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Politics of the "Our Father" and of the Holy Father

Don Bosco's Mediation in Church-State Affairs

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Introduction

The reader of any popular biography of Don Bosco, even a full length one, will probably come across only the merest reference to his activity as mediator between Church and state in Italy in the times of their estrangement following the liberal revolution, the unification and the taking of Rome. And yet such mediating activity is attested for a period of some 20 years (1858-1878) and appears as a quite extraordinary feature in the life of the humble and otherwise politically uninvolved priest of Valdocco.

Don Bosco's efforts as a "negotiator" were chiefly concerned with filling vacant diocesan sees, the bishops of which had either been expelled or imprisoned, or had died. The appointment of bishops, therefore, was an important objective of this activity. At a later period the principal purpose of such mediation was to obtain the so-called *Exequatur* after appointment. This was a state-issued permit that enabled bishops to enter their sees and obtain possession of assets and revenues, held by the government, now needed to run the diocese—the so-called "temporalities."

It is the purpose of this article to tell the story of Don Bosco's efforts to have bishops appointed and to mediate related matters between the Holy See and the Italian government. The *Biographical Memoirs* have given some attention to this activity, especially in its later phases. Father Francesco Motto in a series of articles and Father Francis Desramaut in his biography of Don Bosco have written critically on the subject. This essay will be based mainly on these sources, as well as on some material preserved in the Central Salesian Archive.[1]

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[1] Bibliographical Note

Gioachino Berto, *Vescovi, Nomina, Temporalità*, in Central Salesian Archive [*ASC*]: 112 Documenti, *FDB* 788 B12 – 789 C7; 132 Autografi, *FDB* 789 C8-10. This box contains a collection of testimonies relating to Don Bosco's involvement in negotiations, transcribed by Father Gioachino Berto, some printed material, and some papers in Don Bosco's hand. [*Berto Collection*]

Gioachino Berto, *Compendio dell'andatata di Don Bosco a Roma nel 1873 [...]*, in *ASC* 110 Cronachette, Berto, *FDB* 906 C8ff. [Berto, *Compendio*]; *Appunti sul viaggio di D. Bosco a Roma, 1873* (Notes on Don Bosco's Trip to Rome, 1873), in *ASC* 110 Cronachette, Berto, *FDB* 907 D12ff. [Berto, *Appunti*]; *Brevi appunti pel viaggio di D. Bosco a Roma nel 1873-74 [...]* (Brief Notes on Don Bosco's Trip to

How, why and in what circumstances did this remarkable involvement come about? Don Bosco was certainly not an important person. He was of peasant origins, he was not highly educated, he was not highly placed in the Church. As he often emphasized, he was not involved in politics or in public life. His charitable work, important and successful though it was, did not

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Rome in 1873-74), 1-117; Table of Contents, 118-148, in *ASC* 110 Chronachette, Berto, *FDB* 908 B5 - 910 C3 and 910 C4 – 911 A8. [Berto, *Brevi Appunti*]

Giovanni Bosco, Epistolario. Introduzione, testi critici e note, a cura di Francesco Motto. Vol. I (1835-1863); Vol. II (1864-1868); Vol. III (1869-1872) (Roma: LAS, 1991, 1996, 1999). [Motto, *Epistolario*]

The *Biographical Memoirs*: Italian [*IBM*] V, 344; VI, 483, 544; VIII, 67-71, 530-531; 535, 538, 592-596, 610, 634-636, 679, 688; X, 427ff., 454-459ff.; 475-480; 487-499 (temporalities); 501-506, 526 (press).

Francesco Motto, "Don Bosco mediatore tra Cavour and Antonelli nel 1858," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 5 (1986:1) 3-20 [Motto, *DB Mediatore*]; "La mediazione di Don Bosco fra Santa Sede e Governo per la concessione degli <Exequatur> ai vescovi d'Italia (1872-1874)," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 6:1 (1987) 3-79 [Motto, *La Mediazione*]; "L'azione mediatrice di Don Bosco nella questione delle sedi vescovili vacanti dal 1858 alla morte di Pio IX (1878)," in *Don Bosco nella Chiesa a servizio dell'umanità. Studi e testimonianze*, ed. by Pietro Braido (Roma: LAS, 1987), 251-328 [Motto. *L'Azione*].

F. Desramaut, *Don Bosco en son temps (1815-1888)* (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1996). Salient passages: 515-519 (Cavour-Pius IX); 690-694 (Vegezzi mission, 1865); 711-713 (Don Bosco in Rome and Prime Minister Ricasoli's politics); 713-716 (Don Bosco in Rome and the Tonello mission, 1866-1867); 817-821 (appointments of bishops to vacant sees); 838-841; 860-862; 865-867 (bishops' temporalities) [Desramaut, *DB en son temps*]; "L'audience imaginaire du ministre Lanza (Florence, 22 juin 1871)," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 11:1 (1992) 9-34 [Desramaut, *L'Audience*]; "Études préalables à une biographie de Saint Jean Bosco," in Cahiers Salésiens. Recherches et documents [...] 34-35 (April 1995) 13-129 (critical chronology).

Use is also made of current historical works dealing with the period, such as the following: Christopher Duggan, *A Concise History of Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) [Duggan, *Italy*]; D. Beales, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy*, new ed. (London: Longman, 1981); D. Mack Smith, *The Making of Italy 1796-1866*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1983); Id., *Victor Emanuel, Cavour and the Risorgimento* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971). Recent Italian works dealing specifically with the subject are: P. Pirri, *Pio IX e Vittorio Emanuele II dal loro carteggio privato*. 3 vol. (Roma: Pontificia Università Gregoriana); Vol. II (Parts 1 and 2), *La questione romana (1856-1864)*, 1951; Vol. III (Parts 1 and 2), *La questione romana dalla convenzione di settembre alla caduta del potere temporale, con appendice di documenti fino alla morte di Vittorio Emanuele II* (1864-1878), 1961; R. Mori, *La questione romana (1861-1865)* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1963); Id., *Il tramonto del potere temporale (1866-1870)* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1967).

For basic data and detailed chronology use is made of V. Ceppellini and P. Boroli (eds), *Compact Storia d'Italia*. Cronologia 1815-1990 (Novara: Istituto Grafico DeAgostini, 1991 [*Compact DeAgostini*].

confer on him special power or distinction. How then explain his remarkable involvement in sensitive Church-state negotiations over many years? One may best judge the matter after hearing the long and comples story of this involvement.

At the moment, it is important to understand that Don Bosco was involved in these negotiations in a completely private capacity. The non-official status of his mediation explains why one finds but little mention of it in official documents or secular historical writing. In a comment introducing his collection, Father Gioachino Berto, Don Bosco's secretary, offers an explanation.

> At this point in time, few written documents are available that might be used to show the part which Don Bosco played between the years 1867 and 1874 in the nomination of bishops to vacant sees and in obtaining for them the so-called temporalities. The reason for such lack of documentation is that he did not act in an official capacity. Obviously, the Holy See could not compromise the pope's dignity by negotiating directly with his enemies. Don Bosco did indeed act as a bona fide intermediary, but without bearing official credentials. He dealt with the government in a private capacity and by word of mouth, but always in accordance with instructions received from the Vatican. Then he would faithfully report the government's responses and the demands back to the Vatican.[2]

Now, however, we find ourselves in a different and much more favorable position. Both Motto and Desramaut, the two Salesian historians that have written critically on the subject (to both of whom the present article is indebted) cite several histories of the period in which Don Bosco's activities are mentioned. Catholic Church historians are also cited that mention Don Bosco's mediation, even though not in any great detail. In addition, research in various archives has produced correspondence and other documentation that sheds considerable light on Don Bosco's role. This larger body of historical data lends qualified support to the Salesian claim as embodied in the *Biographical Memoirs*.[3] It also enables us to describe in some detail Don Bosco's activity as intermediary.

In this context it should be clearly understood that negotiations undertaken between the Holy See and the Italian government were never aimed at a political "reconciliation" between the two contending parties. The idea and the word was indeed bandied in both the anticlerical and Catholic conservative

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[2] *Berto Collection*, in *ASC* 112 Vescovi, *FDB* 788 C2. In the next few pages Berto records eyewitness testimonies of various Salesians who were close to Don Bosco in those years.

[3] Motto, *L'Azione*, 252, notes 2 and 3. Among the archives consulted, Motto mentions the Secret Vatican Archive, in its various sections, and the Historical Archive of the [Italian] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also mentions a number of historians, P. Pirri, Roger Aubert, G. Martina, among others.

press for the purpose of excoriating parties involved in any negotiation. But the very idea would have appeared preposterous under the circumstances. This will be apparent from the story that is to follow. As mentioned above, Don Bosco's mediation through the years of his involvement was chiefly concerned with the problem of the nomination and appointment of bishops to vacant dioceses, and with obtaining the *Exequatur* and the so-called "temporalities" for them, once appointed. His earliest attested act of mediation (in 1858) concerned the see of Turin and its exiled archbishop, Luigi Fransoni.

I. Don Bosco's Mediation in 1858

1. The Case of Archbishop Luigi Fransoni of Turin

At Archbishop Colombano Chiaveroti's death in 1831, Bishop Luigi Fransoni was appointed administrator of the Archdiocese of Turin, and on February 24, 1832, at King Charles Albert's request, its archbishop—a post he held for 30 years until his death in exile in 1862.

The first dozen years of his tenure in the Turin Archdiocese were peaceful and characterized by good normal relationships with the monarchy and the state authorities. But, even before the liberal revolution and the adoption of a constitution in 1848, there developed a gradual disaffection in the relationship leading to opposition and confrontation. In 1844 King Charles Albert established the Teachers' Normal School at the university, and invited the noted educator, Father Ferrante Aporti, for a series of lectures on methodology. The Archbishop declared his opposition to the appointment of this liberal educator, and forbade the clergy to attend the lectures. In late 1847 Bills on freedom of the press and of religion were passed. These Bills allowed the production and circulation of books and newspapers of various political tendencies, and granted civil rights and freedom of worship to both the Jews and to the Waldenses (usually referred to as Protestants). The archbishop declared his opposition to such liberal legislation, even as Pius IX in Rome was having the walls of the Jewish ghetto dismantled. The archbishop's opposition to the liberal movement solidified even more with the revolution of 1848 in France and in the Kingdom of Sardinia, when King Charles Albert granted a constitution, and the Kingdom of Sardinia became a constitutional monarchy. There set in a climate of growing euphoria, as the liberal patriots placed their hopes for the unification of Italy on both King Charles Albert and Pope Pius IX. Hopes were dashed when Pius IX failed to support the war waged by Piedmont to win back regions of northern Italy occupied by Austria. A period of turmoil followed in Rome. The pope was forced to flee the city, and revolutionaries led by Mazzini established a republic there.

The first people to be affected by the confrontation in Turin were the seminarians and faculty of the theological school at the University and of the Seminary. The mounting crisis also affected clergy and Catholic laity deeply, caught as they were between conflicting allegiances: the just demands of

citizenship on the one hand, and the archbishop's unyielding opposition to the constitution and to all political and social reforms.

From 1848 on, the archbishop began to be personally the object of attacks in the press and of insults in public, He often found himself in physical danger. In short, he became the symbol of the deep rift that was forming between the liberal state and the Church. The Archbishop was determined to stand his ground. But in March 1848, under pressure from many quarters and at the "request" of the government, he went into "voluntary" exile to Switzerland. Some two years later, a petition for his return bearing many signatures was presented to the Minister for Church affairs. Archbishop Fransoni returned to his diocese on February 26, 1850.

Meanwhile on January 9, 1850, the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Sardinia in Turin approved a Bill presented by the Minister of Justice, Count Giuseppe Siccardi, which abolished some of the ancient privileges enjoyed by the Church in the kingdom. This Bill did away with the privilege of separate ecclesiastical courts and of immunity of sacred places, that is, the right of persons pursued by the police to seek "sanctuary" in churches and monasteries. In the days that followed, other Bills presented by Minister Siccardi were passed that further curtailed Church privileges. They provided for a reduction in the number of established religious festivals, and forbade Church corporations from acquiring properties or accepting gifts without the state's authorization. The Siccardi Bills were passed in the senate on April 8, 1850. In the evening there took place a popular manifestation in Minister Siccardi's honor that required police intervention. The following day King Victor Emmanuel II signed the Bills into law. On the premise that the old ecclesiastical order no longer responded to the needs and demands of the new political and social order of the liberal revolution, these laws had the general effect of reducing the Church's power in civil society.

Church authorities were not slow to react. The Representative of the Holy See in Turin immediately presented a strong protest and left the city. On April 21, the state police confiscated a circular letter from Fransoni to parish priests, which was construed as resisting the application of the Siccardi laws. When summoned to appear in court, the archbishop ignored the summons. He was arrested, fined, and sentenced to one month in jail. A similar situation developed in other cities of the kingdom such as Sassari and Cagliari in Sardinia.

A couple of months later a much more serious episode occurred. On August 6 (1950), the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, Count Pietro Derossi di Santarosa, fell gravely ill and at the point of death requested the Sacraments. As a member of the government he had supported the Siccardi Bill; hence the Archbishop, on advice from his theologians, demanded a public recantation. The count refused and was denied the Sacraments. He was not denied Christian burial, but the funeral turned into a riot. The Archbishop was accused of abuse of power and of activities against the state. He was arrested, imprisoned and subsequently condemned to perpetual exile. On September 28,

1850, he was escorted to the French border. He chose to settle in Lyons, where he died 12 years later, on March 26, 1862. Through all those years and for some years thereafter, the Church of Turin remained without a resident bishop.

As noted above, the process of secularization that was part and parcel of the liberal revolution aimed at abolishing or diminishing the Church's control in all areas and institutions of society. The secularization of the school, long under the total control of the Church, was the object of legislation passed in 1848 and again in 1859 and in the 1870s. New penal and civil codes were introduced after Napoleon's models. But by far the most important and painful stage of the process was the suppression of religious corporations, especially of monastic religious communities of both men and women, and the confiscation of their properties. This was done under the terms of the Rattazzi Bill of 1855, known as the "Law of the Convents." All these secularization laws, at first in force only in the Kingdom of Sardinia, were later extended to the whole of Italy (united in 1861), including Rome (taken from the pope in 1870).

It was in this context, in connection with the Fransoni case, that Don Bosco first became involved as go-between in Church-state negotiations.

2. Don Bosco Intermediary between Gustavo and Camillo Cavour and the Holy See in the Fransoni Case[4]

Archbishop Fransoni did his best to govern the archdiocese from his exile through intermediaries. But his absence left a void that could not easily be filled, and the situation in the Church of Turin deteriorated over the years. Without demanding it, as far back as 1853-1854 the pope had suggested that the archbishop resign, so that a resident successor could be named who would be acceptable both to the liberal government and to the Church. The archbishop, however, would not budge. By 1858 both Church and government people felt that something should be done about it. It is at this point that Don Bosco was asked to act as intermediary in the negotiations between Prime Minister Camillo Cavour, through his brother Gustavo, and the Holy See through Cardinal Antonelli, Secretary of State to Pius IX.

In early 1858 Don Bosco traveled to Rome with Seminarian Michael Rua acting as his secretary. The object of this Don Bosco's first trip to the eternal city, apart from some heavy sightseeing, was to consult Pius IX on the founding of a religious congregation (the Salesian Society). Don Bosco had been in Rome for nearly a month, when he received a long letter from Marquis Gustavo Cavour brother of Prime Minister Camillo Cavour, asking him to act as intermediary. In this letter, dated March 13, 1858, Marquis Gustavo made an important point and offered a proposal. While a comprehensive settlement between the Piedmontese government and the Holy See was out of the question, appointing a resident bishop for the see of Turin might be a good

[4] Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 3-20. Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 515-520.

start and possibly open the way to further negotiations. Would Don Bosco approach the Roman authorities with a proposal: "If it would please the Holy Father to make the [...] revered Archbishop Fransoni a cardinal and appoint an archbishop as resident coadjutor with right of succession," this would be a solution acceptable to both sides. In the marquis' judgment there were a number of acceptable candidates for the post, for example Bishop Giovanni Antonio Odone of Susa, Bishop Giovanni Pietro Losana of Biella, the Vincentian superior Marcantonio Durando, and others.[5] It may be noted that the proposal did not demand Archbishop Fransoni's resignation, but only the appointment of a coadjutor. As will be seen, however, Prime Minister Cavour expected a voluntary resignation. In any case, it was unlikely that Fransoni would accept such an accommodation, hence the appointment (were the pope ever to make it) would practically speaking force his resignation.

In the audience of April 6, Don Bosco presented the letter to Pius IX, who read it and asked Don Bosco to take it to the Secretary of State, Cardinal Antonelli. On April 9, Don Bosco wrote to the Cardinal requesting an audience for the purpose of handing the letter over to him: "I have received a letter from Turin that I would like Your Eminence to see before I leave Rome."[6]

From the exchanges that followed it emerges that Don Bosco did hand the letter over to Cardinal Antonelli, before leaving Rome for Turin,[7] but we have no information regarding their conversation. Likewise, there may have been a second exchange by letter between Cavour and Don Bosco, followed by a second consultation in Rome, about which no information is available.[8]

Back in Turin, Don Bosco made his report to Marquis Gustavo Cavour. From Rome, by letter of June 12, Cardinal Antonelli directed the Representative of the Holy See in Turin, Father Gaetano Tortone, to find out from Don Bosco ("tactfully," *delicatamente*) how matters stood.[9] Don Bosco was able to reassure him that nothing had changed, and that as a matter of fact he had already reported to the Holy Father by letter of June 14. The letter reveals Don Bosco's caution, as well as his desire to see the matter resolved. It is worth quoting in its pertinent parts.

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[5] Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 8.

[6] Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, Rome, April 9, 1958, in Motto, *Epistolario* I, 348 [from the Secret Vatican Archive].

[7] In spite of painstaking research, the original of Cavour's letter could no longer be found. Motto has it from historians P. Pirri and G. Martina [Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 8, note 12].

[8] Cf. Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 9, note 13.

[9] Cardinal Antonelli to Father Gaetano Tortone, June 12, 1958. In Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 14 (from the Secret Vatican Archive).

Turin, June 14, 1858

Most Holy Father,

Back among my boys, I cannot relate enough of the things heard and seen in the eternal city, of those things especially that have to do with Your Holiness. I do so with a profound sense of gratitude toward Your Holiness' sacred person. [...]

One thing, however, has been a source of heartfelt regret to me after leaving Rome—not to have had more time at my disposal so that I could come to see Your Holiness again, since in your kindness Your Holiness had offered to receive me.[10] I believe it was about our archbishop. Be that as it may, I would again recommend our diocese in its pitiable state to Your Holiness' good and fatherly heart. I entreat Your Holiness with the words that the faithful of Lyons of old spoke to St. Eleutherius, your worthy predecessor: "Most Holy Father, act to bring peace to our Church and help us in our need." True, we are not suffering outright persecution and there is no bloodshed, but evil is rampant and the damage immense. We still have a lot of good people, but they are oppressed and helpless. Evil people get bolder by the day. The weak are daily led astray in great numbers. If by the height of misfortune the heretics were to go to power legally, I have reason to fear that defections would reach frightening proportions even from the ranks of those who occupy posts of responsibility in this diocese. I say this in the Lord. May Your Holiness forgive me.

I don't know if the idea expressed by Mr. de Cavour has anything in it to commend it to your Holiness. If it were meant to establish a precedent and a general principle, I would not trust the proposal. But since it is meant to deal with one particular case, I think it holds out some hope of success, especially since the original good intentions endure. In any case, Your Holiness needs to act in some way for the good of the Turin diocese, because the evils that would result from inaction would be irreparable. I speak in the Lord.

Rumor has it, and it has also been reported in the press, that Father [Giovanni Antonio] Genta, pastor of the church of St. Francis de Paola in this capital city, is about to be named bishop of Asti. I would like to bring to Your Holiness' attention that he is very much the liege of the government. He has recently been decorated with the cross of the Order of SS. Maurice and Lazarus "for his enlightened zeal," the very words of the citation. He is a follower of Gioberti, and has given indications of supporting the Bill on civil marriage. [...][11]

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[10] We have no other information on this offer of an additional audience. It's all very puzzling, for if the pope wanted to see Don Bosco, would the latter have failed to respond "for lack of time"?

[11] Don Bosco to Pius IX, Turin, June 14, 1858, in Motto, *Epistolario* I, 352. In the last paragraph Don Bosco is describing a liberal bishop. There were many liberals among the clergy, people who saw value in the new political and social order, especially in the moderate form it had taken in the kingdom of Sardinia. These people were also "patriotic," that is, they supported the idea of a united Italy. Vincenzo Gioberti (d. 1852) was one of these priests. At first he advocated a federated Italy under the presidency of the Pope (Neo-Guelphism); later he joined the

A few days later Don Bosco took the initiative of sounding out Marquis Gustavo Cavour. By letter of June 22 the marquis assured him that his brother the Prime Minister felt "particularly pleased with the good will that His Holiness has shown in the matter regarding the archbishop of Turin." Prime Minister Cavour had also expressed a desire "to have a talk with Don Bosco."[12] This decisive meeting took place on June 26, after which Don Bosco presented Cavour's position to Delegate Tortone. Cavour agreed with the Holy See on the need of restoring Archbishop Marongiu to Cagliari (Sardinia) as well as Bishop Artico to Asti (Piedmont).[13] As for Turin, the appointment of Bishop Odone of Susa would be acceptable. Archbishop Fransoni could return to Turin provided he would resign voluntarily and the Holy See would guarantee his resignation. The Prime Minister would speak with the king and later have another talk with Don Bosco.[14]

In spite of the early signs of good will, Cavour's position revealed the gulf that separated the government's policy from that of the Holy See. On July 3, Cardinal Antonelli, pointing out the grave misunderstanding on Cavour's part, gave a negative reply. The Secretary of State felt that demanding Fransoni's resignation was a capitulation that would humiliate the episcopate and establish a dangerous precedent. The Holy Father might concede to the point of appointing a coadjutor with right of succession, but would go no farther.[15]

In spite of bitter disappointment, Don Bosco promised Delegate Tortone he would try to see Prime Minister Cavour again and explain the Holy See's position to him. But Cavour left for France on July 11 for talks with Emperor Napoleon III.[16] Don Bosco, however, tried to get the conversations restarted.

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general liberal and patriotic movement. Don Bosco at first praised him; later he regarded him as a renegade priest. Among the liberal reforms proposed was that of "civil marriage," that is, recognizing the validity of marriage contracted before the civil authority and not before the Church. In 1852 a Bill to that effect was passed in the House but was defeated in the Senate.

[12] Gaetano Tortone to Cardinal Antonelli, June 23, 1858 (reporting information from Don Bosco), in Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 16-17 (from the Secret Vatican Archive).

[13] Archbishop Giovanni Emanuele Marongiu-Nurra like Archbishop Fransoni, had been expelled from his diocese (Cagliari, Sardinia) in 1850. Bishop Filippo Artico of Asti had been accused of "immoral conduct" back in 1847, and after a decade of seeking redress in the courts had finally resigned.

[14] Gaetano Tortone to Cardinal Antonelli, June 26, 1858 (reporting information from Don Bosco), in Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 17-18 (from the Secret Vatican Archive).

[15] Cardinal Antonelli to Gaetano Tortone, July 3, 1858 in Motto, *DB Mediatore*, 18 (from the Secret Vatican Archive).

[16] These important talks between Napoleon III and Cavour were held at Plombières (France) on July 20-21, 1858. They led to an alliance between France

On August 4, he wrote to Prime Minister Cavour pleading with him "not to forget this poor diocese of ours," and declaring himself "ready to do whatever lies in my power for my country and my religion."[17] There was no reply, and the negotiations came to an end.

Archbishop Fransoni died in exile in 1862, but the Turin diocese remained vacant until 1867 and the appointment of Archbishop Alessandro Ottaviano Riccardi dei Conti di Netro. Archbishop Marongiu, mentioned above, was restored to his diocese of Cagliari (Sardinia) in 1866, in his old age. It was a good will gesture on the government's part, as talks for the appointment of bishops (to be discussed below) were being planned.

II. Don Bosco's Acting As Intermediary in 1859?

In 1859 Don Bosco is reported to have served as go-between in a secret correspondence between Pius IX and King Victor Emmanuel II. We have this information solely on the authority of Don Bosco's biographer, Father Lemoyne. If the report is reliable, one may then inquire into the circumstances that brought about the exchange.

1. Political Context

Pragmatic Piedmontese politicians led by Cavour, and the moderates of the Italian National Society, unlike Mazzini's and Garibaldi's republicans, had realized that the unification of Italy could not be achieved without the support of a foreign power. Under the circumstances the foreign power would have to be France. In addition, Emperor Napoleon III aspired to extend French influence to Italy, at the time largely dominated by Austria. The conversations held by Emperor Napoleon III and Prime Minister Cavour at Plombières in July 1858 (referred to above) resulted in an alliance and eventually in a joint war against Austria, the Second War of Italian Independence. A contrived insurrection at Massa-Carrara offered a pretext, and the war was fought victoriously by the French and the Piedmontese between April and July 1859. Garibaldi also fought victoriously against the Austrians in the Alps with a volunteer force, called the Alpine Hunters, under his own independent command. On July 11, 1859, Napoleon III, contrary to the Plombières agreement, entered into a secret pact with Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, and an armistice was signed. Piedmont gained only the region of Lombardy. King Victor Emmanuel II accepted the terms, but Cavour resigned in angry protest. The king, however, reluctantly returned him to power on January 21, 1860.

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and the Kingdom of Sardinia, to the Second War for independence from Austria (1859), and to the unification of Italy (1861).

[17] Don Bosco to Camillo Cavour, August 4, 1858, in Motto, *Epistolario* I, 357 (from Turin's State Archive).

Under cover of the war, some Italian regional states revolted against their rulers, elected constitutional assemblies, and requested annexation to Piedmont. They were the Duchy of Modena, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchy of Parma, and the Legations of Romagna (Bologna, Ferrara and Ravenna), which were part of the Papal States. King Victor Emmanuel II had to proceed with caution and dispatched his court chaplain, Father Emanuele Stellardi, with a letter to Rome to plead the cause of the Legations with the pope. Pius IX received the king's messenger in audiences of September 23 and 29. While the Stellardi mission was in progress, on September 24, the king received the representatives of the Legations with sympathy, and spoke in a veiled but transparent manner of the need for a political change in their region. The pope responded by expelling the Piedmontese ambassador from Rome, and by a strongly worded letter of protest.[18]

2. Don Bosco Bearer of a Letter from the Pope to the King?

Lemoyne reports that in the autumn of 1859 the Holy Father asked Don Bosco to deliver to King Victor Emanuel, in strictest secrecy, a letter in his own hand.[19] Don Bosco succeeded in getting the letter to the king through the good offices of the king's personal secretary. If Lemoyne's report is factual, then this incident of Don Bosco's mediation is best located after the Stellardi mission. The fact that Father Stellardi was the bearer of an *official* letter to the king, probably a strongly worded letter of protest, does not of itself preclude the possibility of a *private* message from the pope using Don Bosco as go-between. It is known that Pius IX and Victor Emmanuel (who was king but had little power in government) regarded each other with sympathy.

As an intermediate step to annexation, Piedmont appointed a regent for those regions, though not Prince Eugene of Savoy, whom the Legations and those regional states had requested (November 6-9).

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[18] Motto, *Epistolario* I, 387, footnote, with a reference to P. Pirri's work. Also, *Compact DeAgostini*, 132.

[19] As noted above, Don Bosco's biographer, J. B. Lemoyne, is the sole source for this incident. He carries the story in the *Biographical Memoirs* [*EBM* VI, 155-156] and in *Documenti,* the work that preceded the *Biographical Memoirs* [*Documenti* VII, 85, *FDB* 991 D8]. He places this incident under the date April 25 [1859], but the story itself, enriched with dialogue, begins with the words "Some time this year" (*In quest'anno*). The king happened to be vacationing or hunting in the Alps at the time. Chevalier Aghemo, the king's Secretary, was entrusted with delivering the letter, and the king's reply was brought to Turin by Father Roberto Murialdo, a court chaplain, and thence conveyed to Pius IX. *Documenti* VII may have been compiled in the late 1880s. Lemoyne was Secretary of the general council of the Salesian Society and had been very close to Don Bosco since 1884. He had joined Don Bosco as a newly ordained priest in 1864, hence some five years after the event.

It was probably under these circumstances that Don Bosco, through a trusted friend, addressed a letter to Pope Pius IX. It reads in part:

> Most Holy Father, we deeply regret and decisively reject our government's policies and actions in Romagna. We unfortunately were powerless to prevent such evil; but through the spoken and written word we have consistently voiced our disapproval of what has been happening there. Most of the diocesan clergy, practically all the parish priests, and the majority of Catholic lay people here share these same sentiments, even though through fear of reprisal they refrain from public statements. [...]
>
> If I may speak plainly, my fear is that this raging storm will only increase in force. A government that thrives on revolution frightens me. On the one hand defections from the ranks of good practicing Catholics are each day more numerous; on the other the number of the enemies of social order seeking political asylum here or joining the rebels in Romagna is on the increase. But my worst fear is that the person of Your Holiness (God forbid!) may have to suffer even more violent harassment and persecution.[20]

Don Bosco's words were prophetic. The process of the liberal revolution and of the unification of Italy would proceed apace to its inexorable conclusion. Its ultimate result would be that the Church's life, its institutions and structures in Italy would be seriously affected.

III. Don Bosco's Involvement at the Time of the Vegezzi Negotiations for the Appointment of Bishops (March-June, 1865)

1. Political Developments: The Unification of Italy

The armistice concluded between France and Austria, ending the Second War of Italian Independence, was finalized by the Peace of Zûrich (November 10, 1859), in which Piedmont played no part. The treaty provided for Lombardy to be annexed to the Kingdom of Sardinia, and envisaged in general terms a federation of Italian regional states, with their legitimate rulers restored.

Lombardy was annexed to Piedmont, but otherwise things took a different turn. Napoleon III's true position found expression in the pamphlet *Le Pape et le Congrès* (The Pope and the Congress). Written by Baron Louis-Étienne de la Guéronnière but inspired by Napoleon himself, it was published simultaneously in Paris, London, Frankfurt, Turin and Florence on December 22, 1859. The pamphlet recognized the necessity for the pope to retain territorial sovereignty, but suggested that "the smaller the territory, the greater the sovereignty." It also suggested explicitly that the pope might begin by

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[20] Don Bosco to Pope Pius IX, Turin, November 9, 1859, in Motto, *Epistolario* I, 386-387.

surrendering his rule over the Legations of Romagna. The pamphlet drew the ire of the Catholic press and a condemnation from Pius IX, who was unaware of its true authorship.

The pamphlet's implications were clear: the emperor was lending qualified support to Cavour's program for the unification of Italy, being apparently committed also to defending the pope's sovereignty. He was also adroitly furthering French interests. In March 1860, following a referendum, Tuscany, Parma, Modena and the Legations of Romagna were officially annexed to Piedmont. In recognition of French support, by a separate accord, Nice and Savoy (up to that point, June 1960, part of the Kingdom of Sardinia) were ceded to France.

Following an uprising against the Bourbon government in Palermo (Sicily), Garibaldi, at the urging of the Action Party leaders, mounted an expedition to Sicily in support of the revolutionaries. In spite of opposition from Victor Emmanuel II and Cavour, who regarded his radical republican commitment as dangerous, he gathered a small volunteer force (the "One Thousand") and landed in Sicily. In battles fought from Palermo to Naples between May and October 1860, he defeated the Bourbon forces and overthrew the monarchy. By this time Garibaldi's volunteer army had risen to some 50,000 in number.

Piedmont had to make a preemptive move to take the initiative for the "liberation of Italy" away from Garibaldi. Such engagement on Piedmont's part (with France's acquiescence) would involve entering the Papal States. Thus it was that the Piedmontese army invaded the Marches and Umbria, where the movement for annexation had been strong. On September 18, 1860 the Piedmontese army defeated the papal forces, and led by King Victor Emmanuel moved on towards Naples. On October 26, Garibaldi met Victor Emmanuel at Teano. He saw no alternative but to hail Victor as king of Italy, surrender his "conquest," and dismiss his army.

Referendums were held at Naples and in the Papal States, and the "conquered" regions were annexed to Piedmont. These actions paved the way for the proclamation of Victor Emmanuel II as king of united Italy by vote of the first Italian parliament and senate, and by law of March 17, 1861.

2. Political Developments: the Roman Question

Territorially, Italy was not completely united. On the one hand, the Veneto and other areas in the extreme northeast remained under Austria. On the other, the pope still held Rome and the surrounding territory (Latium). From the point of view of the Italian Risorgimento the latter question is referred to as the Roman Question. In Rome, France maintained a garrison for its protection against possible take-over attempts. The Third War of Italian Independence (1866) would settle (even though incompletely) the first question. The latter question (the *Roman Question*), the more sensitive by far, from this point on became the most divisive issue in Italian society.

On March 23 (1861) the first cabinet of the new nation was formed with Count Camillo Benso of Cavour as Prime Minister. Since the unification of Italy was achieved by annexation of Italian regional states to Piedmont, and not (for example) through federal union, Turin functioned naturally as its first capital. But the Roman Question, that is, whether Rome should be claimed from the pope as the historic capital of Italy, immediately came to the fore. On March 26-27, in two speeches delivered in Parliament, Cavour presented the government's position and strategy. The unification of Italy could be regarded as complete only when Rome became its capital. The "liberation" of Rome, therefore, must remain the goal, to be pursued with France's acquiescence. It must be accomplished without infringing upon the pope's spiritual freedom and independence, of which Italy must be the guarantor before the world. In addition, Italy must guarantee to the pope the payment of a yearly sum comparable to his accustomed revenues. Such a policy would exemplify the liberal principle, "A free Church in a free state."

Cavour, however, died suddenly on June 6, 1861. In September, Cavour's successor, Baron Bettino Ricasoli, following Cavour's idea, presented a proposal of "reconciliation" between Italy and the Holy See to Paris and to Rome. The Holy See would renounce all *territorial* sovereignty, in exchange for the recognition of the pope's *personal* sovereignty, right to diplomatic representation, and a large yearly endowment (to be underwritten also by other Catholic nations). The Italian government would pledge not to interfere in the nomination and appointment of bishops. It would also accept international control as to the obligations assumed. Ricasoli's proposal may have been "Cavourian," but his speeches lacked Cavour's moderate and reassuring tone. Thus in his July 1 address in Parliament he said: "We will have Rome not to destroy but to build up, for we will offer the Church the opportunity and the means for self-reformation. We will guarantee freedom and independence for the Church as the means whereby it may renew itself in that purity of religious faith, simplicity of life style, austerity of discipline that were the honor and glory of the papacy in the early days. Such renewal would naturally follow the willing surrender of that worldly power that is diametrically opposed to the spiritual nature of the Church's institution."[21] Apart from Ricasoli's arguable notion of the Church, such rhetoric was not likely to encourage dialogue. The Holy See ignored the overture. France refused to enter into any discussion of the Roman Question on any terms. As noted above, the government's ecclesiastical policy, more than its words, aggravated an already tense situation.

For the next 15 years the government remained in the hands of the moderate liberals of Cavourian stamp (the so-called Historic Right).[22] But the

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[21] *Sussidi* per lo studio di Don Bosco e della sua opera, I: Il tempo di Don Bosco (Roma: SDB, 1989), 67 [*Sussidi* I].

[22] The governments of the Right after Cavour were ineffectual and came tumbling down at every crisis, as the mere enumeration of Prime Ministers suggests. Bettino Ricasoli (June 1861 – March 1862), Urbano Rattazzi (March –

governments that followed were weak and incapable of dealing with the chaotic situation that developed throughout the peninsula.

The government adopted a policy of repression and coercion, administered by army units and police, as a method for dealing with social unrest. This was especially true for the southern parts of Italy and Sicily, where banditry, the Mafia, resentment against the "Piedmontese rule" fueled frequent uprisings and required the deployment of as many as 100,000 soldiers.

No less disturbing for the government were the schemes of the radical Republicans hatched by Mazzini and Garibaldi. The latter had seen fit to "hand over" his conquest of the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to King Victor Emmanuel II. But the pure patriots' sights were now focused on Rome and Venice. On December 16, 1861, the committees that had been formed to support Garibaldi's expedition to Sicily in 1860, were re-established in Genoa and re-named, "Committees for the Liberation of Rome and Venice." Because of disagreements with Mazzini's faction, Garibaldi refused the leadership. But when the committees met again (March 9-10, 1862) to form an "Association for the Liberation of Italy," Garibaldi stifled his personal grudges and accepted the presidency of the association. Some time later, a band of volunteers attempting to move against Venice was dispersed by the Italian regular army, while Mazzini, Garibaldi and other leaders of the Association planned an expedition against Rome. Garibaldi gathered a small volunteer force in Sicily with the oath, "Either Rome or Death." The force crossed over into Italy and was met by Italian regulars at Aspromonte. After a brief skirmish, Garibaldi was wounded in the foot and taken prisoner together with other volunteers (August 29, 1862). One month later, they were amnestied on the occasion of a royal wedding.

A further cause of concern for the government was the anger of Pius IX over the loss of much of his temporal power. The pope's condemnation of the new political arrangement, and his efforts to mobilize Catholics in defense of the Church, were seen as an attempt to undermine the state from within.[23] The ecclesiastical policies of the Liberal Right were a major cause of this state of alienation. These policies maintained the jurisdictionalist position ingrained in

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December 1862), Luigi Carlo Farini (December 1862 – March 1863), Marco Minghetti (March 1863 – September 1864), Alfonso Ferrero La Marmora (September 1864 – December 1865), La Marmora II (December 1865 – June 1866), Ricasoli II (June 1866 – April 1867), Rattazzi II (April – October 1867), Luigi Federico Menabrea (October – December 1867), Menabrea II (January 1868 – May 1869), Menabrea III (May – November 1869), Giovanni Lanza (December 1869 – June 1873), Minghetti II (last government of the Right, July 1873 – March 18, 1876).

In 1876 the government passed into the hands of the more radical liberal Left (the so-called Historic Left). These politicians of the Left had their roots in Mazzini's republican ideology and the Action Party, and with the years they also acquired socialist leanings.

[23] Cf. Duggan, *Italy*, 147-152.

the tradition of the Kingdom of Savoy, and exemplified by the Siccardi and Rattazzi Laws of 1850 and 1855. The laws of suppression of religious orders and congregations and of confiscation of their properties were extended to the whole of Italy between 1864 and 1867. "In 1866-7 2,000 religious congregations were deprived of legal status and 25,000 ecclesiastical bodies were suppressed. In the course of the next fifteen years over a million hectares of church land were sold off."[24]

The year 1864 marked a turning point in the story of the Roman Question, as also in Church-state relations in Italy. Garibaldi's triumphal tour through England in April, his meeting with Mazzini, and talk of Italian unification in the British press, alerted France and Italy to the danger of a possible reconciliation of the two "patriots." Hence, in June, conversations on the Roman Question were held between Emperor Napoleon III's minister of foreign affairs and the extraordinary envoy of the Italian government, now headed by Prime Minister Marco Minghetti. These negotiations led to the signing on September 15 (1864) of an accord between France and Italy known as the "September Convention." It provided for the withdrawal by stages of the French garrison from Rome over a period of two years, thus allowing the Holy See to draft and train its own army. In exchange the Italian government pledged to respect the territorial integrity of the city of Rome and surrounding region, that is, what was left of the Papal States, and to underwrite a portion of the Holy See's public debt. A secret clause provided for the transfer of the Italian capital from Turin to some more central Italian city, as a token of renunciation of Rome as capital.

The September Convention left the solution of the Roman Question in limbo. The Italian government understood the provision of respecting the territorial integrity to mean that the pope would voluntarily surrender Rome, so that armed intervention would not be necessary. It also understood the transfer of the capital as an interim measure. The French government, on the contrary, understood the non-aggression clause as binding the Italian government not to attack, and to control the Garibaldi and Mazzini factions, which might be tempted by the withdrawal of the French garrison. It also understood the transfer of the capital to a more important city (other than Rome) as a valid compromise.

Pope Pius IX obviously mistrusted the provisions of the September Convention, for he feared that the withdrawal of the French garrison would invite armed attack. His fears were not ill founded. His concern, however, transcended the political developments. On December 8, 1864, he published the encyclical *Quanta Cura* with the appended *Syllabus of Contemporary Errors*,

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[24] Duggan, *Italy*, 135. Cf. G. Bonfanti, *La politica ecclesiastica [...]*, quoted in *Sussidi* I, 89-90.

which restated the Church's opposition to all that the liberal revolution stood for.[25]

When the government announced that Florence had been chosen as capital, violent demonstrations in Turin brought the government down, for the move was perceived as a surrender of Rome as capital. A permanent committee was established to oppose any government that did not pledge to make Rome the capital of Italy. But in spite of opposition, on November 19, 1864, the Italian Parliament in Turin approved the transfer of the capital. The Bill was passed into law on December 11, 1864, and on February 3, 1865, King Victor Emmanuel II moved the court to Florence. The departments of government followed by stages.

National elections were held on October 20, 1865. Only 2% of the population had the franchise, and only about 54% voted. Moderate liberals won 250 seats, the more radical opposition, 120, and the conservatives, 20. Some 50 seats went to numerous splinter groups. A month later, the king inaugurated the legislature. By year's end a government was formed with General Alfonso Ferrero La Marmora as Prime Minister, and Giovanni Lanza as minister of interior. It was at this juncture that Don Bosco became tangentially involved in negotiations aiming at filling vacant episcopal sees.

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[25] With the encyclical *Quanta cura* Pius IX put the finishing touch on an intense doctrinal and disciplinary program the purpose of which was to reaffirm the Church's authority in all areas of contemporary society. The *Syllabus of Contemporary Errors* was an intransigent condemnation of the "most pernicious errors" of the liberal revolution. With its 80 propositions or articles the *Syllabus* condemned rationalism as a tendency of the human spirit to reject the authority of revelation and of the Church's teaching. It condemned laicism as eliminating the Church's influence on social life. It condemned moral and religious indifferentism as affirming individual right over the right of truth. The *Syllabus* maintained that socialist ideas subverted the natural right to private property, and that the democratic principle of the "will of the people" violated the divine right of the monarchy. According to the *Syllabus* the state had the duty not only of governing secular life but also of safeguarding the rights of the Church. Its condemnations extended to liberty of conscience, religious tolerance, the lay character of the school, scientific progress, and freedom of thought, of the press, and of critical research. The last article condemned all Catholic liberalism as wishing to reconcile the Church's teaching with liberal modern culture. On the one hand, the *Syllabus* was received with pride and joy by conservative Catholics; on the other, it polarized anticlerical reaction from both liberal and more radical democratic circles. Understood in a purely religious context, the *Syllabus* could be read as a theological statement to Catholics. Under the circumstances, however, it was widely taken as a political manifesto.

3. Don Bosco and the Mission of Negotiator Saverio Vegezzi[26]

(1) The Problem of Vacant Sees

One very serious and damaging effect of the confrontation between Church and State during and after unification was the fact that many bishops were removed from their dioceses, and that the government opposed the nomination of new bishops to fill the vacancies. The reason for such punishing policy is to be sought in the fact that bishops protested against what they perceived to be the government's unjust and unwarranted public policies, and that the government was not disposed to allow dissent or resistance. The takeover of papal territories was not the only reason for the protest. The policies against the Church in effect since 1848, and now being extended to the kingdom, were responsible to an even greater extent for the souring of relations. Such were, for example: the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Kingdom of Sardinia, the abolition of the Church's privileges, the gradual laicization of public education, the Bills on civil marriage,[27] the suppression of religious corporations, the confiscation of property and assets of ecclesiastical and religious bodies, the infiltration of Freemasonry in civil society, the unilateral imposition of laws unfavorable to religion, etc. These were the chief reasons for the bishops' protest, as they also were the reasons for Pius IX's condemnation.

The situation was critical if not desperate. According to one historian, in the process of annexation and unification bishops and other clergy in large north Italian cities, such as Milan, Bergamo and Brescia, were investigated, harassed, and some times expelled. In central Italy, over a dozen important cardinals, archbishops, and bishops were imprisoned, expelled, deported, or placed under house arrest. In southern Italy more than 60 bishops met with the same fate.[28] According to another historian, after the unification of Italy, 13 bishops were brought to trial, though eventually acquitted, and 5 bishops were taken from their dioceses and imprisoned in Turin. By 1865, 43 bishops had been exiled, and 16 bishops had died, and no successor had been appointed. In summary, 24 (of a total of 44) archdioceses, and 84 (of a total of 183) dioceses

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[26] Cf. Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 262-275.

[27] First proposed in 1850, in 1852 the law on civil marriage (that is, making marriage a civil institution, and removing it from the Church's jurisdiction) was passed by the lower house in Piedmont, but defeated in the senate. On April 2, 1865 the new civil code (based on the Napoleonic Code) was promulgated, to go in effect all over Italy on January 1, 1866. The institution of civil marriage, fiercely opposed by the Church and related organizations in Italy, was among its provisions. Motto [*L'azione mediatrice,* 264] points out that civil marriage had already been adopted in countries that maintained amicable relations with the Holy See.

[28] D. Massé, *Il caso di coscienza del Risorgimento italiano*, 342-343, in *Sussidi* I, 86. Cf. also *EBM* VI, 503, 303-304, 416.

were deprived of their pastors.[29] In a number of cases, new bishops nominated by the pope were prevented from taking possession of their diocese. For example, in the consistory of December 21, 1863, the pope had nominated new bishops for Bologna and six other dioceses in that part of the former Papal States. The government, however, had refused recognition on the ground that such nominations constituted an act of sovereignty in territories no longer subject to the pope. Don Bosco was especially concerned with the situation in Piedmont, where eight of eleven dioceses, including Turin, were vacant. In Sardinia Archbishop Marongiu of Cagliari had been in exile for the past 14 years.[30]

In the summer of 1864, Pius IX is reported to have invited King Victor Emmanuel II to open negotiations aimed at alleviating this religious crisis.[31] However, the September Convention (rejected by the pope), the condemnations in *Quanta cura* and the *Syllabus*, and the rigid conservatism of curia circles and the clerical press stymied any progress. Nonetheless Pius IX, even though "reconciliation" was out of the question, was personally inclined to seek some kind of rapprochement, and thought the moment favorable for a solution of the question of vacant dioceses. The Minghetti government (1863-1864), in spite of some backsliding appeared to have acted more temperately than its predecessors.

(2) Don Bosco's Involvement

Don Bosco was in touch with his good friend Father Emiliano Manacorda, who was at the time serving as domestic prelate at the Vatican and could have access to "inside information." Biographer Lemoyne tells us that at this time Don Bosco addressed letters to the pope through Father Manacorda.[32] Don Bosco may have learned of Pius IX's desire to seek a solution to the crisis of vacant dioceses. Don Bosco was personally acquainted with people in the government.

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[29] L'*Unità Cattolica* of April 4, 1865, in Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 264, data confirmed by the instructions given to negotiator Vegezzi.

[30] Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 264; Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 691. The 8 vacant dioceses in Piedmont were: Alba from 1853, Alessandria from 1854, Aosta and Asti from 1859, Fossano from 1852, Vigevano from 1859, Turin from 1862 (Archbishop Fransoni in exile since 1850), Saluzzo from 1864, Cuneo from March 1865) [Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 268 and note 27, citing *Civiltà Cattolica* XVI (1864:6) 373].

[31] Motto, *L'azione*, 265, citing Pirri.

[32] Lemoyne, *EBM* VIII, 44. This is confirmed by Father Manacorda's letters to Don Bosco, seven of which are preserved in the Central Salesian Archive [*ASC* 126.2 Lettere a DB, Manacorda, *FDB* 1543 A9 – C2], specifically the letter of October 8, 1864 [*FDB* 1543 A12]. Manacorda's role is discussed in detail by Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 266-268. Before his appointment (at Don Bosco's suggestion) as bishop to the diocese of Fossano (Piedmont) he was Don Bosco's "Man in Rome."

He had corresponded with both Prime Minister Alfonso La Marmora and Minister of the Interior Giovanni Lanza.[33] It would not have been difficult for Don Bosco to ascertain the government's willingness to deal. Don Bosco then would have stood ready to offer his services. But this is conjecture.

In any case, it was Pius IX himself who in a second letter to Victor Emmanuel II, dated March 6, 1865, expressed his willingness to settle the matter. Referring to the government's rejection of earlier nominees, the pope's letter read in part:

> The most serious difficulty in my view is to reach an agreement in the choice of nominees. The policies of Your Majesty's government are so hostile to the Church that, when I agree to negotiate, your government presents candidates that I could not accept. Accordingly, as I told the [French] ambassador, I suggest that Your Majesty send [to Rome] a person who enjoys your trust. As far as I am concerned, I would prefer a good and honest lay person to a priest of dubious character. [...] Please, I beg you, do all that lies in your power to dry some of the tears of the Church in Italy, so tormented and made the object of so much undeserved hostility.[34]

The king submitted the pope's letter to his government, and a heated debate ensued. For there were ministers who resisted any concession, in fact, any rapprochement on any basis, to the Holy See. But the upshot was that Giovanni Lanza's Ministry of Interior began to look into the matter. At this point (March 17, 1865) Don Bosco received a note from a government official named Veglio, inviting him to a conference.[35] Mr. Veglio's position in the government (presumably in Minister Lanza's office) cannot be ascertained, but Don Bosco must have kept the appointment. The content of the conversation

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[33] Cf. Don Bosco's letters to La Marmora in 1852, 1856, and 1858 [Motto *Epistolario* I, 144, 302, 362-363]. In a letter of August 9, 1865 to Minister of Interior Lanza [Motto, *Epistolario* II, 155] Don Bosco offers to give shelter to some 100 cholera orphans. With an earlier letter of June 12, 1860 to the Minister of Education, Don Bosco enclosed a letter from Minister Lanza written in support of the Oratory school [Motto, *Epistolario* I, 409].

[34] Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 269-270, citing original in the Secret Vatican Archive.

[35] Motto [*L'azione mediatrice*, 270] speaks of an invitation "by telegram." However, the original in *ASC* 126.2 Lettere a DB-Veglio, *FDB* 1,587 B3, does not have a telegram format. Nor does it bear the heading, "Ministry of the Interior," as Lemoyne both in *Documenti* and in *Biographical Memoirs* (followed by Motto) would have it [*Documenti* IX, 170; *EBM* VIII, 44]. The invitation reads: "Turin, March 17, 1865. By order of the Minister, the undersigned requests a conference with you, Reverend and Most Esteemed Father. If you can oblige, please come to see me at your convenience during office hours. Very truly yours, Veglio." It should be borne in mind that, although the capital had by this time been transferred to Florence officially (February 3, 1865), government departments were still operating in Turin.

with Veglio and/or with Minister Lanza can only be conjectured. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that nomination of bishops to vacant sees was the sole matter under advisement. Hence, Don Bosco may have made the point that, if the Cavourian principle, "A free Church in a free State," and the terms of the September Convention were not to remain dead letter, on purely religious grounds the Holy See should have the freedom to nominate bishops.

Chevalier Saverio Vegezzi, "a gentleman of noblest character," was appointed negotiator. This gentleman left for Rome on April 6 bearing a letter from the king to the pope, with instructions "to find ways of reaching an agreement in the matter of the nomination of bishops to vacant sees."[36]

The first round of talks between Vegezzi and Secretary of State Cardinal Antonelli gave promise of success. A letter of Don Bosco to Pius IX refers to the negotiations in a fairly up-beat tone. It reads in part:

> Most Holy Father, our community has been offering prayers morning and evening begging God to be with you as you try to repair the grave damage already done to the Church, and increasing in gravity with any delay in settling the matter. I am referring to the restoration and nomination of bishops. The world is awaiting with trepidation the result of the Holy Father's efforts. But there is hope and comfort in the thought that, when the Pope is involved, the outcome will be for the best and for the greater good of the faithful.[37]

Don Bosco's prayers were not to be answered at this time. As mentioned above, there were within the government those who opposed negotiations with the Holy See for any reason. On the popular front, the radical press on the one hand, and the conservative Catholic press on the other, looked upon negotiations as capitulation to the enemy. Furthermore, the royal house of Savoy, and hence its government, still clung to jurisdictional positions in their ecclesiastical policy. For example, they still insisted on the oath of fealty to the king and on the *Exequatur*[38] These reasons account for the fact that the negotiations were conducted in total secrecy, as also for the fact that they were

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[36] Victor Emmanuel II to Pius IX, Turin, April 4, 1865, in Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 693, citing Pirri, *Pio IX*. Saverio Vegezzi (1805-1888) a trial lawyer in Turin, had held a seat in the Piedmontese senate since the 1840s and had served as finance minister in the third Cavour cabinet (1860).

[37] Don Bosco to Pius IX, April 30. 1965, in Motto, *Epistolario* II, 129.

[38] The royal *Exequatur* was a permit signed by the king and issued to the bishop upon presentation of the Bull (or Bulls) of appointment. It entitled the bishop to exercise jurisdiction in the diocese and to enter into possession of premises and receive revenues. The Bull of Appointment (Latin, *Bulla*) was a protocol sent out from the Holy See's department of protocol (*Dataria apostolica*) that certified the bishop's appointment. Different kinds of Bulls were released. The Bull *ad populum* was addressed to the people of the diocese; the Bull *ad clerum* was addressed to the clergy; the Bull *ad capitulum* was addressed to the cathedral chapter; and a Bull *ad episcopum* was addressed to the bishop himself.

ultimately doomed to failure. A letter from Minister Lanza to Paolo Onorato Vigliani (later minister of justice and a correspondent with Don Bosco in the matter of the *Exequaturs*) clearly reveals the mood within the government.

> Many people in government have held the position that the annexation of Rome is to be effected only by peaceful negotiations with the pope, in accordance with the principle of a Free Church, and with France's agreement. Now those very same people are attacking the government for accepting to negotiate in matters that are after all purely religious in nature. [...] I'm afraid that this attitude of hostility and diffidence within the Cabinet will prevail, and that as a consequence the negotiations will fail. [...] These ministers still insist on the bishop's oath of fealty to the king, an outworn and useless heirloom, in my judgment. I can't imagine the pope accepting to negotiate on these terms. Therefore with such a condition the government would automatically show its unwillingness to come to reasonable and possible agreements.[39]

Vegezzi returned to Rome in June for another round of talks, but apparently with new instructions dictated by the opposition and contrary to Minister Lanza' sentiments. As Lanza had predicted,

> The negotiations that had made a promising start with Cardinal Antonelli failed in the end when Pius IX refused to accept the conditions laid down by the Piedmontese government—namely, that the bishops nominated by the pope should take the oath of fealty to the king.[40]

The fealty oath was perceived as implying recognition of the legitimacy of the Kingdom of Italy. The "intransigence," therefore was reciprocal.

Don Bosco's involvement in the exchanges that go under the name of "Vegezzi Mission" seems to have been minimal, Though always concerned with, and perhaps abreast of developments, he seems to have had no further direct involvement after the exchange with the Lanza office in Turin.

New efforts were made to get the conversations back on course. But neither Prime Minister Lamarmora's expressions of good will, nor Cardinal Antonelli's appeal to Napoleon III, nor encouragement from France and from the moderate press were of any avail. Two more years would elapse before a new beginning could be made and some results obtained.

IV. Don Bosco and the Tonello Negotiations for the Appointment of Bishops to Vacant Sees (December 1, 1866–June 1867)

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[39] C. M. De Vecchi di Val Cismon, *Le carte di Giovanni Lanza*, cited in Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 273.

[40] "Vegezzi, Saverio," in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Treccani) XXXV, 7-8.

1. Political Developments: Italy's Third War of Independence Against Austria and Garibaldi's Military Exploit Against Rome

Early in the year 1866 political relations between Austria and Prussia deteriorated to the point that war seemed imminent. Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck coaxed Italy into a military alliance by offering Italy the prospect of freeing the regions still subject to Austria. Prussia declared war on Austria on June 17 and Italy on June 20. This is reckoned as the Third War of Italian Independence. In the battle of Sadowa (Bohemia, July 3)) Austria suffered a decisive defeat. At the same time Italian regulars fought successfully in the Veneto region, while Garibaldi and his volunteers defeated the Austrians in the Alps. The Italian fleet, however, suffered total defeat by a much superior Austrian fleet off the island of Lissa. After Sadowa Austria asked Napoleon III to mediate an armistice. Without Italy's knowledge (contrary to the terms of the military alliance) the armistice was signed by Austria and Prussia, and Italy was forced to follow suit. Garibaldi was ordered to cease hostilities. By the treaties of peace of August 3 and October 3, Austria ceded Venice and the Veneto region to Italy, but not other territories claimed by Italy in the extreme northeast.

At the height of the war, on July 7, 1866, the Italian government passed a law denying juridical recognition to (hence, suppressing) the remaining religious orders and congregations and providing for the confiscation of their property. (The Bill had been presented in Parliament by Francesco Crispi at the beginning of 1865.) The law also provided for paying into the state's trust fund for the upkeep of religious worship 5% of the revenues. The buildings of suppressed monasteries and convents were made available to local and provincial systems for schools, kindergartens, hospitals and charitable institutions. Confiscated books and works of art were assigned to public libraries and museums. The confiscation law of 1866 merely made universally binding what had been done in the Kingdom of Sardinia by the Rattazzi law of 1855, which (as noted above) had already been extended to regional states upon annexation. It is also worth noting that extending Piedmontese law and administrative systems to regional states and finally to the whole of Italy was in line with the principle of "unification by annexation." Then, in accordance with the terms of the September Convention, the French garrison completed its withdrawal from Rome, begun in early November 1865. The last contingent left Rome in October 1866, leaving the city poorly defended by the papal troops.

This situation is reflected in Pius IX's Allocution of October 29, 1866. Understandably, the pope denounced in the strongest terms the "unjust and iniquitous acts" perpetrated by the Italian government against the Church. Then (not so understandably), he went on to affirm the absolute necessity of the pope's temporal power to guarantee his complete freedom in the exercise of his

pastoral office. He added as a final salvo that in the event of a take-over of the city by Italy, he would not hesitate to go into voluntary exile.

Deprived of French protection, Rome was inviting attack. In March 1867, Garibaldi escaped from his retreat on the island of Caprera and began to rally volunteers for a military expedition against Rome. In September he was arrested and imprisoned, but was quickly returned to Caprera following widespread popular protests. In October an ultimatum from the French government demanded that Italy stop Garibaldi and his volunteers. The French then initiated the deployment of a new garrison to be stationed near Rome for the protection of the city and the pope.

And yet all the while, in spite of such hostile moves and countermoves, initiatives were afoot to restart negotiations to fill the vacant episcopal sees, for the urgency of settling this matter for the good of the people was widely felt.

2. The Mission of Negotiator Michelangelo Tonello in the Government of Prime Minister Ricasoli and Don Bosco's Involvement (December, 1866 - March 1867).

With Italy's declaration of war against Austria on June 20, 1866, Prime Minister General Alfonso La Marmora had resigned to take command of the armed forces at the front. He was immediately replaced by Count Bettino Ricasoli. La Marmora had already sought to clear the air by permitting, on former Mediator Vegezzi's recommendation, the return of aging Archbishop Marongiu to his diocese (Cagliari). Ricasoli began to look for ways to address the thorny question of bishops' nominations. His letters show a sincere desire to permit "the peaceable return of so many bishops to their dioceses and of so many pastors to their parishes," and speak of his resolve to work toward that goal.[41] A signal from the Holy See was needed, and it came when Pius IX let it be known in Florence that he would "gladly receive any person sent [by the Italian government] to discuss religious issues outstanding."[42]

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[41] Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 277-178, citing edition of Ricasoli's letters and papers. Ricasoli believed that solving the problem of vacant dioceses would not solve the Roman Question, but would be a good step toward its solution [*Ibid.*]. He was wrong. The Holy See always maintained that filling vacant dioceses was a purely religious question to be addressed for the spiritual good of the people. People in government, even the better disposed, tended to politicize the issue. Pius IX had often offered to settle purely religious questions by negotiation. But, as the Allocution made clear, he was by no means disposed to accept some new political arrangement for Rome and what remained of the Papal States.

[42] Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 278, citing various authors.

(1) The Tonello Mission and the Mood of the Talks

On December 1, 1866, the Italian government dispatched to Rome its representative in the person of Professor Michelangelo Tonello, accompanied by an aide and bearing a letter of introduction to Pius IX from King Victor Emmanuel.

The mission was by no means off to an easy start. One should again recall that it took place while the law of suppression of religious corporations was being put into effect all over Italy, though Ricasoli sought to soften the application of its harsher provisions. The take-over of most of the Papal States (regarded as a "usurpation") and the fear of a "forcible" solution of the Roman Question (the last contingent of the French garrison was preparing to decamp at that point in time) were not apt to inspire confidence in Rome. Adding to this uncertainty was the fact that the talks started with mutual recriminations for the failure of the earlier Vegezzi mission. Also, Representative Tonello had not been properly accredited to the Holy See and could not be regarded as officially delegated. Nevertheless, in spite of these initial obstacles, the gravity and urgency of matter on the agenda prevailed. And as a matter of fact, looking back over the course of the negotiations, one could discern a new mood at work. Some examples of the new "spirit of collaboration" will suffice. The government had itself seen the necessity of allowing "bishops to return to their dioceses and pastors to their parishes." As talks progressed the government would be ready to modify its position to a considerable degree. Thus, even though "as representative of the laity" it still claimed the right to present candidates for episcopal nomination, it would no longer do so formally, at least for what concerned the dioceses of the former Papal States. It would be willing to forgo the political oath of allegiance from the bishops. It would require the *Exequatur* only insofar as it pertained to the "temporalities," and not, for example, to the bishop's ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It would no longer demand the reduction in the number of dioceses as a condition, even though it still believed in its necessity. And finally, even though the government would not yield in the matter of the suppression of religious corporations and the confiscation of their assets (a matter regarded as demanded by the new social order), Tonello could assure Cardinal Antonelli that the government would exercise "moderation."

(2) Don Bosco's Involvement in Florence

How did Don Bosco become involved? From letters to Countess and Count Uguccioni of Florence we learn that Don Bosco was keeping abreast of developments. He speaks of good news, namely, the "restoration of bishops and pastors to their dioceses and parishes," the very words of Ricasoli's proposal. Hence it appears that, even before the Tonello mission, Don Bosco had information regarding the upcoming talks. A few days after Tonello's appointment, Don Bosco left for Florence, the capital, where he arrived on

December 11 or 12 and lodged with the archbishop.[43] Father Berto, Don Bosco's secretary, claims that Don Bosco went to Florence at Prime Minister Ricasoli's request.

> In 1867 [Prime] Minister Ricasoli summoned Don Bosco to Florence with the object of getting him to approach the pope in a private capacity in the matter of the bishops' nomination. In Italy at the time, over fifty diocesan sees were vacant. Don Bosco himself had written to the [Prime] Minister asking him to take steps to remove the cause of so much grief.[44]

This may be pure inference on Father Berto's part as he collected testimonies of Don Bosco's involvement at a later date. The *Biographical Memoirs*, on the other hand, at this point simply record the agenda Don Bosco had set forth for his trip to Florence. Besides obligatory visits to illustrious friends and benefactors and various other engagements, this included calls at no less than four government ministries or departments: Interior, Finances, Public Works and Justice, all on Congregation business.[45]

Don Bosco's sojourn in Florence lasted one busy week, from Tuesday, December 11 to Tuesday December 18, 1866. From Florence he left for Bologna and Turin.[46]

According to the main (printed) text of Lemoyne's *Documenti* (the forerunner of the *Biographical Memoirs*) from Bologna Don Bosco is said to have briefly returned to Florence in response to an invitation from Prime Minister Ricasoli.

> It appears that from here [Bologna] Don Bosco, invited by Ricasoli, went [back?] to Florence for a very brief visit. [The Prime Minister] was eager to engage his support of Comm. Tonelli [*sic*], as the latter was negotiating various matters with the Holy See.[47]

A later (undated) marginal note in Lemoyne's hand at the same place in *Documenti* explains:

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[43] Don Bosco to Countess Gerolama Uguccioni, Turin, July 20, and to Chevalier Tommaso Uguccioni Gherardi, Turin, September 28, 1866 [Motto, *Epistolario* II, 275 and 299]. Like several other Florentine families, the Uguccioni-Gherardis were Don Bosco's good friends and benefactors.

[44] *Berto Collection* in *ASC* 112, *FDB* 788 C2.

[45] Don Bosco's undated holograph is in *ASC* 132 Promemorie, *FDB* 744 C5-6. Cf. *IBM* VIII, 539 (omitted in *EBM*).

[46] Don Bosco's letter to Oblate Maria Maddalena Galeffi is dated Florence, December 18, 1866 [Motto, *Epistolario* II, 317]. Letters to Father Bonetti and Father Rua are dated Bologna, December 19, 1866. He writes: "Arrived at Bologna, this evening I shall be in Guastalla, tomorrow night in Turin."

[47] *Documenti* X, 89-90 (printed text), in *ASC* 110 *Cronachette*, *FDB* 1,004 C11-12.

> This is how it was. On hearing that Don Bosco was in Florence and desiring to speak with him, Ricasoli, who was minister at the time, invited him to call at the government palace. He wanted to engage his help in the negotiations for the nomination of bishops, for he knew that Don Bosco was on familiar terms with Pius IX. Don Bosco went [to the palace] and as he stepped into the office he told the minister, "I think Your Excellency knows who Don Bosco is—that I am first and foremost a Catholic." "Yes, yes," the minister replied, "We know that Don Bosco is more Catholic than the pope himself." The minister explained what his purpose was and begged him to get in touch with Comm. Tonelli, [sic] who was the [government's] negotiator in Rome.[48]

In the *Biographical Memoirs* Lemoyne greatly expands the marginal note of *Documenti* on the basis of a "confidential report" later made by Don Bosco to a canon of the cathedral, Lemoyne himself being present (so he claims).[49] The story makes the following points. (1) Immediately Don Bosco warned the Prime Minister that he would honor his commitments as a Catholic priest in all circumstances. He is quoted as saying, "Your Excellency, I want you to know that Don Bosco is a priest at the altar, a priest in the confessional, and a priest among his boys. He is a priest in Turin and a priest in Florence, a priest in the house of the poor and a priest in the palace of the king!" (2) Don Bosco, at the Prime Minister's request, accepted to facilitate in a private capacity the Tonello negotiations in Rome. But (3) he added that the government should not object to the pope's choice of bishops, and Ricasoli agreed. (4) At this point Ricasoli was called to an inner conference room where the cabinet was meeting under the presidency of the king himself (!) (5) After a long while, he returned to convey the government's agreement. But (6) he added that the government would like to see the number of smaller dioceses reduced. To this Don Bosco replied that he had neither the authority nor the desire to offer such a suggestion to the pope, and that with such a condition he would have to withdraw altogether. (7) There was a few moments' break in the conversation during which the Prime Minister went in again to consult the cabinet on the issue, and quickly returned to reassure Don Bosco. (8) The conversation ended with the Prime Minister's plea that Don Bosco would meet with negotiator Tonello in Rome and lend his support.

Given the special "literary genre" of such story-reports one may question details, particularly the dialogue.[50] This appears to be the case especially if the story is compared with the marginal note of *Documenti* (quoted above). But, in spite of uncertainty with regard to itinerary and chronological sequence, there seems to be no reason for us to doubt that while in Florence Don Bosco met with Prime Minister Ricasoli at the latter's invitation. As for the burden or upshot of the conversation, though we remain in the realm of conjecture, it

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[48] *Documenti* X, 90 (hand-written marginal note), in *FDB* 1,004 C12.
[49] Cf. *IBM* VIII, 533-535; *EBM* VIII, 239-240.
[50] So Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 281, Note 64.

may be inferred that the Prime Minister did ask Don Bosco to help with the negotiations, and that Don Bosco accepted.[51]

(3) Don Bosco's Involvement with Tonello in Rome

Meanwhile negotiations in Rome had gotten under way. Professor Tonello and Cardinal Secretary of State Antonelli had presented their respective positions and had explored the more difficult issues standing in the way of an agreement. The Holy See would easily accept a negotiated arrangement for nominations to sees within the former Kingdom of Sardinia. But it would not negotiate on nominations in other annexed regions. In this respect the territories of the former Papal States presented the greatest difficulty, for the Holy See did not recognize the Italian government's authority there. Hence for episcopal nominations to dioceses within the former Papal States the Holy See rejected any demands by the government especially in the matter of the presentation of candidates and of the bishops' political oath.[52] It appears that in early January the talk had reached something like a stalemate on these very issues.

It is at this point (so it seems) that, according to the *Biographical Memoirs*, Don Bosco comes on the scene. From Turin Don Bosco left for Rome on January 7 with Father Giovanni Battista Francesia acting as his secretary. Their stay in the eternal city would be prolonged till March 2, 1867. Business of the Congregation had been the main purpose of the trip. Don Bosco was seeking the approval of the Salesian Society (as it turned out without success). Now he was also involved in the Tonello negotiations—to what extent being matter of dispute. Lemoyne describes Don Bosco's Roman activities in detail.[53] He relies on the reports by Father Francesia. These consist of letters that Francesia addressed to various Salesians and of a memoir that he wrote at a much later date. The reliability of Francesia's reports is again a matter of dispute.[54]

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[51] Desramaut is more skeptical. He regards the meeting itself as at least probable. But "we are in the dark as to the content of the conversation, particularly as to what extent the Tonello mission was discussed." Furthermore, the challenging statement "on being a priest," while perfectly true, is regarded as spurious as ascribed to Don Bosco in the *Biographical Memoirs* [*DB en son temps*, 713-714].

[52] Cf. Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 281-282.

[53] *IBM* VIII, 592-636 and (more succinctly) in *EBM* 258-280.

[54] Father Francesia's letters have come down to us only in copy and not even in their entirety. His memoir [G. B. Francesia, *Due mesi con Don Bosco a Roma.* (Torino: Libreria Salesiana, 1904)] was written some 37 years after the events. Then, one should bear in mind that by force of circumstances Francesia was in no way a participant in anything that concerned the negotiations. He was in fact left in practical isolation throughout the Roman sojourn. The talks were conducted in strictest secrecy; not a word was leaked to the press. Furthermore, Francesia was a poet endowed with a naïve but vivid imagination. All these factors tend to weaken the force of his testimony [Cf. Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 742, Note 20].

To what extent was Don Bosco involved with Tonello in Rome? A letter from Father Francesia written 10 days after their arrival in Rome, suggests that Don Bosco was quickly involved. He writes:

> In two separate audiences Don Bosco held lengthy discussions with Cardinal Antonelli. He was able to smooth out a number of difficult issues of a political nature, and bring about an understanding on very weighty matters. He met with Tonello who received him most amiably and told him he was welcome any time he thought it helpful.[55]

Obviously, Don Bosco met with Pius IX in the first place. In the dramatic interpretation of the *Biographical Memoirs*, Don Bosco advises Pius IX not to make any distinction between the various regions of Italy in the matter of the bishop's nomination. Let both the government and the Holy See present their list of candidates. Then let the pope choose those candidates that are acceptable to both sides, and let him begin with those dioceses in which the need is most pressing. Lemoyne comments:

> Pius IX accepted Don Bosco's advice and empowered him to negotiate with Comm. Tonello, reserving all decisions to himself. As a first step, Don Bosco contacted Cardinal Antonelli and with some difficulty brought him round to his point of view, a point of view that was religious in the strict sense rather than political. He then called on Tonello who had received a telegram from Ricasoli that read, "Try to reach an understanding with Don Bosco." The Commendatore, who was no enemy of the Church, was easily won over and promised not to place any obstacles in the way of the bishops' nomination in spite of Ricasoli's exacting instructions. [56]

In the process (so the story continues) Don Bosco had to shuttle back and forth between the negotiators and the Pope till an agreement was reached. According to the *Biographical Memoirs*, therefore, Don Bosco's involvement was a major one, for he appears invested outright as mediator and referee!

However, Lemoyne's construction has been called into question. As indicated above, Francesia's testimony, on which Lemoyne's story is based, is weakened by numerous critical considerations.[57] Furthermore, the Ricasoli telegram (mentioned in the passage just quoted) instructing Mediator Tonello to get in touch with Don Bosco has been regarded as a later inference by Lemoyne. Neither the original nor copies of the original are extant. Neither Francesia, nor *Documenti* make any mention of it.[58]

Motto admits that the extent and the precise contribution of Don Bosco's mediation cannot be determined. But he credits Francesia's (and Lemoyne's)

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[55] *IBM* VIII, 596 (omitted in *EBM*).

[56] *IBM* VIII, 594-595, and (inaccurately translated) *EBM* VIII, 259-260.

[57] Cf. Note 54 and related text above.

[58] Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 714 and 742, Note 23. Desramaut faults Motto and Church historian G. Martina with taking the statement at face value.

report for the main point—that Don Bosco was rather heavily involved. Against some historians who doubt or deny, he writes:

> [Historian] De Cesare, while admitting the possibility of Don Bosco's contacts with the government's representative, dismisses Francesia's statements with finality: "There's not a shred of documentary evidence of Don Bosco's involvement." On the contrary, the facts as we know them today reveal the rashness of De Cesare's conclusion. Very reliable documentation and a whole series of verifiable controls support the thesis of Don Bosco's direct, explicit and sustained mediating activity.[59]

That Don Bosco was involved in some way, that he discussed matters with Pius IX and Cardinal Antonelli, and that he presented a list of candidates for the sees of Piedmont is beyond doubt. Tonello himself states as much in his report of February 1, 1867, to the government:

> [Cardinal Antonelli] handed me a note, which I enclose herewith and of which I retain a copy. It's a list of persons that in the judgment of the Holy See may be nominated to episcopal sees. I would suggest that the government make appropriate inquiries. I have reason to believe that the names proposed for Piedmont were suggested by the Torinese priest, Don Bosco. I think he came to Rome for that purpose.[60]

The last sentence shows that Tonello was aware of Don Bosco's presence in Rome and of some of his activities, and that they may even have met. But it seems to cast doubts on the idea that the two had been engaged in repeated conversations.

(4) Bishops' Appointments and Don Bosco's Involvement

Lists of candidates were submitted both by the government and by the Holy See. Don Bosco had contributed a list of candidates for dioceses of the Piedmont region. But on January 17, 1867, a Bill was presented in the Italian parliament specifying the final disposition of confiscated Church property (the Borgatti-Scaloja Bill). The furor that followed had the effect of delaying agreement on the nominations. Furthermore, inquiries and counterproposals by both sides regarding candidates turned out to be time-consuming. But by the beginning of February progress had been made. It was due first of all to the fact that both parties agreed not to aim at reconciling opposite positions on general principles, but rather at dealing with each case individually as expediency

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[59] Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 283, citing De Cesare's work of 1905. On p. 284, Note 78, Motto adduces reasons in support of Francesia's credibility in essential points.

[60] Quoted in Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 291, citing the Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

required. It was due also, on the one hand, to the Italian government's surrender of jurisdictional claims such as the political oath and the submission of the Bulls of appointment;[61] and on the other, to the willingness of the Holy See to accommodate the government's candidates as much as possible.

The list of candidates submitted by Don Bosco contained 13 names. In the process of Don Bosco's beatification in 1891, Father Berto testified to having seen the list, at the head of which (*pei primi*) appeared the name of Canon Lorenzo Gastaldi.[62] In the autograph list of 13 names that Cardinal Antonelli handed to Tonello and that Tonello transmitted to Florence on February 1, Gastaldi's name is in second place.[63]

Clearly Don Bosco strongly favored the appointment of Canon Gastaldi who, besides being a worthy candidate, was also a supporter of Don Bosco and his work. In a letter to Father Durando dated February 4, Father Francesia writes from Rome:

> In recent days, Don Bosco has been hatching, and is in fact hatching, a plot against Canon Gastaldi, our esteemed professor of moral theology. When you next see him in class, tell him so. But if he asks what the scheme is all about, you shall say that it's not for you to say. It's a mystery, and mum's the word.[64]

On February 9, 1867, Cardinal Antonelli handed to Professor Tonello a second list of 23 possible nominees, to which Tonello added another 3. Possibly Don Bosco contributed some names also to this list.

By this time, however, the country was in a state of turmoil occasioned by the violent campaign unleashed against the Borgatti-Scaloja Bill (mentioned above), bitterly opposed (for different reasons) by both Catholic and anticlerical factions alike. The Ricasoli government fell, and the electoral campaign that

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[61] Cf. Note 38 above.

[62] *FDB* (Rua section) 2,333 A12.

[63] Cf. Note 60 and related text above for a mention of this list. The names (or titles) of the candidates on Don Bosco's list are given in Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 291-292. It contained only the names of candidates for episcopal ordination, not names of existing bishops such as that of Bishop Alessandro Riccardi di Netro of Savona. According to Father Francesia, Bishop Riccardi and Don Bosco had held conversations in Rome. "[Don Bosco] had a talk with the future archbishop of Turin [?!], who had earlier met with him at [Count] Vimercati's house. He will no doubt be favorable to us, I would say, out of *gratitude* to Don Bosco" [G. B. Francesia to F. Oreglia di Santo Stefano, January 17, 1867, in *IBM* VIII, 596. Cf. Note 55 and related text above]. But, one may ask, if the text of the letter is genuine how could Francesia know at the time [January 17] that Bishop Riccardi would be "the future archbishop of Turin"? In any case, Don Bosco did not submit the name of Bishop Riccardi of Savona, who was appointed archbishop of Turin in the consistory of February 22, 1867.

[64] G. B. Francesia to Celestino Durando, February 4, 1867, in *IBM* VIII, 642.

followed was fought on platforms pro or con Ricasoli's conciliating ecclesiastical policy.

Meanwhile in a secret consistory held on February 22, 1867, Pius IX announced 17 episcopal nominations or transfers to dioceses in various regions of Italy. And even though in the heat of the electoral battle Ricasoli had to promise that the government would desist from further accords with the Holy See, on March 27 the pope nominated another 17 bishops, whom the government had approved on March 9.[65]

Bishop Alessandro Riccardi of Savona was transferred to Turin as archbishop, while Canon Lorenzo Gastaldi was named bishop of Saluzzo. The remaining diocesan sees in Piedmont were filled with "friends" of Don Bosco. Only three dioceses whose pastors had recently died were left vacant for the duration.

Back in Turin on March 2, Don Bosco through letters and memorandums continued to press for bishops' appointments. In a letter to Cardinal Antonelli, after reporting the general feeling of satisfaction for the appointments already made, he makes further suggestions:

> The situation in which Bishop [Giovanni Antonio] Balma finds himself merits careful consideration. This worthy prelate is deservedly regarded as a saint. His private and public life testify to this. For the past 20 years he has worked untiringly for vacant dioceses, sparing himself neither the fatigue of trips nor the pains of visits to government departments. In spite of this, his name does not appear on anyone's list of candidates. This has made a bad impression, and a thousand rumors have begun to circulate. Moreover, he finds himself in financial straits and gets by thanks to free-will offerings from kind and charitable persons. Please do look into this matter and do all you can for a person who is universally regarded as pious, learned, wise and zealous.
>
> We have a number of persons here who are highly regarded for their virtue, and would be well received by all authorities. Among these are [Pietro Giocondo] Salvaj, vicar general of Alba, [Pietro] Garga, vicar general of Novara, [Giovanni Battista] Bottino, canon of the cathedral of Turin, Canon [Francesco] Nasi of the same. Even more deserving of consideration is Father Dr. [Francesco] Marengo, professor of theology in the seminary of Turin. [...] All these persons are completely devoted to the Holy See.[66]

In response Cardinal Antonelli laments the government's unwillingness to pursue further negotiations and assures Don Bosco that his suggestions will be taken into consideration. In allusive rather than explicit words he writes:

> I need not speak at length of the Holy See's desire to reach a general settlement regarding the dioceses that remain vacant. We cannot therefore but

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[65] Cf. Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 292-295.

[66] Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, Turin, April 5, 1867, in Motto. *Epistolario* II, 349-350.

> lament the fact that no further progress is being made, due to the lack of response from the parties pledged to negotiations. And yet the initial breakthroughs held out such hope of success. It would be highly desirable that some way be found prudently to apply pressure where appropriate, so as to overcome the present state of stagnation. Meanwhile I have not neglected to take the additional suggestions you made into due consideration. I have given special attention to your just recommendation of the worthy prelate who has labored hard and long for the orphaned dioceses.[67]

From Florence Professor Tonello also continued to work in the pursuit of the same goal, with no success. By May 1, 1867, the government had shut the door on further negotiations.[68]

V. A Mission Entrusted to Don Bosco by Prime Minister Luigi Federico Menabrea (January-March, 1869)?

1. Political developments

The rhetoric and the activities of Italian revolutionaries, Garibaldi's in particular, in the year following the removal of the French garrison showed how perilous the situation had become. France's demand that the Italian government keep revolutionaries in check and prevent an attack on Rome had no effect in spite of the best intentions. On October 20, 1867 Garibaldi escaped from Caprera, the small island where he was "confined," and marched on Rome with some 9,000 volunteers, while a bloody but unsuccessful uprising was taking place in Rome.

The papal troops surrendered to Garibaldi at Moterotondo, near Rome, but because of the failure of the uprising he refrained from attacking Rome itself. Instead, on November 3 he engaged and defeated another contingent of papal troops at Mentana. The French forces stationed at Civitavecchia with their superior chassepot firepower drove the insurgents back into Italian territory, where Garibaldi was captured by Italian forces, placed under arrest and returned to Caprera.

During the whole Roman crisis in the year 1867, popular protests in support of Garibaldi and dissention in regard to the Roman question caused the repeated fall of the government. Ricasoli was unable to form a cabinet. Rattazzi and Menabrea, who succeeded him, were unable to sustain the pressure and were forced to resign. The chaotic condition of the economy, the war debt, and the mounting deficits, which the sale at auction of confiscated Church

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[67] Cardinal Antonelli to Don Bosco, Rome, June 4, 1867, in *ASC* 126.2 *Lettere a Don Bosco*, *FDB* 1441 E9-12. The prelate is the above-mentioned Giovanni Antonio Balma, titular bishop of Ptolemais. He was subsequently appointed archbishop of Cagliari in Sardinia.

[68] Cf. Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 295-299.

property and additional taxes were unequal to compensate, complicated the problem.

The years 1868 and 1869 were especially troubled years. In Italy nationwide popular unrest and mass demonstrations against the grist tax (May 21, 1868) required deployment of army units and the use of force with numerous victims. In Rome revolutionaries were executed or imprisoned in great numbers.

In 1868 Garibaldi was elected to parliament from his district for the second time, but refused. In a letter dated December 24, 1868, he denounced the government as "the negation of God," for betraying the cause during the recent failed attempt against Rome. He added: "What can one expect from a government that is nothing but an internal revenue service, a corrupt devourer of public wealth, and an agent in the pay of a foreign tyrant?"[69]

Two cabinets headed by Prime Minister Menabrea were formed in succession.

2. Don Bosco Invited to Florence by Prime Minister Luigi Federico Menabrea? [70]

It was during the second Menabrea cabinet (January 5, 1868 – May 7, 1869) that Don Bosco may have again been involved in Church-state affairs. In a letter to Chevalier Carlo Canton, a department head, second grade, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Don Bosco writes:

> Please see that His Excellency Menabrea gets the enclosed letter. It is to thank him for his kindness. There is also a confidential message [for him] in it, to which he may ask you to reply, should he think it necessary.[71]

The confidential message alluded to could conceivably have had to do with some Church-state matter in which Don Bosco was involved.

Entries in a short chronicle by Father Rua might be cited in confirmation. In this chronicle he speaks of invitations made to Don Bosco by the government and of Don Bosco's stay in Florence. He writes:

> [1868] November: Don Bosco received an invitation from [Prime] Minister Menabrea. He is requested to go to Florence to discuss important matters. [...]
>
> 1869. January 1: Don Bosco received two stags as a gift from His Majesty the King. Some time ago he received another invitation from the King to go to Florence. [...]
>
> January 7: Don Bosco again gathered all the boys of the house in the study hall to bid us good-bye. He is about to leave for Rome. He told us that he had

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[69] *Compact DeAgostini*, 161.

[70] Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 299-302.

[71] Don Bosco to Carlo Canton, Turin, November 2, 1868, in Motto, *Epistolario*, 591-592. Don Bosco had received help from government ministries.

> very important business to attend to there that would be of great advantage to the Oratory. He asked us to help him with our prayers [...]. He left for Florence where he spent 8 days; from there he journeyed on to Rome. His stay in Florence was in response to the above-mentioned invitations. We don't know as yet what he did there, but it appears that he held conversations with highly placed [government] persons. In Rome he avoided public appearances in order to attend to business with greater freedom. [...] During Don Bosco's sojourn in the eternal city the news leaked that a new slate of bishops was being prepared to fill vacant sees.[72]

In Florence Don Bosco lodged with his good friends, Marquis and Marchioness Uguccioni-Gherardi. Letters from the marchioness to Chevalier Oreglia di Santo Stefano and from Don Bosco himself to Father Rua confirm Don Bosco's week-long stay in Florence. These letters, however, make no reference to any conversations held with any government officials. On the other hand, a letter from Father Domenico Verda, O.P. to Oreglia, taken at face value, confirms Don Bosco's meeting with the above-mentioned Carlo Canton, a department head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and with Prime Minister Menabrea himself.[73] Verda writes:

> Marquis Uguccioni and Mr. Carlo Canton, department head in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met him at the station. [...] Saturday morning I hurried to Mr. Canton's office. Not finding Don Bosco there, I went back down to the courtyard [of the Pitti palace] and there I saw him trying to find his way around. [...] I took him by the hand and guided him up to Mr. Canton, with whom he reached an understanding on a variety of issues. [The meeting over] I accompanied him to see Father Giulio (Metti), and then escorted him back to the government palace for his appointment with [Prime Minister] Menabrea. [...][74]

On the basis of the Rua chronicle and of the letters, Lemoyne speaks of a meeting with Menabrea, and conjectures that the Prime Minister entrusted Don Bosco with an unofficial mission to the Holy See.[75]

That a meeting took place in Florence is practically certain. That Don Bosco was entrusted with a mission is not attested but cannot be ruled out. Reason can be adduced. The execution of revolutionaries in Rome had caused a public outcry and drawn official protests from the Italian government. Prime

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[72] Rua, *Chronicle*, in *ASC* 110 *Cronachette*, Rua, *FDBM* 1,205 E12 – 1,206 A1. The use of past tenses by Father Rua in the January 7 entry would indicate that the entry was made after the "event," perhaps following an oral report by Don Bosco. The chief reason for Don Bosco's trip to Rome was to try again for the approval of the Salesian Society, which he obtained on March 1, 1869.

[73] Prime Minister Menabrea served also as Minister for Foreign Affairs.

[74] Domenico Verda to Federico Oreglia di Santo Stefano, Florence, S. Marco, January 10, 1869, in *IBM* IX, 582, *EBM* IX, 221.

[75] *IBM* IX, 482-483; *EBM* IX, 221-223.

Minister Menabrea hoped to establish some kind of understanding with the papal government for a possible solution of the Roman Question. The opening of the Vatican Council was imminent, and the Italian government was eager to guarantee its freedom. A number of vacant dioceses (3 in Piedmont alone) were still awaiting episcopal appointments. These and other matters needed to be resolved.

Motto found no further documentation of Don Bosco's mediation on this occasion.

VI. Don Bosco and Bishops' Nominations in 1871

1. Political Developments

The First Vatican Council opened on December 8, 1869, in St. Peter's in Rome, with some 600 bishops in attendance. It would continue its deliberations until September 1870 and be adjourned *sine die* after the occupation of Rome by the Italian army. The Constitutions *Dei Filius* and *Pastor aeternus*, the latter defining papal infallibility (July 18), were its two principal documents.

On the political front, the election of Leftist members of parliament to leadership posts forced the resignation of Prime Minister Menabrea and the dissolution of his cabinet. On December 14, 1869, a new government was formed by Prime Minister Giovanni Lanza who also held the Ministry of Interior. Shortly thereafter, in February 1870, taking advantage of popular unrest, Giuseppe Mazzini returned to Italy with the object of organizing a revolution, overthrowing the constitutional government, taking Rome and establishing a republic. Uprisings broke out in several Italian cities in the months that followed, but the revolts were put down, and Mazzini was arrested in Palermo (Sicily) and imprisoned. (He was later released on the occasion of the amnesty decreed to celebrate the occupation of Rome.)

Meanwhile, on July 19, 1870, France declared war on Prussia ostensibly to prevent a Hohenzollern from occupying the Spanish throne, while Italy declared its neutrality. The war was quickly over. On September 1, in the battle of Sedan, the French suffered a crushing defeat, and Napoleon III himself was taken prisoner. On September 4, 1870 the Third Republic was proclaimed in Paris.

At the onset of the hostilities, on August 5, the French expeditionary force deployed for the protection of Rome had been recalled. Immediately the Italian parliament in extraordinary session voted for a quick settlement of the Roman question "in accordance with national aspirations." A memorandum was dispatched to the European powers emphasizing the urgent need of settling the Roman question, so as to forestall a republican revolutionary takeover.

On September 5, following Napoleon's defeat, the Italian government reached the unanimous decision to occupy Rome, though not before making a further attempt to get Pius IX to surrender the city voluntarily and peaceably.

Count Gustavo Ponza di San Martino was the bearer of a letter from King Victor Emmanuel II to Pius IX guaranteeing the Holy See's complete independence for the exercise of its spiritual office. As expected, Pius IX rejected the proposal with disdain. On September 20, 1870, the Italian artillery opened a breach in the wall at Porta Pia, and the ensuing skirmishes left 49 Italian and 19 papal soldiers dead. The surrender was signed, and the whole city, with the exception of the Vatican palaces where Pius IX had taken refuge, was occupied. In early October by popular referendum Rome and the surrounding territory of Latium were annexed to Italy. With the encyclical *Respicientes* of November 1, 1870, Pius IX declared the occupation "unjust, violent, null and illegal." He deplored the condition of captivity that prevented the pope from exercising his sovereign pastoral office. He excommunicated the king of Italy and anyone who might have had anything to do with the usurpation.

To reassure the international community, but also pursuing a policy that had guided the Historic Right since Cavour, Prime Minister Lanza introduced a Bill to establish guarantees for the free exercise of the pope's pastoral office that the king had promised in his letter. On January 22, 1871, debate began in parliament of a Bill entitled "Prerogatives of the Pope and the Holy See, and Relations between Church and State in Italy." The "Law of Guarantees," as the Bill is commonly known, was approved in the Senate on May 2, and published on May 15.[76] By the encyclical *Ubi nos* (May 15, 1871) Pius IX rejected the law as a scheme "to deceive Catholics and soothe their anxiety." He affirmed once again that temporal power was the only true guarantee of the pope's independence.

At the same time, Lanza presented a Bill to transfer the capital from Florence to Rome. The official transfer took place on July 1, 1871, and on

[76] The Law of Guarantees was based on Cavour's political principle, "a free Church in a free state." It was divided into two parts: "Prerogatives of the Supreme Pontiff and of the Holy See," and "Relations between Church and State in Italy." Part I comprised Articles 1-13. Articles 1-8 dealt with the pope's prerogatives: (1) immunity of papal territorial residences (the Vatican, the Lateran and the villa of Castelgandolfo); (2) an endowment of 3,225,000 lire, comparable to the former papal revenues; (3) personal inviolability; (4) right to honors as a sovereign ruler and to a corps of armed guards; (5) free, unimpeded exercise of the spiritual power; (6) right to free, uncensored communication in and outside Italy, and the power to receive and appoint ambassadors. Articles 9-13 of Part I dealt with the Holy See's right freely to communicate with the faithful, with the clergy and with governments throughout the world. Part II (comprising Articles 14-19) exempted the clergy from royal controls. In particular it abolished the bishops' traditional oath of allegiance to the king and all restrictions to the clergy's right of assembly. The final article 20 abrogated all preceding contrary laws and customs. In spite of papal rejection, the law remained in effect until the concordat of 1929.

July 2 King Victor Emmanuel II and his government made their solemn entry into the eternal city.[77]

Such then were the new political arrangements and the ensuing political climate that marked the years 1871-1874. It was the period of Don Bosco's deepest involvement in matters of Church and state. He worked hard and long for the nomination and appointment of bishops to the many dioceses that still remained vacant. Subsequently, while engaged in a veritable struggle to have the Salesian constitutions definitively approved, he was deeply involved in negotiating a formula that would guarantee for the bishops, once appointed, the royal *Exequatur* and their rightful temporalities.

2. Don Bosco's Mediation for the Appointment of Bishops in 1871

(1) Don Bosco's Letters to Cardinal Berardi and to Pius XI

Don Bosco had been in Rome from ca. January 25 to February 23, 1870, during the early working phase of Vatican I, when the debates pro and con the advisability of defining papal infallibility were the order of the day. On January 5, prior to his visit to Rome, Don Bosco had the premonitory "vision" of a divine visitation on Paris and Rome that goes by the name of "Prophecy of 1870." He saw his dark premonitions partly verified in the Franco-Prussian War and in the taking of Rome. After the occupation of Rome, while the Law of Guarantees was being debated, Don Bosco again returned to his somber reflections in letters to Rome. To Cardinal Berardi he wrote:

> I wish I could be the bearer of good news, but alas I have only distressing news to convey. Nevertheless the person who has in the past been favored with extraordinary lights is in a position to assure you that the present [sad] situation in Rome will not last longer than the current year. [...] In the meantime, however, distressing events will take place in Rome, as I mentioned in an earlier letter that may not even have reached you. There will be serious violations of places sacred and profane and attacks on persons resulting in loss of life. In those days God will certainly inspire the Holy Father as to what course he should take. But for his own safety and that of the people around him he may well have to leave the Vatican and eventually return to be the consoling angel of his people in distress.[78]

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[77] The government and parliament were established in the Montecitorio Palace later in 1871. It still took the better part of a year before the transfer of government offices was completed. Officially Florence served as the capital of Italy from February 3, 1865 to July 1, 1871.

[78] Don Bosco to Cardinal Giuseppe Berardi, Turin, April 11, 1871, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 320-321. In *L'azione mediatrice*, 303, Motto states that this letter was addressed to Cardinal Secretary of State Antonelli.

A letter written a few days later to Pope Pius IX expresses similar dire premonitions.

> We hope and pray that the Lord in his mercy will come quickly to our aid and shorten our days of trial. [...] We hope and pray that God will hear our entreaties and prayers and that before this year is over peace will be restored to the Church. We shall then have the joy of paying homage to the Church's supreme Head in the Vatican and of seeing him in full possession and master of his Church. [...] In the meantime, however, the fear remains lest heavy trials befall Rome and her children. In any case, it is certain that Your Holiness shall have to pass through a terrible ordeal, to be followed by a triumph more glorious than any triumph in the past.[79]

(2) Don Bosco's Activities in June 1871: A Conference with Prime Minister Giovanni Lanza in Florence?

The tension following the occupation of Rome and the total rejection of the Law of Guarantees on the pope's part brought about a situation of fear and uncertainty. Don Bosco's dire presentiments did not seem ill founded. In spite of all this, on purely religious grounds bishops needed to be appointed to the many sees that still remained vacant.

Biographer Angelo Amadei, author of Volume X of the *Biographical Memoirs*, relates that in June 1871, on the occasion of Pius IX's jubilee (the 25th anniversary of his election of the Chair of Peter) Don Bosco decided to act.

In summary this is how the story (now thought to be spurious) goes as told in the *Biographical Memoirs*).[80] (1) Don Bosco is said to have obtained the pope's permission to approach the Italian government in a private capacity on the subject of new nominations of bishops to vacant dioceses. (2) As he was planning a new trip to Rome, on the occasion of the pope's jubilee, passing through Florence, he wrote to Prime Minister Lanza for an appointment. (3) Immediately he wrote to Count Tommaso Uguccioni-Gherardi that he would be in Florence on the evening of June 22 at 7:35 and catch a train two hours later

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[79] Don Bosco to Pius IX, Turin, April 14, 1871, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 322-323. The fears voiced in these letters reflect the agony of the Catholic conscience in the context of the "dispossession of the Church." Don Bosco's Prophecy of 1870 (referred to above) expressed similar premonitions. In his Prophecy of 1873 he anticipates the pope's flight from Rome and a slaughter of Catholic priests and laity. For these texts, cf. *EBM* X, 49-59. In the letters Don Bosco also expresses the view (shared by other Catholics at the time) that the situation of Rome would be reversed in the near future. In other words, it was hoped (unrealistically) that the liberal establishment would be forced out of Rome either through divine or human intervention, and that the temporal power would be restored to the pope.

[80] *EBM* X, 186-192; 194-196.

for Rome. He would see the count and his family on the way back. [81] (4) Don Bosco arrived by train punctually and ran to his appointment. ("Your Excellency should know that I am above all a Catholic." "Yes, we know that Don Bosco is more Catholic than the pope!") (5) After initial comments, Lanza is said to have agreed in principle to the nomination of bishops, and Don Bosco suggested that the government refrain from demanding the suppression of small dioceses. (6) A this point Lanza was called away to attend a meeting of the cabinet presided over by the king himself. (7) Returning over an hour later, Lanza reported that the ministers had no objection to the nomination of bishops, but that they wanted the number of dioceses reduced. (Amadei regards such a demand as motivated by the desire to confiscate more Church property.) Obviously Don Bosco was in no position to deal with this further issue, and if that was a condition, he would have to withdraw. (8) Lanza returned to the ministers and then returned to report that the government agreed to leave aside for the moment the matter of the suppression of small dioceses. (9) After some further discussion (which in Amadei's view aimed at making Don Bosco commit himself), abruptly Prime Minister Lanza brought the meeting to a close with the words, "So. Don Bosco, let's be off for Rome?" "Let's," Don Bosco replied.[82] (10) Lanza was driven to the station in a coach and boarded a first-class car. Don Bosco trotted along on foot and took a second-class seat. (11) In an audience (on June 28) Don Bosco made a report to the pope, stressing that he had acted in a private capacity in order not to compromise the Church in any way. (12) Pius IX is said to have authorized Don Bosco to continue the conversations unofficially. Don Bosco is said to have met with the Prime Minister before and after the papal audience.

Both Desramaut and Motto are skeptical about the story. Motto points out that the timetable given in Don Bosco's letter to Count Uguccioni leaves little room for a meeting (in two sessions with a long interval in between!) with the Prime Minister on the evening of June 22, between 8 and 10. Cabinet meetings and Lanza's own movements, are recorded and do not tally with those described in the *Biographical Memoirs*. For example, the only day of Lanza's and Don Bosco's simultaneous presence in Rome was July 1, when Don Bosco was preparing to leave the city for Florence and Turin, and when the Prime Minister was busy with preparations for the official entrance of the king. But Motto stops short of denying that the two ever met. He merely supposes a looser time frame.[83] Desramaut denies that the Lanza interview ever took

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[81] Don Bosco to Tommaso Uguccioni-Gherardi, Turin, June 21, 1871: "I leave for Rome in the morning. In Florence I shall stop a mere two hours, waiting [to catch the next train], that is, from 7:35 to 10 PM. On my way back, God willing, I shall stop over for a couple of days and pay you and your family a visit" [Motto, *Epistolario* III, 341-342].

[82] The capital was being transferred to Rome in those very days, a situation requiring Lanza's presence there. The King made his official appearance in the new capital on July 2.

[83] Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 305-306, esp. notes 142 and 143.

place.[84] He sees it as a literary doublet of the meeting that took place the following September and that Amadei took (already fictionalized) from Lemoyne's *Documenti*.[85]

(3) Don Bosco's Activity in August and September 1871

[Don Bosco at Countess Corsi's Villa]

Don Bosco remained in Rome from June 22 to July 1, and attended the celebrations of the pope's jubilee. In the private audience of June 28 Pius IX, who had resolved to proceed with the appointment of bishops to the dioceses that still remained vacant, asked Don Bosco to submit names and information on worthy candidates. Back in Turin on July 4, after a two-day stopover in Florence, Don Bosco was immediately engrossed in affairs of the Society, the opening of a Salesian school at Varazze, and the closing of the school at Cherasco, visits to Salesian houses. From August 6 to 20, he attended the spiritual retreats "for lay people" at St. Ignatius retreat house near Lanzo.

Don Bosco had for some time been suffering from a painful illness that seriously affected his feet and that was to grow worse with the years. He therefore took advantage of a standing invitation from Countess Gabriella Corsi of Nizza Monferrato to spend a few days at her place in quiet seclusion, from August 21 to 30.

The *Biographical Memoirs*,[86] following Lemoyne's story in *Documenti*, speak of a meeting of diocesan vicars called by Don Bosco to help him compile his list of episcopal candidates. We read in *Documenti*:

> From Lanzo Don Bosco, attended by Father Francesia, traveled to Nizza Monferrato, where he was the guest of Countess Corsi at her secluded villa. The Countess used to spend the summer and autumn season there with the family of her brother-in-law, Count Cesare Balbo. Don Bosco began to work on a list of names of priests that he regarded worthy of being named bishops. He had written numerous letters to obtain information, and had invited outstanding priests to come to Nizza for a conference. Mgr. Tortone came to Nizza at Don Bosco's request to discuss some candidates. On one occasion seated at the dinner table with him were no less than 18 diocesan vicars

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[84] F. Desramaut, "L'audience imaginaire du ministre Lanza (Florence, 22 juin 1871)," *Ricerche Storiche Salesiane* 11:1 (1992) 9-34, with documentation and a reconstruction of events.

[85] Lemoyne records the story, set in June, in *Documenti* XII, 146-149, *FDB* 1,017 A12 – B3. According to Desramaut it may have been Father Francesia's creation, that is, an inference in the context of Don Bosco's new trip to Rome [G. B. Francesia, *Vita breve e popolare di D. Giovanni Bosco* (Torino: Liberia Salesiana, 1902), 302-305]. The story of the meeting with Lanza exhibits striking similarities with the story of the meeting with Minister Ricasoli on a similar prior occasion [Cf. Note 49 and related text above].

[86] *EBM* X, 195-197.

> general and capitular. These conferences, however, were held covertly (*alla chetichella*), the villa lying secluded among the hills, guests arriving separately and unobserved. Don Bosco could thus compile his list of candidates and forward it to the Holy Father.[87]

According to Lemoyne (in *Documenti*), and to Amadei (in the *Biographical Memoirs*) Don Bosco returned from Rome with a clear strategy in mind, the convening of a conference. However, the two letters to the countess whereby he set up his trip give no hint that such was the case, and surely the countess had a right to know. True, Don Bosco speaks of visitors, but they appear to be casual visitors from the area. He writes in one letter:

> I think I shall have time to accommodate everybody. But let's keep to this norm. Those that come with an offering or to discuss things pertaining to the good of souls are welcome at any time on any day. I shall be very happy to see them. Those that come merely to pay their respects should be thanked and dismissed.[88]

The conversations, apparently informal, held at the Corsi villa may or may not have had a bearing on the bishops' nominations. But it is certain that Don Bosco was working on his list of candidates. He was also was encouraging vicars of vacant diocese to petition the Holy Father to act.[89]

[Pius IX's Letter to the King and Don Bosco][90]

As Don Bosco was leaving for Nizza and Countess Corsi's villa, Pius IX, on August 21, 1871, was addressing a letter to King Victor Emmanuel II declaring his intention to appoint bishops to vacant dioceses in Italy. The King was vacationing in the Alps at the time, and the letter was delivered to Mgr. Tortone, the Holy See's *chargé d'affaires* in Turin, by a trusted messenger. An attached note by Cardinal Antonelli suggested that Tortone consult with Don Bosco as to the safest way of getting the letter into the King's hands. Twice Tortone invited Don Bosco to Turin by telegram "to deal with an urgent matter." Don Bosco replied that "poor health and other business" prevented him from leaving Nizza. Tortone was only too glad to dispense with Don Bosco's

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[87] *Documenti* XII, 156, *FDB* 1,017 B10. Motto points out that the presence at Nizza of Mgr. Gaetano Tortone, the Holy See's *chargé d'affaires* in Turin, cannot be reconciled with his attested activities at the time, as will be seen. Lemoyne's testimony in the process of Don Bosco's beatification at this point [*FDB*-Rua 2478 A3] cannot be taken at face value.

[88] Don Bosco to Countess Gabriella Corsi, St. Ignatius, August 18, 1871, in Motto, *Episotlario* III, 360.

[89] Don Bosco to Mgr. Pietro Giuseppe De Gaudenzi, Turin, September 4, 1871, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 366-367. Cf. Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 307.

[90] Here I summarize Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 308-310, where documentation is submitted.

services and entrusted the letter to a court chaplain and to the king's aide de camp.[91] The king pondered the letter and on August 31 handed it to Prime Minister Lanza, in Turin at the time. The Holy See had meanwhile contacted archbishops and bishops to submit lists of candidates, and since the news of imminent nominations had leaked out, Lanza immediately called a meeting of the cabinet in Florence. But before sending a report to the king, he wished to have a talk with Don Bosco. Don Bosco had by this time returned from Nizza and was at Lanzo with the Salesians' retreat. Lanza dispatched a telegram to the Prefect of Turin, who summoned Don Bosco to his office and relayed the Prime Minister's message to him. To Father Gioachino Berto, who had gone with him to the Prefect's office, Don Bosco said that the summons came as no surprise, for he had been involved in this matter by the pope's command for quite some time. He added:

> I regret to have to leave this very night and be absent for several days while the spiritual retreat is in progress at Lanzo. Besides I feel quite tired. But the good of the Church must come first; it has priority even over the good of our congregation. I shall take the 7 o'clock train this evening, travel the whole night, and be in Florence early tomorrow for my meeting at the Ministry.[92]

[Don Bosco in Florence]

We have no report on the topics of the talks at the ministry. But (1) it is likely that Lanza stressed the need of appointing moderate candidates as bishops. A confirmation of this may be read into the letter that the king wrote to the pope immediately afterwards. The king and his government would welcome the appointment of "persons who can join to the discharge of their pastoral duties a high regard for the laws of the state." (2) Agreement was reached on allowing freedom to the pope to choose candidates as he saw fit and on the granting of temporalities by the government. Don Bosco refers to these agreements in a later letter to Lanza: "When I had the honor of conferring with Your Excellency [...] I took it as agreed that the government was going to allow freedom of choice to the pope and place no obstacle in the matter of temporalities."[93]

[Don Bosco in Rome and the Nomination of Bishops]

With these assurances, from Florence Don Bosco went on to Rome and made his report to Pius IX and to Cardinal Antonelli. He had compiled a list of candidates and noted their credentials. He may already have discussed his list of

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[91] Tortone and people at court doubted Don Bosco's discretion [Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 308, Note 155].

[92] Berto's testimony at the process of Don Bosco's beatification, in *ASC* 161: *Testi*, *FDB* 2,108 C9.

[93] Don Bosco to Prime Minister Lanza, Varazze, February 11, 1872, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 398.

candidates in his meeting with Lanza, and may even have made a case for the worthiness of some who may not have had the reputation of "moderates." The list which he presented in Rome is attested in four holograph sheets from the Secret Vatican Archive, cited by Motto.[94] Don Bosco submitted 10 names, all basically recommendable, some without any reservation, others only in certain respects. He writes:

> Having pondered all aspects of the matter before the Lord and offered special prayers, I believe the following can be put forward as models of pastoral ministry.
>
> 1. Giovanni Battista Bottino. He is a doctor in theology, a canon of the cathedral [in Turin] and a preacher of renown.
>
> 2. Celestino Fissore. He is a canon of the same [cathedral], a doctor in theology and canon law, and a jurist of renown. He has been for many years vicar general of the diocese of Turin.
>
> 3. Giorgio Oreglia. He is a canon, provost and vicar general and capitular of the diocese of Fossano.
>
> The three above-listed candidates are also well-to-do.
>
> Canon Luigi Nasi is worthy in every respect. But he's in very poor health.
>
> Both Canon [Stanislao] Gazzelli [di Rossana] and Canon [Carlo] Morozzo [della Rocca] can be recommended and are moreover readily acceptable to the king. But in the present circumstances they are not as desirable as the first three above.
>
> Recommendable but less appropriate would be the nomination of Provost Gaeti, vicar forane of Castel Ceriolo. He is completely acceptable to the king to whom he is very close, but his theological education is spotty.
>
> Mgr. Andrea Scotton, a canon of Bassano Veneto. He preached in the cathedral [of Turin] and gave evidence of saintliness and great learning. He comes recommended by numerous works and supporting reports. He is well-to-do, in great health, courageous to a fault.
>
> Canon [Anacleto Pietro] Siboni, vicar general and capitular of Albenga, comes highly recommended from many quarters.
>
> Bishop [Lorenzo] Gastaldi of Saluzzo has support among the best of the clergy on account of his learning and piety. They would like him transferred to Turin. As a doctor in theology on the faculty of the University of Turin he would be ideally placed to keep theological studies at the University on the right track.[95]

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[94] Motto, *L'azione mediatrice*, 311-312.

[95] This document is proof positive that Don Bosco did recommend Gastaldi for Turin, as the Salesian tradition has always held. Later, during his unfortunate and bitter conflict with the archbishop, Don Bosco maladroitly reminded him of the fact. He wrote: "I would like you to know that someone in Turin is circulating certain papers taken from government files. These papers state that the appointment of Canon Gastaldi as bishop of Saluzzo came about through Don Bosco's recommendation. And if Bishop Gastaldi was appointed archbishop of Turin, it was also through Don Bosco's recommendation. There's also a record of the obstacles that had to be overcome for these appointments, and of the reason why I supported your candidacy." [Letter of May 14, 1873, in Ceria, *Epistolario* II,

Don Bosco submitted other names as well. Amadei, citing Papal Prelate Mgr. Emiliano Manacorda as the source states that Don Bosco submitted 18 names, among which those of Giuseppe Sciandra (for the diocese of Acqui) and of Salvatore Magnasco (for the archdiocese of Genoa).[96] It should be borne in mind that Don Bosco's list, which was concerned only with Piedmont and Liguria, was only one of many sent in at the request of the Holy See.

There followed a diplomatic shuttle from Rome to various dioceses and back that could not escape the notice of the press. Speculations, positions pro and con, and acrimonious debates raged in the press through the remainder of September and most of October, as appointments became known or conjectured. Anticlerical sheets conducted the usual defamatory campaign that contributed significantly to poisoning the atmosphere against particular nominees.[97] But the list of candidates was finalized by Pius IX and, after some objections, accepted also by the government. Finally on October 27, 1871 Pius held the consistory in which 41 bishops were officially named and appointed to various dioceses throughout Italy. Among them (for the regions of the old Kingdom of Sardinia) were: Giovanni Balma (Archdiocese of Cagliari, Sardinia), Lorenzo Gastaldi (Archdiocese of Turin), Celestino Fissore (Archdiocese of Vercelli), Pietro Giuseppe De Gaudenzi (Diocese of Vigevano), and Pietro Anacleto Siboni (Diocese of Albenga)—all five of them proposed by Don Bosco.[98]

279]. Gastaldi himself in a letter to Pius IX complains of Don Bosco's "insolence" and lack of respect, when the latter claimed to have been reprimanded in Rome for having supported Gastaldi. [Letter in the Secret Vatican Archive cited by Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 311, Note 167]. One of the reasons why Don Bosco recommended Gastaldi was that the latter had always been supportive of Don Bosco and his work and would hopefully continue to do so as archbishop of Turin. It was not to be.

[96] *EBM* X, 199.

[97] The anticlerical satirical newspaper of Turin, *Il Fischietto* (the Whistle) undertook a rabid smearing campaign against possible nominees for Turin. The invective became more vicious as soon as the appointment of Bishop Lorenzo Gastaldi of Saluzzo to the archdiocese of Turin was announced. The malevolent satire reached the point of holding him up to ridicule for his physical appearance [Issues of October 5 and 14, 1871, cited in Giuseppe Tuninetti, *Lorenzo Gastaldi, 1815-1883*, II: Arcivescovo di Torino: 1871-1883 (Casale Monferrato: Edizioni PIEMME, 1988), 22-23].

[98] Giovanni Balma had been "sponsored" by Don Bosco earlier in a special letter to Cardinal Antonelli [Cf. Notes 66 and 67 and related text above]. Lorenzo Gastaldi's appointment to Turin came one year after the death of Archbishop Riccardi di Netro, who had been appointed in 1867 and had died on October 16, 1870. The diocese had meanwhile been vacant.

[Don Bosco's Continued Involvement in the Nomination of Bishops]

While the nominations were being pondered and decisions were being made in Rome, Don Bosco returned to Turin (September 16, 1871). However, even pressing affairs of the Congregation and other important commitments did not stymie Don Bosco's active concern for the vacant sees. Even after the nominations of October 27, the diocese of Fossano remained vacant, in spite of earlier petitions by the cathedral chapter, the municipal council and Don Bosco himself. The authorities in Fossano now renewed their petition, asking specifically for Mgr. Emiliano Manacorda, a papal prelate and a friend of Don Bosco and the Salesians. They also asked Don Bosco to act as intermediary with Cardinal Antonelli and to add his own recommendation. Don Bosco gladly obliged.[99] On November 6, the cardinal notified Don Bosco of the pope's favorable decision. Mgr. Manacorda was nominated and appointed bishop of Fossano in the consistory of November 27, 1871.

Don Bosco's active involvement in the nomination of bishops continued, as Motto relates in detail, through the pontificate of Pius IX and his death in 1878, and in a different form even beyond that date.[100] It will not be our task to pursue this later activity of Don Bosco, except to say that in these later difficult years Don Bosco never ceased to suffer, pray and act for the good of the Church.

We must now turn our attention to Don Bosco's involvement in obtaining the royal *Exequatur*, with its attendant repossession of premises and revenues (the temporalities), for the bishops, once appointed. In the situation of conflict brought about by the occupation of Rome and the Law of Guarantees obtaining this royal permit was now more difficult and more onerous. This situation opened another chapter in Don Bosco's mediating activity in Rome.

VII. Don Bosco's Continued Mediation to Obtain *Exequatur* and temporalities for Appointed Bishops in the Years 1872–1874

1. Archbishop Gastaldi's Uneasy "Entrance" and Don Bosco's Illness (December 1871 – February 1872)

Archbishop Gastaldi entered the See of Turin on November 26, 1871. His entrance was in a less solemn and public form than had been originally planned. The rabid propaganda of the anticlerical press and the fear lest the

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[99] Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, Turin, October 31, 1971, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 382-383.

[100] Motto, *L'Azione mediatrice*, 315-322.

archbishop be subjected to personal abuse forced the City to cancel the procession and the accompanying pageant. The local civil authorities received him ambivalently, even if civilly, but one might say that he entered as a *persona non grata.* After all, he had been a well known and in many ways controversial figure, no passive spectator in the religious and political events of the past quarter century. To forestall confrontation, instead of proceeding to his cathedral from the church of St. Philip where the clergy was gathered, he preferred to go there privately from the Church of the Consolata where he had been "in hiding." Meanwhile the various ranks of Catholic laity and orders of clergy (among whom Don Bosco) waiting for the archbishop at the Church of St. Philip proceeded without him to the Cathedral, to find it filled with Catholic people.[101] The following day the archbishop took up residence in the diocesan seminary. Nearly three years were to pass before receiving *Exequatur* and temporalities.

Walking from St. Philip to the cathedral on November 26, Don Bosco began to feel ill with a sharp pain in his shoulders and heavy palpitations of the heart. Back at the Oratory, he seemed to recover. A few days later, in spite of misgivings, Don Bosco undertook a trip to Genoa for the purpose of visiting the Salesian houses in Liguria: He visited Marassi and went on to Varazze, where he arrived on December 4. On December 6, returning to Varazze by train after paying a visit to a benefactress, he collapsed. He was taken to the Salesian school and put to bed in the infirmary. This marked the onset of a very serious illness that kept him bed-ridden for nearly two months.[102] Brother Enria arrived from Turin on January 12 to serve as attendant. He would stand watch at Don Bosco's bedside throughout the illness. The illness has never been exactly diagnosed. Most apparent was an outbreak of tubercles all over the body with high temperatures, profuse perspiration and eventual shedding of the skin. The sources call it "miliary fever" (*miliaria*, prickly heat). There were also other complications, primarily a deep pain in the shoulder and right arm, probably of rheumatic origin. At one point Don Bosco saw himself at the point of death. But by January 5 his condition took a turn for the better, and by mid-January he could spend a few hours out of bed. On January 30, on his way to recovery, he began a period of convalescence at the Salesian school of Alassio, farther west along the Riviera.

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[101] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 15-25.

[102] The story of Don Bosco's participation in the archbishop's "entrance" and of his subsequent illness at Varazze is told in detail in *EBM* X, 122-130. The story is based on letters by Salesians at Varazze to the Salesians in Turin. The letters of Pietro Enria, who served as Don Bosco sick room attendant throughout the illness, constitute the chief source [*ASC* 112 Malattie di DB, *FDB* 430 D12 – 435 E4. For comments and evaluation, cf. Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 821-824].

2. *Exequaturs* and Temporalities: Terms of the Question and Don Bosco's Involvement in 1872

During the long siege, Don Bosco was kept informed on how matters fared in the dioceses to which bishops had been recently appointed. Things were not going well. The bishops were not being given the necessary temporalities. In a letter written from Varazze before returning to Turin Don Bosco wrote to Prime Minister Lanza demanding to know why.

> I meant to write sooner and ask for a clarification regarding the question of the temporalities to which the recently appointed bishops are entitled. Illness has thus far prevented me from doing so. [...] When I had the honor of conferring with Your Excellency on September 9 [11] past, I understood that the government agreed not only to allow the pope full freedom in the choice of candidates, but also not to place any obstacles in the way of their obtaining the temporalities. [...] I have been receiving inquiries about this matter, and I myself would like to know if I was wrong or if the government has had cause to change its position. [...] When people saw their bishop forced to take up residence in the diocesan seminary, or in a private house, or at an inn, or in a rented apartment, they began to take a different view of the government's credibility.[103]

What had happened? We must refrain from imputing malicious intent to the Prime Minister. When he had agreed that the temporalities would not be denied to the newly appointed bishops, he must have understood that they would be granted in the form prescribed by law. Now, if according to the provisions of the Law of Guarantees the Italian government surrendered the right to nominate bishops, it still claimed the right to issue the *Exequatur*. As already noted, the *Exequatur* was the name given to a royal permit enabling a newly appointed bishop to take possession of the bishop's palace and other premises and to receive revenues from the diocesan benefice, and so set up his household and administration.[104] A royal decree with the date of June 25, 1871 reaffirmed this policy and established that to obtain the *Exequatur* the bishop must submit the *original papal Bull of Appointment* to government authorities.[105] It seems anomalous that the government should permit on the one hand the free election of bishops (as it did in 1871), and then demand that the bishops should present

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[103] Don Bosco to Prime Minister Lanza, Varazze, February 11, 1872, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 398.

[104] *Exequatur* (*Exsequatur*) though used as a noun is a Latin verbal form meaning "Let him put into execution." A similar permit (called the *Placet*, "It is decided") had to be obtained from the local authority for the appointment and installation of a pastor.

[105] This referred primarily to the Bull of Appointment addressed to the people (*Bulla ad populum*). Later the submission of other Bulls would be required. As noted earlier the Holy See also dispatched Bulls addressed to the clergy (*ad clerum*), to the Chapter (*ad capitulum*) and to the bishop (*ad episcopum*) [Cf. Note 38 above].

"official credentials" so as to obtain a permit (*Exequatur*) to enter into possession (temporalities). Historically, this was an ancient prerogative claimed by the kings of Sardinia, who had always followed a "jurisdictionalist" ecclesiastical policy. This policy, some times established by concordat, allowed the sovereign to exercise a measure of control, not only on the bishops' activities but also on their very nomination. Failure to obtain the *Exequatur* would paralyze the running of the diocese from an administrative and juridical point of view. Now by the Law of Guarantees and by royal decree the bishops could be freely appointed by the pope, but they must obtain the royal permit for the unimpeded use of diocesan material assets. To ease tension, the government would later clarify the juridical issue by introducing a distinction: the submission of the Bull would not be for the purpose of obtaining the *Exequatur* with its juridical implications. It would only be for the purpose of recording officially that the bearer of the Bull was the person to whom the temporalities pertained.

But the Holy See (and in particular Cardinal Secretary of State Antonelli) would have none of it, because they did not acknowledge the government's jurisdiction in the matter. *The government* was the usurper of the pope's temporal power and of the properties of the Church and of religious orders. The bishops, therefore, were instructed to avoid any action (such as the submission of credentials) that could be construed as recognition of the illegal and unjust situation. Thus, on October 31, 1871 a circular from the Holy See (Cardinal Antonelli) directed the bishops to enter their dioceses as soon as possible, immediately perform some act of jurisdiction, and send notice of their election to the government. If the government demanded that they request the *Exequatur* in accordance with the law, they were to ignore the demand and take the consequences. They were not to request the *Exequatur* either directly or indirectly.[106]

On November 29, 1871, Archbishop Gastaldi reported to Cardinal Antonelli that his notification to the government had drawn a negative reply and inquired whether he could request the *Exequatur* indirectly. He suggested that the Holy See might supply "a certificate of election" that the bishop could show to the authorities, and thus obtain the temporalities. Cardinal Antonelli remained inflexible. And when Gastaldi made a second attempt on January 9, 1872, the cardinal replied that if the Archbishop was in want, the pope would allot to him, as he did to other bishops, a stipend of 700 lire.[107]

The bishops were chafing at the bit under such strictures from the government and intransigence from the Holy See. Attempts were made in certain dioceses to get around the obstacle. We have the case of the cathedral chapter of Saluzzo who petitioned the Minister of Justice for the *Exequatur* and submitted in lieu of the Bull of Appointment a transcript of the minutes of the

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[106] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 52, citing document from the Archive of the Archdiocese of Turin.

[107] Gastaldi accepted the offer [Tuninetti, *ibid.*, citing sources].

meeting at which the bishop read the Bull of Appointment to them. The government granted the *Exequatur*, signed by the king on February 25, 1872. Bishop Alfonso Buglione di Monale and his Chapter received a stern rebuke from Cardinal Antonelli.[108]

In this case the government's action may have been motivated by the recognition of the propaganda value of the incident. On the other hand, on March 3, 1872 the government did relax the condition for obtaining the temporalities by approving three alternatives to the direct submission of the original Bull of Appointment (to be discussed below). Nevertheless on March 10, 1872 a circular from the Holy See forbade any compromise. The bishops were not to make any move to request the *Exequatur*.

Don Bosco was certainly aware that the government, fearing the political backlash from this stalemate or simply out of a desire to see the matter resolved, was seeking a compromise. He was also aware that both Cardinal Antonelli and Pius IX had decided to make no concession to what they perceived as aggression and bad faith. But he did not give up. Writing to Pius IX on April 8, 1872, he comments on question of the temporalities.

> When the government began to raise objections, I immediately wrote to Prime Minister Lanza. I reminded him of the formal pledge made by the government and by the king himself that nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the bishops' temporalities. He replied that there was no cause to worry because the difficulties that had arisen were temporary and would be resolved, and that the government's position in the matter had not changed at all.
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> As time went by, noting that nothing was being done I made further inquiries but got no reply. I know for a fact that the government would like to move out of this embarrassing situation, but it cannot find a way.[109]

Pius IX replied on May 1, 1872, in Latin:

> What you write regarding your endeavors to obtain the temporalities that are due to the bishops is appreciated, and We praise your zeal and concern. But you know how matters stand, and you understand therefore that it is better to turn in prayer to God who alone can change people's hearts. Since God promised the Church perpetual protection, God cannot fail us.[110]

Apparently Pius IX no longer believed in diplomacy. Was he also telling Don Bosco that, "zeal and concern" notwithstanding, his diplomatic endeavors were no longer helpful? Apparently Don Bosco was not ready to stop trying. On May 21, 1872, he wrote to Prime Minister Lanza asking him to move the

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[108] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 53.
[109] Motto, *Epistolario* III, 422-423.
[110] *IBM* X, 570 (original Latin text). Cf. *EBM* X, 210.

business of the temporalities along. To help toward this end, he suggested a compromise formula for notifying the government of the appointment.

> In a recent letter to Your Excellency I stated my belief that it would not be too difficult to come up with an acceptable arrangement, one that would not require either the government or the Holy See to give up cherished general principles. I don't engage in politics, am not involved in public affairs, nor have I received any mandate to negotiate. But I believe that an authenticated note from the Holy See would meet the government's requirements. The note would state that in the consistory held on such and such a date, such and such individual was officially appointed bishop to such and such vacant diocesan see.
>
> Perhaps this or some similar formula that Your Excellency might suggest will serve the purpose. In this event, should Your Excellency wish to make use of me to bring it to the attention of the right parties, I should be more than happy to be of service to my government and of some use to the Church.[111]

We have no record of Lanza's reply, if there was one. But a new move of the Holy See confirmed what Don Bosco had already surmised from the pope's letter of May 1. In an open letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State dated June 16, 1872, Pius IX shut the door on negotiations with a government that he regarded as willfully interfering with the Church's freedom.[112]

Don Bosco saw that there was nothing to do but wait for a thaw in the glacial relationship that had developed between the contending parties.

3. Don Bosco's Involvement with the Question of the *Exequaturs* in Rome in Early 1873

On February 18, 1873, Don Bosco and his secretary, Father Gioachino Berto left for Rome where they arrived, after stopovers at Parma, Bologna and Florence, on February 24. The definitive approval of the Salesian constitutions was the chief item on Don Bosco's agenda. But he quickly became involved in a totally private capacity with the issue of the *Exequaturs*. The day before his departure from Turin, he had had a meeting with Archbishop Gastaldi on that very subject. The Archbishop, like other bishops, was impatient with the delay, and he had been to Rome shortly before to speak with the pope. In January at Alessandria, contrary to the Holy See's express prohibition, Canon Giuseppe Bernardo Corno on his own initiative had submitted a transcript of Bishop Giocondo Salvaj's Bull of Appointment and obtained the Exequatur.

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[111] Don Bosco to Prime Minister Lanza, [Turin,] May 21, 1872, in Motto, *Epistolario* III, 434.

[112] Pius IX to Cardinal Antonelli, June 16, 1872, referred to in Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, citing the journal, *Civiltà cattolica*.

Cardinal Antonelli's wrath was swift, and the bishop survived only by apologizing and submitting proof of his innocence.[113]

Father Berto has left diaries of the Roman trips on which he accompanied Don Bosco, including the present one of 1873. After describing the trip, he relates (though not in detail) Don Bosco's activities as go-between in the matter of the *Exequaturs*.[114]

Not long after his arrival in the city, Don Bosco received an invitation from Prime Minister Lanza. They discussed the issue of the bishops' temporalities.[115] Apparently at this meeting Lanza presented to Don Bosco three alternate procedures for requesting the *Exequatur* instead of the submission of the original Bull of Appointment. Together they are referred to as "the four *modus vivendi*." We have Don Bosco's holograph in a memorandum which he penned in view, no doubt, of a meeting with Cardinal Antonelli.

Bishops' Temporalities

The four *modus vivendi*, so-called, proposed by the Prime Minister and approved by the Cabinet are:

1. The bishops shall notify their appointment and present the official Bull in accordance with the law.

2. The cathedral chapter, or the diocesan chancery or other competent diocesan authority shall submit a summary of the Bull, with a declaration that nothing has been added [in the original] to the formulation that is customary in such texts.

3. [A competent diocesan authority] shall submit the text of a typical Bull, with a declaration that the original Bull issued for N. N. agrees with that text.

4. The secretary of the Consistorial Congregation shall submit in each case of appointment name, date, and diocese, with a declaration that nothing has been changed in the official Bull.

Generally speaking it seems that the government is afraid lest secret codes might be appended or inserted into the Bull. This fear was dispelled to everyone's satisfaction. [...]

The second alternate procedure (*modus vivendi*) appears to be more in conformity with principles guiding the Holy See, especially if modified as follows:

The [Cathedral] Chapter, the chancery or other competent [diocesan] authority shall forward to the Royal Procurator or other government authority

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[113] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 54.

[114] Berto, *Compendio*, in *ASC* 110 *Cronachette*, Berto, *FDB* 906 C8ff., esp. D7-12; *Appunti sul viaggio di D. Bosco a Roma, 1873*, *FDB* 907 D12ff., esp., E1-4.

[115] Prime Minister Lanza and Don Bosco also discussed the government's policy regarding the suppression of religious congregations and the taking over of their properties in the province of Rome. Earlier Don Bosco had asked Lanza to spare some convents that were dear to him, in particular the convents of Tor de' Specchi, of the Bocca della Verità and of Trinità dei Monti. The Prime Minister was able to reassure him [*ASC* 110, Berto, "*Compendio*," *FDB* 906 D11].

a declaration of appointment. This shall be a statement that in the [papal] consistory held on (Date) the priest (Name) was officially appointed bishop of (Diocese) and that the customary Bull (couched in the customary terms) has been sent.

The government seems to have accepted this procedure. However, the Minister would like to wait till the [parliament's] Easter break, or preferably till the June recess to put it into effect. At that time the government will not have to deal with [parliamentary] debate and will proceed as desired. [...]

[Prime Minister] Lanza moreover pledged to protect the Generalates [of religious orders from confiscation], or [should parliament move against them] to hand in his resignation. He will also try to compensate the bishops for the losses sustained because of the necessary delay.

[Signed] Father Giovanni Bosco.[116]

Berto reports that some time during the meeting with Lanza Don Bosco was "set upon" by cabinet ministers who argued with him and tried to trick him in contradictions or compromising statements. He came out of the meeting tired, bathed in perspiration, flushed, but smiling. To Berto he explained what "those scoundrels (*canaglia*)" were trying to do to him and to "poor Lanza." [117]

After the meeting Don Bosco sent the memorandum with Lanza'a proposals to Cardinal Antonelli. And on March 15 and 16, 1873 he met again with both the Prime Minister and the Cardinal.[118] However, in spite of the fact that the Don Bosco-Lanza conversations had made a breakthrough, and the cardinal seemed to want to go along with the new proposal, no real advance was made in the new direction. On the one hand Lanza would have to wait for parliament to recess in June, and on the other Cardinal Antonelli, still skeptical, adopted a wait and see attitude.

The business of the Society, the approval of the constitutions, had not gone well either. The revised text Don Bosco had brought to Rome and submitted to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars was rejected after drawing no less than 38 serious critical observations from the examiner. Therefore after taking leave of Pius IX on March 18, on March 22 with his secretary he left Rome for Turin. With stops at Florence, Modena and Bologna a week went by before the travelers were back home on March 29, 1873.

In Turin Archbishop Gastaldi was also looking for a way to notify his appointment to the authorities and obtaining the *Exequatur*, without submitting the original Bull directly. He proposed to Cardinal Antonelli that the Bull to the People or a copy thereof might be displayed in the cathedral in a corner of the sacristy. The reply was that the Archbishop should not take such a course of action until the Holy See had explored its implications.[119]

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[116] Berto, *Collection* in *ASC* 112, *FDB* 789 C8-10 (Don Bosco's holograph), B4-6 (Berto's transcription).

[117] *ASC* 110 Berto, *Compendio*, *FDB* 906 D9-10.

[118] Motto, *La Mediazione*, 25, Note 66, citing an unpublished letter of Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, March 15, 1873.

[119] Tuninetti, *Gastaldi* II, 55.

Meanwhile in early May, the Bill of suppression of religious orders and confiscation of their properties in the province of Rome began to be debated in parliament. The Pope voiced his protests and launched excommunications, but the Bill was passed into law and published on June 26. It would go into effect in October 1873. Eventually a total of 472 convents and monasteries were suppressed and some 8000 religious men and women dismissed. The value of the properties was estimated at 8,000,000 lire.[120] Prime Minister Lanza, as promised, fought hard to save the general houses of religious congregations in Rome, and he succeeded to some extent. But the parliamentary opposition and a groundswell of popular anticlerical feeling forced his resignation on June 25, 1873. His government fell on July 5, leaving the question of the *Exequaturs* and temporalities unresolved.

4. Don Bosco's Fight for the *Exequaturs* at the Beginning of the Ministry of Prime Minister Marco Minghetti and of Justice Minister Onorato Vigliani (Latter Half of 1873)

On July 10, 1873, Marco Minghetti, designated Prime Minister, formed a new government, in which Onorato Vigliani took the post of Minister of Justice. A few days later, on July 14, 1873, Don Bosco wrote to Prime Minister Minghetti recalling the progress made in meetings with Prime Minister Lanza, and requesting that the talks be restarted on the basis of the second modified option.[121]

> [Prime Minister Lanza] put forward four options worked out by the cabinet ministers, the text of the second, slightly modified, is herewith attached. I reported the proposals to Cardinal Antonelli and to the Holy Father himself. All parties understood that once the debate on the Bill against religious corporations was concluded, and parliament adjourned for the summer recess, the proposal would be put into effect as modified. I hope the new government still intends to work toward the settlement of a dispute that is harmful to many and advantageous to no one. I shall be happy again to be of service in any capacity that may be for the good of my country and of the Church.[122]

On July 16, 1873, Prime Minister Minghetti assured Don Bosco that he would give attention to the matter and get back to him. Come August, there still was no reply. Don Bosco thought that the delay was occasioned from the fact that Minister of Justice Vigliani was away taking the waters. The negotiations would eventually be turned over to Vigliani. In the first week in August Don Bosco and Cardinal Antonelli carried on a lively correspondence. Don Bosco

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[120] DeAgostini, *Compact*, 172.

[121] Cf. Don Bosco's memorandum to Cardinal Antonelli, Note 116 and related text above.

[122] Don Bosco to Marco Minghetti, {Turin,] July 14, 1873, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 64.

made an updated report to Cardinal Antonelli and needed to know whether someone else had been appointed to negotiate, and he should cease and desist—or did he have the Cardinal's permission "to deal." On August 6 Cardinal Antonelli gave permission, but he lay down new and more restrictive demands, thereby making the obtaining of the *Exequatur* and of the temporalities more problematic. On August 25, Don Bosco brought to the cardinal's attention the discrepancy between the new formula and the procedure agreed upon the previous March. On September 13, Cardinal Antonelli restated his position, and told Don Bosco to adhere strictly to it.[123] In spite of the cardinal's statement that he just wanted to fix parameters to what had been agreed in Rome, the new formula forbade any move by the bishop, the chancery, or any other diocesan authority. The "inquiry" was left up to the government.[124]

Don Bosco did not give up, but he had no other option open than to work with the new intransigent position of Cardinal Secretary of State. Not having had a reply from Prime Minister Minghetti, on October 12, 1873 he contacted Onorato Vigliani, to whose department (Ministry of Justice) the matter did pertain. He brought the minister up to date regarding the March agreement with Prime Minister Lanza, his writing to Prime Minister Minghetti, but not receiving a reply. Then in an effort to sell the new position he writes.

> The March talks dealt only with the procedure [to be followed in seeking the temporalities] for the bishops to be named in the future. But a second procedure applicable to bishops already named and in place at the time (marked *Modus Vivendi* B on the attached sheet) was agreed upon. Discussion

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[123] Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, Turin, August 3, 1873; Cardinal Antonelli to Don Bosco, Rome, August 6, 1873; Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, Turin, August 25, 1873; Cardinal Antonelli to Don Bosco, Rome, September 13, 1873, all in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 64-67.

[124] Cardinal Antonelli's formula ran as follows: "[The government] may address an inquiry to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Consistory regarding the date [of appointment], the bishops' names, and the dioceses to which they have been appointed in various consistories. [The secretary of the Congregation] will gladly provide name, date, and diocese to which each the bishop was appointed. He will likewise certify that the customary Bulls of appointment were dispatched in each case" [Letter of August 6, as in Note 123 above].

The alternate procedure recorded in Don Bosco's memorandum is considerably different. "The second alternate procedure (*modus vivendi*) appears to be more in conformity with the principles guiding the Holy See, especially if modified as follows: 'The [Cathedral] Chapter or the chancery or other competent [diocesan] authority shall forward to the Royal Procurator or other government authority a declaration of appointment. This shall contain a statement to the effect that in the [papal] consistory held on (Date) the priest (Name) was officially appointed bishop of (Diocese), and that the customary Bull [of appointment] has been delivered'" [Cf. Note 116 and Don Bosco's memorandum above].

[about the implementation] of this second formula, however, was put off to a more appropriate time.[125] [...]

It seems to me that this *Modus Vivendi* B is entirely consonant with the government's view of the matter and advantageous to it. (1) The government would be contacting the Holy See and establishing a direct relationship. (2) The Holy See would respond directly and officially, (3) On receiving the official list of appointed bishops, the government can judge the merits of the case in each instance. (4) The government would then be wielding an effective *Exequatur*, for it may decide not to grant the temporalities or, if needs be, even to place appropriate conditions.

In the practical implementation of this plan certain details of the procedure could be modified, and I believe that the Holy See would raise no objections. For example where it is said, "The government may address an inquiry, etc.," one may take it to be an oral inquiry through a delegate. [...]

I am totally uninvolved in politics or in public affairs. Hence, should Your Excellency see fit to make use of my humble services in this matter, there would be no unwanted publicity. [...][126]

Minister Vigliani replied immediately. After lamenting the sad condition of the dioceses in which the bishops were still deprived of the *Exequatur*, he goes on to say that Prime Minister Minghetti, who like himself was desirous to see the conflict resolved, has asked him to look into the matter. But not having found any files on the previous negotiations, he will need time to consult with former Prime Minister Lanza. Vigliani, however, shows acquaintance with the general situation, when he writes:

What's needed is that both sides give evidence of good will and Christian tolerance. Then a settlement may be reached that satisfies all requirements. You are a devoted priest and a committed citizen. I beg you therefore to take the most effective steps to persuade the Holy See to meet the government halfway. For the government needs to find a way to conciliate the requirements of the law, which is above the will of any individual minister, and the concessions that will make the granting of the *Exequatur* possible. You may know that the bishops of Alessandria, Saluzzo and Aosta have been generously granted the *Exequatur*. Why don't other bishops follow the good example of these confreres of theirs. Why can't they find a way, through their

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[125] "The first *modus vivendi* mentioned here by Don Bosco is the second alternate formula proposed by Lanza in March 1873. As modified in Don Bosco's memorandum it was the preferred formula, in harmony with the mind of the Holy See [Cf. Note 116 and Don Bosco's memorandum above]. Don Bosco here mentions a second mysterious *modus vivendi*. This is the new formula laid down by Cardinal Antonelli. Although the Cardinal states that it was the agreement worked out in March [Cf. Letter of August 6, Note 123 above], it does not appear in Don Bosco's memorandum which lists Lanza's proposed alternate formulae [Cf. Note 124 above]. Is Don Bosco trying to sell the new position of the Holy See to Vigliani?

[126] Don Bosco to Minister Vigliani, Turin, October 12, 1873, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 67-68.

> chapters, the local mayors, or other trusted person, to forward a transcript of the Bull of Appointment to the government authority, without seeming to make an act of submission? I don't see in this mode of acting anything that might offend our holy religion.[127]

As mentioned above, the procedure described by Vigliani and adopted in the dioceses of Saluzzo, Alessandria and Aosta is what called forth the ire of Cardinal Antonelli.[128] It would in any case be ruled out by the Holy See's new position.

Don Bosco quickly wrote to Cardinal Antonelli on October 20 to acquaint him with his exchange with Minister Vigliani. He had placed the new position of the Holy See squarely on the table, but Vigliani had withheld comments, and had instead cited deviant examples. Don Bosco was willing to travel to Rome if the Cardinal thought it helpful. Cardinal Antonelli's reply on November 1 restated his intransigent position, forbidding the bishop or any other diocesan authority to make any move to request the *Exequatur*. He couldn't say whether a trip to Rome by Don Bosco would help, "since the government seems unwilling to do anything right."[129]

As the year 1873 came to an end, therefore, several months after first contacting Prime Minister Minghetti, Don Bosco had to accept the fact that the contrast remained unresolved. On December 17, 1873, Archbishop Gastaldi had a notarized copy of the Bull of Appointment displayed in the sacristy of the cathedral, as was done with the bishop's pastoral letters, an act that could be interpreted as a petition for the *Exequatur*. To make matters worse influential lay people in Turin started a process whereby the notarized transcript of the Bull would reach the authorities. Nothing came of it, however. Minister Vigliani refused to take action because the move had not come from the archbishop and the document presented was not the original Bull. Gastaldi was not aware that such action was being taken "on his behalf."[130] When Don Bosco saw the archbishop before leaving for Rome again toward the end of December, he promised to keep him informed of development. Don Bosco's letters to the archbishop from Rome (to be cited below) give evidence that Gastaldi was impatiently waiting for a breakthrough.

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[127] Minister Vigliani to Don Bosco, Rome, October 15, 1873, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 68-69.

[128] For Saluzzo and Alessandria, cf. Notes 108 and 113 and related text above.

[129] Don Bosco to Cardinal Antonelli, Turin, October 20, 1873; Cardinal Antonelli to Don Bosco, Rome, November 1, 1873, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 69.

[130] Motto, *La Mediazione*, 36-37.

5. Don Bosco Involvement with Minister of Justice Vigliani for the *Exequaturs* in Rome in 1874[131]

Don Bosco meanwhile had been revising (though not significantly) the text of the Salesian constitutions. On December 29, 1873, he left for Rome with his secretary, Father Gioachino Berto. They arrived on December 30 after a brief pause in Florence as the guests of Count and Countess Uguccioni-Gherardi. The business of the definitive approval of the constitution (the main reason for the trip) would keep them in Rome until the decree of approval on April 13. But during this protracted stay Don Bosco was determined to continue his diplomatic activity for the bishops' temporalities, and hopefully get the parties to agree on a compromise formula. He needed to meet with the parties immediately, so as to ascertain their respective positions.

(1) Finding a Formula for a General Settlement of the Issue

On December 31, the day after his arrival in Rome, Don Bosco met with Minister Vigliani and with Cardinal Antonelli. Immediately Don Bosco understood that the position of the contending parties differed. In a letter to Archbishop Gastaldi written that very evening Don Bosco reported words of Vigliani that revealed the two irreconcilable positions. Vigliani said, "We are not demanding that bishops submit a request for the *Exequatur*, but only for the temporalities." Don Bosco adds, "But even this second request is ruled out by order of a higher authority [Cardinal Antonelli]."[132] After a new meeting with Minister Vigliani devoted to discussing the basic formula,[133] the evening of January 2, 1874, Don Bosco wrote to Cardinal Antonelli. He reported that Vigliani wished to modify certain expressions in the formula to forestall objections that might be raised. Otherwise he accepted the formula in its entirety, and anticipated no opposition either from the Cabinet or in the

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[131] Father Berto's chronicle of the trip and Don Bosco's correspondence are the chief sources for this the final chapter in our story.

For Berto's chronicle of this trip to Rome and of Don Bosco's activities there [Berto, *Brevi Appunti*], cf. reference in Note 1 above. Motto [*La Mediazione*, 38] discusses the reliability of Berto's chronicle. Apart from Berto's penchant for aggrandizing the figure of the master, he finds no reason for doubting these reports. The *Biographical Memoirs* carry the reports, reveling in the dialogue and other detail [*EBM* X 223-245].

The most important pieces of Don Bosco's correspondence relating to the *Exequaturs* are likewise given in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 56-79, an Appendix from which letters have already been cited above.

[132] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, December 31, 1873, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 70.

[133] This is the second (modified) formula recorded in Don Bosco's March, 1872 memorandum as the most acceptable to the Holy See [Cf. Notes 116 and 124 and related text above].

Council of State. More meetings took place through the next week including an audience with Pius IX, and letters were exchanged. Both Minister Vigliani and Don Bosco were convinced that progress was being made.

But the government's proposal did more than modify certain expressions in the basic formula, for it required the bishop to notify the Ministry of his appointment and entrance into the diocese. The position of the Holy See emphatically ruled out any action on the bishop's part that might be construed as a request for the *Exequatur* or simply for the temporalities. It also ruled out displaying the Bulls to the Clergy and to the Chapter in the sacristy of the cathedral. On the other hand, the government required that all the Bulls be shown, or at least the Bull to the People with an accurate description of the contents of the others. But, making a juridical distinction, it required only that the bishop request the temporalities, not the *Exequatur*.

A person of lesser staying power would have despaired—not Don Bosco. His numerous conversations and exchanges with the parties concerned must have convinced him that an understanding was possible if a fresh approach were adopted. The principle to be safeguarded was that in any formula the bishop must not be required directly to submit the request. Hence Don Bosco, either single-handedly or in collaboration with others, came up with the following new proposal.

> Avoiding any personal involvement, the bishop has the Bull *ad capitulum* (and perhaps that *ad episcopum* as well) displayed in the sacristy of the cathedral or in some other appropriate place. Anyone, including a notary public, is allowed to make authentic copies [of the Bull]. Then the mayor, the prefect, or the royal procurator shall be asked to forward this authenticated transcript to the Ministry of Justice. The Minister contacts the bishop in writing to inquire whether by that act he intends to request the temporalities. The bishop replies in the affirmative, and that he does so in order that any obstacle in the way of the free exercise of his pastoral ministry may be removed. He asks the Minister to see to it that the obstacles are removed and the temporalities granted. Finally the Minister sets in motion the process whereby the temporalities are granted, and the bishop and his signature legally recognized.[134]

The new formula seemed to satisfy all requirements, so that on January 11 Don Bosco could write reassuringly to Archbishop Gastaldi, who was impatient to see the issue resolved.

> I hasten to notify Your Excellency of the fact that good progress has been made in the matter under consideration. The formula accepted by the Holy See has also been approved by Vigliani and by the cabinet. Some time next week it will be put before the Council of State, hopefully also with a favorable outcome. After which, if the devil won't stick his finger in the pie, there will

[134] Berto, *Collection*, in *ASC* 112 Vescovi, *FDB* 789 B7 (transcription signed by Berto with the note that it agrees with Don Bosco's holograph).

> be immediate implementation. Vigliani has repeatedly told me that the presentation of the Bull to the People would suffice, provided it is accompanied by the statement that it was for the purpose of obtaining the temporalities. [...] I ask you therefore to wait out this week and the next, after which you shall hear from me. If the present plan won't work, I will ask Cardinal Antonelli about displaying the Bull *ad clerum* in the sacristy. To date, however, he has not allowed bishops to request the *Exequatur*.[135]

On January 15, after a new round of talks with Minister Vigliani and Cardinal Antonelli, Don Bosco had real cause for optimism. His letter of January 16 to Archbishop Gastaldi is really upbeat.

> Agreement in the matter under consideration has been reached. Both parties have accepted the formula. An authentic copy will be sent to Your Excellency this coming Monday together with a form letter to be addressed by each bishop to the Minister of Justice.[136]

On January 19 the Congregation of the Consistory sent the protocols to the archbishop, testifying to his official appointment. A cover note by Cardinal Antonelli specified that both documents and bishop's letter should be addressed to Minister Vigliani. It was understood that no publicity should be given to this agreement and that no action was to be taken by the bishop before matters were finalized in Rome. Unfortunately Archbishop Gastaldi began to speak about the issue as resolved and on January 22, disregarding Don Bosco's pleas for patience, he took matters into his own hands and sent his file of documents to the Royal Procurator (not to the Minister of Justice, as instructed.)

Don Bosco learned the facts from the Minister himself who was angry with the Archbishop, as was Cardinal Antonelli. Don Bosco's disappointment is voiced in a letter of January 24 to Gastaldi.

> Everything seemed to be falling into place—now this.[...] People here wanted explanations, especially when it became known that a newspaper [in Turin] published a point by point account of the transaction. The Council of State meeting earlier today was in a state of bewilderment, and motions were made that will be presented tomorrow. In any case, I have been told to ask Your Excellency to keep this whole business under strictest secrecy. [...] Some Members of Parliament have made inquiries at the Ministry regarding the truth of reports that have appeared in some newspapers. Clearly the devil has had a hand in this.[137]

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[135] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, Rome, January 11, 1874, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 71-72.

[136] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, Rome, January 16, 1874, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 72.

[137] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, Rome, January 24, 1874, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 72-73.

(2) Breakdown in the Negotiations

On January 26, Don Bosco discussed the situation with Cardinal Antonelli, who strongly condemned Gastaldi's action. However, the breakdown in the negotiations cannot ultimately be imputed to Gastaldi's indiscretion, or to the action of a few others who had similarly taken matters into their own hands.[138] Don Bosco's activities in Rome could not escape the unwanted attention of the anticlerical press. Throughout January and February, in good or bad faith, the anticlerical newspapers went on the attack. They inveighed against a liberal government that was about to buckle under the demands of the Holy See and that was making "illegal" concessions in view of a "reconciliation." [!] Nor were conservative clerical newspapers, such as *La Voce della Verità* (The Voice of Truth) of Rome, less hostile. Don Bosco came in for a drubbing.[139]

The outcry from the anticlerical press over the government's imagined attempts at a "reconciliation," or simply over "concessions" made to the Holy See, had international repercussions. On February 2 Don Bosco had a long interview with Cardinal Antonelli in which he learned that the issue of the bishops' *Exequaturs* had become entangled in international diplomacy. It had in fact even raised the hackles of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of Germany. Father Berto reports in his chronicle:

> As we were going down the stairs and out of the Vatican, Don Bosco said to me: "Do you want to know why our government no longer wishes to proceed with the matter of the bishops' *Exequaturs*? The reason is that it has received a diplomatic note from Bismarck forbidding any accommodation."[140]

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[138] On January 8, Archbishop Balma of Cagliari (one of Don Bosco's "nominees") had obtained the *Exequatur*, and there had been questions asked of the government in parliament. Cardinal Antonelli had not been amused when he learned that the Bull to the People had not only been displayed in the sacristy of the Cathedral, but had been submitted to the Ministry [Motto, *La Mediazione*, 51].

[139] Details and quotes in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 41-46. Mgr. Saverio Nardi's attack on Don Bosco (described as "a partisan of compromise") came in the issue of February 1, 1874 of *La Voce della Verità*. This newspaper was the organ of an intransigent, ultramontane society established in Rome in defense of the Holy See. The article, which took even Don Bosco by surprise, drew cogent rebuttals from other more moderate Catholic newspapers. Don Bosco himself had Father Berto take down and mail a strongly worded note of protest to Mgr. Nardi [Text given in Berto, *Brevi Appunti*, 55, entry of February 16, 1874, in *ASC* 110 Cronachette, Berto, *FDB* 909 B12].

[140] Berto, *Brevi Appunti*, 45, in *ASC* 110 *Cronachette*, Berto, *FDB* 909 A12. German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was a dominant political figure in Europe after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871. His *Kulturkampf* program led to a ruthless repression of Catholicism in Germany. His influence was especially felt in Italy where anticlerical governments were engaged in similar ecclesiastical policies. Instances of intervention and political pressure by the Chancellor in Italian affairs are given by Motto [*La Mediazione*, 47-48].

Some time in February, in a letter to Archbishop Gastaldi sent through a trusted messenger, Don Bosco voiced the same conviction.

> With the definitive agreement signed by the Minister of Justice and approved by the Holy See [...], nothing, so we thought, could stand in the way. So we thought! Then I was sent for [by the Minister] and given an earful of the wrongdoing of the archbishop of Turin—that he had leaked information, and the newspapers had gotten hold of it [...], etc. But such recriminations were just a screen to hide the fact that the day before the government had received a bristling letter from [Chancellor] Bismarck calling for an end to attempts at reconciliation, especially as it concerns the bishops, etc. The negotiations have not been broken off, but they have been shelved.[141]

Bismarck's intervention in this instance is not separately attested, but it is not at all unlikely. The fact is that the government retreated from commitments already made. Don Bosco had further conversations with Minister Vigliani on February 11 and March 3, with Cardinal Antonelli on March 1, and with Pius IX on March 4. But by March 1874 negotiations for the bishops' temporalities had come to an end and were for all practical purposes dead.

(3) Practical Expedients Become the Norm

Most of the bishops were still waiting for the *Exequatur* and the temporalities, without which they could not exercise their pastoral ministry. Attempt at negotiating a general formula for the bishops already appointed and waiting and for those to be appointed in the future had failed. Each bishop therefore had to proceed as seemed best in each individual case. Thus to Archbishop Fissore of Vercelli who was asking for guidelines, Don Bosco replied that the Archbishop could try to display the Bull to the People (and perhaps also the Bull to the Chapter).

> I am herewith enclosing a procedure by which some bishops, such as those of Susa and Aosta as I am told, have obtained their temporalities. The Holy See does not object to the procedure. At first displaying the Bull to the Chapter had been permitted. This was later reversed, so that only the Bull to the People may be displayed. [...][142]

A few days later in similar circumstances Don Bosco made the same suggestion to Archbishop Gastaldi.[143] The procedure suggested in these cases

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[141] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, [Rome] February, 1874, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 74.

[142] Don Bosco the Archbishop Fissore, Rome, March 9, 1874, in Motto, *La Mediazione*, 74.

[143] Don Bosco to Archbishop Gastaldi, Rome, March 14, 1874, in Motto. *La Mediazione*, 75.

was the very one that Don Bosco had devised and that the parties had agreed to, though at the time there was disagreement as to which Bull should or could be displayed.[144]

Throughout his Roman sojourn Don Bosco did not neglect the important business of the Salesian Society, the approval of its constitutions. This was no foregone conclusion. On the contrary it was a long drawn-out struggle centering especially on the structures for priestly and religious formation embodied in the constitutions. Against Don Bosco's efforts to retain certain features dear to him the examiners of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars and the Cardinals of the general congregations introduced important modifications before recommending approval. The Decree of approval was signed on April 13, 1874. Don Bosco had lost the battle of the *Exequaturs*, but he won the battle of the Salesian Society.

The next day, April 14, Don Bosco and Father Berto left Rome and were back in Turin (via Florence) on April 16. Don Bosco met with Archbishop Gastaldi, according to Father Berto's chronicle, the afternoon of April 18. Berto reports nothing of the conversation, except that "it wasn't about the affairs of the Salesian Congregation."[145] The fact is that without delay the archbishop prepared his request for the *Exequatur*, which was forwarded by the Royal Procurator to Minister Vigliani together with the Bulls to the Chapter and to the Clergy. The Decree granting *Exequatur* and temporalities was signed by the king on May 15, 1874.

By and by the Holy See conceded. Not only could the Bull to the People be displayed in the sacristy of the cathedral or submitted, but other Bulls as well. One bishop after another took advantage of the concession. And although the government still claimed the right of judging the merit of each case, by the end of 1874 many bishops had obtained *Exequatur* and temporalities. By 1876, this practice was allowed by the Holy See to become the norm "in view of circumstances."[146]

Conclusion

The story told in this article has shown, if nothing else, the considerable extent of Don Bosco's mediating activity undertaken over and above the thousand concerns of a founder. The occasional critical exceptions taken to elements in the Salesian tradition do not detract quantitatively or qualitatively from this remarkable involvement. But as we stand back and ponder this "side activity" undertaken over a period of some 20 years, we are tempted to ask, How did Don Bosco get involved, and why Don Bosco?

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[144] Cf. Note 134 and related text above.

[145] Berto, *Breci Appunti*, 111, in *ASC* 110 *Cronachette*, Berto, *FDB* 910 B9.

[146] Motto, *La Mediazione*, 55-57; Desramaut, *DB en son temps*, 867 and 881, note 112.

Part of the answer comes from a consideration of Don Bosco the man, living and working in those historic years of change. Don Bosco was known "on both sides of the Tiber." The Piedmontese ruling class, people like the Cavours, Rattazzi, Lanza, etc. who were the architects of the liberal revolution and of the unification of Italy, knew and admired him and his humanitarian work. From 1849 on he was also personally known to Pius IX and to his Secretary of State, Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli. The fact that he was a Piedmontese humanitarian and a priest made him acceptable to both sides. He was liked and trusted, for his personality and character had much to recommend him. His approach to people was simple, direct, sincere, unpretentious, and completely non-threatening. This explains why he might be asked to carry messages or to sound out the opposition. On his part, his intuitive intelligence could quickly divine where possibilities lay. Then his trust in God and in the basic decency of people, no matter what their stripe, made him confident and fearless. For in some instances Don Bosco did not wait to be asked. He took the initiative; as one might say, he volunteered.

Another aspect of the question regarding Don Bosco's involvement should be considered: he was a man of faith and a man of the Church. He thought it his strict duty to offer his services in any matter that he regarded as vital for the Church and the good of souls. His Catholic Christian and Church commitments made him totally available on this point. This is what he meant when he emphasized that his politics were the politics "of the Our Father." For the good of the Church and of souls he was ready to leave everything aside, even what was closest to his heart, the business of the Salesian Society. When summoned by Prime Minister Lanza in 1871, Don Bosco did not hesitate to leave his Salesians on retreat, which was very important to him, with the words:

> The good of the Church must come first; it has priority even over the good of our congregation. I shall take the 7 o'clock train this evening, travel the whole night, and be in Florence early tomorrow for my meeting at the Ministry.[147]

Don Bosco's idea of Church was at once simple and complex. The Church was a spiritual and a faith reality established in society as a religious institution. For him it was also Roman and papal in a very anthropomorphic, almost plastic, sense. Temporal power, accruing to the pope by right, was an important element, of this socially incarnate ecclesiology. Hence Don Bosco's politics "of the Our Father," totally directed towards religious aims, in the historic confrontation of Church and liberal State in Italy became the politics "of the Holy Father."

True, Don Bosco himself went on record as being non-political. He dutifully followed Pius IX's policy of withdrawal from political activity, as

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[147] Cf. Note 92 and related text above.

mandated by the pope's *Non Expedit* of 1868 and 1874. He prescribed the same policy for his Salesians, and even for his Salesian Cooperators. Thus he could truthfully write to Prime Minister Lanza, "I don't engage in politics, am not involved in public affairs, nor have I received any mandate to negotiate."[148] He wished to emphasize that the appointment of bishops to vacant sees and obtaining for them the material assets, or temporalities, for the exercise of their pastoral ministry had a purely religious aim, for the good of the people. Lanza would have agreed. Such negotiations did not aim at political reconciliation or at solving the Roman Question. Yet the negotiations themselves and every step taken toward a general settlement for the filling of vacant diocesan sees had political implications. For one thing, it demanded concessions that would change the political posture of the government and of the Holy See toward each other. For another, the granting of the *Exequatur* in particular, recognized the diocese as a juridical corporation.

In the 1864 edition of the constitutions, Don Bosco included an article prohibiting political activity to the Salesians. When Don Bosco petitioned for approval, the article was ordered removed. Later, in an address to the First Salesian General Chapter (1877), Don Bosco quoted the reason given for its removal by the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars:

> Of itself [the article] appears to be generally acceptable, but in this day and age circumstances may well force one in conscience to enter the political arena, since politics are often inseparable from religion. In such cases good Catholics cannot be forbidden political activity. [...] We may therefore get involved in politics when it is advantageous and genuinely advisable.[149]

Don Bosco's extended activity in mediating the appointment of bishops, as the royal *Exequatur* and the temporalities certainly appears to be a case in point.

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[148] Cf. Note 111 and related text above.

[149] *ASC* 04: Capitoli Generali, GC I, Session 4, September 7, 1877, Barberis' Original Minutes, 53-55, *FDB* 1,843 C12-D2 (also in Transcribed Minutes, *FDB* 1,849 C5). *EBM* XIII, 195 needs correction.