals all to the one he should.

- Jesus will amply reward you for your faith towards his ministers.

- The first Director is Jesus himself, who will guide you on the secure road to Calvary; you will never err because you especially know your nothingness and all you can do in Jesus.

- Conserve simplicity and openness with your director; thus you will not be deceived and will be sure of walking the right road. May our dear heavenly Mother bless and protect you always, and make you a saint.

- It is not necessary to have discernment of souls for spiritual direction, since God gives it as and to whom he wishes; even in those who have, or have had it, it is not continuous; but only in a few cases, as it pleased His Divine Majesty. We see this in the lives of the saints who did not always scrutinize all hearts, this being God's task alone. Enough that the director is a man of prayer and study in what regards souls and that his conduct correspond to the sublime character with which he is invested. I feel that knowing the conscience of the soul he is directing is a great help in illuminating the director, and this is accomplished in the confessional, or by other clarifications, or periodic holy conversations.

- I know by experience that the closer one is to a soul, the more one sees its defects, even small, which are almost always intertwined with virtue. At the same time, the director learns as he directs and is forced to give good example and sanctify himself, even if he wasn't so inclined at first.

- Directing souls tending to perfection has always been attractive to me, as the cultivation of select flowers: curious inclination isn't it? It has been and is a defect which I have never eliminated. However, no one knows of the first, but everyone knows the second. I confess, however, that I haven't been able to give that special direction that many special souls needed, and that Jesus expected of me. He supplied for everything!

- I think it, and let us consider it, a special grace from the Divine Goodness in knowing how to speak clearly and without reticence with one's poor spiritual father. Believe me, such is given to a few souls; he wants everything for himself and who wants to give a guide who assumes all the responsibility.

- Hasn't our Lord himself given spiritual directors, priests, for the sanctification of souls? All waters come from the same most pure Fount.

- To abandon oneself to the will of the heavenly Spouse and to submit in simplicity to the direction given is already paradise anticipated. Always have a tender devotion, a filial confidence, toward our heavenly Mother, and do not doubt that you will make great progress in perfection. You don't have to aspire to sublime things; enough to live hidden and as a sweet-smiling violet; but totally united in Jesus in perfect charity.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1877, 28 January | Born at Salice Salentino (Lecce) of Donato and Concetta Leuzzi; baptized at the parish church of Salice four days later; confirmed on May 16, 1882. |
| 1892, November | Feels called to the religious life during a mission preached by three Passionists. |
| 1893, 20 November | Enters the Passionist novitiate at Paliano and is vested in the religious habit taking the name of Eugene of St. Raphael the Archangel. |
| 1894, 21 November | Professes his religious vows on the Feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple. |
| 1898-1900 | Studies are interrupted to fulfil his military service. |
| 1903, 31 May | Ordained priest in the Cathedral at Taranto by Archbishop Peter Jorio. |
| 1903 - 1906 | Vice-master of novices at the retreat at Ceglie Messapico. |
| 1906 - 1908 | At Rome for a two year theology course under the guidance of Fr. Luigi Besi. |
| 1908 - 1914 | Director and professor of Passionist students. |
| 1914, June | Elected first provincial consultor to the provincial Fr. Flaviano De Vincentiis. |
| 1915, 22 May | Drafted during World War I and serves as military chaplain at the Brindisi hospital. |
| 1919, 21 May | Returns to Manduria after the war; in the Chapter held at St. Sosio, he is named vice-provincial of Puglia and Calabria; completes the foundation at Monopoli. |
| 1922 - 1925 | Lives a year at Borgetto (Palermo), then to Fuscaldo as superior; he leads by good example. |
| 1925, 28 August | Elected provincial of the re-established Province of the Sacred Side of Jesus; directs it for six years, giving new impulse to popular missions. |
| 1931, 2 September | Master of novices at Laurignano; the novices "simply by looking at him feel animated to live the religious life fervently." |
| 1935, 26 November | Named bishop of Cariati (CS) and consecrated in the collegiate church of Manduria. |
| 1936 - 1956 | In the twenty years of his episcopacy: renovates and reopens the seminary which had been closed for eight years; begins a summer seminary; calls the Passionists to the diocese; renovates the cathedral and bishop's residence; makes many pastoral visits; generously provides for the needs of clergy and people; celebrates his golden jubilee of priesthood. |
| 1956, 26 September | The Pope accepts his resignation tendered because of age and ill health; returns to Manduria among his brother Passionists. |
| 1960, 2 May | At eighty-three years of age his long and laborious day comes to a holy conclusion; he had lived totally for the glory of God and the Church. |

At the request of the Passionist Provincial Curia of Puglia, Lucania and Calabria, the Episcopal Conference of Calabria presided by Archbishop Joseph Agostino, Archbishop of Crotona, requested and obtained from the Holy See permission to begin the informative process for canonization of Bishop Eugene R. Faggiano. The process is taking place at the Archdiocesan Office, Crotona (Cosenza).