

A full-length portrait of Cardinal Willem van Rossum, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a red cardinal's cap and a red cape over a white and red patterned cassock. He is holding a red envelope and a gold cross. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

Red Pope

A Biography of Cardinal
Willem van Rossum C.Ss.R.
(1854-1932)

VEFIE POELS

**RADBOUD
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PRESS**

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Translated by
BRIAN HEFFERNAN

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Translator's preface

As she was completing the Dutch-language edition of this book (published in 2021 by Valkhof Pers of Nijmegen), Dr Vefie Poels was diagnosed with a deadly disease. It made her all the more determined to see the English translation of her *magnum opus* through to the end, and she took an active part, together with Dr Hans de Valk, in discussing the translated chapters with me as I sent them to her over the course of 2021 and 2022. She reviewed the final part shortly before her untimely death on 2 October 2022; she sent me her last email about the project three days before she died.

As per her wishes, and motivated by the desire to honour her legacy as a historian, Dr De Valk and I worked during the months that followed to prepare the English manuscript for publication, with the expert assistance of Dr Hans Krabbendam of the Catholic Documentation Centre at Radboud University Nijmegen. In doing so, we made a number of minor changes to the text as it was seen by Dr Poels: apart from some linguistic tweaking, these adjustments consisted mainly of the improvements suggested by the peer reviewers.

I wish to thank Dr Poels's husband Hans Peters very warmly for offering Dr De Valk and me every encouragement and granting the required permissions. I am very grateful to Dr De Valk for his close reading of the manuscript, his judicious corrections and suggestions for improvement, and his kindness and delicacy throughout the process. Thanks are due furthermore to Dr Krabbendam and the staff at Radboud University Press, the anonymous reviewers, who offered valuable feedback, Gerrit Vroon, Dr Hanneke Westhoff, Dr Otto S. Lankhorst, Sr Magdalena Schumann O.Ss.R. and Fr Dan Baragry C.Ss.R. for assistance rendered, and to Vrienden van het KDC and an anonymous donor for funding the translation.

It is my fervent hope that, in introducing Cardinal Van Rossum to an international audience, this book will at the same time be testimony to the meticulousness and far-sightedness of Dr Vefie Poels's historical work.

Brussels, 25 June 2023

Brian Heffernan

Author's preface

My interest in Cardinal Willem van Rossum (1854–1932) was quickly aroused when I first began to study the heyday of Dutch Catholicism during the first half of the twentieth century. The name of this Rome-based Redemptorist priest appeared sooner or later in many of the sources I used for my historical research.

I began to realise that Van Rossum, prefect of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide (the Vatican's missionary department) since 1918, though operating behind the scenes, exerted a crucial influence there. In fact, it is impossible to understand the rise of missionary activities and the flourishing of religious institutes without looking at his contribution. My doctoral research on a Dutch Catholic mission in Norway drove this truth home to me. But who was this man, how did he come to occupy such an exalted position in the Vatican, and what agenda did he pursue? The existing literature offered little to go on. Two dated and hagiographical biographies gave limited and unsatisfactory answers. The plan started to take shape in my mind to write a scholarly biography myself, one that would shed light on his Dutch origins, his position within the Congregation of the Redemptorists and his career in the Roman curia, and on the links between these various aspects.

My fascination for Van Rossum was shared by my doctoral supervisor at the time, Jan Roes, and, after his death in 2003, by other historians who were interested in placing the history of Dutch Catholicism in the wider context of the global church. Their support helped me to begin my biographical research on this Dutch cardinal in 2008, initially as a pilot project at the Nijmegen Institute for Mission Studies (NIM) and, from 2009–2014, as a postdoctoral project at the Tilburg School of Catholic Theology (TST). I continued working on the biography in my own time after 2014, facilitated by the Catholic Documentation Centre (KDC) in Nijmegen.

This book is the result of extensive research in a large number of archives in the Netherlands and abroad. The active assistance of many archivists was of crucial importance. I would like to mention here, for the Vatican archives, Marcel Chappin s.j., and Alejandro M. Dieguez (Vatican Apostolic Archives), Msgr L.M. Cuña Ramos (Propaganda Fide Archives), Msgr Alejandro Cifres (Archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), and Johan Ickx (Historical Archive of the Secretariat of State). My research in the archives of the Redemptorists benefited much from the support of the late Piet Nelen and Jozef Konings (Dutch province), and in Rome of Jean Beco, Gilbert Enderle and Adam Owczarski (Historical Institute of the Generalate). For

the archives in the Netherlands, the staff of the Heritage Centre for Religious Life in the Netherlands in St. Agatha and of the Catholic Documentation Centre in Nijmegen helped me on innumerable occasions. Jos Drehmanns gave me access to the family archives (Roermond). I would also like to thank the archivists of a number of regional heritage centres and diocesan archives in the Netherlands, and, further afield, Gunnar Gudmundsson (Reykjavik), Patrick Hayes (Redemptorists, New York), Agnes Maria Weber (Ingenbohl) and the staff of KADOC (Leuven). I thank the board of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome for its generosity in facilitating the colloquium on Cardinal Van Rossum held there in June 2009.

I received indispensable financial support for my research and for the publication of the biography from KDC Fonds, the Conference of Dutch Religious (KNR, PIN Commission), Missio Nederland, NIM, Nuyensfonds, the Order of Redemptoristines, Sormani Fonds, St. Clement's Redemptorist Province, Stichting Echo, TST and the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross in Ingenbohl. I am most grateful to all of them.

While researching and writing this book, I benefited greatly from the critical comments made by the members of the supervisory committees at NIM and TST: Eric Corsius, Adelbert Denaux, Jan De Maeyer, Peter Rietbergen, Theo Salemink, Maria ter Steeg, Hans de Valk, Joop Vernooij C.Ss.R., Joos van Vugt and Lodewijk Winkeler. I also thank the other readers who offered critical comments on the text or parts of it: Jan Bank, Gilbert Enderle C.Ss.R., Eduard Kimman S.J., Jozef Konings C.Ss.R., Hans Krabbendam, Melanie van Oort-Hall, Ton van Schaik and Jan Snijders S.M.

A special word of thanks must go to Theo Salemink and Hans de Valk, who supported my plans for a biography from the start and who helped bring it about. Moreover, Hans de Valk, for whom the Vatican archives have no secrets, offered inestimable help as a guide and assistant during the archival research. It truly was a pleasure to work with him. In the last phase of the biography, Otto S. Lankhorst and Hans de Valk were a great help to me; the former by compiling the bibliography and the latter by compiling the list of archives consulted and the index. The same is true for Mariken Roes and Hanneke Westhoff of Valkhof Pers, who followed the original Dutch-language project throughout with warm interest. Thanks are due also to Brian Heffernan for his excellent English translation and for our pleasant cooperation. Finally, I thank my husband Hans and our children Daniel, Myriam and Jakob. They were there throughout the genesis of this book, and 'the Cardinal' has become somewhat of a family member over the years.

The Netherlands, with Roman Catholic dioceses (1853–1956)



Introduction

A century ago, the Dutch Redemptorist Cardinal Willem Marinus van Rossum (1854–1932) was one of the most influential Catholic prelates. As the ‘red pope’, the moniker given to the prefect of Propaganda Fide, he gave Catholic missions worldwide a decisive impetus after the First World War, as Europe lay destroyed and a new world order presented itself, in which the church of Rome had to redefine its position. The great missionary drive of the interwar years was crucial in this endeavour, and its results are still visible today: the Catholic church with its 1.2 billion members is the most numerous Christian denomination in the world. As the church’s influence in Europe declines, its role in the other continents of the world continues to be significant. The non-European pole in the church is consequently becoming more and more important, and one of the visible signs of this was the election of the Argentine Pope Francis in 2013. Van Rossum would have been delighted at this: he was a great protagonist of a centrally governed but universal church, which would no longer be beholden to the Italian element. It was a point of view he did little to hide within the Roman curia.

Van Rossum is an intriguing figure, who more than merits a biography, if only because it is odd that a man of his stature and influence should have left so few traces in national and international historiography. As a Dutchman, he was an outsider in the predominantly Italian College of Cardinals. He was also an exception among his fellow cardinals of the curia because he was a Redemptorist. This helped shape the way he operated in the Roman curia: these two aspects of his background paradoxically proved to be both an impediment and the key to his successful career.

Three historical developments converged during Van Rossum’s lifetime. In the first place, hailing as he did from the mainly Protestant town of Zwolle, he was a representative of late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Dutch Catholicism, which was slowly emancipating itself from its second-class position in society. Secondly, he was a religious and a priest at a time in which orders and congregations flourished in the Catholic world and were able to wield great power. As an adolescent, he was educated by the Jesuits, but at the age of eighteen he chose to join the Redemptorists, at the time a strict congregation that specialised in moral theology and the ministry of confession. In this environment, he became an expert in the doctrine of the founder of this congregation, the doctor of the church Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Thirdly and finally, he joined the Roman curia in 1896, and served the Vatican under four popes:

Leo XIII (1878–1903), Pius X (1903–1914), Benedict XV (1914–1922) and Pius XI (1922–1939). In this capacity, he had a rigorist profile, influenced by a tendency that strongly opposed modern interpretations of church doctrine. He went from being a ‘humble’ consultor of the Holy Office to receiving the cardinal’s hat in 1911, and was appointed prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1918. In this latter position, which he held until his death, he operated as a strong manager who proved very capable of responding strategically to contemporary developments at a global level.

Not only was Willem van Rossum a representative of these historical periods and developments, he also exerted influence over them. A product of his time and circumstances, he was simultaneously a driver of change. In addition, he uniquely stood at the intersection of these three processes – I have previously called him an ‘embodied interface’ between them.¹ The microhistory of this cardinal of the curia can provide insight not only into each of these periods, but also permits us to trace how they were interrelated to and interwoven with each other through Van Rossum. Of course, this biography cannot aspire to give a full account of the historical periods and developments at issue. Its subjects are the life of Willem van Rossum and his convictions and activities in their historical context. Thus, readers will look in vain for a history of the missions or of Propaganda Fide in the 1918–1932 years. The central position which this one historical figure occupies served as the criterion for determining whether important issues required extensive and detailed discussion, or had to be left aside or discussed only in passing.

The need for a biography was felt immediately after Van Rossum’s death in 1932. His former private secretary Joseph Maria Drehmanns published *Kardinaal van Rossum. Korte levensschets* (‘Cardinal Van Rossum. A Brief Life’) three years later. Drehmanns was an advocate for the cardinal’s beatification, and his book is of limited use, not least because it is based largely on the secretary’s personal memories. In 1955, Jan Olav Smit, one of Van Rossum’s protégés, published a lecture he gave on the occasion of the cardinal’s hundredth birthday, entitled *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum. Een groot mens en een wijs bestuurder* (‘Wilhelmus Marinus Cardinal Van Rossum. A Great Man and a Wise Administrator’). Both biographies are hagiographical and were intended to hold Van Rossum up as an example to Dutch Catholics. In 1976, Josef Metzler, the archivist of Propaganda Fide, published a brief scholarly description that focuses exclusively on Van Rossum’s role as prefect of that congregation, in the standard work *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*. Much later, in 2007, the

1 Vefie Poels, ‘Embodied interface. The importance of the biography of Willem van Rossum’, in: Vefie Poels, Theo Saleminck, Hans de Valk (eds.), *Life with a Mission. Cardinal Willem Marinus van Rossum CSSR (1854–1932)*, Ghent 2011, also published as a special edition of *Trajecta. Religie, cultuur en samenleving in de Nederlanden 19–20* (2010–2011), 188–194.

historical journal of the Redemptorists carried a more extensive biographical essay by Joop Vernooij, subtitled ‘The Great Cardinal of the Small Netherlands’.²

This book is the first extensive scholarly biography of the life of this Dutch curial cardinal. That it is the first is partly due to the fact that the Vatican archives for the pontificates of Pius X, Benedict XV and Pius XI were only opened between 1985 and 2006. The current author consulted these and other archives from 2008 to 2015, together with Dr. Hans de Valk, a staff member of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome.

The research in the Vatican collections covered the archives of Propaganda Fide (ASPF), the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV; formerly the Archivio Segreto Vaticano [Vatican Secret Archives]), the Archivio del Dicastero per la Dottrina della Fede (ADDF; the archives of the Holy Office) and the Historical Archives of the Secretary of State: Section for Relations with States and International Organizations (ASRS; specifically the archives of the Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari). Despite various requests, I was unable to gain access to the archives of the Congregation for Religious. The archives of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, which Van Rossum chaired for many years, appear to have disappeared without a trace after the 1960s.³ Although Van Rossum was also a member of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches (the ‘Orientale’), the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities and the Congregation of Rites, I chose not to consult these archives and to focus instead on his most important roles as regards the curia.

In addition, I was given unlimited access to the general archives of the Redemptorists in Rome, the Archivum Generale Historicum Redemptoristarum (AGHR), and the provincial archives of the same congregation in the Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven (ENK; Heritage Centre for Religious Life in the Netherlands) in Sint Agatha (Cuijk). I would like to pay tribute to the hospitality of the Redemptorists, who frequently welcomed Hans de Valk and me on Via Merulana to do research in Rome and the Vatican, allowing me literally to tread in Van Rossum’s footsteps in the monastery of Sant’Alfonso and in his former apartment on Via dello Statuto.

The Van Rossum papers and those of his secretary Drehmanns in the Catholic Documentation Centre in Nijmegen proved to be of particular interest. The genesis of this remarkable collection is somewhat peculiar. In 1932, after Van Rossum’s death, his apartments were immediately sealed, following curial tradition. Officials

2 Jos. Maria Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum. Korte levensschets*, Roermond/Maaseik 1935; Jan Olav Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum. Een groot mens en wijs bestuurder*, Roermond 1955; J. Metzler, ‘Präfekten und Sekretäre der Kongregation in der neuesten Missionsära (1918–1972). Willem Marinus van Rossum’, in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide. Memoria rerum 350 Jahre im Dienste der Weltmission, 1622–1972*. Ed. J. Metzler (Rome 1971–1976), vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 303–312; J. Vernooij, ‘Cardinal Willem van Rossum, c.ss.r. “The Great Cardinal of the Small Netherlands” (1854–1932)’, in: *Spicilegium Historicum Congregationis Ss.mi Redemptoris (SHCSR)*, 55(2007), 347–400.

3 For more on this, see Chapter 12.1.

of the curia then went through the cardinal's papers and took all official material, and clearly also other documents that interested them, and deposited these in the archives of the various dicasteries.⁴ A few days later, the remaining documents were examined by the executor of Van Rossum's will, Drehmanns. He took these papers, which included thousands of letters exchanged with members of the general curias of orders and congregations, shipped them to the monastery of his congregation in Wittem in the Netherlands, and added many pieces from his own archives to the collection. Remarkably, he removed most of his own letters to Van Rossum and deposited them in his family archives. He selectively used these various collections for the biography mentioned above. After this book was published in 1935, the papers remained in the Redemptorist archives and they were rudimentarily catalogued for the first time in the 1960s. In consultation with the archivist at the time, Jan Vinkenburg, they were transferred to the Catholic Documentation Centre in the 1990s, because their importance transcends the history of the congregation. They were fully catalogued there and are now accessible digitally.

In addition to these archives, I consulted archival collections in Belgium, France, Ireland, Iceland, the United States and Switzerland, and in various repositories in the Netherlands. A full list is included in the bibliography.

I also used the extensive library collection of the Dutch province of the Redemptorists, which was purchased by the university library of Radboud University in Nijmegen in the 1970s. This collection includes rare works from Van Rossum's and Drehmanns's personal collections, and some of them proved important for this biography, such as a book of dietary advice for diabetics from 1925, or the *Communicanda*, a periodical published by Drehmanns but banned by Propaganda Fide after only a few issues.

The research for this biography benefited greatly from the results of a colloquium on Cardinal Van Rossum held on 11 and 12 June 2009 in the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome. International experts, archivists, historians and theologians gathered to shed light on Van Rossum's activities from their specific disciplines. The conference was attended by the then prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples – the successor to Propaganda Fide –, Cardinal Ivan Dias. The contributions by Joop Vernooij C.Ss.R., Otto S. Lankhorst, Eric Corsius, Giuseppe M. Croce, Otto Weiss, Anna Luisa Casiraghi, Marcel Chappin S.J., Johan Ickx, Claude Prudhomme, Hans de Valk, Theo Saleminck and Vefie Poels were subsequently published in the volume *Life with a Mission. Cardinal Willem Marinus van Rossum CSSR (1854–1932)* mentioned above.

4 The Archives of Propaganda Fide contain four boxes of 'Carte W.M. van Rossum': documents and correspondence on a wide range of subjects.

This biography of Willem van Rossum consists of three parts: the first two are structured largely chronologically and cover the 1854 to 1918 period. The first five chapters are set in the Netherlands. After his youth in Zwolle (1), his years in the minor seminary (2), his formation as a Redemptorist (3), and his years as a lecturer in Witem (4), they discuss the polarisation in his congregation at the time, which led to his departure for Rome in 1895 (5). The following chapters chronologically address his life up to his appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide: life in the generalate (6), his first steps in the curia (7), his support for antimodernist movements within the church (8), his near-election as superior general (9), his creation as cardinal (10), his position within the College of Cardinals as a Dutchman (11) and his first roles as a cardinal of the curia (12). The remaining chapters are largely thematic and examine the period that he was prefect of Propaganda Fide. After an introductory chapter on this department of the curia (13), attention turns to the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* (1919) and the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926) and Van Rossum's part in their drafting (14), the conflict with France and the American bishops over the centralisation of fundraising and support for the missions (15), his journeys to the Netherlands and Scandinavia (16), the role of religious in the church and specifically in the missions (17), his activities as cardinal protector of orders and congregations (18) and the problematic role his private secretary Drehmanns played (19). The last chapters address his difficult relationship with Pius XI (20), as well as his criticism of the way the church was being governed in a sensational anonymous pamphlet that advocated fundamental reorganisation of the Roman curia. It was circulated shortly before his death in Maastricht in 1932 (21).

Childhood

1 The Hanseatic town of Zwolle

Willem Marinus van Rossum was born on Sunday 3 September 1854 in the central Dutch town of Zwolle in the region of Salland, as the second son of a cooper, or barrel maker. “No one in Zwolle”, his biographer Joseph Drehmanns intimated, “suspected that on this day the man was born who would make Zwolle famous across the whole world.”¹ It was no exaggeration to state that Cardinal Van Rossum was a well-known name across the world, at least among Catholics, at the time that Drehmanns’s *Korte levensschets* or ‘Brief Life’ was published, in 1935. But it is doubtful that the town of his birth ever shared in his fame. And yet the circumstances in which he grew up in Zwolle had a major impact on his life.



The house on Hagelsteeg, Zwolle, Willem van Rossum’s birthplace

¹ Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 8.

Willem's native town still breathed the atmosphere of its origins as a Hanseatic stronghold at the place where four rivers meet: the IJssel, the Vechte, the Zwarte Water and the Aa. The inhabitants of this area are called Sallanders. They have the reputation of being reserved but sensitive and a little conservative, strongly attached to their region and its customs.² Zwolle became prosperous in the fourteenth and fifteenth century thanks to its trade relations with Amsterdam and cities in Germany and Flanders. In 1798, at the time of the Batavian Republic, the town became the administrative centre of the region. When the United Kingdom of the Netherlands was founded in 1815, it was made the capital of the province of Overijssel.

The young Willem, or Marinus as he was usually called by relatives, grew up in the old centre of the town. Zwolle had approximately 18,000 inhabitants in the mid nineteenth century; half of the population lived in the crowded town centre. The medieval city walls and towers had been demolished in the first half of the century, because space was needed to accommodate the growing population. Only the Sassenpoort was spared; later certain vestiges of the old city walls were dug up and 'restored'. Wealthy residents in particular began to build stately townhouses outside the city moat or *singel*, where the new train station was also built. The first steam train pulled into this station from Utrecht at 3.25 pm on 4 June 1864, to the rapturous welcome of hundreds of inhabitants, among whom perhaps also the nine-year-old Willem.

Willem was born in Hagelsteeg in the old town centre, which was dominated by narrow alleys and single-room dwellings. This part of town was the domain of the poorer labouring class, the *kleine lieden* or common people. In 1850, the industrial sector in Zwolle was made up of about a thousand craftspeople who employed at most one member of staff.³ The Van Rossum family belonged to this group: they were coopers who manufactured wooden barrels for the storage and transportation of fluids and other products.

Willem Marinus's grandfather Jacob van Rossum had moved to Zwolle at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He was a farmer's son from Emmerich, a small town in the German Rhine Province, in what is now North Rhine-Westphalia. Like many other Catholics he decided to leave the area when it was assigned to the Protestant state of Prussia after the fall of Napoleon by the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815). On 10 March 1815 the twenty-three-year-old Jacob married the widow Willemijntje Tollenaar, fourteen years his senior, who owned a cooper's business. Willemijntje died precisely a month later, but not before Jacob had apparently managed to master the cooperage trade. He remarried three months later, this time with the seamstress

2 Otto S. Lankhorst, 'La jeunesse du cardinal Van Rossum et son lien avec le Salland, sa région d'origine', in: *Life with a Mission*, 26–37, at 30.

3 Jan ten Hove, *Geschiedenis van Zwolle* (Zwolle 2005), 409–421, 441–457.

Maria Gerrits Krommendam from the neighbouring town of Dalfsen.⁴ Jan van Rossum, one of their sons, followed in his father's footsteps and also became a cooper. He married Hendrika Veldwillems, a farmer's daughter from nearby Hellendoorn, on 19 May 1852.⁵ They had five children: three boys, Jacobus (1853), Willem (1854) and Johannes (1858), and two girls, Hendrina (1856) and Hendrika (1860).⁶

2 The Catholic community of Zwolle

Zwolle and its environs have gone down in history as the birthplace of a fifteenth-century spiritual movement called the *Devotio Moderna* or Modern Devotion. The monasteries of St. Agnes and Windesheim near Zwolle were the most important centres of this movement. The mystic Thomas a Kempis died in Zwolle in 1472; he was deeply influenced by the Modern Devotion. His book *De imitatione Christi* continues to be one of the most read and most translated spiritual texts of all times. We do not know if Willem van Rossum knew this work during his years in Zwolle, but he would certainly become familiar with it during his seminary formation. In his later life and during his journeys, he always carried a copy of *The Imitation of Christ* with him as well as his breviary.⁷

Ever since the Reformation, Dutch society had been politically and culturally dominated by Calvinism, and the Dutch Reformed Church was the most important denomination. The Calvinists mainly lived in the northern part of the country, north of the great river delta. Catholics made up about a third of the population and lived predominantly in the southern provinces. As Catholics, the Van Rossums therefore belonged to a minority in Zwolle, which lay in the north. Protestants made up about three-quarters of the population, with the remainder being Catholics or belonging to the small Jewish community (approximately 2%). The citizens of Zwolle

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- 4 Zwolle, Collectie Overijssel (CO), *Register van de burgerlijke stand*. Jacob van Rossum (Emmerich, 12 February 1792 – Zwolle, 12 March 1867) married Maria Gerrits Krommendam (Dalfsen, 27 November 1789 – Zwolle, 31 January 1864) on 4 July 1815. See also *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal* [Zwolle 1933], 3. This publication contains 69 letters that Willem van Rossum wrote to his stepfather and half-brother from 1886 to 1932.
 - 5 CO, *Register van de burgerlijke stand*. Jan van Rossum (24 April 1827 – 15 May 1861); Hendrika Veldwillems (24 February 1825 – 24 September 1863). See also Kees Ribbens, "'Heil U! Zwolle's eedle spruit'. De terugkeer van kardinaal Van Rossum in zijn geboortestad', in: *Zwols Historisch Tijdschrift*, 13 (1996), 58–65.
 - 6 CO, *Register van de burgerlijke stand*; Nijmegen, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (KDC), *Archivalia W.M. van Rossum (ROSS)*, nos. 27 and 264. All five children were born in Zwolle: Jacobus Johannes (12 March 1853 – Zwolle, 4 October 1904), Wilhelmus Marinus (3 September 1854 – Maastricht, 30 August 1932), Hendrika Johanna (Hendrina) (28 December 1856 – Tilburg, 9 November 1937), Johannes Gerardus (1 October 1858 – Amsterdam, 27 August 1915), Hendrika Gerritina (Wilhelmina) (1 September 1860 – Amsterdam, 14 June 1905).
 - 7 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 73. Van Rossum's estate includes two editions of this work by Thomas a Kempis (KDC, ROSS, nos. 461 and 466); the oldest printed in Turin in 1853.



The centre of Zwolle (c. 1900), with St. Michael's church (built in 1892) on Roggenstraat

had largely joined the Protestant religion after the Reformation, while many who remained Catholics left the area. But the share of practicing Catholics subsequently rose again to a quarter, primarily due to the immigration of Catholics like Willem's grandfather, who fled Protestant and militaristic Prussia.⁸

The Catholics of Zwolle experienced discrimination like elsewhere in the Dutch Republic, but they were not openly persecuted and were able to lead more or less normal lives. The Batavian Republic, which was founded in 1795 with the support of the French, brought formal freedom of religion. The Catholics rejoiced: up to that point they had had to worship in clandestine churches or *schuilkerken*. They also benefited from the government of Louis Napoleon, placed on the throne by his brother, the French Emperor Napoleon, in 1806. During his four-year reign as king of Holland, Louis Napoleon commanded that churches and church properties that had fallen to the Protestants after the Reformation be redistributed among the two denominations according to their numerical proportions. The Catholics of Zwolle recovered one of their former medieval churches.

Nevertheless, Dutch Catholics continued to occupy a position of socio-economic deprivation compared to their Protestant compatriots. They were not proportionally

⁸ Ten Hove, *Zwolle*, 473–476; CO, library, no. C449, 'Suolla catholica. Grepen uit de geschiedenis van katholic Zwolle, ter gelegenheid van de onthulling van den Kardinaal van Rossum-gedenksteen op Zaterdag 4 September [1954] te 4 uur namiddags in een pand gelegen aan Bitterstraat 57/63 te Zwolle', 3.

represented in the higher echelons of society, and were more likely to be dependent on poor relief. In 1855, more than twenty percent of the Catholics of Zwolle received relief aid, as compared to ten percent of Protestants. According to Joseph Drehmanns, this socio-economic injustice made a great impression on the young Van Rossum. Even in old age, he used to reminisce about his youth in Zwolle, where Protestants walked to church on Sundays along well-kept pavements with their *Statenbijbels* or State Translation bibles under their arms, while Catholics had to walk in the middle of the road on badly paved streets to get to their churches.

But Drehmanns's conclusion that "Zwolle was antipapist to the bone" does seem somewhat exaggerated, and not all Catholics belonged to the lower classes of society.⁹ Thus the Catholic Arnoldus Vos de Wael, scion of a respectable family from Venlo, was mayor of Zwolle for many years (1813–1855). Other elite Catholics such as the Heerens, Schaeppman and Van der Biesen families, and Baron F.W.J.A. van Lamsweerde, formed a tightly knit network that exercised considerable influence in the municipal council and in the economic life of the town. They established a Catholic cemetery and ensured that the two parish churches were never without the funds they required.¹⁰

The division between the largely Protestant north and the Catholic south was reflected in the organisation of the Catholic church in the Netherlands. After the Reformation, the church in the north was led by seven archpriests of the districts that together formed the *Missio Hollandica* (Hollandse Zending or Holland Mission). Ecclesiastical government was coordinated by a 'vice superior' who exercised authority on behalf of the Roman *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. By contrast, vicars apostolic were appointed in the south. Since 1829, an internuncio in Brussels, later in The Hague, was responsible for maintaining relations between the Dutch government and the Holy See. This structure was replaced in April 1853 by ordinary episcopal government, something Dutch Catholics had desired for many years.¹¹ An archbishop and four bishops came in the place of the vicars apostolic and archpriests. Joannes Zwijsen (1794–1877) was appointed the first archbishop of Utrecht, the city that, before the Reformation, had long been an important Catholic centre. This diocese covered the entire country north of the river delta, with the exception of the western coastal part, and also included Zwolle.

The erection of the episcopal hierarchy was accepted smoothly in Zwolle, but this was not true for all the country. Opposition to this new form of Catholic authority

9 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 11–12.

10 J. Erdsieck, *Zwolle in geel-wit. De RK Kerk van 1855–1941* (Zwolle 1991), 11–12 and 32.

11 Although the Dutch church province remained subject to *Propaganda Fide* in Rome until 1908, when the Roman curia was thoroughly reorganised in the papal constitution *Sapienti Consilio*. Hans de Valk, *Roomser dan de paus? Studies over de betrekkingen tussen de Heilige Stoel en het Nederlands katholicisme 1815–1940* (Nijmegen 1998), 47–49.

emerged in the form of the so-called 'April Movement'. In some areas, Catholics were threatened by groups that resisted the new structure. But the agitation was essentially antiliberal rather than anti-Catholic, and King William III's dismissal of the liberal cabinet restored the peace and the bishops were able to take up their sees.¹²

Under Archbishop Zwijsen's authority, the former districts of the archpriests were gradually divided into parishes. This process also took place in Zwolle. But it would take a number of years before the Catholic community in Zwolle acquired a clear parish structure. Willem Marinus's baptism by Father Henricus van Kessel in Our Lady's church on 3 September 1854, the day he was born, was recorded in the register of the Steegjeskerk, which served as baptismal chapel.¹³ A year later, the family no longer belonged to Van Kessel's flock. As of 1855, Our Lady's parish included the southern part of the town, while the northern part, where the Van Rossums lived, belonged to St. Michael's parish.

The parishioners of St. Michael's attended the Bogenkerk in Nieuwstraat, where Andreas Ignatius Schaepman, a Zwolle native, was parish priest from 1848 to 1857. He was succeeded by Petrus Mocking (1857–1865), Gerard Roelofs (1865–1885) and Nicolaas A. van Balen (1885–1919). Generous inheritances from a number of wealthy Catholic families permitted Father Van Balen to build a new and impressive St. Michael's church in 1892. Willem van Rossum felt a close connection to this parish, and he visited to celebrate a solemn Mass there on 8 September 1880. The parish's patron saint occupied an important place throughout his life, as the inclusion of an image of the Archangel Michael over his cardinalial coat of arms testified. During his visit to Zwolle in 1913, he celebrated a pontifical Mass in St. Michael's church, and after his death, his cardinal's hat was given a place of honour in the nave of the church in 1933.¹⁴

Developments within the Catholic church during his childhood made a deep impression on Van Rossum. It was a period of slow but steady burgeoning of Catholic self-consciousness in the Netherlands. Catholics began to claim their place in all sectors of society. The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of growth and expansion within new organisational structures, a development that ran parallel to the unstoppable emancipation of the Catholic population of the country. This subject will be discussed more extensively in the following chapter.¹⁵

12 Piet de Rooy, 'Inleiding', in: J. Vis, W. Janse (eds.), *Staf en storm. Het herstel van de bisschoppelijke hiërarchie in Nederland in 1853: actie en reactie* (Hilversum 2002), 9–16.

13 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 4–5.

14 The church was demolished in 1965. Erdtsieck, *Zwolle in geel-wit*, 11–12 and 32; *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 9 and 68–73.

15 John A. Coleman, *The Evolution of Dutch Catholicism, 1958–1974* (Berkeley 1978), 24–48; L.J. Rogier, N. de Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren. Katholiek Nederland 1853–1953*, The Hague 1953; J. Kennedy, J.P. Zwemer, 'Religion in the Modern Netherlands and the Problems of Pluralism', in: *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 125(2010), 237–268.

3 Willem Marinus's childhood

Willem and his brothers and sisters were raised in rather bleak circumstances. The situation in the overcrowded old town centre of Zwolle, where the Van Rossums and many other members of the popular classes lived, was far from ideal. The small houses in the vicinity of Hagelsteeg were declared uninhabitable shortly after Willem Marinus had lived there.¹⁶ Clean drinking water was not available, nor were proper sanitary facilities. The Aa river served as an open sewer. It is no wonder that every cholera, typhoid or measles epidemic claimed dozens of victims. The situation further deteriorated in the course of the 1860s as a result of population growth in the inner city, which was already bursting at the seams. The municipal authorities did little to fight the outbreak of infectious diseases, so that the mortality rates were higher than in the nearby town of Deventer. During the cholera epidemic of 1866, burning barrels of tar were placed in the streets to 'purify' the air, a measure that failed to curb the danger of infection. It was not until the end of the decade that the town council began to invest in a sewerage system, healthcare and drinking water.¹⁷

Yet Van Rossum's biographer Drehmanns's suggestion that his earliest years were spent in utter destitution is exaggerated.¹⁸ His parents earned enough from their cooorage business to send their children to a private Catholic school, and this at a time when fewer than two thirds of the children in Zwolle attended primary school at all. Primary education was only made mandatory in 1901, but the School Act of 1857 compelled municipal councils to ensure that there were a sufficient number of public primary schools that offered instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, language, geography, history, biology and singing. At the time, Zwolle had a public school attended by some five hundred children, a number of smaller, single-classroom schools, and seven private schools, three of which were Protestant and four Catholic. All these schools were located in the old town centre.¹⁹

The Catholic schools were managed by an umbrella organisation, the *RK Gesticht van Liefde* or Roman Catholic Charitable Institution. This had been founded after the arrival in Zwolle of the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, better known as the Sisters of Tilburg, a congregation founded in 1832 by the later Arch-

16 CO, no. C449, 'Suolla catholica', 1. The houses were demolished during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

17 Ten Hove, *Zwolle*, 456–460.

18 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 7–8. To stress Van Rossum's status, Drehmanns compared the impoverished circumstances of Van Rossum's birth to those at the birth of Jesus.

19 A. van der Wurff, 'Standenscholen en buurtscholen in Zwolle in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw', in: *De school anno. Periodiek van de Vereniging Vrienden van het Nationaal Onderwijsmuseum*, 3(1985), no. 1(April), 3–10. 72% of the boys and 60% of the girls were enrolled in a primary school in 1859.

bishop Zwijsen. The first sisters arrived in Zwolle in 1844 and took up residence in a house on Gasthuisplein. Up to the last decade of the nineteenth century, this was to remain the only Catholic religious house in the town.²⁰ After their arrival, the Sisters founded two girls' schools: one for children from well-to-do families, and one for the poor. They also took on the care of the girls from the local Catholic orphanage, which up to that point had accepted both boys and girls. The same umbrella organisation also ran two new Catholic boys' schools staffed by lay teachers. Like the girls' schools, one of these was for pupils from deprived backgrounds and the other for boys from wealthier families.

Willem and his brothers attended the latter school, located on the corner of Praubstraat and Koestraat. The inspector of schools at the time had a favourable impression of the building and furnishing of this school, but was less impressed by the quality of the teaching. The head teacher, J. Dalmeyer, was competent enough, but there were not enough assistant teachers. Perhaps this was why Willem and another pupil received additional evening instruction at the public school when they were a little older. According to Drehmanns, the young Willem and his mates sometimes got into fist fights with the pupils of the nearby Protestant school. But during these evening classes, the two Catholic boys had a hard time on their own among an overwhelming majority of Protestant pupils.²¹

The curriculum at the Catholic school was much improved in 1867 at the behest of a new headmaster, M. Ridder. He had the "odd little books (...) that offer very little material for the development of mind and heart" replaced by study books that were also in use in the public schools.²² The young Van Rossum only had a brief opportunity to benefit from the improved education under Headmaster Ridder, who was his teacher in the highest class of primary school. At the request of Father Gerard Roelofs, parish priest of St. Michael's, Ridder tutored the twelve-year-old in Dutch and assessed him with a view to admission to the archdiocesan minor seminary of Kuilenburg.²³

20 Lankhorst, 'La jeunesse du cardinal van Rossum', 31–32. The Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy (Brothers of Tilburg) founded a house in Zwolle in 1891, and the Dominicans in 1900.

21 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 11.

22 Anneke van der Wurff, 'Lager onderwijs in Zwolle in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw' ('Doctoraalscriptie' Utrecht University. Zwolle 1983), 52–53.

23 Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal, 5.

4 The Catholic orphanage

Willem Marinus had already experienced a great deal of adversity at this point in his young life. The municipal authorities' investments in improved hygiene came too late for his parents. Jan van Rossum died at the age of 34 on 15 May 1861, leaving his widow to look after the five children: Jacob of eight years, Willem of six, Hendrina of four, Johannes of two and Hendrika who was eight months old. Despite this calamity, his mother Hendrika successfully continued the business as cooperess, with the aid of two servants. When a competitor died, she purchased his house and workshop on Diezerpoortenplas for the price of 925 guilders at a public auction on 8 April 1862, and moved into this considerably more comfortable residence with her children.²⁴ Located just outside the city walls, it had several rooms, as well as a workshop and a shop which sold barrels of all shapes and sizes, buckets, milk churns, wood, iron-work and cooper's tools. The prominent Schaezman family was one of her clients.²⁵

Six months later, the then 37-year-old widow married again, this time to the baker Lambertus Antonius Janssen, who was ten years her junior.²⁶ An official doc-



Hendrika Veldwillems and Lambertus Janssen's cooperage on Diezerpoortenplas in Zwolle, acquired in 1862

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁵ KDC, ROSS, no. 90: 'Inventaris boedel van den heer L.A. Janssen', drawn up by the solicitor H.G.P. van der Biesen, on 13 October 1863.

²⁶ CO, *Register van de burgerlijke stand*. He was born in Rijssen on 23 July 1835 and died in Zwolle on 7 January 1914. KDC, ROSS, no. 264.

ument signed before a solicitor and dated 30 September 1862, a few days before the wedding, stipulated that Hendrika was the guardian of her children and that her future husband would be co-guardian. In addition, grandfather Jacobus van Rossum and his son and namesake ('Uncle Jaap') were appointed guardian and supervisory guardian respectively.²⁷ The marriage with Lambertus Janssen was celebrated on 13 November of the same year. On 23 December – when it had possibly become clear that Hendrika was once again pregnant – the parties agreed to a division of property, which safeguarded the heritage of Jan van Rossum's children in the form of the house and workshop on Diezerpoortenplas.²⁸ Twins were born on 27 August of the following year, but adversity struck again a month later, when Hendrika died of typhoid fever on 24 September 1863 at the age of 38.²⁹

Jan van Rossum's and Hendrika Veldwillems's joint in memoriam card described their fate in the pathetic language of the time: "Wretched days have been our lot and we have known difficult nights; our lives have ended in sorrow; yet our model was the suffering Redeemer, and therefore we say with Him: it is finished."³⁰ It was a difficult fate for the five Van Rossum children, as family life ended abruptly and they were sent to an orphanage.

A fortnight after their mother's death, on 7 October 1863, the regents of the RK *Weeshuis* or Roman Catholic Orphanage met to discuss whether to accept the Van Rossum children.³¹ It was not unusual that Lambertus Janssen declined to look after the five children from his dead wife's first marriage. Even half-orphans were regularly placed in orphanages when their remaining widowed parent remarried.³² Lambertus's sister, 'Aunt Bet', moved in with him to take care of the new-born twins, but they clearly felt it was too much to look after Hendrika Veldwillems's and Jan van Rossum's five children as well.³³

27 CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 78: deed of 30 September 1862.

28 *Ibid.*: deed no. 5283 of 23 December 1862. The house and yard measured "fifty-eight ell" (approximately 40 m²), Kadaster Sectie F Nummer 291.

29 CO, *Register van de burgerlijke stand*. The twins were called Johannes Marinus and Wilhelmus Hendrikus Janssen. The latter died in 1868 at the age of four. Van Rossum kept in touch throughout his life with his other stepbrother, who married Johanna Gezina Vrede (1864–1905) in 1891 and died in Vaassen in 1940, the bearer of a 'Pro Ecclesiae et Pontifice' medal. See *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 12–13, 29–30; 55–56; KDC, ROSS, no. 264.

30 KDC, ROSS, no. 264.

31 CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 2: minutes of 7 October 1863.

32 S. Groenveld, J. Dane et al. (eds.), *Wezen & boeffjes. Zes eeuwen zorg in wees- en kinderhuizen* (Hilversum 1997), 306–307.

33 Despite this tough decision, there is not a trace of resentment or reproach in the letters that Willem van Rossum wrote to his stepfather, 'Aunt Bet' or his half-brother and his wife, which were published in *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, although the introduction does mention that passages intended exclusively for the family had been omitted for reasons of privacy. The original letters are no longer available.

Feelings of compassion, or the idea that children would be better off in a family than in an orphanage were not commonplace at the time.³⁴ Orphans from wealthy families were normally placed with relatives; orphans in the countryside and even from cities were often sent to farmers. There were 232 orphanages in the Netherlands in 1859, which accommodated approximately 10,000 of the 30,000 orphans in the country. These institutions were usually governed by private and ecclesiastical bodies and were divided into *armenweeshuizen* ('orphanages for the poor') and *burgerweeshuizen* ('burgher orphanages') according to the children's social background. Local governments intervened only in emergencies. Although the 1848 constitution stipulated that poor relief should be the object of "the Government's ongoing care", the Poor Law of 1854 affirmed, at the prompting of Protestant leaders such as Otto Heldring and Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, that this was primarily a task for private and church organisations, an idea that fitted the Protestant tradition of Christian charity.³⁵

The utilitarian principle that underlay the orphanages meant that their aim was to allow the children to build a life for themselves within their own class. In most *burgerweeshuizen*, the boys were trained to be craftsmen and the girls domestic servants. The idea was that by teaching them a trade, the orphans could be prevented from sliding to the margins of society. The notion of *volksverheffing* or popular improvement similarly played a role, given the fear of the impoverished masses that riots in various European countries in 1848 had aroused. Moral improvement would help prevent new insurrections. The sick, the physically or mentally handicapped, and children from 'immoral' families were often refused by *burgerweeshuizen* because it was assumed that they would never be able to earn an honest living for themselves. This group had to fall back on the even more frugal facilities provided by the municipal authorities.³⁶

Zwolle had two orphanages: one Protestant and one Catholic. It goes without saying that the three Van Rossum brothers ended up in the RK *Weeshuis* or Roman Catholic Orphanage. With its cap of twenty children, this was a much smaller institution than the Dutch Reformed orphanage that had approximately a hundred children.³⁷ The Catholic orphanage had been founded in 1812 by the local Catholic poor relief committee, after Louis Napoleon had provided a building in 1809. It was said that the king had been so generous because the French needed orphans to serve in their armies.³⁸ The Catholic poor relief committee had initially advised against founding

34 Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (Glasgow 1977), 224–240.

35 Joost Dankers, J. Verheul, *Als een groot particulier huisgezin. Opvoeden in het Utrechtse Burgerweeshuis tussen caritas en staatszorg 1813–1991* (Zutphen 1991), 98–116; Groenveld et al., *Wezen & boeffjes*, 258.

36 *Ibid.*

37 Ten Hove, *Zwolle*, 424.

38 Groenveld et al., *Wezen & boeffjes*, 255.

an orphanage, as it feared that the children would become lazy and dependent if care was too easily available. The commissioners also worried that immoral behaviour would become rife, so that the children would end up either in prostitution or in the army. A year later, a subcommittee judged more positively of the educational opportunities that an orphanage could offer, specifically the possibility to develop an independent life, thus allowing the orphans to “assume a status in society as citizens, men and fathers”. This recommendation won the day.³⁹ The funds needed for the Catholic orphanage of Zwolle were raised by collections supported from the pulpit, supplemented by donations and inheritances. The annual expenditure per orphan was estimated to be a hundred guilders in 1810; sixty years later this amount had tripled. From 1854 onwards, the orphanage was in receipt of a municipal subsidy.⁴⁰

The board of the Catholic orphanage, composed of members of the local elite, decided on admissions. The decision to admit a child was usually based on a number of factors: the health of the child, the parents’ life style, whether or not they had been dependent on poor relief, and the sum the orphan could contribute from its parents’ inheritance. The Van Rossum children’s application was examined by the board members at the time, J.N.J. Heerkens, B.J.B. van Sonsbeeck, H.J. Reirink, and J.F.A.A. Schaepman.⁴¹ The latter was a brother of Andreas Ignatius Schaepman, former parish priest of St. Michael’s and later coadjutor (1860–1868) and archbishop of Utrecht (1868–1882).

The Van Rossum orphans disposed of a sum of 800 guilders from their father’s estate and another amount that constituted their mother’s inheritance, for which their stepfather had signed a promissory note. An inventory of the house on Diezerpoortenplas was drawn up to determine the value of their maternal inheritance. The value of such items as linen, furniture, crockery, shop inventory, mirrors, paintings and gold and silver jewellery was estimated at 773 guilders.⁴²

Janssen continued the cooperage after his wife’s death. This appears to have been a common pattern among minor craftsmen in Zwolle at the time; Willem’s grandfather had acquired his cooperage in the same way. His 23-year-old son Jaap married a 42-year-old smith’s widow, and similarly continued the smithy after she died two years later.⁴³

39 *Eeuwfeest van het RK Weeshuis te Zwolle 1812–1 mei 1912* (Zwolle 1912), 2–5.

40 *Ibid.*, 10.

41 *Ibid.*, 16.

42 CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 78: promissory note by L.A. Janssen for 800 guilders, including interest, to the Catholic orphanage, dated 1 July 1864; KDC, ROSS, no. 90: ‘Inventaris boedel van den heer L.A. Janssen’, dated 13 October 1863.

43 CO, *Register van de burgerlijke stand; Genealogie van de familie Van Rossum* by Ferdi van Rossum (in private collection). After Jennegien Brinkhof’s death in 1859, Jaap (Jacobus) van Rossum (Zwolle 1831–Raalte 1914) married his sister-in-law’s younger sister, Harmanna Veldwillems (Hellendoorn 1827–Zwolle 1863) on 9 February 1860. After her death, he married Theodora Jop from Raalte on 12 November 1863. They had five children; two daughters joined the congregation of the Sisters of »

The board of the Catholic orphanage, having been “authorised by the parish poor relief committee”, decided to accept the three boys into the orphanage on 3 December 1863; the record states that “the decision had been put into effect”. At a subsequent board meeting, a petition was read out which their grandfather Jacob van Rossum and others had addressed to Archbishop Zwijsen on 17 December 1863. They asked him to accept the two Van Rossum sisters into the orphanage of the Sisters of Tilburg; Zwijsen was apparently able to decide such matters. He gave the permission requested, perhaps on the advice of his coadjutor Schaeppman, who, as parish priest of St. Michael’s, had probably personally baptised the eldest sister in 1856.⁴⁴ A deed of division of property was drawn up by a solicitor, H.G.P. van der Biesen, on 2 August 1864, giving the Catholic orphanage the usufruct (interest) of the estate that the Van Rossum children had received.⁴⁵

From the moment Willem van Rossum entered the orphanage, his life changed radically. He was no longer in familiar surroundings, and all his personal effects became the property of the orphanage. Instead of his own clothes, he had to wear an orphanage uniform. The day-to-day care for the Van Rossum brothers and the nine other boys, between five and twenty years old, who lived there at the time, was in the hands of a married couple called Verheijden.⁴⁶ The master and mistress of the orphanage recreated a family setting of sorts, but one where personal attention for the children was not the main concern, but discipline through admonition, punishment and warning. This was regarded as indispensable for any good education. The master, Frederik Verheijden, emphasised in his letter of application for the post that, as a former military man, he was well-used to guaranteeing discipline.⁴⁷ This was clearly regarded as a valuable asset, possibly because many orphanages lacked order, particularly the larger ones, whose alumni were wont to join the ranks of beggars, vagrants or prostitutes.

The master and mistress were bound by rules fixed by the regents. These stipulated that the children must be bathed, combed and given a clean shirt on Saturdays, and Sunday clothes on Sunday. On weekdays, they were required to wear the

» Tilburg. Van Rossum regularly corresponded with his uncle Jaap and his two nieces, Sister Theodora (Jacoba) and Sister Josephine (Maria). St. Agatha, Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven (ENK), *Archief Zusters van Liefde Tilburg (AZLT)*, no. 77: letters written between 1885 and 1924.

44 CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 2: minutes of 3 December 1863. The archbishop replied on 9 March 1864 to the effect that the two girls, Hendrina and Hendrika, could go to the Sisters of Tilburg.

45 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 5; CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 78. The deed of division dated 2 August 1864 says that “the Board of the Roman Catholic Orphanage in Zwolle appearing for the five minor children” claimed “a. from these children’s share in the estate of their father f 866.31; b. from the share of their mother 5/8 share in the credit balance of her estate of f. 152.47 1/4, i.e., f 95.30, Together f 961.61”.

46 See the ‘Naamlijst van wezen’, in the catalogue of CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis te Zwolle*, 21–28.

47 CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 18: File on the appointment of Frederick Verheijden and his wife Maria Engelina Weller.

orphanage uniform: black smocks, trousers and cap.⁴⁸ This made it easy to identify them as orphans, so that the local police would know where to bring them if they got into trouble at fairs in the town. Time was strictly regulated and food was simple but sufficient, which was not always the case for children outside the orphanage.⁴⁹ The rules also banned orphans from entering the attic, where apples and pears were stored. At the centenary in 1912, the board of the Catholic orphanage was proud to report that of the 207 orphans which it had housed over the previous hundred years – 112 boys and 95 girls – only sixteen had died in the institution and only six had been dismissed for misconduct.⁵⁰

The changes were no doubt dramatic for Willem van Rossum, but they did not totally overturn his whole life. The orphanage was located on the corner of Roggenstraat and Bitterstraat, in a part of Zwolle he knew well. He was not separated from his two brothers, and as he served Mass in the chapel of the Sisters of Tilburg, he probably also continued to see his sisters regularly. The orphans attended Mass together in St. Michael's church, his own familiar parish church, where they were seated in a dedicated section. And Willem continued to attend the same school.

On days off, he would stay with his stepfather and stepbrothers in their home on Diezerpoortenplas, which he knew well, or his grandfather or uncles and aunts in Zwolle and Hellendoorn. According to one of the children, he particularly liked visiting Jacob van Rossum, 'Uncle Jaap', and Aunt Door in their smithy on Thomas à Kempisstraat in Zwolle. They would offer the Van Rossum brothers a slice of the local speciality of *boerenstoet* or home-baked bread with brown sugar, and other delicacies like apples and nuts. Almost fifty years later, when Van Rossum visited Zwolle for the first (and last) time as cardinal, he honoured his uncle with a personal visit on the day before the pontifical Mass, Saturday 26 July 1913. Uncle Jaap was then in his eighties and so overcome by emotion that he could hardly utter a word. "When, at the Cardinal's departure, all fell on their knees to receive his blessing, and old Uncle Jaap could not do so, His Eminence lovingly approached him, made the sign of the cross on his forehead and blessed the old man separately." He left his uncle overawed by the incredible fact that his "Marinusien" (little Marinus) had become a cardinal of the Roman church.⁵¹

The orphanage remained responsible for the orphans until they reached majority, and they were eligible for further education after completing primary school. Thus, in September 1865, when Willem's oldest brother was twelve, he was sent to an indus-

48 *Eeuwfeest van het RK Weeshuis te Zwolle*, 6; CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, nos. 17 and 84.

49 Groenveld et al., *Wezen & boeffjes*, 300–310; Dankers and Verheul, *Als een groot particulier huisgezin*.

50 CO, *Archief RK Weeshuis*, no. 17; *Eeuwfeest van het RK Weeshuis te Zwolle*, 8–11.

51 ENK, *Archief van de Nederlandse Provincie der Redemptoristen (ANPR)*, no. 8530: 'Mijn herinneringen'.

This document contains reminiscences by his cousin Sister Theodora (Jacoba) or Sister Josephine (Maria) van Rossum, daughters of his uncle Jaap van Rossum.

trial school together with two other orphans. Three years later, Kobus van Rossum, as he was usually called, was admitted to the boys' teacher training college of the Roman Catholic Charitable Institution, "in receipt of board and lodging and probably a certain wage". Two years later, he joined the Brothers of Maastricht as Brother Nicodemus.⁵²

Willem Marinus's ambitions lay elsewhere: he wanted to become a priest. On Sunday 6 October 1867, the board of the orphanage decided, "with the approval of the poor relief committee, to send the orphan Marinus van Rossum, 13 years of age, to the minor seminary of Kuilenburg for further education, as he has demonstrated much inclination and good aptitude for study, and his family is willing to contribute in the additional costs, and moreover to grant him a suitable trousseau and a stipend of 120 guilders per year until he gains majority at 19 years of age, to be paid every quarter starting on 1 October 1867 to the Reverend Father Roelofs, Parish Priest."⁵³ Every orphan was entitled to a study allowance of 120 guilders per year, but this clearly did not suffice for Kuilenburg, the archdiocese of Utrecht's Jesuit-run minor seminary in the town of Culemborg.⁵⁴ The unknown remaining amount was furnished by his stepfather Janssen, his guardian and uncle Jaap van Rossum, and Hendrika Veldwillems's two brothers from Hellendoorn.⁵⁵

The day after the board's decision, on 7 October 1867, four years to the day that he had been admitted to the orphanage, Willem van Rossum departed for Culemborg. His trousseau consisted of six shirts, "four white underpants, four white nightcaps, four towels, six half shirts with collars, six handkerchiefs, three of which white, six pairs of stockings, one pair of shoes (he brought a second pair), a clothes chest, four white ganseys".⁵⁶ Although he no longer lived in the orphanage, the board continued to be responsible for him, and it paid doctor's and pharmacy bills of 54.30 and 13.70 guilders in 1873 and 1874 respectively when he was sick. He was only discharged – at his own request – in January 1878, when he was 23 years old and had completed more than half of his curriculum at the Redemptorist major seminary.⁵⁷

Willem van Rossum never spoke publicly about his experiences as an orphan. But he did once leave emotive testimony in a poem he wrote as an 18-year-old seminararian for his sister Hendrina, on her birthday on 28 December 1872:

52 ENK, Archief van de Broeders van de Onbevleete Ontvangenis van de Maagd Maria (FIC), no. 241.

53 CO, Archief RK Weeshuis, no. 2: minutes of 6 October 1867.

54 It is not clear whether poor students were eligible for an allowance. Joep van Gennip, "Studeren op andermans kosten". De studiefondsen van de Nederlandse Provincie der Jezuiten, ca. 1852–1965, in: *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800*, 38(2015), no. 83(Dec.), 15–24, mentions an average amount of 230 guilders per year for the period from 1878 to 1881.

55 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 5–6.

56 CO, Archief RK Weeshuis, no. 84, 241. Willem's brothers Kobus and Jan received more or less the same outfit in 1869 (230) and 1879 (263).

57 *Ibid.*; *Eeuwfeest van het RK Weeshuis te Zwolle*, 9–10. It was the custom that the orphans asked to be discharged themselves; See Groenveld et al., *Wezen e' boeffjes*, 316–318.

*You, too, my little sister, were snatched
From Father's loving heart.
Ah! Nor was there a gentle mother
To comfort this bitter sorrow.⁵⁸*

In this poem for his sister, Van Rossum described the calamities that God had sent them as a sign of his goodness. God had consoled them by calling three of the family's children to the religious life: in addition to their oldest brother Kobus, who was a Brother of Maastricht, Hendrina had announced that she wished to join the Sisters of Tilburg, who had educated her as an orphan. She received the habit as Sister Gerulpha on 30 November 1873. And Willem was called to the altar.⁵⁹

As a cooper's child, Van Rossum spent his first years in an unassuming domestic setting in the centre of the old Hanseatic town of Zwolle. His youth was marked above all by the early demise of both parents, a few years after each other, and by the subsequent years spent in a Catholic orphanage in the town. Some authors have argued that his memories of his years as a simple orphan boy, acquainted with the difficult side of life, gave him a certain meekness and humility. But they also taught him to be a survivor.⁶⁰ During his later visits to the Netherlands, Van Rossum showed a special interest in orphanages, and he would recall that he had shared the orphans' fate. In 1913, and again in 1929, he was received in the Amsterdam boys' orphanage and the Maagdenhuis or girls' orphanage.⁶¹

Another important lesson he learned in his youth was that, as a Catholic boy, he belonged to a group that had second-class status in Dutch society. But from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, this group no longer accepted the subordinate position assigned to it by the Protestant political and economic elite. Throughout

58 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 8–9.

59 Jacobus entered the Brothers of Maastricht on 9 December 1869 and left again on 22 March 1873.

He became an office clerk and married Cornelia Siebers from Zutphen (1852–1920) on 13 June 1878 in Zwolle, where he died on 4 October 1904, leaving two children. The youngest brother, Jan, stayed in the orphanage until he was 21 and then became a furniture maker in Amsterdam. He married Johanna Fakkert from Dalfsen (1854–1894) in 1883 and, after her death, Theodora Lielieveld in 1895. He died in Amsterdam in 1915, also leaving two children. The youngest sister similarly moved to the capital, where she became a cashier in Benschop's chocolate factory (KDC, ROSS, no. 67: interview with Sister Gerulpha van Rossum [1927]). She died unmarried in 1905 at the age of 45. Both are buried in St. Barbara's cemetery. Hendrina (Gerulpha) was the only one to survive Willem van Rossum. They kept in touch and he visited her regularly in Tilburg; she came to Rome on at least one occasion. They met each other for the last time a few days before his death on 30 August 1932. CO, *Register van de burgerlijke stand; Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 8–9; KDC, ROSS, no. 264.

60 'Van weesjongen tot kardinaal. Een gouden bladzijde in de geschiedenis van het R.K. Weeshuis te Zwolle', in: *Onze weeshuizen. Maandblad gewijd aan de belangen van de Nederlandsche weeshuizen en tehuizen voor ouden van dagen*, 1(1933), 65–66. The former orphanage was renamed the 'Kardinaal van Rossumhuis' in 1954. Lankhorst, 'La jeunesse du cardinal van Rossum', 30–31.

61 *Het Centrum*, 11 July 1913 and 7 September 1929.

his life, Van Rossum felt the urge to confront Protestantism. His Salland upbringing perhaps helped form his detached and conservative character, which was also evident in his views on the course that the Catholic church should take.

But Van Rossum also had a sensitive side, which appears in his life-long correspondence with relatives and members of his stepfamily. Similarly, his choice for the religious life, which had prayer and devotions as its driving forces, testifies to this. That he was able, as a simple orphan, to become a priest, was due on the one hand to the lucky circumstance that the Schaepman family of Zwolle took him under its wing, but on the other to his willpower, which his biographer Drehmanns called his most characteristic feature. His love for God and Mary – possibly in compensation for his lack of parental love – became a guiding light throughout his life.

Minor seminary

1 Kuilenburg

On the evening of Monday 7 October 1867, Willem van Rossum and 37 other boys entered the triple gate of the minor seminary of Kuilenburg, passing underneath Archbishop Zwijsen's coat of arms over the door with its figures of a lion and a lamb and his motto *Fortiter et suaviter*: firmly and gently. He joined the minor seminary immediately after primary school, like most other boys from the archdiocese of Utrecht who wanted to become priests. Willem was enrolled as 'Marinus van Rossum, number 144'.¹

The minor seminary of Kuilenburg had been founded by the Jesuits in 1818, in Culemborg, a medieval town on the river Lek, in the province of Gelderland. The Jesuit presence in Culemborg dated back to the seventeenth century, when the Lek was an important thoroughfare. The minor seminary was temporarily closed under King William I (1815–1840), but reopened under his son William II in 1841. The Jesuits ran it until 1906, when it was transferred to the diocesan clergy at the behest of the then archbishop, Henricus van de Wetering.² According to some observers, this showed that the archdiocese was finally able, more than half a century after the restoration of the hierarchy, to take care of its own business.³

We do not know how Willem van Rossum made his first journey from Zwolle to Culemborg, more than a hundred kilometres away, nor in whose company. He possibly travelled the first part by train with Father Roelofs, who was known to visit the Jesuits in Culemborg from time to time.⁴ But the train did not as yet extend as far as Culemborg, and the last stretch of the journey had to be made by wagon or on foot. The rail connection between the town and the north was subsequently improved

1 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6221; Ton H. M. van Schaik, *Alfrink, een biografie* (Amsterdam 1997), 42.

2 The Jesuits strongly resisted the transfer; see Vatican City, Archivio Storico de Propaganda Fide (ASPF), *Nova Series*, vol. 324, f 316–329; 337–364.

3 Jan Y.H.A. Jacobs, 'De opgang tot het altaar van God. De structuur van de priesteropleiding in Nederland vóór en ná 1853', in: *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800*, 24(2001), no. 54 (June), 5–27; *150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht 1818–1968*. With contributions by A. J. Vermeulen, Th. P. A. I. M. Ruys et al., n.p. [1968].

4 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6054.



The archdiocesan minor seminary in Culemborg, c. 1900

and the seminary staff sometimes managed to organise a train to carry the seminarians as they left on holidays.⁵

It was a small miracle that Willem Marinus van Rossum was admitted to Kuilenburg at all. Not because he had any doubts about his vocation: “From childhood on, my inclination has been exclusively for the clerical state”, he wrote in 1873 in his ‘Curriculum vitae’ for the Redemptorists.⁶ One of his former fellows from the orphanage remembered in 1933 that a regent of the Catholic orphanage had had a miniature altar made for Willem so that he could play Mass under the dome of the orphanage, dressed in paper vestments and using a censer given to him by the parish priest. Other boys from the institute served the Mass. He also remembered that Willem would light a candle before a statute of Our Lady in the middle of the night.⁷ In *Levensschets*, Drehmanns similarly pointed to certain early aspirations to the priesthood. He characterised the young Van Rossum as a gentle, bright and modest boy, who liked collecting stamps and butterflies and was pious without being sanctimonious; “strength of will [was] his most distinguishing feature”.⁸

But piety and intelligence were not enough to open the gates of Kuilenburg. This was a place for the sons of distinguished and wealthy Catholics, and an orphan boy of modest background did not fit the mould. Various sources point to the stimulating role played by Gerard Roelofs, parish priest of St. Michael’s since 1865. As such, he was also the spiritual director of the orphanage located beside the presbytery. “Father Roelofs loved Willem”, according to Drehmanns, “precisely because he had noticed that there was potential to the boy, because he was well-behaved compared

5 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 14–15; KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6215.

6 ENK, ANPR, no. 8530. Candidates for the Redemptorists were required to write the history of their vocation in a so-called curriculum vitae during their noviciate.

7 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 5–7.

8 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 10–11, 13.

to the other boys, because he could recite the catechism well, and could answer his questions cleverly.”⁹

No doubt another important factor in getting Willem admitted was that Andreas Ignatius Schaepman (1815–1882), coadjutor of the archdiocese of Utrecht since 1860, had known the Van Rossum-Veldwillems family when he was parish priest of St. Michael’s from 1855 to 1857. His brother, J.F.A.A. Schaepman, chair of the board of the Catholic orphanage, may also have put in a good word for Willem Marinus, one of ‘his’ orphans. As the archives testify, Bishop Schaepman regularly visited Kuilenburg. He administered the sacrament of confirmation to a namesake from Zwolle there in February 1867; among the other confirmands at this ceremony was the later archbishop Henricus van de Wetering, then in fourth class, the *suprema grammatica*.¹⁰

2 The horarium

When Willem van Rossum came to Kuilenburg in 1867, the college numbered 156 students, spread across seven years. The seminary had been renewed and several large buildings were added in 1855, and the new complex would be used for decades, until it was left in 1935 for a new location in Apeldoorn. Up to that time, all aspiring diocesan priests had to accustom themselves to its long corridors, the two large study halls below the chapel, the class halls, the narrow chapel on the first floor and the dormitories above it. Outside, the seminarians’ domain consisted of a gravel schoolyard called the *cour*, in French.¹¹ In the mid-thirties, the college was regarded as old and no longer fit for purpose: “We lived there as a large family in a home that was too small”, according to A.J. Vermeulen. In his retrospective from 1968, Vermeulen also remembered the smelly canal beside it and the fact that the building was rather cramped.¹²



Willem van Rossum aged 16

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰ KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, nos. 6054–6055; no. 6178. Confirmation was administered to a number of seminarians in Kuilenburg again in 1872, but Willem van Rossum was not one of them. He was probably confirmed in his own parish in Zwolle.

¹¹ Van Schaik, *Alfrink*, 51.

¹² *150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht*, 4.

Like every year, the school year of 1867 began in October with a four-day retreat, which started the day of Willem's arrival. Meditation, spiritual reading (*lectio divina*, for example from the writings of Thomas a Kempis), reflection, examination of conscience, recitation of litanies, conferences, evening prayers, benediction and confession at the end of the day, followed the morning after by two Masses and communion: all this was intended to instil the right disposition in the students for the year that lay before them.¹³ In the first week, they were assigned fixed places in chapel and in the classrooms. The seminary diaries show that the prefects were also required to initiate the entrants into the rules of billiards and croquet, as well as smoking.¹⁴

The teacher in charge of the first class – the *sexta* – in 1867 was the Jesuit Bernard van Meurs. His qualities were mainly in the fields of literature and poetry. Father Roelofs had recommended the young Van Rossum to Van Meurs, effectively calling in a favour, as he had once helped Van Meurs to pursue his own vocation when Roelofs had been a curate in Nijmegen. Van Meurs probably gave Van Rossum private tutoring from time to time and also taught him the rudiments of poetry. According to Drehmanns, Van Rossum spoke with gratitude and esteem of this priest in later years.¹⁵ Other teachers he encountered during his formation were C. ten Brink (second class or *quinta*), W. Marzorati (*media grammatica*), H. van den Boogaard (*suprema grammatica* and *humanitas*), and in the last year, *rhetorica*, H. Allard and G. Kusters.¹⁶

The ordinary horarium, which remained almost unchanged for decades after the departure of the Jesuits, was extremely detailed.¹⁷ The seminarians rose at 5.30 am and gathered for morning prayer and spiritual reading twenty minutes later. Holy Mass was at 6, followed at 6.30 by an hour of study. They had breakfast at 7.30 and then fifteen minutes of recreation before lessons started at 8. The emphasis was on the humanities: Latin and Greek claimed the greatest share of the time (and of the exams). After two hours of lessons, there was a break of thirty minutes, followed by forty-five minutes of study. There was another lesson at 11.15, more study at noon, followed by dinner at 12.30 pm and recreation. The seminarians returned to their books for study at 2, followed by a lesson at 2.45. They partook of a *goûter* or afternoon snack at 4; then there was recreation and study began again at 5. A decade of the rosary was recited at 7.10, replaced on some days by spiritual reading. Supper was

13 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6215, 2–3.

14 *Ibid.*, 68. The newcomers were assigned to “smoking 2nd class”.

15 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 6; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 15; *De volksmissionaris*, 37(1915/16), 37 and 123; J.H. Mulders, ‘Levensschets van de Hoogerw. pater Petrus Oomen CSSR’, in: *Monumenta Historica Provinciae Neerlandicae CSSR (MHPN-CSSR)*, 4(1952), 66–69. KDC, ROSS, no. 460: *Manuel des jeunes étudiants, ouvrage destiné à leur apprendre à bien dire les petites choses. A l'usage des institutions et des collèges* (Tilburg 1864), with “M. v. Rossum”'s signature.

16 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no 6196.

17 Cf. Van Schaik, *Alfrink*, 38–68.

at 7.30, followed by recreation and free study at 8.15, and the day drew to a close with evening prayers at 8.45.

There were no lessons on Sundays and feast days and the seminarians were allowed to get up half an hour later, but there was study time. In addition to the ordinary Mass, there was High Mass, catechism and a meeting of the Confraternity of Our Lady. The religious character of the day was further enhanced by the joint recitation of vespers at 3 pm. Tuesdays and Thursdays were special, as the community took long walks in the afternoon: a long line of boys, walking two by two, could be seen meandering through the countryside along the river Lek. Their destination was normally 'Tusculum', the college's country house, named after Cicero's villa outside Rome, where coffee was served and, on very special occasions, festive banquets were held. Not infrequently, the weather ruined plans and the walk had to be postponed. In winter, every day that the canals were frozen, time was freed up for ice-skating, and Van Rossum was surely one of the boys who would take to the ice. Drehmanns wrote that he had inherited his graceful stroke from his mother. His old skates were among the few possessions that Van Rossum carefully guarded throughout his life.¹⁸

Great festivities marked the feasts of Saint Cecilia, Saint Aloysius and Saint Nicholas. The older boys staged theatre performances, and prizes were awarded for best behaviour and for those who had come top of their class in a certain subject. The *Diaria alumnorum* regularly commented on the necessity of vigilance with respect to the tone and subject matter of the plays (which should preferably not be comedies). Among the few frivolities allowed on these days were dice and card games. Outings were permitted on rare occasions, when parents or guardians could come and collect their children for a day. The seminarians went home on holidays for approximately three weeks around Easter. A 'Tusculan fair' was held every year in summer, followed by the awarding of final prizes by the archbishop, with parents and relatives in attendance. The college's long summer holidays ran from mid-August to early October.¹⁹

Willem does not appear to have taken a very active role in such festivities. The only time he featured in a play was on 19 August 1869, in the 'Scène comique Tching-Tong-Khan, ou l'orphelin de la Tartarie' (The comedy 'Tching-Tong-Kahn, or the orphan of Tartary'), in which he played a slave.²⁰ He did not stand out, either as an actor or as a script writer, unlike other smart class mates or Jan Kronenburg, the best student of the class above Van Rossum's, whom we will soon meet more frequently.²¹

18 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 15. The skates are now in KDC (inv. no. COVW-1620).

19 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6215.

20 *Ibid.*, Program of prize-giving ceremony, 97ff.

21 See H.J. Allard, *De eersteling-proeven onzer Muze, door de Academie der rhetorica in 't seminarie Kuilenburg, St. Michielsgestel 1871-1873*. Two of Kronenburg's poems were included in this in 1872, 'Het wapenbord der Chateaubriands' ('The Chateaubriand coat of arms'), 5-6, and 'Ecce homo', 23-24.

But Willem was still one of the better students. He was among the ten best students of his class during the first year, the *sexta*, and he ended up fifth in the *quinta*, probably despite having had to skip the exams from mid-November to mid-January due to illness. He was sixth in the *media grammatica*, third in the *suprema grammatica* (also called *syntaxis*) and fourth in the *humanitas* (or *poesis*). His strong points were catechism, Scripture, *declamatio* and mathematics, but he also received prizes in Latin, Dutch, Greek, and ‘cosmography’. Archbishop Schaepman mentioned him with distinction on various occasions during the prize-giving ceremonies.²² Geography and history appear to have interested him the least.²³

3 Ultramontane Jesuits

Kuilenburg was also a kind of recruitment centre for the Dutch Jesuits, who had no minor seminary of their own. Tongues outside the Society implied that they kept the best students for themselves, and they had to field some criticism for this. Vermeulen’s 1968 retrospective assumed that the transfer of the college to the archdiocese in 1906 was due to the Jesuits’ practice of creaming off the best potential candidates for themselves. The Society’s orientation towards the universal church and its Roman centre, and its lack of interest in the archdiocese of Utrecht were cited as another reason. There is some support for this last point in the great veneration which both the college community and the Jesuits bore to Pius IX. In an 1853 letter to the seminary, the pope acknowledged how strongly they were “attached to Us and this Holy See by fidelity, love and devotion”.²⁴ He also expressed the hope that the seminarians would become worthy servants of the church. This personal letter by the pope was a closely guarded treasure in the college.

A papal letter from 1860 imparted apostolic benediction upon the seminary in response to the support that Kuilenburg had offered: students and teachers had responded with indignation to an attack by Italian troops on the Papal States. The struggle would lead to the fall of the city of Rome in September 1870, and thus to the demise of the Papal States. The pope was allowed to stay, but he regarded himself from that moment on as the ‘prisoner of the Vatican’.²⁵ Similarly, events surrounding the First Vatican Council (1869–1870), which was attended by Bishops Zwijsen

22 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6202.

23 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6196.

24 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6180: letter from Pius IX, 27 July 1853; *150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht*, 3–4

25 *Ibid.*: letter of 14 March 1860; *Viering der Piusfeesten op het aartsbisschoppelijk seminarie te Kuilenburg 1871, Utrecht [1871]*; *150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht*, 17.

and Schaepman, were followed very closely in the college. The seminarians celebrated effusively when the council defined the doctrine of papal infallibility in its dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus* in 1870, and they were even treated to beer to mark the occasion.²⁶

Great festivities were also organised to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pope Pius IX's election to the papal throne in 1871. For five days, from 16 to 21 June, the building was decorated with the papal colours, yellow and white. A student who had previously served as a zouave in the papal army was the hero of the day. Dressed in his uniform, he showed his fellow students how valiantly he had fought to defend the pope. The plan had been to organise a 'colossal illumination' of 3,000 lanterns and Chinese coloured balloons in the gardens of Kuilenburg, but this was cancelled at the last moment due to fears of disturbances and protests from the predominantly Protestant Culemborg population. Instead, Father Van Meurs held a "magnificent *soirée musicale et littéraire*", with speeches and performances by the best students. The session took place in a beautifully decorated hall, around a tastefully illuminated bust of the papal jubilarian. It was concluded with an impressive speech by the Jesuit provincial, who recounted his personal encounters with "the august person of Pius IX".²⁷ All this served to introduce the students to the majesty of the universal church. "Is it any wonder that the 'best students', those who most successfully appropriated the education they were offered, discovered this international character of the church and thus also the limited character of any individual diocese?"²⁸

4 Leaving Kuilenburg

Of the 38 seminarians who began their studies in 1867, 22 made it to the end in 1873. Most of them continued to the *philosophicum* in Culemborg, an additional seventh year and as such more or less part of the major seminary.²⁹ The drop in numbers during these six years appears to have been caused primarily by a process of natural selection: those who came last in the mid-term reports around Easter often no longer appeared in the final ranking of that year. On very rare occasions, the register of marks mentions a death. The registers sometimes also refer to the intermediate departure of a seminarian to join an order or congregation.

According to a historical overview of the minor seminary, of the 1,870 students enrolled at the institute at some stage between 1841 and 1891, only 709 chose to

26 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6215.

27 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6180: *Viering der Piusfeesten*.

28 Th. Ruys, 'Bladerend in oude papieren', in: *150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht*, 12–13.

29 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, nos. 6196 and 6221.

continue with the higher diocesan theology programme to become a priest of the archdiocese of Utrecht. Of the remainder, 233 went on to study for a religious order or congregation. These students were the ones who looked beyond the frontiers of the archdiocese and chose a wider perspective.³⁰ Most of them joined the Jesuits. On one occasion, the rector of the seminary exceptionally permitted Herbert Vaughan, founder of the Congregation of Mill Hill in 1866, to address the seminarians, and he succeeded in recruiting some of them for his British institute. Willem van Rossum and his friend Jan Kronenburg took a different route. As far as can be ascertained, they were the only ones in Kuilenburg to join the Redemptorists, a congregation that was building a strong reputation at the time, as the following chapter will show.

Kronenburg, the best student of the *rhetorica*, was the first to leave, after Easter 1872.³¹ The unusual time of his departure was probably due to the fact that postulancy – the probationary period that lasted no more than a month at the time – with the Redemptorists began in mid-May, followed by the start of the noviciate on 16 June, at that time the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. This meant he could not sit the final exams in Kuilenburg.

Kronenburg explained his choice for the religious state by saying that the path he had followed up to that point now seemed meaningless to him: *Quid hoc ad aeternitatem* – ‘What does this mean in the light of eternity?’ These words from an introduction to the life of the Jesuit Saint Aloysius Gonzaga had stuck in his mind, troubled him and inspired him to seek an alternative way. Initially he had considered life as a Jesuit. But then, by chance,



Jan Kronenburg aged 17

30 150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht, 12–13 and 19, where the author mentions that many past pupils of Kuilenburg later became missionary bishops. Remarkably, Vermeulen forgot to point out that the cardinal prefect of Propaganda, Willem van Rossum, was also a past pupil.

31 Joannes Antonius Franciscus (Jan) Kronenburg (Zutphen 1853–Nijmegen 1940); provincial superior of the Dutch Redemptorists from 1894–1898 and 1918–1924. He was known in the Netherlands for his edifying publications, particularly on the Blessed Virgin Mary, and somewhat hagiographical works on Petrus Donders, Alphonsus Liguori and Dutch saints. He was much appreciated in orthodox Catholic circles for his strong support for the restoration of Dutch Catholic traditions like pilgrimages. S.A. Boland, *A Dictionary of the Redemptorists* (Rome 1987), 188; Henri Mosmans, ‘J.A.F. Kronenburg’, in: *Jaarboek van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde*, 1939/40, 34–43; A. van der Zeijden, ‘Heiligen, nationale identiteit en herinneringscultuur. J.A.F.J.A.F. Kronenburg (1853–1940) en zijn meerdelig seriewerk “Neerlands Heiligen”’, in: *Trajecta*, 17(2008), 50–78.

he met the Redemptorists on Keizersgracht in Amsterdam, during a visit to his aunt: “The sight of the monastery and the silence that reigned there made a deep impression on me.” The Jesuits still appealed more to him than the Redemptorists, but he began to change his mind after reading a life of Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, who had just been proclaimed a doctor of the church (*doctor ecclesiae*) in 1871 by the pope. After months of prayer, he decided to join this congregation.³²

Whether Willem van Rossum’s decision to do the same was inspired by Kronenburg’s is not entirely certain. Van Rossum did not mention his friend in his curriculum vitae for the congregation, but it cannot have been a coincidence. Kronenburg and Van Rossum hailed from the same region and they had become friends at Kuilenburg.³³ Van Rossum wrote to the Redemptorists in Amsterdam in April 1873 to request admission. Unlike Kronenburg, he recounted that he had been drawn to the congregation as a child. He said that after one of their parish missions in Zwolle, he had felt “the desire to become what they were”.³⁴ It is indeed possible that Willem attended a parish mission when he was ten, because a number of Redemptorists from Amsterdam preached one in Zwolle from 8 to 19 June 1865.³⁵ The issue is confused somewhat by a passage in the introduction to the edition of his letters to his stepfather, which claims that Van Rossum told Lambertus Janssen that he had attended a Redemptorist mission when his mother was still alive.³⁶ But she had died in 1863, two years before the first mission in Zwolle.

His application was supported by a letter of recommendation from his parish priest, Father Roelofs, dated 14 April 1873 and addressed to the Redemptorists: Roelofs’s “priestly, fatherly care” for Willem had always inspired him to hope that Willem was called to the religious life. He added that it would be better, given Willem’s health, if he did not have to stay in Culemborg until the summer holidays, but could be admitted to the noviciate as soon as possible.³⁷ Willem had in fact been ill from mid-November to January, but had recovered in the meantime, returned to his lessons and successfully passed the exams. The day before he left Kuilenburg, on Holy Thursday, 10 April, he was the best student in the *Declamatio*.³⁸

We may ask why Willem decided to enrol in a diocesan minor seminary first rather than join an order or congregation immediately in 1867. Possibly this was

32 ENK, ANPR, no. 12126 (J. Kronenburg’s personal file): ‘Curriculum vitae’.

33 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 15.

34 ENK, ANPR, no. 8530: ‘Curriculum vitae’.

35 Lankhorst, ‘La jeunesse du cardinal van Rossum’, 32; ENK, ANPR, no. 884. The register of missions does not mention the names of the Redemptorists who took part in this mission; the first recorded mission in Zwolle took place in 1865.

36 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 9.

37 ENK, ANPR, no. 8530: G. Roelofs to provincial superior, 14 April 1873.

38 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6196.

because there were very few options at the time. The Redemptorists somewhat hesitantly opened their own 'juvenile' or minor seminary only in 1870, following the example of the French province.³⁹ A great wave of orders and congregations arriving in the Netherlands was yet to come, from Germany as a result of the *Kulturkampf*, and from France after Émile Combes's anticlerical laws. Subsequently, cheap minor and major seminaries were in much greater supply.⁴⁰ But when Van Rossum was young, Kuilenburg and the other diocesan minor seminaries were the most obvious choice for boys who wanted to become priests.

There may have been another reason for Van Rossum's departure. On 22 March 1873, some three weeks before he left Kuilenburg, his older brother was dismissed from the Brothers of Maastricht. The annals of this congregation give lack of suitability for the religious life as the reason.⁴¹ It must have been a bitter disappointment for his younger brother. A few months previously, in his poem for his sister quoted above, Willem had written of his gratitude to God for having given three of the Van Rossum-Veldwillems children a vocation for his service.⁴² It is possible that Willem felt a moral duty to enter the monastery as an act of penance.

But Van Rossum's choice for the Redemptorists may also have been a decision against the Jesuits, due to his financial circumstances. Although he never articulated this explicitly, his humble origins perhaps made him feel less at ease among the Jesuits than among the Redemptorists, who were known as the "common people's Jesuits".⁴³ Similarly, the Jesuits may not have considered Van Rossum a suitable candidate for their Society, due to his social background and delicate health. At least there is no indication that the Jesuits were keen to recruit Van Rossum, as they were in the case of Jan Kronenburg.⁴⁴

The president of Kuilenburg at the time, Petrus Prinzen S.J., was effusive in his praise of Kronenburg in his testimonial letter in 1872. He declared that "Joannes

39 Herman J.J. Janssen, 'Geschiedenis van het "Juvenaat" van de Nederlandse Provincie. Eerste gedeelte. Van de oprichting tot en met het directeurschap van pater J. Kronenburg, 1870-1915', in: *MHPN-CSSR*, 3(1951), 76-86, 107-110, 175-184; 4(1952), 121-128, 161-166 (no further issues published).

40 Jan Roes, Hans de Valk, 'A World Apart? Religious Orders and Congregations in the Netherlands', in: *Religious Institutes in Western Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Historiography, Research and Legal Position*. Ed. by Jan De Maeyer, Sofie Leplae, Joachim Schmiedl (Leuven 2004), 135-162. Twenty German and ten French institutes came to the Netherlands between 1851 and 1900, and ten German and thirty-eight French between 1901 and 1950.

41 Goswin Jägers, *Fraters die ooit hun noviciaat begonnen in de Congregatie van de FIC in de periode 1840-2001*, Maastricht 2001; ENK, *Archief van de Broeders van de Onbevleete Ontvangenis van de Maagd Maria (FIC)*, no. 42: 1838-1889, f 372.

42 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 8-9.

43 Jan Y.H.A. Jacobs, *Werken in een dwarsverband. Een portret van de gezamenlijke Nederlandse priesterreligieuzen 1840-2004* (Nijmegen 2010), 16-17; 30-31.

44 Rome, Archivum Generale Historicum Redemptoristarum (AGHR), *Uncatalogued miscellaneous papers*, H. Schäfer, 'Levensschets van Pater J.A.F. Kronenburg Redemptorist (1853-1940). Ad usum strictae privatum CSSR' (manuscript, dated Nijmegen 1940).

Kronenburg from Zutphen had applied himself to studies in the aforesaid seminary for nearly 6 years with exemplary zeal and the most positive results. His religious comportment here was such that without fail he merited the full satisfaction of his superiors, and invariably edified and encouraged his fellow students.”⁴⁵ By comparison, Willem van Rossum’s testimonial letter, dated 11 April 1873 and written by the new president, Jacobs, was more sparing in its praise. Jacobs wrote that Van Rossum had successfully followed the humanities course for five and a half years, and he commended him for his piety and moral integrity. Jacobs used precisely the same formula for other students who left the college before completing the course.⁴⁶

At eighteen years of age, Willem van Rossum left Kuilenburg, having received a thorough education from capable teachers, a formation that he could rely on for the rest of his life.⁴⁷ He gives the impression of having been a serious candidate for the priesthood: a clever and hard worker, a good speaker but without any inclination for drama, not a natural leader but a modest man, focused on prayer and devotion, and with a strong sense of duty towards God.

The contacts he made at the minor seminary with later priests of the archdiocese of Utrecht, including the future archbishop Henricus van de Wetering, and with the Jesuits would stand him in good stead. We may also assume that his years in Kuilenburg fed his love for the pope and the universal church centred on Rome. Moreover, he learned to solve problems according to the methods of the Jesuits, according to whom the end sometimes justified the means. Lastly, the connection he formed in the college with Jan Kronenburg would come to play an important role in his career as a Redemptorist. They would be friends, but also rivals.

45 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6194: testimonial letter of 26 April 1872.

46 *Ibid.*: testimonial letter of 11 April 1873: “Seseque cum pietate in Deum tum morum integritate quam plurimum commendavit.”

47 *150 jaar klein seminarie Aartsbisdom Utrecht*, 3.

Redemptorist formation

1 Choosing the Redemptorists

Willem van Rossum left Kuilenburg minor seminary on 11 April 1873, and a month later, on 15 May, became a postulant with the Redemptorists, officially the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (C.Ss.R.).¹ Shortly afterwards, on 16 June, he began his noviciate in the same primitive building on Kapellerpoort in Roermond. A few months later, on 28 October, the novices were moved to a better location in Saint Joseph's monastery in 's-Hertogenbosch.²

Like everyone who wanted to become a Redemptorist, Willem was asked to write down his motives for joining the congregation. This probably happened towards the end of the noviciate. As writing this so-called curriculum vitae was compulsory for every novice, the resulting accounts were no doubt coloured by the experiences and expectations they had of the congregation. Most of his fellow novices said they were attracted by the parish missions that the Fathers gave. In comparison to the curricula vitae of other aspiring Redemptorists such as Mathias Tulkens, Johannes Lohmeijer, Frans ter Haar and Jan Kronenburg, Van Rossum's essay described the motives for his choice more elaborately and with greater deliberation.³

Kronenburg, for instance, wrote that he had initially preferred the Jesuits and disliked the Redemptorists. Whereas his choice was essentially a matter of coincidence, Willem van Rossum said that he had been attracted to the congregation since attending one of their parish missions in Zwolle as a child. From that moment on, he wanted 'to become what they were'. This feeling had always stayed with him, with varying degrees of intensity, but it was rekindled whenever he read the writings or a life of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists.

Van Rossum said that he was drawn specifically by the sober life and strict discipline of the Redemptorists, two aspects he considered "particularly suited to atone for my former sins". He did not say what sins specifically he had in mind. He also felt

1 A previous version of chapters 3, 4 and 5 – in a different translation – was published as: Vefie Poels, "A Desire to Become What They Were": Willem van Rossum as a Redemptorist Before his Roman Years (1873–1895)', in: *SHCSR*, 62(2014), 151–245.

2 Alfons Strijbos, 'De geschiedenis van ons noviciaat', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 6(1954), 6–11.

3 ENK, ANPR: personal files of Mathias Tulkens (no. 12358), Johannes Lohmeijer (no. 12164), Frans ter Haar (no. 12035) and Jan Kronenburg (no. 12126).



Willem van Rossum at his profession as a Redemptorist

attracted by their marked devotion to the Virgin Mary and the Marian activities they pursued. After praying to Jesus and Mary for more than a month, he had imagined himself on his deathbed, as his confessor had advised him to do. "I reflected once more on my motives, then asked myself, in what state would I be most at ease when dying? And my reply was: as a Redemptorist."⁴

In order to understand why the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer exercised such powers of attraction over young men at the time, it is necessary to look more closely at the history of this congregation in the Netherlands.

2 The Redemptorists in the Netherlands

The first Redemptorists to arrive in the country established themselves in Wittem in 1836. This village was located in the part of the south-eastern province of Limburg that had initially belonged to Belgium after the 1830 Belgian Revolution against King William I, but was transferred to the Netherlands after the Belgian-Dutch peace treaty of 1839. It was very close to the Prussian border, specifically to the Rhineland and Westphalia. The members of the new community hailed from various European countries.⁵ Clement Mary Hofbauer had first brought the Redemptorists from Italy across the Alps in 1785. The congregation subsequently spread via Warsaw, Alsace and Austria to the Low Countries. The first Belgian house was in Rumillies near Tournai (1831), and was followed by houses in Liège (1832), Sint-Truiden (1833) and Wittem.⁶

According to the historian L. J. Rogier, no religious order or congregation contributed more to the mid-nineteenth-century revival of Catholicism in the Netherlands than the Redemptorists.⁷ More recently, other historians have similarly pointed to the rapid growth of this congregation's influence.⁸ Rogier ascribed their suc-

4 ENK, ANPR, 8530: 'Curriculum vitae'; Vernooij, *Cardinal Willem van Rossum, C.S.R.* The spiritual exercise described here looks very much like the one included in *Bereiding tot den dood door den zaligen Alphonsus Maria de Liguori* (Ghent 1836), 233-235.

5 For the history of the Dutch province, see Theo de Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul. Het verhaal van een grootseminarie. Wittem 1836-1968*, Wittem 2007; Bert van Dijk, Theo Saleminck, *Tussen droom en daad. Beeld van anderhalve eeuw Redemptoristen in Nederland*, Nijmegen 2000; Eric Corsius, *Een vrij en bevrijdend leven. Een theologisch onderzoek naar de geschiedenis van de praktische en reflexieve arbeid der Redemptoristen in Nederland in het licht van de subjectdiscussie in de theologie, 1833-1990*, Kampen 1999; Henri Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem. Een bijdrage tot onze vaderlandsche kerkgeschiedenis 1836-1936*, Roermond-Maaseik 1939. There is unfortunately no general history of the Dutch province, but various articles in *MHPN-CSR* offer valuable background information, even though they cover a rather eclectic selection of subjects.

6 Jean Beco, 'Les Rédemptoristes en Belgique', in: *SHCSR*, 55(2007) 1, 3-83 and 2, 273-345.

7 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 239-243.

8 Otto Weiss, *Deutsche oder römische Moral? - oder: Der Streit um Alfons von Liguori. Ein Beitrag zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen Romanismus und Germanismus im 19. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg 2001), 35-36; Jacobs, *Werken in een dwarsverband*, 16-17 and 30-31.

cess to the union of contrasts in the nature and character of their founder, Alphonsus Liguori. Although an aristocrat himself, he was also a man of the people; he was a lawyer and a theologian, a rational intellectual, but also a man of feeling. He combated heresy mercilessly, but his attitude to sinful men and women was meek and forgiving. His views stood somewhere halfway between Catholic Romanticism and ultramontanism. Alphonsus attempted to create a moral theology that would simultaneously satisfy the divine law and the reality of human freedom. These complementary characteristics allowed the Redemptorists to play a leading role in the development of Dutch Catholicism during the nineteenth century.⁹

As has been seen, the societal and political dominance of the Dutch Reformed Church had been contested since the beginning of the nineteenth century, as the Catholic community became increasingly politically conscious. The constitution of 1848 affirmed the separation of church and state, and also abrogated the ‘right of *placet*’, removing the state’s involvement in episcopal appointments. This made it possible for the Catholic church to freely appoint bishops, thus clearing the way for the restoration of the hierarchy in 1853.¹⁰ Catholics increasingly felt confident enough to advertise their religious affiliation, and clergy and women religious no longer had to operate away from the lime-light. For the newly appointed bishops, the challenge was to create unity in the new church province. The archpriests and parish priests of old had been used to acting like ‘little popes’, deciding liturgical and doctrinal issues on the basis of their own



*Devotional picture of Alphonsus
Maria Liguori (c. 1800)*

9 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 239–243; see also Corsius, *Een vrij en bevrijdend leven*; C.E.M. Struyker Boudier, *Wijsgerig leven in Nederland, België en Luxemburg 1880–1980*. Vol. 4, *Een zwerm getuigen*, chapter 3, ‘De redemptoristen’ (Nijmegen/Baarn [1988]), 61–106.

10 M.H. Mulders, ‘De Redemptoristen en het herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie in Nederland’, in: *MHPN-CSSR*, 5(1953), 40–64.

preferences.¹¹ Some were rigorists in their religious beliefs and were labelled 'semi-Jansenists'; others were accused of being laxists.¹²

Apart from this fragmentation in the new church province, Archbishop Zwijzen and his colleagues also faced difficult relations with various Protestant denominations. They were particularly cautious because the erection of the new dioceses had led to a brief but ferocious explosion of anti-Catholicism, the so-called April Movement of 1853. For decades, Catholics trod carefully and avoided anything that could provoke the Calvinists. And yet the new diocesan structure was a strong stimulus for the Catholic community on its way to claiming equality.

The Redemptorists believed they had a great role to play in this drive towards uniform structures and in bringing about the revival of the Dutch Catholic church. After Wittem, they established a house in the capital, Amsterdam, in 1850. Despite the popular belief that this city was home only to 'Protestants and liberals', some twenty percent of the Amsterdam population at the time were Catholics.¹³ Further monasteries were founded in 's-Hertogenbosch (1854), Roermond (1863) and Roosendaal (1868). The Redemptorists had three strong points that helped them establish their influence and reputation: their parish missions, the translation and dissemination of the works of Saint Alphonsus Liguori, and their special relationship with the diocesan clergy. These activities also affected Van Rossum's choice to join the congregation, as well as his later activities as a Redemptorist.

Van Rossum mentioned specifically in his curriculum vitae that he felt drawn to the Redemptorists' parish missions. These missions normally lasted ten to twelve days and followed a fixed programme of sermons, Masses and confessions. The subjects to be treated during these sermons were mortal sin, confession, death, judgement, hell, the Virgin Mary, and prayer.¹⁴ Parish missions were part of a wider movement of religious revival in Europe and North America, and in their nature and motivation were not unlike the Great Awakening taking place within Protestantism in

11 H. de Valk, 'Meer dan een plaats. De keuze van Utrecht als aartsbisdom in 1853', in: Vis, Janse (eds.), *Stafen storm*, 37–63, at 40–42.

12 Various authors have pointed out that Alphonsus was no less zealous than the Jesuits in his opposition to Jansenism, so called after the theologian Cornelius Jansenius (1585–1638): Giuseppe Cacciatore, *S. Alfonso de' Liguori e il Giansenismo. Le ultime fortune del moto giansenistico e la restituzione del pensiero cattolico nel secolo XVIII* (Florence 1942), 177–222; E. Rosa, 'S. Alfonso Maria de Liguori e la lotta contro il Giansenismo', in: *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 90(1939), no. 1, 97–106, 214–223. The Jansenists had argued against the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception of Mary and papal infallibility, two causes of which Alphonsus had been an ardent protagonist.

13 Thomas H. von der Dunk, 'De katholieken en hun kerken in Amsterdam tussen 1795 en 1853', in: J.D. Snel (ed.), *En God bleef toch in Mokum. Amsterdamse kerkgeschiedenis in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw* (Delft 2000), 141–212.

14 Mulders, 'De volksmissies der Redemptoristen', 136–137 and 175; Corsius, *Een vrij en bevrijdend leven*, 166–181.

the United States at the time.¹⁵ The Redemptorists played an important part in the Catholic version of this revival movement. According to Alphonsus Liguori in a 1734 letter, their missions were so successful “because we give them in a manner different from that of other congregations”.¹⁶ For ordinary Catholics, parish missions were usually their first introduction to the Redemptorists, who conducted their first mission in the Low Countries in late 1833 in Wittem, in a region with strong German, Belgian and Dutch links.

The mission, which was preached in German, attracted a great deal of attention. It lasted nearly three weeks due to the overwhelming popular interest, with people coming from as far afield as Aachen and Cologne. According to Henri Mosmans, the best orator was Father Ludwig, an Alsatian, “who kneaded hearts like a potter kneads his clay”.¹⁷ There were three sermons every day, at nine in the morning and three in the afternoon, and the third in the evening, which was repeated the next morning. The penetrating sermons preached during the mission were meant to bring the audience to contrition, and then to offer them salvation: hope and faith in God’s grace would lead to forgiveness and redemption. Penitents flocked to the confessional in great numbers after the sermons. Assisted by twenty priests from the deanery of Gulpen, the Redemptorists heard confessions every day from 6 am to 12 and from 3 pm to 8.30 pm. The final sermon was given on 7 January 1834 and was attended by six or seven thousand people. The following day a ceremony was held to erect the ‘mission cross’ that faced the main entrance to Wittem parish church.

According to Mosmans, the mission unmistakably exerted an edifying influence on the community: the people received communion more frequently and more worthily, they prayed more, and those who had been leading a life of vice were converted. Soon new missions were organised elsewhere. On some occasions this led to rioting, for instance in Venlo, where Belgian officers disrupted a meeting, allegedly at the instigation of Freemasons.¹⁸ A more serious incident occurred in 1851, when the congregation in the packed church of Bommel panicked and three people were crushed.¹⁹

Bernard Hafkenscheid (1807–1865) was a renowned and charismatic preacher. Born in Amsterdam as the son of a paint dealer, he decided to become a priest. After attending the minor seminary of Hageveld, he went to Rome at the age of twenty to complete his studies at the Collegium Romanum. One of his fellow students there

15 J.P. Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism. The American Experience 1830–1900*, Notre Dame 1978.

16 Maurice De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists* (Leuven 1956), 42, 68–69.

17 Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem*, 22–40, at 27.

18 *Ibid.*, 39. See M.H. Mulders, ‘De volksmissies der Redemptoristen in Nederland’, in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 5(1953), 131–186.

19 Laurentius Dankelman, ‘Een gestoorde missie’, in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 7(1955), 181–182.

was Vincenzo Gioacchino Pecci, later Pope Leo XIII, with whom he appears to have become good friends. Hafkenscheid joined the Redemptorists in Rome and made his vows in 1833.²⁰

Rogier contended that Father Bernard outshone all his fellow Redemptorists in several ways. His pulpit oratory was fervid, not to say demagogic.²¹ It must indeed have been effective, as the Dutch anticlerical Protestant press described him as a 'former actor' of 'medieval zeal', who hawked holy pictures to the superstitious and uneducated masses like a market vendor in his stall.²² When the *Evangelische Kerkbode* ('Evangelical Church Messenger'), for many years the mouthpiece of anti-Catholicism in the Netherlands, learned in 1848 that he would be sent to America, it responded with delight and invited him to take his entire congregation with him. The journal felt obliged to warn Catholics against the Redemptorists, who were 'actually Jesuits', and were allegedly stirring up a medieval spirit among the Catholic clergy.²³

In the United States, Hafkenscheid again played an important role in spreading the Catholic revival movement. He led the organisation of a group of mission preachers and became the first superior of the American Redemptorist province.²⁴

Hafkenscheid took up his former work again after returning to Europe in the 1850s. He toured the Netherlands as a famed and fiery preacher during the years of Van Rossum's childhood (from about 1855 tot 1865), doing much to increase the popularity of the Redemptorists among the faithful. But it is unlikely that Van Rossum ever actually saw Hafkenscheid at work, as there is no reference to him in the curriculum vitae and he is mentioned only rarely in Van Rossum's writings or letters.

The Redemptorists had somewhat of a monopoly on parish missions in the Netherlands around 1850. Their success remained uncontested for long, and it stimulated the Jesuits and Franciscans to become engaged in similar missionary work.²⁵ In the 1870s, the majority of the *labores externi* (external works) of the province – missions and retreats – was carried out from the monasteries of Amsterdam, 's-Hertogenbosch and Roosendaal. The houses of Wittem and Roermond focused primarily on the formation and training of young men who aspired to join the missionary life of the Redemptorists, and on the *labores interni* (internal works), which were mainly in honour of the Blessed Virgin.²⁶

20 A. Dankelman, 'Paus Leo XIII en pater Bernard', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 3(1951), 187–190. Hafkenscheid visited Pecci on various occasions when the latter was nuncio in Brussels (1843–1846).

21 Boland, *Dictionary*, 150–151; Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 241–243.

22 Mulders, 'Herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie', 53–62.

23 Laurentius Dankelman, 'Amstelodamensia 2', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 2(1950), 33–48, at 41.

24 Dolan, *Catholic Revivalism*, 38–40.

25 Mulders, 'Herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie', 50–52; Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 239.

26 ENK, *ANPR*, no. 3, f 203–337. Wittem became better known in the course of the twentieth century as a place of pilgrimage for Gerard Majella.

In their *curricula vitae*, Van Rossum and other novices like Kronenburg pointed to the influence that the life and work of Alphonsus Liguori had on their choice. His writings were being disseminated rapidly among the Dutch Catholic community and Van Rossum had read several of them.²⁷ Even before the Redemptorists came to Belgium in 1831 and Wittem in 1836, some of his works on meditation, prayer, the Blessed Virgin and visits to the Blessed Sacrament had already been published in Flanders and were thus available in Dutch. The number of editions quickly increased over the course of the 1830s, especially after his canonisation in 1839.

Alphonsus's works were widely read and discussed by students and professors at Dutch seminaries in the 1830s and 1840s. The diocesan clergy initially objected to his ideas. Rigorists among them felt he was too indulgent in moral issues, and that he advocated equiprobabilism in practical ethics. This moral system stipulated that if various arguments concerning a certain ethical duty were all more or less plausible, there was no obligation to choose the strictest one. Alphonsus's approach differed from the 'laxism' of the Jesuits, which was regarded as even more permissive.²⁸ According to some, his system offered an acceptable compromise between rigorism and laxism, but others long believed that Alphonsus's writings, particularly on moral theology, were dangerous for students. However, in the years after Alphonsus's canonisation this clerical mistrust gradually dissipated and his doctrine was increasingly accepted in seminaries.²⁹ Once Alphonsus was made a doctor of the church in 1871, appreciation for and acceptance of his works grew.

According to Rogier, most Dutch Catholics by 1950 regarded the Redemptorists as quite strict in moral issues; it was difficult to imagine at that point that Alphonsus's views had once been branded insufficiently 'rigorist'.³⁰

If we peruse the *Tableau statistique général* in Maurice De Meulemeester's bibliography, it is evident that there was a particular interest in the works of Saint Alphonsus in the Netherlands and Flanders. In 1933, the number of Dutch editions of his works ranked fourth at 1,538, behind the French (5,629)³¹, Italian (3,916) and German editions (3,291), but far ahead of the Spanish (842) and English (797) ones. At that time, most editions were in Latin. This category contained the works regarded

27 Maurice De Meulemeester, *Bibliographie générale des écrivains redemptoristes*, vol. 1: *Bibliographie de S. Alphonse-M. de Liguori* (The Hague/Leuven 1933), 291–306, provides an overview of the 111 works of Alphonsus that had been published in Dutch at that time.

28 For the debate on equiprobabilism and other systems of morality, see E. Corsius, 'Willem van Rossum and the Theological Tradition of the Redemptorists', in: *Life with a Mission*, 38–51.

29 Jacobs, 'De opgang tot het altaar van God', 15. Leuven similarly chose Alphonsus's system; see L. Kenis, 'The Faculty of Theology in the 19th Century on Augustine and Augustinism', in: M. Lamberigts (ed.), *L'Augustinisme à l'ancienne faculté de théologie de Louvain* (Leuven 1994), 413.

30 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 239–243.

31 Alphonsus's ideas were particularly popular in France due to the support of influential ultramontane anti-Jansenists like Bruno Lanteri and Thomas-Marie-Joseph Gousset.

as suitable for the clergy but dangerous for a lay readership, such as the *Theologia Moralis* (also available in French), the *Praxis confessarii* (also in Italian, German and French) and *Praxis et instructio confessariorum* (also in Italian, German, Spanish and French).³² As De Meulemeester has shown, there was some doubt as to whether Alphonsus's works *Selva* (on the dignity and duties of priests) and *Le Glorie di Maria* should be published in Dutch, as they were liable to provoke vehement reactions from Protestants.³³

In addition to his own writings, there was no shortage of biographies of Alphonsus on the market, usually in hagiographical style. Adrianus Bossers translated a French edition in 1856 to encourage Dutch Catholics in "the practice of all virtue".³⁴ Such biographies were very influential. Both Willem van Rossum and Jan Kronenburg affirmed that their reading of a life of Alphonsus had been the determining factor in their decision to become a Redemptorist.

The Redemptorists succeeded after some time in building up a close relationship with the Dutch diocesan clergy. They had to overcome many obstacles, because the archpriests of the Holland Mission and the vicars apostolic in the southern part of the country normally regarded religious as their competitors. The threat was felt all the more keenly after King William II (1840–1849) succeeded to the throne. His father William I (1813–1840) had maintained strict limitations on the activities and growth of orders and congregations, but in 1840 his son permitted the Crosiers, Franciscans, Capuchins and Carmelites to expand their work. The *ligorijnen* or Liguorians, as the Redemptorists were often called in the nineteenth century, gained legal recognition in a royal decree of 28 November 1840, and also received official permission to conduct parish missions. Moreover, William II allowed the Jesuits to take over Kuilenburg minor seminary, whereas William I had regarded them as a 'dangerous order'.³⁵ As we have seen, Willem van Rossum would spend nearly six years at this college.

Like the other orders and congregations, the Redemptorists experienced some resistance from the diocesan clergy, but they were not seen as quite as great a threat as the Jesuits, Dominicans or Franciscans, who had their own parishes like the secular clergy.³⁶ The Redemptorists were reluctant to accept parishes and focused instead on the work of fostering a religious revival among the clergy and the faithful. To fur-

32 De Meulemeester, *Bibliographie*, vol. 1: 'Tableau statistique général', 1–3, II 1–3.

33 *Ibid.*, I, 292.

34 *Leven van den H. Alphonsus de Liguori, Bisschop van St. Agatha der Gothen en Stichter van de Congregatie des Allerheiligsten Verlossers* (Amsterdam 1856), 'Inleiding'.

35 Jacobs, *Werken in een dwarsverband*, 23–31.

36 *Ibid.*

ther this programme, they were keen to found houses in the northern, mainly Protestant part of the Netherlands, particularly in the capital, Amsterdam. They opened a chapel there on 24 November 1850, despite the protests of a number of local clergy, and serious misgivings on the part of the internuncio and vice superior of the Holland Mission, Msgr. Carlo Belgrado, who feared Protestant opposition. This chapel, which opened its doors three years before the restoration of the hierarchy, quickly became a popular place for confessions. A year later, the government's minister of Roman Catholic Worship gave permission to replace the chapel with a new church.³⁷ Relations with certain members of the local clergy remained strained for a while, but when the new church was consecrated by missionary bishop Johannes B. Swinkels c.ss.R., in 1865, almost all diocesan priests in Amsterdam participated in the ceremonies.³⁸

According to clerical rumour, the Redemptorists had tried to prevent the restoration of the hierarchy in 1853. It is unlikely that this story is true, because the Redemptorists set great store by one of its most conspicuous consequences, the tightening of clerical discipline.³⁹ But the rumour continued to do the rounds. To put an end to it, Cardinal Van Rossum asked the archivist of Propaganda Fide, Giuseppe Monticone, in 1928, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the restoration of the hierarchy, to look for relevant documents. Monticone's study showed that the Redemptorists, unlike the Cistercians, Jesuits and Norbertines, had raised no objection at all to the erection of a new governing structure for the church province.⁴⁰

And yet this new structure did pose a number of problems for religious. The bishops sometimes blocked the expansion of their activities because religious claimed exemption from episcopal oversight, so that the bishop had less control over them than over the diocesan clergy. Some secular priests also feared that their parishioners might prefer to attend the oratories of religious houses for confession or Mass, resulting in a loss of influence and income for the secular clergy. The Redemptorists did indeed notice after 1853 that it was not always easy to obtain permission from bishops to open new houses in their dioceses.⁴¹

But they had a friend and advocate in Franciscus Jacobus van Vree (1807–1861), president of Warmond, the major seminary that became the diocesan seminary of Haarlem, and first bishop of Haarlem in 1853. He introduced retreats for his theology students and asked the Redemptorists to preach these. Their performance

37 L. Dankelman, 'Amstelodamensia 1', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 2(1950), 1–14.

38 *Idem*, 'Amstelodamensia 5', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 2(1950), 139. Swinkels had been the first superior of the Anglo-Dutch province and was vicar apostolic of Suriname at the time; see Boland, *Dictionary*, 378–379.

39 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 238–242; Corsius, *Een vrij en bevrijdend leven*, 163–166.

40 Mulders, 'Herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie', 40. Monticone's undated *Promemoria* is in KDC, ROSS, no. 70.

41 Laurentius Dankelman, 'Niet gelukte stichtingen', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 1(1949), 97–102.

was clearly satisfactory, because the congregation was soon charged with giving the annual retreats for all secular priests in every diocese in the country, so that Redemptorists came into close contact with almost all Dutch diocesan priests. They were able to exercise considerable influence over clerical formation and religious mentality, revive clerical piety and stimulate priests' prayer life, for example through recitation of the rosary, thus creating a certain uniformity among the clergy.

As has been seen, the Redemptorists attempted to chart a middle way between rigorism and laxism. They regarded rigoristic priests as arrogant and presumptuous, and considered that the strict approach failed to do justice to the mercy that Saint Alphonsus advocated. On the other hand, they rejected the religious feebleness and leniency that they perceived among other secular priests. It is striking that many diocesan priests wished to join the Redemptorists; they were possibly attracted by the middle course with which the congregation so strongly identified.⁴²

The congregation derived great benefit from its good relations with the bishops and the diocesan clergy during the nineteenth century.⁴³ Towards the end of the century, Alphonsus's *Theologia Moralis* had been introduced in most Dutch seminaries. The first Dutch-Flemish edition (in Latin) was published in 1886–1887 by the Redemptorist Joseph Aertnijs, and for decades this manual was studied by almost every Dutch seminarian.⁴⁴ Aertnijs was also the longstanding editor of the Dutch clergy's 'trade journal', *Nederlandsche Katholieke Stemmen* ('Dutch Catholic Voices'), together with Antonius C.M. Schaepman, president of Rijsenburg, the major seminary of the archdiocese of Utrecht.⁴⁵ This periodical fulfilled the same function in the Netherlands as the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* in Belgium, likewise edited by Redemptorists from 1894 to 1907.⁴⁶

42 Laurentius Dankelman, 'Roepingen tot onze congregatie onder de seculiere priesters', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 5 (1953), 121–130, 190, mentions that 49 diocesan priests joined the Redemptorists between 1833–1906; Mulders, 'Herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie', 50–52. Something similar occurred in the kingdom of Naples during the earliest phase of the history of the congregation: De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 64–65.

43 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 239, 246; Mulders, 'Herstel der bisschoppelijke hiërarchie', 53.

44 ENK, ANPR, no. 34: J. Aertnijs to J. Meeuwissen, 25 August 1901. Joseph Aertnijs (Eindhoven 1828–Wittem 1915) taught philosophy in Wittem almost without interruption from 1860 to 1898. Willem van Rossum and Aertnijs were colleagues from 1883 to 1892, when the former taught dogmatic theology in Wittem. AGHR, 0900: G. Schrauwen, 'Rapport sur le Personnel de la Province Hollandaise, 1887–1900', describes Aertnijs as a simple and peaceable man of great intellectual gifts. He was a good religious, but had no talent for leadership or preaching.

45 According to De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 90–91, W. van Rossum and F. ter Haar played a role in bringing about this partnership. A.C.M. Schaepman, 'In memoriam Plur. Rev. Patris Joseph Aertnijs C.ss.R.', in *Nederlandsche Katholieke Stemmen*, 15 (1915), 210–211. Schaepman remembered Aertnijs as a talented scholar and a hard worker, someone who chose to avoid the limelight.

46 Maurice De Meulemeester, *Histoire sommaire de la Congrégation du T. S. Rédempteur* (Leuven 1950), 185–187. See also Chapter 5.1.

3 A son of Alphonsus: the novice

When Willem van Rossum left Kuilenburg and began postulancy in Roermond, this brought him in touch again with Jan Kronenburg, who was just starting the last month of his noviciate. The two young men both came from old trading towns that had once been part of the so-called Northern Hanseatic League. They had become good friends during their years together in Kuilenburg. In his biography of Kronenburg, Henri Mosmans spoke of a friendship that was as “spontaneous and sincere as that between David and Jonathan”.⁴⁷ Like Kronenburg a year before him, Van Rossum was the only student of the *rhetorica* year to leave Kuilenburg and become a religious priest.

In January 1873, the year Van Rossum began his noviciate, the Dutch Redemptorist province had five houses and 136 members: fifty-eight priests, two priest-postulants, six priest-novices, seventeen seminarians, forty lay brothers, nine novice brothers and four candidates for lay brother. The provincialate, provincial Johannes Schaap’s residence, was in Amsterdam. The so-called *studentate* (major seminary) was in Witem and the *juvenate* (minor seminary) in Roermond, where it had started in 1870 with no more than three pupils. The minor seminary was an initiative of Schaap’s, who feared the competition of the diocesan minor seminaries, which might take the best students and leave the rest for the Redemptorists. To guarantee a supply of good vocations, the province needed its own pre-noviciate college, an idea that gained the support of the Swiss superior general Nicolas Mauron (1818–1893).⁴⁸ In addition, there were houses in ’s-Hertogenbosch and Roosendaal. Suriname, then a Dutch colony, also fell under the province’s remit. It had been assigned to the Dutch Redemptorists as their own mission territory by Propaganda Fide in 1866.⁴⁹

Every year, between six and ten new candidates for the priesthood joined the Dutch province, but typically some of them left again before the end of formation. Most, like Van Rossum, were young students, who came from various minor seminaries or Latin schools.⁵⁰ Others were secular priests or men of a riper age, so-called ‘late vocations’.

47 The friendship between David and Jonathan is described in 2 Samuel 1:26. Mosmans, ‘J.A.F. Kronenburg’, 35. We must ask whether Mosmans was alluding here to more than a friendship. In his undated ‘Aantekeningen door Henri Mosmans CSSR. Jeugdherinneringen aan pater Van Rossum CSSR’ (ENK, ANPR, no. 8530), he notes under point 1: “The first time I saw Father v. Rossum was when I entered the Juvenate (Kapel in ’t Zand). The head boy, Hendrik de Jong, told me to go and ask Father Kronenburg for his blessing, and brought me to his room. I found Father v. Rossum there, too, sitting on the edge of Father Kronenburg’s bed. I, a little boy, was amazed at this familiarity. I can still see the bright sparkle in his eye, his blushing countenance, even though this scene (which took place in Sept. 1881) happened now more than 50 years ago.”

48 For Johannes Henricus Schaap (Amsterdam 1823–Paramaribo 1889), see Boland, *Dictionary*, 353. Schaap asked Mauron’s permission on 26 April 1870. Janssen, ‘Geschiedenis van het “Juvenaat”’.

49 ENK, ANPR, no. 3.

50 Jan J. Dellepoort, *De priesterroepingen in Nederland. Proeve van een statistisch-sociografische analyse* (The Hague 1955), 28–33; Jacobs, ‘De opgang tot het altaar van God’; Latin schools were grammar schools.

One example was Engelbertus Bührs from Amsterdam, who had cared for family members before joining the congregation.⁵¹ One remarkable novice was Charles Warren Currier, who entered in 1874. He was a native of Saint Thomas (one of the Virgin Islands), where the Belgian Redemptorists worked.⁵² He was followed by a number of students from Suriname, mostly sons of colonists, but occasionally sons of Creole mothers.⁵³ Thus, even at the time Van Rossum was a novice, the Dutch Redemptorist province's admissions policy was not limited to Western Europeans only. This was possibly a factor in Van Rossum's later dedication to fostering indigenous priests.

As was the custom at the time, the daily time-table in the noviciate was very strict.⁵⁴ Newcomers were introduced to the rule and constitutions of the congregation, which had been published in Dutch for the first time in 1868.⁵⁵ The rule stipulated that everyone must always carry a copy of the constitutions; they had to be learned by heart and novices were required to meditate on them frequently. In a later edition (1924), superior general Patrick Murray exhorted his subjects to observe the rule and the constitutions very strictly: any Redemptorist who was unable to understand the value of even the most insignificant rule was entirely unworthy to be called a son of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

The rule and the constitutions also show that secrecy was regarded as essential. Breaches of confidentiality were seen as a major cause of conflicts, problems and discord, even in the most harmonious of houses. Confidential letters had to be marked

51 ENK, ANPR, no. 3. Van Rossum received the habit of the order on 16 June 1873, together with Alphonsus Houben, Jacobus Polman and Mathias Tulkens. They were joined later that year by Joannes Baekers, Engelbertus Bührs, Petrus Kreijns and Joannes ten Winkel. Houben and Kreijns were dismissed due to their poor health ("ob sanitatis defectum"). See also ENK, ANPR, no. 11930 (personal file of Engelbertus Bührs): *Curriculum vitae*.

52 Saint Thomas, which became an American territory in 1917, was part of the Danish Antilles at the time. Currier (1857–1918) had a Dutch mother and a father from New York State. He worked in Suriname from 1880 to 1892, then left the congregation and went to the United States. He was consecrated first bishop of Matanzas in Cuba by Cardinal Falconio in Rome in 1913; not by his former class fellow Van Rossum, who was then not yet a bishop. Currier resigned for health reasons after a year and died in Baltimore in 1918.

53 ENK, ANPR, no. 12272 (personal file of François Henri Rikken). Rikken (1863–1908) was the son of a Dutch soldier and Maria Elisabeth Jantke, a Creole mother. He was professed in 1886 and ordained a priest in 1890. He was reputedly very talented and spoke three different variants of Chinese. *Ibid.*, no. 12209 (personal file of F.H. Moorrees). Franciscus Henricus Moorrees (1870–1888) was the son of a Dutch army medic and a Curaçao mother, Josephina Agostini. The file contains a lengthy obituary, two years after his entry, written by the prefect of students, Van Rossum.

54 ENK, ANPR, no. 49: *Regula Novitiorum congregationis Sanctissimi Redemptoris*, Rome 1856. *Regel der Novicen van de Congregatie des Allerh. Verlossers. Uit het Latijn vertaald, en uitgegeven met verlof van den Hoogw. P. Nicolaas Mauron, Generaal en rector major derzelfde congregatie*, Gulpen 1885, with the additional text: 'De ware Redemptorist. Door den H. Alphonsus zelven geschetst.' See also the *Manuale Novitiorum Congregationis ss. Redemptoris*, Rome 1856.

55 *Regels en constitutiën van de Congregatie des Allerheiligsten Verlossers. Eerste en tweede deel. Uit het Italiaansch en het Latijn. Uitgegeven met verlof van den hoogw. P. Nicolaus Maurin [sic], Generaal en Rector Major derzelfde Congregatie*, 's-Hertogenbosch 1868.

Soli, were not to be opened or read by anyone but the addressee, and actually had to contain secrets. Faults against the rule were classified into four categories: light, grievous, very grievous and most grievous. The fourth category included revealing occurrences in the congregation to outsiders, specifically if this information was likely to cause scandal or wonder, to harm the congregation or any of its members, or hinder its success or welfare.⁵⁶

Every Redemptorist was encouraged to strive for evangelical self-denial and to give up their own will, even though this was considered to be beyond human power. But God's mercy and grace made it possible, as Saint Paul had said, 'I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me' (Gal 2:20).⁵⁷ Mortification and asceticism were regarded as important instruments to achieving an ever-higher state of self-denial, on the way to perfection and holiness. As was the case in many orders and congregations, special forms of mortification of the flesh were practiced on Fridays, such as penances and the chastisement and disciplining of the body. The practice of the midnight office, fasting, the wearing of undergarments made of rough fabric, hair-shirts or a cilice (a metal chain with sharp, inward-pointing spikes that was worn around the leg), or self-flagellation with the so-called discipline (a rope scourge with knots) were common until far into the twentieth century. Van Rossum's chain cilice was kept in Wittem for many years.⁵⁸ In addition, there were exercises in humility, such as the chapter of faults, where minor transgressions against the rules of the community (such as breaking a cup) had to be confessed, and other public penitential practices. The Redemptorists were unique in their habit of adding a bitter herb (wormwood) that spoiled the taste to the soup given to novices. This was a custom said to derive from Alphonsus Liguori himself.⁵⁹

If we are to believe Joseph Drehmann's biography, the harshness of the formation programme and the strictness of novice master Theodorus Langerwerf became too much for Van Rossum. The practice of eating bitter herbs was the straw that broke the camel's back. Drehmann recounts that Van Rossum decided to leave the congregation after a few weeks – he was still a postulant. In the days just before he was due to receive the habit, he confided his intention to leave to his friend Kronenburg: "I can't bear it here any longer", he said, "I want to leave". "Have you lost your mind?" was Kronenburg's robust reply, and Willem stayed.⁶⁰

56 *Regels en constitutiën van de Congregatie des Allerheiligsten Verlossers*, 36–39, 149, 161.

57 *Constitutiën en regels der Congregatie van priesters onder den titel van den Allerheiligsten Verlosser. Met machtiging van den Hoogw. P. Rector Major Patricius Murray, in het Nederlandsch vertaald* (Rome / Esschen 1924), no. 267 and no. 285.

58 This implement is currently in KDC, inv. no. COVW-1760.

59 Emke Bosgraaf, *Gebroken wil, verstorven vlees. Een historisch-psychologische studie over versterving in het Nederlandse kloosterleven (1950–1970)* (Groningen 2009), 115–142, at 128.

60 Drehmann, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 18.

We do not know whether Drehmann's version of events is correct, and it seems to be at odds with Van Rossum's confident decision to join the Redemptorists described in his curriculum vitae, and indeed with Drehmann's own claim that Van Rossum's most characteristic feature was an iron will.⁶¹ But it is possible, of course, that he went through a brief period of doubt, as he would again later, in Wittem. At any rate, he himself never alluded to any presumed moment of indecision.

There is only one extant letter in which Van Rossum mentions his noviciate: a letter to Jan Kronenburg written in 1915, in which Van Rossum recounts his first encounter with Petrus Oomen. Oomen, then rector of Wittem, came to Roermond to visit the novices in 1873. When he was introduced to the young novice Van Rossum, Oomen blessed him and embraced him with particular warmth. "From that moment on", Van Rossum wrote, "I had great love for him and placed unlimited trust in him (...) and I also enjoyed his particular care and a certain predilection." Oomen was one of the driving forces behind the Redemptorist expansion in the Netherlands at the time. His sway over the course of the congregation was great, as was his influence on the careers of his two most promising pupils: Jan Kronenburg and Willem van Rossum.⁶²

4 Petrus Oomen

Petrus Oomen, provincial of the Dutch province from 1874 to 1887, was a strong-willed and dominant superior. He preferred to keep at an emotional distance from his subjects and was therefore not much loved. Martinus Lathouwers, a young Redemptorist at the time, remembered the rather cool welcome that Oomen was given by the Amsterdam community when he returned from Rome in 1909. He had just spent fifteen years as a member of the Redemptorist general curia as procurator general. "If we are honest", Lathouwers wrote in 1950, "we must acknowledge that Father Oomen was not greatly loved. Father Kronenburg and Father Van Rossum were great friends of his, but Father Oomen really wasn't loved by, or popular with many in the Province, although of course his many achievements were respected."⁶³ Who was this successful but unbeloved superior?

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶² KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 13 April 1915. Kronenburg had asked for information because he was compiling a biographical sketch of Oomen, who died in 1910; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 20–21; Laurentius Dankelman, 'Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum. Studiën te Wittem (1874–1880)', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 6(1954), 191–196, at 193.

⁶³ Martinus Lathouwers, 'Iets over het karakter van pater P. Oomen', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 2(1950), 94–95.



*Petrus Oomen, provincial superior
and Van Rossum's mentor*

Petrus Oomen was born in Breda in 1835. He attended the seminary of his native diocese but decided in 1865 to become a Redemptorist.⁶⁴ The then Dutch provincial, Joannes Swinkels, discussed his qualities with superior general Mauron, describing him as an exceptional young man, both intellectually and morally. Oomen became prefect of students in Wittem and rector of this house in 1868. Mauron appointed him provincial superior of the Netherlands in 1874.⁶⁵

Oomen ruled the Dutch province during one of the most promising periods in its history. The congregation flourished and over the coming decades would become one of the most important religious institutes of the country. Between 1870 and 1900, the Redemptorists succeeded in attracting more candidates than any Dutch diocese, and they also outperformed other orders and congregations.⁶⁶ There were twenty students in Wittem in 1874, but five years later this number had more than doubled to forty-four. New houses were opened, for instance in Rotterdam, and the congregation's devotional activities flourished. At the instigation of the superior general, the province was placed under the special patronage of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1875, and a year later steps were taken to boost the devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.⁶⁷

64 Due to his background, Oomen was a serious candidate for the episcopal see of Breda in 1885, which was most uncommon for religious in the Netherlands at the time. See A. Sampers, 'Documenta', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 1(1949), 28–29, who refers to correspondence between Msgr. Jacobini, secretary of Propaganda Fide, and Nicolas Mauron, 11 April 1885.

65 Mulders, 'Levensschets Petrus Oomen CSsR', 33–92. See also J. Kronenburg, 'Stille krachten. (Levensschets van den Hoogerw. Pater P. Oomen)', in: *De volksmissionaris*, 36(1914/15) and 37(1915/16), passim.

66 H. van Mierlo, C. Stuart, *De seminaries van de Redemptoristen in Nederland. Een onderzoek naar het rendement van de opleiding* (n.p., n.d. [c. 1961]), 26; Dellepoort, *Priesterroepingen in Nederland*, 45–47. Religious priests were beginning to outnumber the secular clergy in the Netherlands at the time, and they retained the lead for many years. Whereas 573 secular priests were ordained between 1881 and 1890 as opposed to 343 regular priests, during the following ten years these figures were 663 and 669 respectively. The disparity was greatest in the decade between 1941 and 1950: 884 diocesan versus 3,001 religious priests. Although the number of ordinations has subsequently plummeted dramatically, the balance is currently once again in favour of the secular clergy.

67 De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 43, 229; ENK, ANPR, no. 3.

Internationally, too, the congregation thrived, after Alphonsus's canonisation and proclamation as doctor of the church. During General Mauron's term of office, from 1855 to 1893, the congregation grew from approximately five hundred to more than three thousand members.⁶⁸ In 1875, Victor Dechamps, archbishop of Mechelen and former prefect of studies and professor of dogmatic theology in Wittem, was the first Redemptorist to receive the cardinal's hat. Dechamps visited Wittem in the company of Bishop Johann Theodor Laurent (1804–1884), vicar apostolic emeritus of Luxemburg (1841–1848) and a warm friend of the Redemptorist community, on 21 June 1876. We do not know whether this first encounter with a cardinal made any particular impression on the youthful Van Rossum.

Besides the expansion of the congregation, the Dutch provincial busied himself during these years with ensuring that the 'sons of Alphonsus' would receive a thorough spiritual and religious formation. In Oomen's view, the figure of Alphonsus had to be at the forefront of all aspects of the religious life. In one of his first circular letters as provincial, on 30 December 1874, he instructed the Dutch Redemptorists to adopt certain devotions "to further the piety of a Christian life" recommended by the founder, even though this meant abolishing the hitherto customary daily prayers to Saint Joseph.

Similarly, Oomen advocated the daily exercise of the stations of the cross, probably accompanied by the recitation of reflections from the writings of the Redemptorist Egidius Vogels (1804–1877), which were popular at the time.⁶⁹ According to Oomen, lack of time was not an acceptable excuse to omit the corresponding prayers, "because if a single glance at the cross already has such a salutary effect upon the soul, as Saint Alphonsus teaches, the meditations of the stations of the passion, even if brief, cannot possibly remain without fruit".⁷⁰ Oomen's exhortations appear to have fallen on fertile ground with Van Rossum. The stations of the cross and meditations on the passion would continue to occupy an important place in his religious life, particularly after he received the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, with its precious treasure of relics of the cross, as his titular church. In the last years of his life, he wrote a little treatise on Alphonsus's meditations on the passion of Christ, which was published posthumously.⁷¹

68 Boland, *Dictionary*, 230–231.

69 Egidius Vogels, *Twee en veertig kruisweg-oefeningen, of de ziel vereenigd met Jesus op den kruisweg*, Amsterdam 1874 (5th edition).

70 ENK, ANPR, no. 32: circular letter, 30 December 1874.

71 W. van Rossum, *Sint Alphonsus' lijdensgedachten*, Roermond/Maaseik 1933 (36 p.; facsimile of the handwritten text).

The policy of Nicolas Mauron and the general curia in Rome was to further recognition of Saint Alphonsus in the church as much as possible, both within and outside the congregation. Petrus Oomen believed he and the Dutch province had an important role to play in this. Every Redemptorist should contribute to it according to the measure of his capabilities: “No one should be better informed than a Redemptorist about the doctrine and sentiments of Saint Alphonsus in every respect: his biography, ascetical works, doctrinal works, moral works.”⁷² Talented Dutch Redemptorists and students had to prepare for their contribution to spreading, defending and illuminating the thought of the saintly doctor of the church, even at the price of their health.

One example of Oomen’s strategy is the way he put Jan Kronenburg’s talents to use. We have already seen that Kronenburg was especially appreciated for his literary gifts. During his first year in the studentate, when Oomen was still rector of Wittem, Kronenburg was given his first commission: to translate Alphonsus’s hymns from French into Dutch. The translation was published in book form in 1874 and comprised fifty-six hymns, mainly on the passion of Jesus and devotion to the Blessed Virgin.⁷³ And in 1874, Kronenburg was chosen to present a philosophical discourse.⁷⁴ At the end of the academic year of 1873–1874, Franciscus Godts, prefect of Wittem, used superlatives to describe him: a man of extraordinary intellect and an excellent poet, who effortlessly passed all subjects, of cheerful, open and docile character, without pretensions despite his great talents, pleasant in conversation, pious and charitable. He would make a first-rate professor in the future.⁷⁵ But all this hard work demanded its toll in his second year of philosophy. Kronenburg was totally overworked and frequently suffered heavy bouts of migraine. He had to interrupt his studies in Wittem on doctor’s orders.

In September 1875, Oomen sent Kronenburg to the juvenate (minor seminary) in Roermond. Without referring to the cause of Kronenburg’s exhaustion, he explained to Mauron that this excellent student had been moved because he suffered from migraine. In Roermond, he would teach the twelve students in the juvenate, which, Oomen believed, was not too taxing for him and would distract him.⁷⁶ It was clearly

72 ENK, ANPR, no. 32: circular letters by P. Oomen, 25 January 1887 and 2 February 1887.

73 *Geestelijke liederen van den H. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori. Vrij gevolgd naar de Fransche vertaling van O. Hayois en de daarbij behoorende muziek van E. Deleval, beide priesters van de Congregatie des Allerh. Verlossers*, Amsterdam 1874 (imprimatur 14 April 1874). A handwritten note on the frontispiece of the Nijmegen university library copy, originally from the Redemptorist monastery in Wittem, says: “translated by J.A.F. Kronenburg CSSR”.

74 G. van Nimwegen, ‘Miscellanea. Pater Kronenburg als filosoof’, in: *MHPN-CSSR*, 2(1950), 24–25.

75 AGHR, *Provincia Hollandica (PH) Studentatus*, VI 3 G. 1864–1880 (*PH Stud.*), *Rapports sur le studentat de Wittem 1864–1880, 1873/74*.

76 Van Nimwegen, ‘Pater Kronenburg als filosoof’; AGHR, *PH Stud.*: *Rapports 1874/75*; ENK, ANPR, no. 5079: *annals of the juvenate*, 13 September 1875; AGHR, *Losse archivalia*, Schäfer, ‘Levensschets J.A.F. Kronenburg’, 10.

not regarded as a problem in those days to send young teachers who had not even completed their seminary studies to teach in the juvenate.⁷⁷

Despite the high standards Oomen demanded of him, Kronenburg remained devoted to his mentor.⁷⁸ The same was true for Van Rossum, as the intensive correspondence between them in later years (often marked *solli*) testifies.⁷⁹ But not all Redemptorists were keen on Oomen. Particularly his harsh and demanding style of government proved unpopular. This was especially the case when, at Mauron's instigation, he began to emphasise the importance of the vow of poverty. He took aim frequently at customs that were contrary to poverty and that existed only in the Dutch province, such as taking coffee during afternoon recreation, failure to observe silence at table and in the kitchen, the wearing of slippers inside and regular smoking.⁸⁰

5 The Wittem studentate

When Willem van Rossum entered the Wittem major seminary on 17 June 1874 after completing his noviciate, Oomen had just left to become provincial superior in Amsterdam. There were twenty students in the monastery in Wittem at that time, spread out over six years, as well as nineteen priests (six of whom were German refugees of Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*), thirteen professed lay brothers and three lay servants. Oomen was succeeded as rector by Willem Wulfingh.⁸¹ Franciscus Godts was still prefect of students in June 1874, but he was replaced by the Belgian Ernest Dubois a few months later.⁸²

The Redemptorist seminary in Wittem enjoyed a good reputation and was at this time one of the most important studentates of the congregation. Due to its location on a major intersection of connecting roads between Belgium, the Netherlands

77 Janssen, 'Geschiedenis van het "Juvenaat"', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 4(1952), 121–124; Mosmans, 'J.A.F. Kronenburg', 38–39. As it turned out, Roermond was the right place for Kronenburg. With the sole interruption of the years 1894–1898, his first term as provincial superior, he served as teacher, subprefect, prefect and superior in this Roermond institution for many years until 1915, when he became provincial for the second time. For decades, he formed almost every aspiring Redemptorist at the minor seminary in a manner that earned him the love and respect of the congregation.

78 Kronenburg, 'Stille krachten'.

79 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416. Various confidential letters from P. Oomen to W. van Rossum are marked *Solli*, with the word sometimes underlined three times, and accompanied by the urgent request to destroy the letter after reading it. It is interesting that Van Rossum nonetheless kept them, unlike Oomen, in whose papers the corresponding letters are missing.

80 ENK, ANPR, no. 32: circular letter by P. Oomen, 4 January 1879.

81 Gerardus Schrauwen succeeded Wulfingh as rector of Wittem in 1877.

82 Ernest Dubois (1835–1911) was the superior of the Belgian province from 1892–1894 and was subsequently general consultor under superior general Matthias Raus from 1894–1909. Boland, *Dictionary*, 118.

and Germany, it had been functioning for many years as the international seminary of the Redemptorists outside Italy.⁸³ The purpose of its programme was twofold: to form the religious life of the students and to offer them a solid academic seminary course, in sum, *solī Deo et studiis*, ‘for God and studies alone’.⁸⁴ Wittem seminary was also an important international study centre of the congregation, and its distinguishing characteristic was the strict, literal interpretation of the doctrine of Alphonsus.⁸⁵

At the time of Van Rossum’s arrival, fifty percent of the student population were Dutchmen and the other half were Belgians. In subsequent years, the balance shifted in favour of the Dutch: in 1878, 26 of the 39 students were Dutch and thirteen were Belgian. Eventually the Belgians founded a studentate of their own, in Beauplateau, in September 1882.⁸⁶ The prescribed languages in Wittem were French and Latin. French was spoken during recreation and the weekly walks on Thursdays; Latin was used for teaching. The students were permitted to speak other languages on days without lectures.

During Van Rossum’s years as a student, the daily time-table in Wittem was still the same as when it was fixed in October 1847. The students rose at 4.30 am, attended Mass after a period of personal reflection and prayer, studied for an hour and then had breakfast at 7 o’clock. This was followed by three hours of lectures. There were further periods reserved for study during the day, as well as moments of leisure, meals, and three or four times set aside for various religious exercises, such as silent prayer, *lectio divina*, the weekly chapter of faults and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Lights went out at 9.30 pm.⁸⁷

The first week of the academic year, just after the summer holidays, was reserved for the annual retreat, and the first Friday of every month for recollection. Devotional exercises and prayers occupied an important place in the lives of the students. In the month of May, each morning at 6.30 a hymn was sung to Our Lady of Wittem, whose statue adorned the ‘Round Chapel’; it was replaced in 1889 by an image of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, whose veneration was promoted worldwide by the Redemptorists.

83 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 131–132. All major seminaries of the Redemptorists were called ‘studentates’, a term “ignored by the dictionaries” as De Meulemeester observes (*ibid.*, 66). Wittem also accepted German students up to 1861.

84 De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 53.

85 Corsius, ‘Theological tradition’, 163–166; De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 41–47.

86 ENK, ANPR, no. 3; AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rappports.

87 Dankelman, ‘Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum’, 191–192; De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 35; ENK, ANPR, no. 3 and no. 5678, f 76 ff.

The students spent Sunday mornings in silence and meditation. After attending Mass, they gathered to listen to a conference given by their prefect, a task Van Rossum took very seriously himself when he was prefect of students from 1886 to 1893. He put a lot of time and effort into preparing his conferences, which were renowned for their solid character, as he was accustomed to writing out the text fully. Oomen encouraged him to jot down only the main ideas, and “improvise after having thought and prayed well”. This would give him greater force of persuasion and would save him a lot of tension. “Try it”, was his advice.⁸⁸

Of the nineteen priests in the Wittem community, six served as the professors of the seminary. The composition of the teaching staff changed a few times during the years that Van Rossum was a student there. The two professors who were there for the full six years were the prefect of students, Ernest Dubois, and the professor of moral theology, Joseph Aertnijs. In addition to his scholarly qualities, Aertnijs reputedly had a great talent for training his students how to be good confessors.⁸⁹

The curriculum began with two years of philosophy (based on the scholasticism of Thomas Aquinas) and ‘physica’ (a mixture of mathematics, physics and biology), followed by two years of dogmatic theology (both Thomist and Alphonsian) and biblical exegesis. The last two years were spent on moral theology, canon law and church history. In addition to these subjects, various languages were taught, both modern and ancient, the latter so that the students would be able to read classical and ecclesiastical texts.⁹⁰

Van Rossum began his studies in June 1874 together with three other students, the Dutchman Jacobus Polman and the Belgians Paulus Wittebolle and Joseph Heyndriks. During the remaining two months of the academic year before the summer holidays, they joined the other students, who had nearly finished their first year of philosophy. Philosophy was taught by Henricus Saintrain and physics by Henricus Bruining.⁹¹ Both professors were somewhat at odds with the prevailing academic outlook in Wittem. Bruining, professor of physics since 1869, was removed from his post in 1875 after allegations that he had taught certain modern ideas on the human body and on geology.⁹² He was replaced by Josephus Nuyts.

88 De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 55; ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Amsterdam, 28 February 1887; no. 8530: notes by Henri Mosmans, memories of Fr Van Rossum from his younger years.

89 Dankelman, ‘Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum’, 195.

90 ENK, ANPR, no. 3; J. Vernooij, ‘Cardinal Willem Marinus van Rossum CSsR (1854–1932). A Dutch Son of Alphonsus at the Roman Curia’, in: *Life with a Mission*, 9–25, at 11; Dankelman, ‘Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum’, 191–196; De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 65–66.

91 Dankelman, ‘Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum’, 192; ENK, ANPR, no. 5678, 408.

92 AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rapports 1874/75. There is no reference to the content of these ideas.

The affair that cost Saintrain his job was testimony to the drive that was underway to give precedence to Thomas Aquinas and his scholastic method in philosophy. Mosmans and Dankelman record that neo-scholasticism had been introduced in Wittem as early as 1857, and its position was strengthened when the Thomist Matteo Liberatore's new handbook was prescribed in 1862, on the orders of superior general Mauron. The Thomistic method had thus become prevalent in Wittem years before Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* appeared in 1879, with its call to restore Christian philosophy according to the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas.⁹³ Saintrain, who held doctorates in philosophy and letters from Leuven, had been appointed to teach philosophy in Wittem in 1873. But he resigned this position a year later, apparently because he was unwilling to embrace Thomism to the degree required.⁹⁴

Drehmanns's biography of Van Rossum contains a slightly different account of Saintrain's departure: he has Van Rossum and other students protesting against the absence of Saint Thomas in the philosophy course. They supposedly demanded that "true philosophy" should be taught. According to Drehmanns, it "was due in particular to Brother Van Rossum that Thomas and his philosophy came to occupy the place they deserve in Wittem".⁹⁵ Given that Van Rossum had only recently arrived in 1874 and had taken Saintrain's classes for at best two months, it seems unlikely that he would have engaged in any kind of protest against his professor. Nor do the Redemptorist archives contain proof that such a protest was made. But the story was convenient to Drehmanns at a time of rigorism in the Catholic church, as it showed that Van Rossum's views were Thomistic from the start and never deviated from the official line.

Saintrain's successor was the German philosopher Alphonsus Jansen, who taught this subject from 1874 to 1890. Van Rossum took church history (1878–1879) and canon law (1879–1880) with Hector Nimal, Scripture with Theodulus Heintz, and dogmatic theology with Joannes van Asten, both from 1876 to 1878.⁹⁶

According to Drehmanns, Willem van Rossum was a student of exceptional diligence and dedication.⁹⁷ And in fact, his results throughout these years were excel-

93 Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem*, 205n; Dankelman, 'Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum', 194–196. De Meulemeester, *Histoire sommaire*, 186, who also mentions that every student in Wittem was given his own copy of Thomas's *Summa theologica* from 1879 onwards.

94 Struyker Boudier, *Wijsgerig leven*, 64; this author also contends that Oomen, who taught philosophy from 1860–1862, had reservations with regard to the scholastic method.

95 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 20. See also Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem*, 205n and Dankelman, 'Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum', 194–196. They objected to Drehmanns's claim, all the more so because he erroneously attributed the unorthodox teachings to Ernest Dubois rather than Saintrain. It has been suggested that the Holy Office kept a file on Dubois, see ENK, ANPR, no. 7696: Jan Olav Smit to J. Drehmanns, 30 December 1935.

96 Dankelman, 'Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum', 194.

97 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 20–21.

lent: his reports always have the qualification *excellenter*, except for one *optime* after two months of philosophy with Saintrain in 1874, and, remarkably, only a *bene* in 1880, given by Aertnijs for his final thesis in moral theology.⁹⁸

Van Rossum took his final exams together with ten other students, five Dutchmen and five Belgians, from Friday 3 September (his 26th birthday) to Monday 6 September 1880. It was customary that six theses were presented at the same time as the exams, but not necessarily by students who were also sitting the exams. Thus, Van Rossum had defended a thesis in dogmatic theology in 1878, and, as has been seen, in moral theology in 1880. The student who presented a thesis was exempted from sitting the exam in that subject. The annual defence of the theses was one of the highpoints of the academic year. Announcements and invitations were sent to all Redemptorist houses in the Netherlands. In addition to the Dutch and Belgian provincials, the proceedings were attended by many local rectors, who came not only from the Netherlands but also from the neighbouring countries.⁹⁹

In addition to the academic curriculum, the years in the studentate were intended for formation to the priesthood. Van Rossum received the tonsure and the four minor orders of porter, lector, exorcist and acolyte on 6 October 1874, only three months after his arrival in Wittem.¹⁰⁰ He was ordained a subdeacon in October 1875, and a deacon three years later, on 16 October 1878, followed by ordination to the priesthood at the hands of the Luxembourg bishop emeritus Laurent on 17 October 1879. A memorial card shows that he said his first Mass on 18 October.¹⁰¹

Van Rossum still had a year to go in his seminary programme after ordination. The custom that seminarians were ordained priests before their last exams was one of the privileges or special faculties that had been granted to the Congregation of the Redemptorists by various popes.¹⁰² They enhanced the status of the congregation, but also brought financial benefits, as seminarians who were ordained could say Mass and generate income through the stipends received for doing so.

98 AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rapports 1873/74–1879/80.

99 De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 60–61; ENK, ANPR, nos. 5829–5830. Unfortunately, this list does not contain the titles of Van Rossum's theses. Dankelman, 'Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum', 192, mentions that he defended a philosophical thesis in February 1878 and one on moral theology in February 1879, but the Redemptorist archives have no record of this.

100 AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rapports 1873/74 and 1879/80.

101 ENK, ANPR, no. 3, f 328, 335–337; *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 8–9.

102 ENK, ANPR, no. 53: *Compendium privilegiorum Congregationis ss. Redemptoris ex concessione summorum pontificum Benedicti XIV, Clementis XIII, Clementis XIV, Pii VI, Pii VII et Leonis XII. Recto, et accurato ordine collectorum ad usum patrum ejusdem congregationis* (1840). Another privilege was the right to absolve cases normally reserved to the pope during parish missions. For the Netherlands specifically: ANPR, no. 34: *Facultates quas episcopi Neerlandiae communicare nostris solent*.

One of the duties of the prefect of students was to send the Redemptorist general curia in Rome an annual report on the studentate and on the individual students. After a year in this post, Ernest Dubois's impression was that the general condition of Wittem was most satisfactory. He told the superior general that the 'spiritual state' of the students was excellent. "Among our young men, there is piety, obedience, charity, honesty, trust in the superiors, inner peace, cheerfulness and courage. Their manners do leave something to be desired, and a somewhat greater degree of religious modesty and politeness would not go amiss." He had addressed these minor points for improvement during the annual retreat. The 'scholarly state' was equally good. "Our students love their studies, they apply themselves earnestly to them and like to speak about them amongst themselves." According to Dubois, there had been problems with the professors of physics and philosophy, but the removal of these two men had restored the desired unity within the curriculum, and had therefore also re-established authority over the minds of the students.¹⁰³

The provincial superior, Oomen, never one to take a lenient view, did not agree entirely with Dubois. He regarded the prefect's account of the spiritual and scholarly state of the studentate as too optimistic. He added a number of critical comments to the report for 1874–1875, and did not spare the prefect. Thus, he considered that the lack of authority was due not only to the professors but also to lack of discipline. A number of students had failed to show the required respect for their superiors, as he himself had witnessed. He had even been compelled to reprimand some of them during the exams. He regarded this as a more serious problem than the lack of 'religious modesty and politeness' which Dubois had addressed during the retreat.¹⁰⁴

The prefect of students also sent Rome an assessment of each individual student and his physical and spiritual wellbeing, under the headings of health, character and prospects as a member of the congregation. At the end of the 1873–1874 academic year, Godts, the prefect at the time, described the young Van Rossum as a young man of weak constitution, "not very robust, even though he is not ill". His successor Dubois expressed a similar view throughout the following years: Van Rossum's health was "delicate", and in the report for 1874–1875 Dubois added, "his chest is not well developed".¹⁰⁵

His physical state may have posed somewhat of a risk for the congregation, but his intellectual capacities more than made up for this. As early as 1873, Godts told the superior general that Van Rossum was an excellent student, studious and intelligent, who passed all subjects with ease. Dubois reiterated this message over the

103 AGHR, PH Stud.: Rapports 1874/75.

104 *Ibid.*

105 *Ibid.* The Zwolle orphanage paid Van Rossum's medical and pharmacy bills in the years 1873 and 1874. CO, Archief RK Weeshuis, no. 84, f 241.

years. He praised Van Rossum's penetrating intelligence, just judgement and his enormous appetite for learning: he was a brilliant student in all classes.¹⁰⁶

The prefects' evaluations of Van Rossum's character were usually positive, too. Godts regarded him as "an outstanding young man with a strong desire to grow in perfection, [who] draws great benefit from the spiritual conferences. He is pious, a punctilious observer of the rule."¹⁰⁷ The descriptions for the subsequent years likewise portrayed him as someone conscientiously dedicated to piety and striving for perfection.

But Dubois identified a number of potential problems in his report for 1875–1876, which appears to have been a difficult year for the 21-year-old seminarian. The prefect wrote that Van Rossum's heart was too sensitive, but that he was struggling against his affections. This was liable to endanger his vocation in the future unless he constantly guarded his feelings carefully. In a letter to Kronenburg, Van Rossum later referred somewhat vaguely to "special difficulties" during that time, and to the support he had received from Oomen's wise instructions and consoling words.¹⁰⁸ The problems proved to be of a transient nature, and Dubois had no doubts about Van Rossum's character in the year of his ordination to the priesthood (1879–1880): "ardent, takes his pursuit of perfection very seriously, but is somewhat timorous". Provided he stayed in good health, he would be an excellent teacher and preacher. In short, he was a true asset to the congregation.¹⁰⁹

Willem van Rossum chose a congregation in 1873 that was on the increase worldwide, thanks in part to the fact that its founder, Alphonsus Liguori, had recently been canonised and declared a doctor of the church. As the 'common man's Jesuits', the Redemptorists also made a name for themselves and acquired great influence in the Netherlands. Their focus was not on ordinary parish pastoral care, but on the revival

106 AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rappports 1873/74, 1874/75 and 1879/80.

107 *Ibid.*, 1873/74.

108 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 13 April 1915. It is possible that the problems were of a financial nature. ENK, ANPR, no. 48: *Voorschriften en Costuimen bij de administratie der Holland-sche Provincie C.ss.R., genoteerd 1 December 1920*, stipulated that every student must pay 75 guilders a month for the studentate. It is unclear what the amount was in the 1870s. The Zwolle orphanage was responsible for Van Rossum up to 1878, when he sent his letter of termination to the Roman Catholic poor relief committee. It is unclear whether the orphanage's and the family's combined funds were sufficient to pay for Van Rossum's studies (see Chapter 1.4). According to his sister, his studies were partly financed by the rich widow J. van der Horst-van der Kun. KDC, ROSS, no. 67: interview with Sister Gerulpha van Rossum [1927]. There is a tradition in the Dreesmann family, a dynasty of wealthy Dutch Catholic entrepreneurs, that Anton Dreesmann (1854–1934) contributed to Van Rossum's education; this is not impossible, as Dreesmann opened his first business in 1878. After moving to Amsterdam from Germany in 1870, Dreesmann first lived with the Bührs family, and E. Bührs was a fellow novice of Van Rossum's. P. Hondelink, R. Otto, *Vroom & Dreesmann. De opkomst en ondergang van het warenhuis (1887–2016)* (Almelo 2016), 29–33, 120–121.

109 AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rappports 1873/74 and 1879/80.

of the Catholic religion, both among the faithful through parish missions and among the clergy through retreats. In this sense, they were part and parcel of the great revival movement that gripped both Protestants and Catholics in Europe and America.

Van Rossum proved receptive to the message of the Redemptorists and their founder. In his motivation letter for the congregation, he wrote that he carried a sense of guilt with him from his childhood, which he believed required personal penance. Strict observance of the teachings of Alphonsus appeared a fitting way to do this. At the major seminary in Wittem, Van Rossum turned out to be an intelligent, diligent, and on occasion even brilliant student of sound judgement. He observed the rule meticulously, learned to interpret the works of the founder literally and strove to become a perfect 'son of Alphonsus'. But his health was regarded as weak, which made him less suited for the often-exhausting life as a parish missionary.

If we look at the curriculum vitae that Van Rossum wrote during his noviciate, it is clear that he must have found much of what he was looking for in the congregation. Not only did he become a priest, he also adopted a sober way of life, obedience and a life of devotion, particularly to the Virgin Mary and the founder of the congregation, Alphonsus. But a life of giving parish missions would not be his destiny, even though these missions had initially attracted him to the congregation.

Van Rossum found an ideal mentor in the provincial superior, Petrus Oomen. Oomen was quick to discover the capacities of this young man from Zwolle, qualities which could be used to further disseminate the doctrine of Alphonsus in the Netherlands and further afield. They shared a love for Alphonsus and a desire for perfection, in which they spared neither themselves nor others. Oomen kept an eye on his protégé, and whenever he visited Wittem they had a "brief or longer personal meeting". Oomen encouraged him during moments of doubt, but also gave him special tasks to perform. Thus he asked him to correct the Latin translation of a book written by the eighteenth-century Redemptorist Gennaro Sarnelli. It was Van Rossum's first exposure to the Italian language. While he was occupied with interesting tasks like this, his fellow students had to do jobs around the monastery.

But like Kronenburg, Van Rossum's health suffered under the many extra assignments in addition to his studies. This was why he was not appointed in Wittem after he completed his exams and – less successfully – defended his thesis on moral theology. Although the Belgian provincial Johan Kockerols proposed keeping him there as a professor, Oomen decided to send him to Roermond. That would allow him to recover his strength while he helped in the juvenate.¹¹⁰

110 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 20–21; Dankelman, 'Uit het leven van kardinaal Van Rossum', 193; KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 13 April 1915.

Lecturer, prefect and rector in Wittem

1 The Roermond juvenate

On 6 September 1880, straight after his exams, Willem van Rossum joined the teaching staff in Roermond as a Latin and *retorica* teacher. His old friend Jan Kronenburg had been teaching there for a number of years, and another colleague was Frans ter Haar, with whom Van Rossum would later work together closely in Rome.¹

The annals of the Dutch province do not give student numbers for the *Collegium Ruraemundense* at this time, but it can be calculated from the juvenate's 'Stamboek' or register, that the college attracted at most eight new pupils per year.² In a circular letter of 12 December 1879, Petrus Oomen appealed to all the houses to continue to look out for young candidates, but, as the provincial emphasised, also to be very selective. "We must, however, be very strict in our choice of little boys, and try only



The monastery and chapel of Our Lady in 't Zand, Roermond

¹ ENK, ANPR, no. 3, f 394; no. 4, f 24; Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 9.

² ENK, ANPR, no. 5391; no. 8530: notes by Henri Mosmans, memories of Fr Van Rossum from his younger years. Not all pupils stayed. Mosmans recounts that there were only sixteen of them in September 1881.

to send those, in whom the beginnings of a vocation to the clerical and religious state can be discerned, who are of a respectable class and of irreproachable conduct, who have aptitude for studies, and in general possess such capacities as to hold out the promise that they will in the future be good Redemptorists. Please also attend to the parents' financial situation and try to ascertain whether and to what extent they are able to pay the costs."³

Van Rossum proved to be a good teacher in Roermond, especially of rhetoric.⁴ His notes, mainly in Latin, give some clues as to the content of his lessons. He recorded painstakingly what manuals he used for his lessons, probably the same he had used himself at the seminary.⁵ One of them was the *Ars dicendi priscorum potissimum praeceptis et exemplis illustrata* by Joseph Kleutgen S.J. (1811–1883). This edition from 1855 contained rules for and examples of the 'ancient art of speaking'. The Jesuits in Kuilenburg seminary also used it.⁶ Another book that Van Rossum mentions in his notes is *Bloemlezing uit zijn godsdienstige werken* ('Extracts from the religious works') of the famous French bishop and pulpit orator François Fénelon (1651–1715), containing Christian counsels on humility, self-denial, dissipation of the mind, sadness, distraction for the mind, consolation, and "suffering without losing courage". Henricus Weytingh's *Historia graecorum et romanorum* was intended to responsibly introduce young men to the classics, but also acquaint them with more recent authors such as Dante and Erasmus.⁷

In addition to his lessons, Van Rossum was involved in another activity at the Roermond house.⁸ When the Redemptorists came to Roermond in 1863, they were given custody of the miraculous statue of the Blessed Virgin that had been venerated there since the fifteenth century under the title of 'Our Lady in the Sand' ('Onze Lieve Vrouw in 't Zand'). In the years 1881–1883, Van Rossum was responsible for receiving

3 ENK, ANPR, no. 32: circular letter from P. Oomen, 12 December 1879.

4 ENK, ANPR, no. 8530: notes by Henri Mosmans, memories of Fr Van Rossum from his younger years.

5 KDC, ROSS, no. 399.

6 The 21st edition of the *Ars dicendi priscorum potissimum praeceptis et exemplis illustrata* appeared in 1928. Kleutgen S.J., a theologian and one of the drafters of the First Vatican Council's dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, on papal infallibility, was called to Rome in 1878 by Pope Leo XIII to be prefect of the Gregoriana. On Kleutgen, see John Inglis, *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden 1998), 143–158.

7 Fénelon. *Bloemlezing uit zijn godsdienstige werken met een voorberigt van Ernest Naville. Naar het Fransch door Tryposa*, Amsterdam 1873; H. Weytingh, *Historia graecorum et romanorum literaria. In usum juventutis concinnavit*, Hoorn 1854.

8 Sermons and Lenten meditations from this period have been preserved in manuscript form in ENK, ANPR, no. 8531, and in a bundle of notes in AGHR, *Conferences given by Van Rossum*. In 1965, the archivist of Propaganda Fide, Nic. Kowalsky O.M.I., presented these papers to the then general archivist of the Redemptorists, A. Sampers. Van Rossum had apparently kept them.

the groups of pilgrims that came to visit her chapel.⁹ His sermons are testimony to his fervent Marian devotion, and show that he had adopted Alphonsus's adage, "If some opinion that gives honour to Mary has any basis at all and is not contrary to the faith, it must be followed."¹⁰ He regarded the Roermond shrine as a special place, where the Mother of God was present, as it were, among her devotees, upon whom she bestowed her motherly love. "Pray to her ardently and with unbounded trust. Your desire to receive favours from her can never be too great. However great it is, Mary's desire to lavish her favours upon you will always be greater."¹¹

When Van Rossum visited Roermond as a cardinal in 1913, he promised his fellow Redemptorists to ask the pope for the privilege of a special votive Mass for Our Lady in the Sand. In 1915, he wrote to Kronenburg, the then rector of the house, that the prefect of the Congregation of Rites, Cardinal Vico, had initially raised objections, but had ultimately granted this favour to "our Sweet Mother to whom I owe so much".¹² The cult of the miraculous statue of Mary became increasingly popular in the 1920s and pilgrims began to surround the image with votive plaques mentioning their needs and intentions. As prefect of Propaganda Fide, Van Rossum participated in this tradition by having a plaque nine times the usual size placed in the chapel, bearing the prayer intention, "O powerful Gentle Lady in the Sand, protect and bless the Holy Missions!"

9 ENK, ANPR, no. 4, f 26, mentions 22 pilgrimages in 1882. Van Rossum's sermons were posthumously published in *Het pelgrimsblad van O.L. Vrouw in 't Zand, Roermond*, 8(1934), nos. 5, 18–19, 23, 32, 34–35, 38–39, 42–43. We learn there that 74 Marian shrines – like Lourdes, Issoudun and Wittem – had joined forces in a kind of federation, so that every prayer sent up in any of these places would be joined with the prayers offered in the other shrines, thus creating a strong entreaty to heaven that could not be ignored.

10 Th. van Eupen, 'Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de dogmatische theologie in Wittem (1836–1955)', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 7(1955), 97–118, at 109. Van Rossum would devote various works to her, some of which were published in Franciscus J. Harte, F.X. Schoupe, *Dictata theologico-dogmatica. Ad usum strictae privatum RR. FF. studentium Collegii Wittemiensis C.Ss.R.*, vols. 1 and 2, Gulpen, 1898–1899.

11 'Kardinaal van Rossum en de L.Vr. in 't Zand' [texts by W.M. van Rossum], in: *Het pelgrimsblad van O.L. Vrouw in 't Zand, Roermond*, 8(1934), 18–19, 23, 32, 34–35, 38–39, 42–43.

12 ENK, ANPR, no. 13003, vol. 3, 1913–1942, 29 July 1913; Roermond, parish archives, *Speciaal Archief O.L.V. in 't Zand*, A.pl.2, b 12 (folder 2) b: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 21 June 1915 and 7 September 1915. In return, Vico asked for special prayers from the worshippers at the chapel. The prefect of Rites had hesitations about the proposed introit, which contained words that Van Rossum had used in his sermon to the pilgrims in 1882: "Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae, ut misericordiam consequamur, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilio opportuno." These words from Heb. 4:16 referred to God, and Van Rossum appears to have been the first author to apply them to the Virgin Mary. Nevertheless, permission for the liturgical texts of the Mass, including the introit, was granted. The words were later used for the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (22 August).

2 Lecturer and prefect in Wittem

Oomen was very content with the way his pupil was developing in Roermond. He wrote to him in 1882, “Make sure to be good and virtuous and become holy; then the good God will use you in time to do great things.”¹³ After recommending him to superior general Mauron as “a very distinguished subject”, Oomen appointed him lecturer in dogmatic theology in Wittem in the summer of 1883.¹⁴ Van Rossum initially used his predecessor’s course for his lectures, but soon switched to a manual by the Belgian Jesuit F.X. Schouppe, *Elementa theologiae dogmaticae e probatis auctoribus collecta et Divini Verbi ministerio accommodata*.¹⁵

His students regarded him as a learned man, but more so as a demanding and occasionally sharp-tongued teacher.¹⁶ He was not particularly loved, but this did not dissuade Oomen from regarding him as a suitable candidate for the post of prefect of students. When the rector of the house had to resign for unknown reasons in late 1885, the man who was then prefect, J. van Asten, was asked to succeed him. Oomen then transferred a number of the prefect’s duties to the 31-year-old Van Rossum.¹⁷

One of these tasks was the care of the sick, and Wittem monastery was afflicted at the time by an unspecified epidemic. Van Rossum had to supervise the washing of clothes and disinfecting of rooms,¹⁸ and, surprisingly, he was remembered in his capacity of infirmarian for his “motherly care”.¹⁹ Despite his best efforts, at least one member of the religious community succumbed, which made a deep impression on Van Rossum. In early 1886, he wrote to Oomen that he wished God would have taken him instead of a promising young priest like Albert Smulders. “Yes (...) what would [the world] have lost in me? Nothing but misery, a fellow without judgement, and, worse, without virtue.”²⁰

13 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 29 May 1882.

14 AGHR, 0900: P. Oomen to N. Mauron, 27 September 1883.

15 De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 83. The first edition of F.X. Schouppe’s manual was published in Brussels in 1861.

16 ENK, ANPR, no. 8530: notes by Henri Mosmans, memories of Fr Van Rossum from his younger years.

17 AGHR, 0900: P. Oomen to N. Mauron, 8 June 1885; ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 5 February and 13 June 1886 (‘Soli’); Theodorus Langerwerf was replaced as rector due to an “intolerable situation”.

18 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 18 December 1885 and 4 January 1886. “First and foremost, the clothes and everything worn by the sick must be boiled. The floor and beds must be washed with carbol. The rooms occupied by the sick must be fumigated with sulphur, which is to be burned on a coal fire: the rooms must be hermetically closed as much as possible during the fumigation, which, I believe, must last 24 hours.”

19 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 22; ENK, ANPR, no. 8530: notes by Henri Mosmans, memories of Fr Van Rossum from his younger years; no. 8545: W. van Rossum to L. Voncken, 10 August 1890 and 5 September 1891.

20 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to P. Oomen, Wittem, 7 February 1886.



Façade of the Redemptorist monastery and church in Wittem

Oomen disagreed. With the permission of superior general Mauron, he gave Van Rossum the title of vice prefect in the summer of 1886, entrusting him with the supervision of all students.²¹ The newly appointed vice prefect wrote to Oomen that it was “truly a nonsense” to assign such an important task to him, “My God, what a tiding!” According to Van Rossum, he lacked even the most rudimentary qualities to be able to lead students and form them to achieve sound virtue. “Do not think, Very Rev. Father, that this is humility. Would that God would give it, for the benefit of our Congregation. No, it is my inner conviction and the full, simple truth.” Nonetheless, he accepted the appointment in obedience.²² A fortnight later, Van Rossum addressed a letter to the superior general thanking him for the trust placed in him. He promised he would do his utmost to “make the students happy in their great state of life, lead them according to the spirit of our father St. Alphonsus, and form them into true Redemptorists”.²³

Van Rossum’s temporary appointment as prefect was made permanent in 1887.²⁴ He took his position seriously and expected the same earnestness from his students. In his conferences, he often returned to the motto of *Soli Deo et studiis*, “Holiness is our first occupation, studies our second, and apart from these we have none.”²⁵

21 AGHR, 0900: P. Oomen to N. Mauron, 8 June 1885; ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 5 February and 13 June 1886.

22 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to P. Oomen, 15 June 1886.

23 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 10 July 1886.

24 *Ibid.*, W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 25 June 1887.

25 De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 56–57.

Nonetheless, he did organise holidays and excursions for the students to reward them for their hard work.²⁶

In his report to Rome on the 1886–1887 academic year, Van Rossum expressed satisfaction at the ‘spiritual state’ of the students. There was an atmosphere of industrious diligence, and science and piety were in good harmony. The students were content and happy in their vocation, docile to their prefect and professors, and relations among the students were cordial. But he was critical of the workload that burdened the teachers. Although the seminarians studied assiduously, the Reverend Professors had so many pastoral and religious obligations that it was threatening to affect the studies and preparation for their lectures. He believed that this would eventually have a negative impact on the ‘scholarly state’ of the studentate and on the quality of teaching.²⁷ Circumstances appear to have improved after 1887, because later reports did not repeat these critical comments.

Gerardus Schrauwen, Oomen’s successor as provincial, enthused about Van Rossum’s great intellectual abilities and described him as very virtuous, but also as rather strict and demanding as prefect. According to Schrauwen, it would enhance the prefect’s influence among the students if he were to adopt a less rigid and authoritarian stance in his judgement and behaviour.²⁸

3 Becoming an expert in Alphonsian dogmatic theology

Yet forming seminarians into good Redemptorists was not Van Rossum’s primary task in Wittem. At Petrus Oomen’s behest, most of his effort went into developing a well-founded dogmatic theology based on the principles and spirit of Saint Alphonsus.²⁹ In a letter to superior general Mauron in 1890, Van Rossum reminded him that Oomen had insisted as far back as 1883 that he should create a course in dogmatic theology in the tradition of Saint Alphonsus. He had immediately set to work on this great project, and had continued to take notes and collect material. His keen hope was to complete a work on dogmatic theology that would be worthy of ‘our great Doctor’.³⁰

²⁶ Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 22.

²⁷ AGHR, *PH Stud.*: Rappports 1885/86; 1886/87. The reports were read and signed for approval by the provincial.

²⁸ AGHR, 0900: G. Schrauwen, *Rapport sur le Personnel de la Province Hollandaise 1887–1900*.

²⁹ Corsius, ‘Theological Tradition’, 168, mistakenly suggests that Van Rossum’s interest in the teachings of Alphonsus dated from a later time in his life.

³⁰ AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 14 November 1890. See also W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 12 March 1892: “Several years ago, the Very Rev. Fr. Oomen, then Provincial, charged me with writing a dogmatic work, which had as its goal to set out and organise everything Our Father St. Alphonsus wrote in the field of dogma.”

As has been seen, Petrus Oomen frequently exhorted the Dutch Redemptorists in his circular letters to broaden their knowledge of the works and thought of Alphonsus. Mauron, who had been present at the proclamation of Alphonsus Liguori as doctor of the church in 1871, had asked Oomen to instruct his confreres to study the doctrine of the founder. Traditionally, the old medieval orders and the Jesuits were the dominant voices in theology, but the Redemptorists were now attempting to claim a position for themselves in this discipline. Mauron's plan was to publish the results of theological studies on Alphonsus internationally at an academic level, and he warmly welcomed Dutch support. The renowned Dutch theologian Joseph Aertnys made a substantial contribution to the successful promotion of Saint Alphonsus in academic circles by publishing the influential Latin edition of the *Theologia Moralis* mentioned above. A first edition appeared in 1886–1887, followed by many reprints, and the book gained recognition also outside the Netherlands for its innovative moral theological insights on the practice of confession.³¹

Alphonsus's doctrines were not always entirely beyond reproach from a strictly theological point of view, and it was certainly no foregone conclusion that they would be widely accepted simply because he was now a doctor of the church.³² Moreover, Alphonsus had to compete with a matchless rival, the medieval philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), whose teaching, as we have seen, had been included in the curriculum in Wittem in 1857. The prestige of the doctrine of this Dominican saint and doctor of the church was further strengthened by the publication of the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), in which Pope Leo XIII presented Thomism as the only reliable philosophical and theological foundation for Catholic engagement with the modern world.³³ This papal confirmation ensured that Thomism (or rather, neo-Thomism) would long be the undisputed criterion for interpreting Catholic doctrine.³⁴

But the Congregation of the Redemptorists was keen to play a role of its own in the development of modern Catholic theology. Its attempts to realise this focused primarily on the field of moral theology, where it advanced a specifically Alphonsonian equilibrium. These efforts were relatively successful, precisely because moral

31 L. J. Rogier, *Katholieke herleving. Geschiedenis van katholiek Nederland sinds 1953* (The Hague 1956), 489. De Meulemeester, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2: *Auteurs rédemptoristes A–Z* (Leuven 1935), 9–11, 210–216, 420–422. In addition, the French Redemptorist Leonardus Gaudé (1860–1910) had been working on an edition of the moral theology in Rome since 1887. The first volume of his *Opera moralia Sancti Alphonsi Mariae de Liguori doctoris Ecclesiae: theologia moralis* was published in 1905, the fourth posthumously in 1912.

32 Weiss, *Deutsche oder römische Moral?*, 25–36.

33 ENK, ANPR, no. 32. Oomen congratulated the Dutch Dominicans on this occasion, and in their reply dated 23 August 1879 the latter expressed the hope that “the sons of Alphonsus and those of St. Dominic” might work together to “combat error”.

34 Inglis, *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy*.

theology was regarded as Alphonsus's special expertise. But the congregation also had hopes of carving out a doctrinal place of his own for Alphonsus in the field of dogmatic theology, alongside Thomas. Aertnijs had brought honour to the Dutch province with regard to moral theology; Oomen looked to Van Rossum to do the same for dogmatic theology.

The first task that Van Rossum took to hand in the field of dogmatic theology was to prepare an edition of the *Dissertatio adumbrata de Praedestinatione J. Chr.* This treatise by Alphonsus on the predestination of Christ was at the time only accessible in an edition of the Italian manuscript.³⁵ After consulting with Oomen, Van Rossum decided to translate the text from Italian into Latin, to make it available to a broader scholarly audience. From the start, Oomen was more than pleased with Van Rossum's approach. On 24 January 1884, he wrote to his pupil saying how delighted he was to "discern in you that childlike reverence for the teaching of Our Holy Father Alphonsus". Van Rossum's love for Alphonsus would afford him deeper insight and permit him to solve problems that had baffled others: *Ubi amor, ibi oculus* (where there is love, there is the power to see). Oomen advised him to pray often to "our Holy Doctor that he may help you understand his teaching well".³⁶ The *Dissertatio adumbrata de Praedestinatione J. Chr.* was published in 1885 in a lithograph edition.³⁷ Van Rossum dedicated the translation and the commentary to his provincial, to whom he thanked much of his love for Alphonsus.³⁸

This first publication revealed how difficult it was to claim a place for Alphonsus in church doctrine, where Thomas Aquinas now enjoyed an inviolable position.³⁹ On the one hand it was unthinkable to depart from Thomas, but on the other, if Alphonsus's independent status was to be highlighted, it was necessary to demonstrate that his teaching was not just irreproachable, but actually constituted an improvement on certain views of Saint Thomas's. Van Rossum had vigorous discussions about this with Ernest Dubois, his former prefect in Wittem. Dubois feared

35 De Meulemeester, *Bibliographie*, vol. 1, 177.

36 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Amsterdam, 24 January 1884.

37 *Dissertatio adumbrata de Praedestinatione J. Chr. Auctore S.P.N. Alph. ex Italo in Latinum versa*, Wittem, autograph, 1885 (67 pages). The work was later published in Rome (Cuggiani, 1896): *Dissertatio de Praedestinatione D.N. Jesu Christi auctore S. Alphonso Maria de Ligorio ecclesiae doctore. Nunc primum edita cum versione Latina, introductione et adnotationibus rev. patris W.M. van Rossum C.ss.R.* (32 pages), in an Italian and Latin version. A third edition followed in 1903 in Alphonsus's *Opera Dogmatica*, published by Aloysius Walter, vol. 2, 731–754.

38 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to P. Oomen, 30 June 1885; Corsius, 'Theological Tradition', 166–167.

39 'Z. Em. Kardinaal van Rossum in het Dominicanenklooster te Zwolle', in: *De Rozenkrans*, 35(1913), no. 9, 236, quotes a speech Van Rossum gave to the Dominicans in Zwolle on 27 July 1913, in which he said that Alphonsus "studied under Cartesian influence, but later, through studies and research of his own, developed the deepest reverence for the great Doctor of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas".

that Alphonsus's ideas were not wholly compatible with the Thomist view in the classical controversy on the *motivum incarnationis*, which revolved around the issue whether the incarnation would have been necessary if there had been no original sin. Dubois initially harboured doubts about Alphonsus's position, but after reading Van Rossum's publication he congratulated him on his "excellent *opuscule*", which threw light on Alphonsus's true doctrine and showed that this deviated in nothing from the opinions of Thomas. Van Rossum had, moreover, demonstrated that Alphonsus's theoretical system was dogmatically more reliable than other systems, like Scotus's. Dubois wrote that Van Rossum's work had convinced him to change his own views in certain respects, and to include the new insights in the curriculum at Beauplateau.⁴⁰

Once the translation of the *Dissertatio adumbrata de Praedestinatione J. Chr.* was complete, Van Rossum began to write a treatise entitled *De essentia sacramenti ordinis*, on the essential elements of the sacrament of orders (ordination to the priesthood and the episcopate), based on old Roman and oriental sources. His reasoning in this thorough study was "according to his characteristically ruthless logic, which he does not hesitate to use even to refute each and every one of his allies' traditional arguments".⁴¹ One of his conclusions was that Thomas Aquinas's doctrine on the subject was not entirely consistent with Catholic tradition and orthodoxy, whereas Alphonsus Liguori's was.⁴² Oomen congratulated him on his book on 4 March 1886.⁴³

In the same letter, the provincial commented rather critically on the work of Aertnijs, who was just completing the manuscript of his *Theologia Moralis*. It is clear from the correspondence between Oomen and Van Rossum that they thought Aertnijs was not sufficiently "fundamental" and strayed too far from the teaching of Alphonsus.⁴⁴ What concerned them most was that Aertnijs did not believe a priori that Alphonsus's opinions were to be preferred in all cases where this could be even remotely defended. Van Rossum wrote to Oomen that he had attempted in vain to persuade Aertnijs of the inaccuracy of some of his views. Oomen urged him not to be swayed by this, to stay true to his own ideas and use these in his lectures: "Keep (...)

40 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to P. Oomen, 30 June 1885; no. 8416: E. Dubois to W. van Rossum, Beauplateau 26 November 1884 and 20 July 1885.

41 Van Eupen, 'Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de dogmatische theologie in Wittem', 102; ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to P. Oomen, 7 February 1886.

42 *De essentia sacramenti ordinis. Disquisitio historico-theologica* was published in Freiburg in 1914 by Herder, and again, in a revised edition, in 1932. It was Van Rossum's most academic work, which was regularly cited and received positive reviews after its publication in 1914. See for example Samuel F. Darwin Fox in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 18(1917), no. 72(July), 325-335. The 1914 publication was received positively in *Civiltà Cattolica*, but not the 1932 edition. See Chapter 21.1.

43 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 4 March 1886.

44 *Ibid.*, 4 and 24 March 1886.

firm in your decision to defend the teaching of [Our Holy Father] in everything, and you will be enlightened and blessed.”⁴⁵

Van Rossum’s next work was entitled *Hexameron seu Officium sex dierum*.⁴⁶ It was a commentary on the six days of creation as described in the Book of Genesis in the Bible. Van Rossum argued in favour of a literal interpretation of the text, that is to say: each day of creation took 24 real hours. In advancing this opinion, he distanced himself from the emerging historical-critical method in biblical exegesis. This method had been on the rise in Protestant circles in Germany for some time, but by the end of the nineteenth century it was also attracting adherents among more modern-minded Catholic Bible scholars. We will have occasion to discuss this method at greater length later, but suffice it to say here that the Roman curia regarded it with great suspicion. In publishing his *Hexameron* in 1888, Van Rossum was nailing his colours firmly to the mast of the Roman, antimodernist camp.

Although Oomen’s term of office as provincial superior ended in 1887, he did not stop encouraging Van Rossum to continue to work on a theological manual that could serve as “an anchor in all storms”. Such a book would enhance respect and love for Alphonsus, not only among the Redemptorists, but outside the congregation too. Other theologians were also beginning to engage with Alphonsian research, such as Frans ter Haar. Ter Haar specialised in the moral problem of probabilism: the idea that in questions of moral uncertainty, any plausible solution may be followed, even if other solutions could be considered more certain or plausible.⁴⁷

Oomen assured Van Rossum that he could expect further encouragement from Rome if he continued his studies. He viewed Van Rossum as the best man for the task, and his advice was to proceed. Van Rossum was certainly willing, but also observed that his other obligations made it difficult to give his studies the time they required. To make things worse, it was decided at the time to carry out major renovations in Wittem monastery, so as to accommodate the growing influx of students. Although rector Franciscus Peters bore the main responsibility for the building

45 *Ibid.*, Amsterdam 24 March 1886. Oomen wished to see Aertnijs’s revised text and, if necessary, discuss it with ‘Rome’ first.

46 *Ibid.*, Amsterdam, 24 February and 6 June 1888. *Hexameron seu Officium sex dierum*, Wittem 1888 (lithograph edition, 88 pages); second edition Wittem 1890 (109 pages).

47 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Amsterdam, 22 February, 11 May and 1 December 1889. Frans ter Haar (1857–1939) taught exegesis in Wittem, 1882–1892. He was appointed prefect in Wittem (1893–1904) at Van Rossum’s behest, and became the first rector of the Redemptorist *Schola Major* in Rome in 1909. He succeeded Van Rossum as *consultor generalis* in 1911 and remained in this post until 1936. De Meulemeester, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2, 420–422. Ter Haar used Van Rossum’s work, *Commentarius de Iudicio Sacramentali* ed. 2^a, no. 48 in his treatise *De conferenda absolutione sacramentali iuxta canonem 886 Codicis Iuris Canonici*, Rome 1919 (“Cardin. van Rossum cum S. Alphonso docet”, 33–35).

activities, as prefect, Van Rossum was also heavily involved in the plans.⁴⁸ He asked Oomen, then a consultor of the Dutch provincial, to transfer a number of his daily duties to others.⁴⁹ Oomen obliged by relieving him of some of his tasks, and at the same time urged him to send Nicolas Mauron a testimony of his learning in 1890, in the form of seventeen copies of the second edition of the *Hexameron*, including a specially bound personal copy for the superior general.⁵⁰ Oomen later reported that the work had been positively received in Rome, including by the Austrian Karl Dilgskron (1843–1912), general consultor of the Redemptorists.⁵¹

Van Rossum was able to send a lithograph edition of his new treatise on the eucharist, *Tractatus de SS. Eucharistia*, to Rome in the spring of 1892.⁵² On 6 March, Oomen wrote to congratulate him from Rome, where he had moved a year before, in March 1891, to become general consultor for the Belgian and Dutch provinces. He had succeeded Theodorus Lelouchier after the latter's sudden death.⁵³

Oomen talked to his colleague Dilgskron about the role Van Rossum might play in the study and promotion of the works of Alphonsus, particularly in the field of dogmatic theology.⁵⁴ Dilgskron had previously suggested that Van Rossum should collaborate with his French confrere, the theologian Jean Herrmann (1849–1927), as Herrmann had been working for some years on a scholarly manual of dogmatics. Van Rossum and Herrmann had corresponded on this subject from time to time throughout the 1880s, and Van Rossum once set out his opinion of Herrmann's work to Mauron.⁵⁵

Unlike his Dutch colleague, Herrmann could spend all his time on research, and he completed his treatise *De Incarnatione* in early 1889. This book was very highly thought of in Rome, and Oomen also praised it, even though Herrmann did not quote Alphonsus very often, and the main protagonist of his book was Thomas. It was not the dreamed-of monograph that focused entirely on Alphonsus, and Oomen therefore told Dilgskron that Van Rossum was working on a book that would put the

48 Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem*, 64. ENK, ANPR, no. 8545: W. van Rossum to L. Voncken, Wittem, October 1890.

49 ENK, ANPR, 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Stratum, 11 May 1889, and Amsterdam, 29 December 1889.

50 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 14 November 1890.

51 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 30 January 1891. Oomen also expressed satisfaction at Van Rossum's observation that Alphonsus was quoted by several dogmatic theologians, such as Jeremias Dalponte in his *Compendium theologiae dogmaticae specialis* (Trento 1890).

52 This treatise as such was never published. F. J. Harte, who succeeded Van Rossum as lecturer in dogmatic theology in 1892, brought together a number of treatises, including Van Rossum's *Tractatus de ss. Eucharistia* and included them in his two-volume manual, mentioned above, which was based on the Jesuit Schouppe's work. Harte, Schouppe, *Dictata theologico-dogmatica*, 490–573.

53 AGHR, XLIV 4: Nicolas Mauron to the provincial superiors, 4 March 1891.

54 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Rome, 25 May 1891

55 *Ibid.*, 9 November 1886; AGHR, LX 2b: J. Herrmann to W. van Rossum, 8 July 1887, 16 and 22 January 1888.

doctrine of Alphonsus centre stage.⁵⁶ Dilgskron was interested, but also warned that Van Rossum should not attempt to repeat what Herrmann had just done. Instead, he should write an extensive monograph on Alphonsus's dogmatic work; that was the kind of book that would have enduring value.

Oomen took proper note of this advice. After receiving Van Rossum's *Tractatus de ss. Eucharistia* in March 1892, he explained his strategy to his protégé on how once again to draw the attention of the congregation's highest authority to Van Rossum's talents, possibly with a view to freeing him of his other tasks so that he could dedicate himself fully to his scholarly studies. Van Rossum was to send copies immediately to the superior general and to consultor Michael Ulrich. In his covering letter to Mauron, he was to explain that the treatise was the fruit of work entrusted to him in the past by Oomen, which he hoped to continue in the future. He was also to write that an exhortation by Mauron himself had inspired him to take up the difficult task of studying Alphonsus's dogmatic works. Moreover, he was to emphasise that his research did not compete in any way with Herrmann's, who had 'merely' published a manual. His own publication would be much more original. Oomen advised Van Rossum to conclude this letter by asking for Mauron's blessing on him and his work, and he thanked him for sending a list of passages in Herrmann's work where Herrmann deviated from the teachings of Alphonsus. Oomen asked Van Rossum to keep his eyes open and keep him well-informed in the future.⁵⁷

In his letters to Mauron and Ulrich, Van Rossum did indeed stress that he was not trying to duplicate Herrmann's work, who had written "a simple manual". By contrast, his own intention was "to develop and prove more extensively the teaching of St. Alphonsus". He added that his short work on the eucharist was only a part of the project.⁵⁸ Ulrich's congratulations arrived by return of post. He said he was impressed by Van Rossum's expertise and love both for Saint Thomas and Saint Alphonsus, and that he had no doubt, therefore, that the upcoming book would be excellent. Four days later, Nicolas Mauron expressed his approval of the lithograph work sent to him: "I endorse it with all my heart and rejoice that you have not abandoned the idea of writing a theology inspired by St. Alphonsus." He urged Van Rossum to continue his work. "It will be a great boon to the congregation if we could have a major and complete theological course in this genre."⁵⁹

56 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Stratum, 1 and 11 May 1889.

57 *Ibid.*, Rome, 6 March 1892.

58 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Ulrich and N. Mauron, 12 March 1892.

59 AGHR, LX 2b: M. Ulrich to W. van Rossum, 16 March 1892; N. Mauron to W. van Rossum, 20 March 1892.

The first version of Herrmann's complete manual was ready in 1892. A number of Redemptorists were invited to give their views on the work before it was published. In a letter sent to Van Rossum in late 1892, Mauron emphasised how important it was that Herrmann's work should be a success; the manuscript therefore had to be very carefully reviewed before he could give his approval. As Mauron had complete confidence in Van Rossum's own works, he asked him to be one of the reviewers. Van Rossum's academic stature was now evidently acknowledged within his congregation. The general assured him that the reports of the examiners would remain anonymous to safeguard their freedom: Herrmann would never know who had made which comment. In his reply, Van Rossum thanked Mauron profusely and professed that this was the most honourable charge he could imagine: "in this earthly life, I could not fulfil a greater task".⁶⁰

But he proved rather less eager in his next letter to Oomen. Not only was he too busy, which Oomen should have realised when he put his name forward as examiner, but he was far from satisfied with Herrmann's work. They should have asked themselves in Rome beforehand whether this Herrmann was up to writing a theological manual at all. In a confidential letter of 15 December 1892, marked *Soli*, Oomen replied that he was sorry to hear that Van Rossum regarded Herrmann's work as little more than "a meagre little theology".⁶¹ The "little" cannot have referred to size, as Herrmann's *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae* eventually ran to more than two thousand pages.⁶² Oomen categorically denied that he had persuaded Mauron to ask Van Rossum as a reviewer, because he knew very well that Van Rossum was already overworked. Nonetheless – Oomen pointed out – it stood to reason that Mauron would have chosen him, because Van Rossum and Herrmann were both working in the same field of theology.

Despite his negative judgement on Herrmann's work and his busy occupations in Wittem, Van Rossum set himself to the task the superior general had given him. To ease his burden somewhat, Franciscus Harte stepped in as a replacement for his lectures in dogmatic theology. After six months, on 6 July 1893, Van Rossum had his report ready for Rome. Superior general Mauron most likely never saw it, as he died on 13 July, having governed the congregation for more than thirty-eight years.

60 *Ibid.*: N. Mauron to W. van Rossum, 4 November 1892; W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 18 November 1892.

61 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Rome, 15 December 1892.

62 Jean Herrmann, *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae*. The first edition was published in Rome in 1897, the seventh in 1937. The 1908 edition contains explicit references to 'erroneous modernist' ideas.

4 Rector of Wittem

Mauron's death had momentous consequences for Willem van Rossum, all the more so because it occurred just nine days before Franciscus Peters died, the rector of Wittem. Shortly before his own passing, Mauron had appointed Father Matthias Raus as vicar general, and the task of appointing a new rector of Wittem now fell to Raus. After consulting the Dutch provincial, Jacobus Meeuwissen, and Petrus Oomen, and spending 'much time in prayer' and earnest consultation with his consultants, he chose Willem van Rossum.⁶³ In a letter to Matthias Raus dated 9 August 1893, the new rector expressed his gratitude at this appointment, which effectively made him the second most powerful man in the Dutch Redemptorist province, after the provincial superior.⁶⁴ Van Rossum certainly had good grounds for welcoming his new post, although he was soon to discover its downsides too.

A few months before, in April 1893, when the new triennial appointments were announced, Van Rossum had been relieved of his position as prefect of students; Frans ter Haar took over from him. This gave him more time for his academic activities. At the same time, however, he was appointed chaplain and confessor to the Redemptoristine Sisters of the convent of Mariental, in the hamlet of Partij near Wittem.⁶⁵ Their order had been founded by the Italian Maria-Celeste Crostarosa together with Alphonsus Liguori in Scala in 1731 – a year before the Redemptorists. Van Rossum described the life of the sisters in a letter to his stepfather, "They lead a purely contemplative life, do not teach, nor care for the sick, but only lead a life of prayer and penance. They never leave the cloister and are always heavily veiled, so that I cannot even see them when giving a conference. Saint Alphonsus, who is also their founder, established them primarily so that they might, through their prayer and penance, call down God's blessing upon the missions given by the Fathers."⁶⁶

Van Rossum appears to have despised his task as spiritual director of the forty-six nuns, expressing his antipathy in a confidential letter to Oomen. Oomen replied that he could understand Van Rossum was not keen, as the sisters' way of life was far

63 AGHR, 0900: J. Meeuwissen to M. Raus, 23 July 1893 and M. Raus to J. Meeuwissen, 28 July 1893; AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: M. Raus to W. van Rossum, 28 July 1893; this letter also contains the appointments of Frans ter Haar and Jacobus Schrauwen as Van Rossum's consultants and of Joseph Aertnijs as his *admonitor*, an official who had to watch over the rector's conduct. Jacobus Meeuwissen (1847–1916) was provincial superior 1890–1894, rector of Roermond 1894–1898, provincial again 1898–1907 and vicar apostolic of Suriname 1907–1911. See J. Vernooij, 'The Seven Redemptorist Bishops of Suriname', in: *SHCSR*, 60(2012), 223–277, at 248–254.

64 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 9 August 1893.

65 ENK, ANPR, no. 4, f 353 and 359; AGHR, 0900: N. Mauron to J. Meeuwissen, 26 April 1893.

66 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 13, Wittem 23 July 1893.



The Wittem community in 1895. First row, from left to right from fourth from left: Rector Van Rossum, Joseph Aertnijs and Frans ter Haar

removed from their own active life as Redemptorists. Yet he urged him to master his disdain and try to motivate himself through “lofty feelings”.⁶⁷

It is remarkable that Van Rossum should have felt so strongly about this. Possibly the fact that he had rarely encountered women and women religious since being admitted to the orphanage and the minor seminary played a role in shaping his dismissive attitude, which was not, however, unique in clerical circles. But it does appear that Van Rossum managed to overcome his negative feelings in due course, because in later years he developed very strong bonds with these – and many other – sisters.⁶⁸

Van Rossum’s appointment as rector of Wittem meant he had to take on many new burdens. First and foremost, the renovation of the monastery was now fully his responsibility. It was also his task to supervise the many internal and external activities undertaken by the Wittem community. The external apostolate mainly consisted of giving parish missions and retreats. The Wittem Redemptorists gave retreats for religious, women and men, and for the pupils of the Roermond diocesan

67 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Rome 17 May 1893. Oomen asked Van Rossum specifically to destroy this confidential letter (*solis*).

68 See Chapter 9.4, 17 and 18.

college in Rolduc. Van Rossum took part in this work too.⁶⁹ In addition, Fathers from Wittem gave parish missions and renewal missions in the dioceses of Roermond and Liège (ten and eleven such missions respectively in 1894), not only in Dutch but also often in French or German. Van Rossum had never preached a parish mission before – even though this was the congregation’s core business – and he dreaded his first performance. He spent a great deal of time on the preparation, and afterwards wrote with relief to his family that “my first mission in Valkenburg was a great success, thank God”. It is not known whether he ever preached a parish mission again.⁷⁰

In addition, life in the Wittem house was marked by countless devotional practices and liturgical obligations, for which Van Rossum as rector now bore responsibility. The semi-public oratory was the scene of many liturgical celebrations according to the rhythm of the calendar, and was the home of three pious sodalities that required the ministrations of the priests of the community. One of these, dedicated to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, had no fewer than 38,167 members. The other two promoted devotion to the Holy Family and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The annals of the Wittem community record that 26,500 devotional objects were sold or distributed in 1894.⁷¹

He had hardly had time to become used to the hectic nature of his new appointment when a letter arrived from Matthias Raus, in September 1893. The vicar general told him that he had been going through the correspondence of the deceased superior general Mauron and had found a letter sent by Van Rossum in July, giving his observations on Jean Herrmann’s manual of dogmatic theology. Raus had also read Herrmann’s book and his thoughts and impressions were exactly the same. He regarded Van Rossum’s assessment of Herrmann’s work as the best he had seen so far. Raus added that he attached great importance to Van Rossum’s own Alphonsian studies. He was delighted that the founder of the congregation was, as a result of studies, “gaining in the veneration and esteem of the people, not just the ordinary [people], but particularly scholars,” as Cardinal Parocchi had said recently on the feast of Saint Alphonsus. This would help to increase the founder’s reputation as a great saint, a great scholar, and *the* doctor of the church for their time. The studies that Van Rossum was undertaking would shed light on those parts of Alphonsus’s work that were least known, and Raus therefore urged him to continue at all costs, even though he was aware of the many tasks with which the rector was burdened.⁷²

69 ENK, ANPR, no. 8531, 8 and 9; AGHR, *Conferences given by Van Rossum*, including notes for sermons, missions and retreats.

70 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 14, Wittem 1 January 1894.

71 ENK, ANPR, no. 4, f 398.

72 AGHR, LX 2b: M. Raus to W. van Rossum, 19 September 1893.

Raus clearly shared Mauron's ambition to enhance Alphonsus's theological prestige and he regarded Van Rossum's academic talents and knowledge as useful tools to realise this goal. In his reply to Raus on 25 November 1893, Van Rossum thanked him at length for his appreciative remarks on the Herrmann report, and also for the honourable and flattering recommendations of his work on Alphonsus's dogmatic theology, a project on which he had already expended a great deal of energy. But he also wrote that his position as rector of Wittem made it almost physically impossible to do any more work on Herrmann's manuscript or his studies "on the dogmatic writings of our Glorious Doctor".⁷³

Van Rossum also told the vicar general that, in addition to his many other responsibilities, he was weighed down by great and previously unimagined worries arising from the Wittem renovation plans. This task alone took up almost all his time, sometimes even preventing him from saying his breviary, which was otherwise the first thing he did in the morning. He truly needed God's help "in this ocean of obligations and distractions which is of such great peril to the interior life."⁷⁴

Despite these cares, Van Rossum succeeded in carrying through a grand and impressive renovation of the old monastery complex, including the addition of a beautiful and greatly enlarged library. As early as October 1890, he had rhapsodised to a former student about the new hall, which would be 23 metres long, eight metres high and seven metres wide. "The Rev. Fr. van Rossum's ideal" would ultimately turn out even larger, at 32 x 9 x 8 metres.⁷⁵ His biographer Smit took a similarly favourable view of the renovation: he admired Wittem's "airy hallways, bright rooms, clean refectory, voluminous library and well-lit classrooms", which were still fully fit for purpose sixty years later.⁷⁶

But there were some murmurings about the renovation among certain Dutch Redemptorists. Although the previous rector, Franciscus Peters, had financed part of the project from private family funds, the renovation was criticised as being too expensive and excessively opulent.⁷⁷ Some mourned the demolition of the graceful baroque façade of the former Capuchin monastery, a design by the Westphalian architect Johann Conrad Schlaun (1695–1773).⁷⁸ Van Rossum was criticised for having imposed his views on the architect and having pushed through the decision to

73 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 25 November 1893.

74 *Ibid.*, W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 25 November 1893. See also *ibid.*: 23 December 1894.

75 ENK, ANPR, no. 8545: W. van Rossum to L. Voncken, Wittem, October 1890; AGHR, 0900: Bernardus Richters to Michael Ulrich, 5 August 1892. See also Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem*, 64.

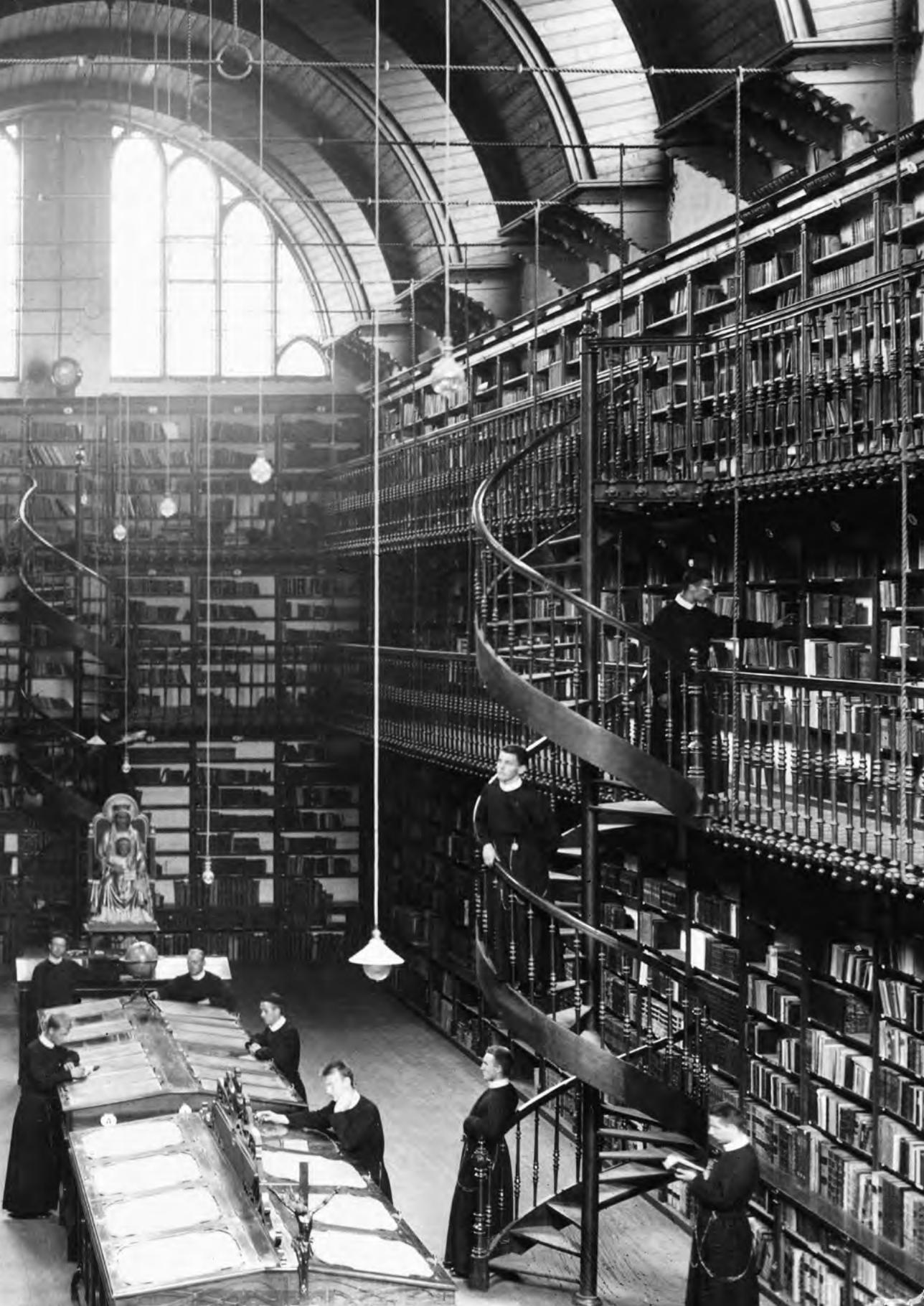
76 Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 9.

77 See for example AGHR, 0900: Bernardus Richters to Michael Ulrich, 5 August 1892.

78 K. van Wely, 'De uitwendige schoonheid van ons oude Wittem', in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 4(1952), 97–120, 166–184; 5(1953), 1–16.



*The library of
Wittem monastery, c. 1929,
built by Van Rossum*



sacrifice the old construction. The rector himself appears to have been unperturbed: the efficiency of the new building trumped any cultural and historical significance. He wrote to Raus (then superior general) on 4 November 1894 that the builders were working on the new façade of the oratory, which, he hoped, would be finished before the winter. “This will create a perfect harmony between the church and the façade.”⁷⁹ Later generations did not share this view, believing instead that “the colossal brick monstrosity” disfigured the elegant Wittemer Allee.⁸⁰ Some lamented Willem van Rossum’s rectorship because it had brought the destruction of the old façade.

Nor did Van Rossum receive much credit for his efforts to turn the house in Wittem into a place of pilgrimage for Gerard Majella (1726–1755). This simple tailor’s son from Muro Lucano in Italy, who became a Redemptorist brother, was beatified by Leo XIII in 1893. In the same year, Van Rossum through Raus obtained a number of relics, and the cult of Gerard Majella began to flourish in Wittem. If Majella would continue to bestow spiritual and temporal blessings as he was doing, Van Rossum told Raus, he would soon become “a second Anthony of Padua”.⁸¹ Van Rossum had a chapel dedicated to him in the newly renovated monastery. Over the following years, particularly after Majella’s canonisation by Pius X in 1904, Wittem developed into one of the most important places of pilgrimage for this popular saint.

As a young Redemptorist, Van Rossum was enlisted in the strategy pursued by provincial superior Oomen to strengthen the standards and orthodoxy of the Dutch province, and to secure a more prominent role in ecclesiastical discourse for the teachings of Alphonsus. His first posting in Roermond was away from the limelight, possibly on account of his weak health, or because Oomen felt that teaching oratory and Latin (the lingua franca of the church) would help him to perfect a number of basic qualities. Perhaps it was also because Oomen believed his pupil needed to work on strengthening an attitude of humility.

But once Van Rossum had been appointed, at the age of 29, to teach dogmatic theology in Wittem, Oomen began to pile responsibility after responsibility upon his shoulders. As prefect of students, it was his task to look after the material and spiritual wellbeing of the aspiring priests. He proved a strict and often disagreeable director to the young Redemptorists, and he was not well-liked, except in his role as infirmarian, which allowed him to display ‘motherly care’. He demonstrated

79 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 4 November 1894. Van Rossum felt that the oratory had become much brighter, which, he said, had since convinced opponents of the renovation that the new situation was in fact better. KDC, ROSS, no. 67: W. van Rossum to L. de Swart, 7 June 1895.

80 Van Wely, ‘De uitwendige schoonheid’, 97; De Caluwe, *Emmaus aan de Geul*, 74–77; Mosmans, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem*, 64.

81 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 25 November 1893.

his solicitude for the wellbeing of his students by working to create better, roomier and more efficient living and working quarters in the monastery. As rector, he was responsible for bringing a large-scale renovation project to a good ending. His devotional susceptibility was evident in Roermond in his love of Mary, and in Wittem in his decision to dedicate a special chapel to the beatified Redemptorist Gerard Majella.

But his heart lay in studying the writings of the founder, Alphonsus Liguori, an occupation strongly encouraged by the provincial superior, Oomen. Dogmatic theology, oriented by papal command to the teachings of the Dominican Thomas Aquinas, was one of the core disciplines of theology. In order to bring Alphonsus's doctrine to greater attention in this field, Oomen asked Van Rossum to publish a number of treatises. The provincial was very satisfied with the commitment, meticulousness, orthodoxy and persuasiveness of his protégé. The quality of his work was such that Oomen urged him to send it to the general government of the Redemptorists in Rome. There, too, ways were being sought to increase the prestige of Alphonsus's views within the accepted teaching of the church. Van Rossum's writings were well received, and as a result, superior general Mauron and his successor Raus came to regard him as one of the experts on the founder's dogmatic-theological work.



Altar of Saint Gerard Majella, in the monastery church of Wittem (probably 1950s)

Where there's smoke, there's fire: polarisation in the Dutch Redemptorist province

1 The 1894 general chapter

After the Redemptorist superior general Nicolas Mauron's death in 1893, vicar general Matthias Raus was charged with preparing a general chapter that would elect Mauron's successor.¹ This general chapter, held from 25 February to 22 April 1894 in Rome, was to have great consequences for Willem van Rossum's further career.² First because it took aim at certain customs in the Dutch province. In the resulting polarisation, Van Rossum adopted a principled and intractable stance which made his position as rector of Wittem untenable. And second, it appointed his mentor Petrus Oomen to a new post, in which he was able to further advance Van Rossum's career.



Nicolas Mauron, superior general of the Redemptorists (1855–1893)

As the constitutions stipulated, all provinces had to send delegates to Rome to attend the general chapter of 1894. These delegates were elected at preceding provincial chapters, which also discussed items for the agenda of the general chapter; every general chapter presented a new opportunity to modify the congregation's overall policy. Solicited and unsolicited recommendations were sent to the general government from all corners of the world in the months leading up to the general chapter.

Petrus Oomen, one of the consultors general and the secretary of the chapter, felt strongly that improvement of the academic and ascetical formation of young Redemptorists should be an important item on the agenda, particularly as great advances had been made in recent times in the understanding of Alphonsus's writ-

1 Matthias Raus (Aspelt, Luxembourg 1829–Birtigny 1917) was consultor generalis under Mauron from 1889–1893 and became superior general in 1894, a position he occupied until 1909. Boland, *Dictionary*, 309.

2 *Acta integra Capitulum Generalium Congregationis SS. Redemptoris ab anno 1749 usque ad annum 1894* (Rome 1899), 645–651.

ings. He tried to use his influence to accomplish this, and as early as 11 July 1893, even before Mauron's death, he had asked Van Rossum to draft a Latin memorandum presenting his experiences and recommendations as a former professor and prefect of students. "For if the professional and experienced men do not set the tone here, we must fear that the brash may make bold to take the lead."³

A few months later, Matthias Raus similarly asked Van Rossum to submit his thoughts on the formation of students, novices and minor seminarians.⁴ In a lengthy reply dated 25 November 1893, the rector of Wittem argued that clear rules were needed for the prefects of students and novice masters. Prefects were wont to follow their own ideas, which might in themselves be praiseworthy, but might not always be in accordance with the spirit of the congregation, and could therefore do great harm. A new manual of rules and precepts, including a compulsory list of conferences to be given, would create unity in formation and ensure that this corresponded with the "particular spirit" of the congregation. Such a manual would simplify the prefect's work and greatly benefit the congregation.

In addition, Van Rossum made an impassioned argument that young priests should not be left to their own devices after leaving the studentate. They should be required to sit an exam every year, like the Dutch secular clergy. This would prevent them becoming totally absorbed by their daily activities and stimulate them to keep up their studies. Van Rossum also recommended that retreats for young Redemptorists should be given only by exceptionally able confreres.⁵

Other proposals and requests from the Dutch province similarly reached Rome. In November 1893, Aertnijs wrote to provincial Meeuwissen that he had been in touch with respectable confreres from various provinces.⁶ Some were dissatisfied with the late superior general's government, which they regarded as overly authoritarian. They advocated that other members of the congregation should have a greater say in decision making, that the consultors general should be competent and energetic, and that the provincial councils and chapters should be given greater powers. They also hoped for the introduction of collective consultations between provincial superiors and the general government in Rome, instead of the customary individual meetings between the general council and the provincials. Lastly, they asked that there be regular visitations by the superior general, or, if that was not possible, by someone from another province, to prevent abuses and irregularities within the congregation.⁷

3 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 11 July 1893.

4 AGHR, LX 2b: M. Raus to W. van Rossum, 19 September 1893.

5 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 25 November 1893.

6 ENK, ANPR, no. 34: J. Aertnijs to J. Meeuwissen, 12 November 1893. Aertnijs mentioned no names, and we do not know whether Van Rossum belonged to this group or not.

7 *Ibid.*



The 1894 general chapter. First row, left to right from fourth from left: Petrus Oomen, Bishop Willem Wulfingh, superior general Matthias Raus, Edward Douglas, Karl Dilgskron; third row, left to right from third from left: Joannes Mastboom, Joseph Aertnijs, Jacobus Meeuwissen

Another one of Aertnijs's and his associates' objectives was the foundation of a higher theological institute for the congregation, a Schola Major where the most talented Redemptorists could go for advanced studies. Academically gifted confreres would be trained there to disseminate and defend the true doctrine and thought of Saint Alphonsus. For the same reasons, the congregation also needed an international journal; it was in fact an egregious dereliction of duty that no such publication existed yet. This last wish came true the following year, as the Redemptorists took over the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, a journal founded in 1869, at the invitation of its founder, Père Piat.⁸ The professors of Wittem, gathered in joint session with Rector Van Rossum in the chair, agreed to accept the editorship of the journal in October 1894, quoting the opportunity this offered to defend "the honour of St. Alphonsus".⁹

8 The founder Jean-Joseph Loiseaux (1815–1904) joined the Capuchins and was henceforth called Père Piat de Mons.

9 AGHR, Province of Belgium. Correspondence with the general government: R. Van Aertselaer to M. Raus, 20 October 1894. The takeover was signed by Willem van Rossum, Jozef Aertnijs, Frans ter Haar, »

The delegates brought these proposals, including the establishment of the Alphonsonianum, later the Accademia Alfonsiana (Higher Institute for Moral Theology) in Rome, with them as they attended the general chapter. The Dutch province was represented by the provincial, Meeuwissen, and the other *vocales* or 'vocals', delegates with the right to vote: Aertnijs and Joannes Mastboom. Kronenburg and Jacobus Polman were elected as their substitutes, and Willem Wulfingh represented the vice province of Suriname.¹⁰ It would be an exciting chapter for the Dutch. In the first round of the election of a new superior general on 1 March, Matthias Raus and Petrus Oomen received almost the same number of ballots: twenty-four for Raus and twenty-three for Oomen. Support for Oomen then dwindled, and in the seventh round Raus was elected superior general, a post he would occupy until 1909.¹¹

This was a disappointment for the Dutch delegates, who told their confreres back home that Oomen had been "the soul of the chapter".¹² He had tabled a proposal for constitutions for the noviciate and rules for the students. He had also vehemently opposed anyone who deviated from what he regarded as the rule and spirit of Saint Alphonsus. Meeuwissen later remembered that Oomen showed himself to be a true expert in the writings of Alphonsus, and that he clearly outshone everyone else at the chapter in this respect.¹³ In a confidential letter, Oomen described himself as a "signum cui contradicetur", a sign of contradiction, but he did not care: he regarded it as his duty to push the congregation in the right direction. At least he had no reason to reproach himself for having kept silent at a time when it was necessary to speak out.¹⁴

But Oomen did not do himself any favours by assuming the role of intransigent defender of Alphonsus. Not only did he miss out on election as superior general, he was not reinstated as consultor general either, the office he had occupied since 1891. Oomen found the opposition he encountered difficult to accept. But in the same confidential letter, probably addressed to Van Rossum, he wrote that he was glad he had escaped the heavy burden of the generalate that had nearly been placed on his shoulders.¹⁵ According to a tradition in the Dutch province, Oomen was not re-elected consultor general because of his assertive and unbending reputation and the fear that he would dominate the more flexible Raus.¹⁶

» J.L. Jansen, Hubert Schoth, Henri de Jong, Frans Harte and Adriaan Mertens. The Redemptorists edited the journal from 1895 to 1907, when it was taken over by the Jesuits. *Litterae Annales de rebus gestis Provinciae Hollandicae Congregationis SS Redemptoris* (Gulpen 1895), 13. See also De Meulemeester, *Bibliographie*, vol. 3, 131–132.

10 *Acta integra Capitulorum Generalium Congregationis*, 645–651.

11 ENK, ANPR, no. 8437: postcard from J. Aertnijs, Rome, 1 March 1894.

12 Mulders, 'Levensschets Petrus Oomen CSSR', 76.

13 M. Mulders, 'Pater Oomen en het Generaal Kapittel van 1894', in: *MHPN-CSSR*, 2(1950), 23–24.

14 ENK, ANPR, no. 8419: P. Oomen to unknown Redemptorist (probably W. van Rossum), *Soli*, 27 May 1894.

15 *Ibid.*

16 Mulders, 'Levensschets Petrus Oomen CSSR', 76.

Instead, he was elected procurator general, the official who represented the congregation in its relations with the Holy See. Although Oomen was still a member of the general government, this appointment gave him much less influence over the internal affairs of the congregation than the consultors had. But, as would soon become clear, Petrus Oomen's new position proved providential for Willem van Rossum. As procurator general, it was Oomen's task to be in close touch with the Vatican, and he built up an extensive and powerful network there. From 1895, he would use his new position to introduce Van Rossum to many important people in Rome: professors, prelates in high places, and cardinals.¹⁷

2 The Dutch province under fire

One of the main concerns raised during the general chapter of 1894 came from the international group which has just been mentioned and which was led by Aertnijs. This group wished to put a stop "to abuses and irregularities that have crept up in certain provinces". No provinces were mentioned by name, but the Dutch province was clearly one of the targets. The most important neuralgic point was smoking: the question as to how the rules on this practice should be interpreted had been debated from the 1850s onwards. The issue was tabled once again at the chapter.¹⁸

Redemptorists in other provinces were troubled by the Dutch penchant for smoking. In principle, the rule banned the custom. Provincials could give individual priests permission to smoke outdoors or in their rooms for special, personal reasons. But tobacco was a national product in the Netherlands and was the source of national pride: the Dutch were as keen on their tobacco as the Italians were on their wine, which was served daily in the Italian houses. In the seventeenth century, smoking a pipe had been a status symbol for wealthy gentlemen, but since the eighteenth century, almost everyone in the Netherlands had developed a taste for the habit, even children. Among the elite, pipes, snuff and chewing tobacco were increasingly being replaced by cigars. The Dutch colonies of Indonesia and Suriname produced great quantities of high-quality tobacco, which were turned into cigars in Dutch factories. Amsterdam alone hosted more than sixty such companies in 1867, and Dutch cigars were famed across the globe.¹⁹

17 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 13 April 1915.

18 ENK, ANPR, no. 66: memorandum on the smoking question in 1894-95 (16 p.) by Jan Kronenburg, dictated to Felix Schweigman, f 6-7.

19 G.A. Brongers, *Nicotiana tabacum. The History of Tobacco and Tobacco Smoking in the Netherlands* (Groningen 1964), 201-226.

Smoking good (and expensive) cigars was a status symbol among the Dutch secular clergy, and only marginally less so for the regular clergy. From the moment boys entered the minor seminary, they were inducted into the cult of smoking. As they moved from one class to the next, it was a rite of passage on each occasion to receive more generous smoking privileges. Thus at the age of thirteen, Willem van Rossum was categorised under “smoking, second class” during his first week in Kuilenburg seminary. The annals of the seminary record that the community smoked every Wednesday, even during Lent, and on feast days.²⁰ One of the requirements that Van Rossum had to comply with when he sought admission to the Redemptorists in 1873 was to stop smoking. According to Drehmanns, this was a real sacrifice for him. The biographer’s subsequent comment is telling: “From that moment on, he stopped smoking and he never smoked again for the rest of his life.”²¹ This comment implicitly referred to the so-called smoking question in the Dutch province and to the side that Van Rossum chose in this debate.

The general government of the Redemptorists had long accepted that smoking was a national tradition in the Netherlands. In 1867, the Dutch received a derogation from the rule in this respect, as “the habit of smoking is an irrevocable part of Dutch national identity. Everyone smokes (...), priests as well as bishops, strict religious as well as the more lenient Orders.” The Dutch Jesuits, for example, smoked every day during recreation, and their general superior Jan Philip Roothaan (1785–1853) defended this habit.²² The Dutch Redemptorists were permitted to smoke twice a day during their parish missions, when they were in the company of secular priests.²³

In a later memorandum on the smoking question, Jan Kronenburg wrote that after the announcement of the 1894 general chapter, a number of Dutch Redemptorists began to lobby for further mitigation of the smoking ban. They hoped at least for permission to smoke in their own rooms. Kronenburg, who was rector in Roermond at the time, tried to prevent the corresponding petition from reaching the chapter. He feared it would provoke opposition and even lead to the withdrawal of existing dispensations. Instead, he sent a petition of his own to Rome, asking the members of the chapter to maintain the existing situation. This request was signed by some twenty Redemptorists from Roermond and Wittem, including Van Rossum. Other houses refused to support the initiative.²⁴

20 KADOC, ANSI, Files on Kuilenburg minor seminary, no. 6215, f 68 ff.

21 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 17.

22 AGHR, PH V 11/M: ‘Pour quelles raisons l’on désirerait la coutume de fumer réintroduite’, memorandum from 1867, 1.

23 AGHR, 0900: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 4 November 1895. Kronenburg was referring to a decision by Nicolas Mauron of 30 September 1857 acknowledging that smoking in the presence of ecclesiastical *officiales* was a Dutch tradition that was therefore exempted from the ban.

24 ENK, ANPR, no. 66: memorandum on the smoking question in 1894–95 by Jan Kronenburg.

3 The extraordinary visitation of 1894

The 1894 general chapter discussed and rejected both requests. The chapter instead adopted a decree ‘on the ban on smoking tobacco’, with 43 votes in favour and 4 against, the latter probably from the four Dutch delegates with voting rights. The decree stipulated that all existing dispensations from the ban on smoking were withdrawn.²⁵ After the chapter ended on 22 April, the new superior general Raus on 9 June ordered an extraordinary visitation of the Dutch province, to be conducted by the Dutch Redemptorist Fulgentius Koopmans. His task was to carry out an in-depth investigation of the views and atmosphere in the province.

It is not clear why Koopmans was chosen for this assignment. Perhaps his appointment was meant to reassure the Dutch, as Koopmans was known to be mild and affable, and he was generally well-liked.²⁶ But Willem van Rossum was astonished at the choice. In a letter to the superior general dated 30 June, he observed that Koopmans, a former secular priest whose noviciate had lasted only six months, was perhaps a friendly man but had never become a ‘real’ religious. He was not a ‘true’ Redemptorist, adequately formed by the spirituality of Saint Alphonsus. Nor was he disposed to respect the authority of religious superiors. Moreover, Koopmans, together with other discontented confreres, had attempted to sabotage the implementation of the decisions of the general chapter, specifically its ban on smoking. The argument advanced by this group that Dutch smoking customs made it impossible for the Dutch Redemptorists to follow the rule, was nonsense, Van Rossum wrote. He believed that the Dutch were perfectly capable of following these rules, like everyone else in the congregation.²⁷

Van Rossum made no attempt to conceal his views and feelings. He suggested sarcastically that Koopmans’s visitation report should contain the following passage: “There are a few disgruntled members in the province, who always speak against authority, and I am one of them; there are some who are more parish priests than religious, who are too involved in parish ministry to concern themselves with the rules and the spirit of the Congregation, and I am the first among them.” Van Rossum continued that disgruntled people were the cause of trouble in politics, society

25 *Ibid.*, 2. See also ENK, ANPR, nos. 63–65: correspondence between J. Kronenburg and the general government, as well as various other documents on the smoking question.

26 Fulgentius Koopmans (1838–1904) was rector of Roermond and later Rotterdam. According to provincial superior Gerard Schrauwen, Koopmans was “more a parish priest than a religious superior. He is too lenient, he doesn’t know how to say no.” AGHR, 0900, 5562: G. Schrauwen to N. Mauron, 1890.

27 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 30 June 1894. Van Rossum mentions Jacobus Mastboom, Carolus Wulfingh, Joannes Boumans, Fulgentius Koopmans and Willem Wulfingh as the discontented; Koopmans was the only former secular priest among this group.

and the church. They delighted in causing difficulties and complaining that they were not understood or even that they were victims of persecution, whereas good religious kept silent, prayed and trusted in God, “particularly in the current time, in which the democratic spirit of the age threatens to penetrate monasteries everywhere”.²⁸ He ended by saying that it had cost him much to write this critical letter, but that he felt obliged to give his view in all frankness to prevent later regrets.

Koopmans conducted the visitation in July and August. In his report to Matthias Raus dated 19 September 1894, he recommended several changes in the Dutch province, including the appointment of a new provincial. According to him, Meeuwissen was a good and pious religious, but he lacked sharp and practical judgement. Moreover, he commanded little trust or goodwill among the clergy and the faithful. Koopmans's favourite candidate for the position was Jacobus Polman, rector of Roosendaal.²⁹ In the same month, Raus also asked Meeuwissen to recommend candidates for his succession. Meeuwissen regarded Joseph Deckers and Willem van Rossum as the most suitable candidates, although he noted that the latter had little experience with parish missions.³⁰

4 Provincial Jan Kronenburg and the smoking question

The new provincial appointments were announced on 25 October 1894. Although neither Koopmans nor Meeuwissen had mentioned Jan Kronenburg, at the time rector and prefect in Roermond, as a suitable candidate, Raus decided to make him head of the Dutch province.³¹ It is possible that Petrus Oomen made representations in Rome on behalf of his then 41-year-old protégé. The appointment received a mixed response, as Kronenburg's biographer Henri Schäfer recounted in 1940. Some regarded him as too broadminded, and others felt he was too diplomatic.³² Meeuwissen's predecessor Gerardus Schrauwen characterised Kronenburg in 1890 as fervent but sickly, and inclined to be independent-minded.³³

Provincial Meeuwissen had so far deferred promulgation of the controversial new decree on smoking. He knew it would cause a storm of protest and much unrest, and decided to let his successor be the bearer of bad news. Upon taking office, Kronenburg and his consultors Koopmans and Carolus Wulfingh immediately sent a vigorous protest to Rome. They wrote that it was impossible for the Dutch Redemptorists

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ AGHR, PH V, report by F. Koopmans, 19 September 1894, f 1–4.

³⁰ AGHR, 0900: J. Meeuwissen to M. Raus, 21 September 1894.

³¹ ENK, ANPR, no. 4, f 387–389. Fulgentius Koopmans was appointed rector of Amsterdam and, together with Carolus Wulfingh, consultor to Kronenburg.

³² AGHR, Schäfer, 'Levensschets J. A. F. Kronenburg', 22–25.

³³ AGHR, 0900: G. Schrauwen, 'Rapport sur le Personnel de la Province Hollandaise 1887–1890'.

to adhere to the terms of the Roman decree, and mentioned the tradition of dispensations from the smoking ban going back to the 1850s, under the first Dutch provincial Johannes Swinkels. They also pointed out that the internuncio and the bishops would fail to understand the new measures, a comment that reflects the close bonds that existed between the Redemptorists and the secular clergy. Moreover, the consultants warned that submission to the decree would damage the reputation of the congregation in the Netherlands and would sap the motivation of many Redemptorists to accept parish missions. Some Redemptorists, they predicted, would even leave the congregation or secretly continue to smoke.³⁴

In November 1894, Raus and his consultant and *admonitor* Ernest Dubois told Kronenburg that the general government was resolved to uphold the general chapter's decision.³⁵ The Dutch province would not be treated any differently from the American provinces, where smoking was also customary, although only by individual priests with personal dispensation from the provincial rather than on the basis of a general dispensation. Such personal dispensations might still be given, but only for grave reasons. Raus permitted Kronenburg to postpone the introduction of the decree until Easter, the end of the parish missions season. Surprisingly, the superior general added in his letter of 1 December 1894 that he would personally have been happy to give the dispensation requested, but now that the general chapter had decided otherwise, he was obliged to uphold its decisions.³⁶

On Aertnijs's advice, Kronenburg asked in early 1895 if he might give every Redemptorist individual permission to smoke when in the company of one or more secular priests during a mission. He also told Raus that a number of confreres had informed the internuncio of the situation, who had purportedly expressed his support for the disgruntled Dutchmen, and had even said, "What foolishness; they criticise us, Italians, because we don't adapt to the customs of the land, and now look what the Redemptorists are doing... I will write directly to the Pope to explain the whole affair to him."³⁷ But Raus did not budge and Kronenburg eventually had to accept the decree *De prohibitione fumandi tabacum*, which was promulgated in the Dutch province on 8 April. Raus was very pleased with this and wrote to Kronenburg on 5 May 1895 that he did not fear an appeal to the pope, as the decision had been inspired by one thought only: "The Rule, the Rule, the Rule. That is our strength; outside that, everything is arbitrary."³⁸

34 ENK, ANPR, no. 66: memorandum on the smoking question in 1894–95 by Jan Kronenburg, f 6–7.

35 The *admonitor* is an advisor charged with giving the general superior honest and confidential warnings or exhortations on his personal conduct and government of the congregation.

36 ENK, ANPR, no. 66: memorandum on the smoking question in 1894–95 by Jan Kronenburg, f 6–7.

37 *Ibid.*, 11.

38 *Ibid.*, 13. See also ENK, ANPR, no. 5, f 23.

Although Kronenburg submitted to Raus's decision in his letters, there was too much at stake for the Dutch province to leave it at that. One of the factors that had contributed to the growth of the province was its success in attracting secular priests, and it was feared that the smoking ban would change this. Another problem was that the Redemptorists felt more or less equal to, or even superior to, the secular clergy, whose retreats they preached and with whom they collaborated closely during parish missions. The Dutch Redemptorists possibly feared that the smoking ban would make them an exception among the other religious in the country. It must also be remembered that many congregations sought refuge in the Netherlands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a result of the German *Kulturkampf* and anticlerical legislation in France. These institutes were all recruiting new members, which meant that competition was growing.³⁹ It was feared that new candidates would ultimately prefer other, more lenient orders or congregations.

Jan Kronenburg decided to ask Matthias Raus for a private meeting to discuss these problems, and the vicar apostolic of Suriname, Willem Wulfingh, arranged an encounter during a visit to Rome. Wulfingh himself argued for dispensation from the smoking ban for the Redemptorists in Suriname.⁴⁰ Ernest Dubois, Raus's *admonitor*, had said earlier, in January 1895, that no such dispensation was necessary: the Belgian Redemptorist missionaries on the Virgin Islands of Saint Thomas and Saint Croix had not asked for dispensation either. Kronenburg protested against this argument: the situation in Suriname was entirely different, if only because of the many mosquitos due to the colony's swampy terrain. Raus agreed to discuss the problem personally with the vicar apostolic during the latter's visit to Rome before his return to Suriname.⁴¹

On 31 August 1895, while the superior general was on a visitation of the Austrian province, Kronenburg and Joseph Deckers, rector of Roosendaal, travelled to Prague, then part of the Austrian province (and of the Austro-Hungarian empire).⁴² The day after Kronenburg's departure, Willem van Rossum – "albeit reluctantly" – wrote a concerned letter to Raus, also on behalf of a number of confreres, he claimed. He warned the superior general that the provincial's trip to Prague had only one goal: "to obtain from your goodness the concession of cigars". Kronenburg had told everyone in the Dutch province that it would be easy to secure this concession if he could only speak to Raus personally.⁴³

39 Jan Roes, *Het groote missieuur 1915–1940. Op zoek naar de missiemotivatie van de Nederlandse katholieken* (Bilthoven 1974), 16–17.

40 AGHR, *Correspondence between Raus and Kronenburg, 1895*: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 8 July 1895.

41 ENK, ANPR, no. 66: memorandum on the smoking question in 1894–95 by Jan Kronenburg.

42 ENK, ANPR, no. 5, f 23–24.

43 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 1 September 1895.

Of course, Van Rossum continued, the superior general, “given his high position and illumination by the Good God”, was well aware of the counterarguments. But still he wished to reiterate that the attempt to have the smoking ban lifted was not an isolated case. It would mean the victory of “the all too natural, too secular tendency that threatens our province”. Also, Raus would do well not to believe everything he was told. Even though the secular clergy would normally insist that he smoke cigars with them, he had personally experienced that they eventually acquiesced in a refusal. He concluded by asking Raus not to divulge to anyone that he had written to him about this, because he had already spoken to Kronenburg about it. “To avoid unpleasantness, I’d rather stay in the shadows.”⁴⁴

Given the confidence Kronenburg had expressed prior to travelling to Prague, the provincial must have felt he had convincing arguments, but we do not know precisely what they were. Rumour had it that ten Redemptorists had threatened to leave the congregation, and it is not unlikely that the internuncio and the Dutch bishops brought pressure to bear upon the congregation.⁴⁵ A memo written by Kronenburg much later, in September 1929, shows that the case he presented to Raus was obviously sufficient to convince the superior general. In Prague (and later again in Wittem), Kronenburg and Raus came to a verbal understanding that the provincial would submit to the smoking ban in all letters and written documents sent to the superior general and his consultors, but might *in practice* permit smoking under certain conditions. Kronenburg would orally inform the rectors of the various houses of this confidential arrangement.⁴⁶ This allowed Raus to keep his critical consultors at bay, while placating the unrest that had arisen in the Dutch province.

44 *Ibid.* Meeuwissen also objected to Kronenburg’s policies on smoking and to his trip to Prague. See AGHR, 0900: J. Meeuwissen to anonymous consultor general [E. Dubois], 2 September 1895. It was nothing new that Van Rossum expressed his criticisms frankly and undiplomatically. See ENK, ANPR, no. 8544: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 9 and 19 November 1884. Van Rossum apologised to Kronenburg for his critical, pedantic tone, which might seem rude to Kronenburg but was due to his desire to be frank: “You will say, the old critic is still there.”

45 AGHR, 0900: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 28 April 1895. The Dutch bishops officially appealed to the pope and the prefect of Propaganda Fide in June and August 1896 to obtain mitigation of the smoking ban for the Dutch Redemptorist province. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 80, f 321–328; AGHR, 0900: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 19 November 1896.

46 ENK, ANPR, no. 66: memories by Jan Kronenburg, September 1929. The smoking ban was relaxed in 1906 after a visitation by Raus, as is shown by ASPF, *Carte W.M. van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder G, ‘Lettere private, 1904–1910’: J.D. [J. Deckers] to W. van Rossum, Wittem 18 August 1906. “The Most Reverend Father [Raus] regretted not having come 10 years earlier and our province would never have had this sad smoking affair with its lengthy fallout. He gave us back smoking, and more generously than we used to have it.”

5 A matter of conscience

Kronenburg returned to Amsterdam on 25 September 1895. The following day, Van Rossum wrote again to Raus, this time sending photos of the renovation in Wittem and inviting him to come and inspect the results. He also emphasised that he was entirely at the superior general's disposal: he was happy to go wherever his superiors sent him and would carry out whatever charge they might give him. When Raus was still vicar general, he had encouraged Van Rossum to immerse himself in the theology of Alphonsus. Van Rossum had not forgotten this and he wrote he would gladly heed this advice if God so willed.⁴⁷ It was as if Van Rossum felt that his days as rector were almost numbered and he was applying for an academic position.

We may assume that most rectors of Dutch houses were happy to be told of the smoking deal that Kronenburg had struck in Prague. Not so Willem van Rossum. On 9 October he sent Raus a long litany of complaints, a detailed description of the abuses that existed in the Dutch province and the ways in which it deviated from the decrees issued in 1894. Religious discipline was far from ideal and the situation was worse now than before the general chapter. Thus, contrary to the rule and the decrees, the provincial superior permitted students, priests and lay brothers to make overnight family visits, even if there was a Redemptorist house in the vicinity. There were even young Redemptorists who toured around openly in coaches or, worse still, went on sailing trips with relatives. People saw this and were amazed at the strange spectacle. The Amsterdam rector Koopmans had encouraged all his subjects to attend an 'obscene' exhibition in Amsterdam, including young priests who had not yet completed their studies. "One of these young Fathers told me that he had seen such frivolity and indecency at the exhibition in broad daylight that he had to avert his eyes."⁴⁸

Van Rossum's list of complaints went on. Kronenburg had said that French cognac was not a spirit and might therefore be served before meals on certain occasions. He had also allowed four Fathers to smoke in their rooms; Oomen had only done so in one single case during his fourteen years as provincial, and he still regretted it. During Schrauwen's and Meeuwissen's provincialates, no such permissions had been given at all. Moreover, Kronenburg had told him that the superior general had granted a general dispensation from the smoking ban in cases where a distinguished

47 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 26 September 1895; see also W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 23 December 1894.

48 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 9 October 1895. Meeuwissen, too, wrote to Rome with similar complaints, see AGHR, 0900: J. Meeuwissen to consultor general [E. Dubois], 9 October 1895 and M. Raus to J. Meeuwissen, 14 October 1895. The exhibition in question was possibly the 'Exhibition of living masters in Amsterdam', which opened in the *Stedelijk Museum* in September 1895.

prelate insisted that a Father light up a cigar in his company. But when he had asked the provincial to explain in writing what he meant by “insisted” and “distinguished prelate”, Kronenburg had shrugged and said he would apply the dispensation flexibly. A distinguished prelate could mean, Kronenburg had said, “a bishop, a vicar general, a dean, or *another highly distinguished priest*”.⁴⁹ When one of the Fathers in Wittem asked Van Rossum if he could smoke when visiting a neighbouring parish for pastoral assistance, the rector had refused. The priest in question then became very angry and told him that all other rectors of Redemptorist houses gave permission in similar cases.

Van Rossum apologised for writing, as Raus’s “very humble, very devoted servant and son”. He had hesitated to write this letter, but felt compelled to raise the matter. He wished to judge or accuse no one, but simply wanted to report these facts to the superior general to ease his conscience and assuage the turmoil of his soul. Once again, Van Rossum was eager that Kronenburg should not find out that he was the source of this information: “I ask urgently, Most Reverend Father, to keep my name absolutely hidden, particularly from the Very Reverend Father Provincial.”⁵⁰

6 Appointment to Brazil and transfer to Rome

In addition to the smoking question, Kronenburg had to attend to another problem: the staffing of the overseas mission posts in Suriname and Brazil. Suriname had been given to the Dutch Redemptorists in 1866, and they accepted a second mission in 1893, in Brazil. The Redemptorists at the time were in fact rather reluctant to take on foreign missions, also because the rule prohibited them from accepting parishes. They feared that their vocation as religious would be endangered through excessive contact with the ordinary faithful. But after turning down various requests, they finally agreed to accept a second mission in 1893.⁵¹ In the summer of that year, Matthias Tulkens and Franciscus Lohmeijer crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and in January 1894 they established themselves in Juiz-de-Fora. Two months later, the former rector of Wittem, Gerardus Schrauwen, was installed there as the first superior.⁵²

49 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 9 October 1895. Italics in the original. Raus’s response to Kronenburg was that a “moral necessity to smoke” could only be said to exist if a bishop or the internuncio insisted on it; AGHR, 0900: M. Raus to J. Kronenburg, 14 October 1895.

50 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 9 October 1895.

51 L. Dankelman, ‘Niet geslaagde stichtingspogingen’, in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 1(1949), 42–60, 97–104.

52 B. Haanappel, ‘Brazilië. Begin van de toekomstige Vice-Provincie van Rio-de-Janeiro’, in: *MHPN-CSsR*, 3(1951), 44–51.

Schrauwen told Kronenburg that the Brazilian mission needed more people; he asked for four priests and two brothers.

In a letter to Raus dated 18 July 1895, Kronenburg explained his plans for the new Latin American province. The first Father he wanted to send to Brazil was Simon Bodeke, who had been in Rome for some years serving as the annalist of the general government. His knowledge of Italian could serve the Brazilian mission well. The second person Kronenburg and his consultors had chosen was the rector of Wittem, Willem van Rossum. This surprising proposal clearly required further justification, and Kronenburg presented a long list of arguments in favour. First, his predecessor Jacobus Meeuwissen had at the time also felt that Van Rossum was very suited for the missions, and had proposed him and Matthias Tulkens for this to Mauron.⁵³ Second, a man like Van Rossum could be of great use in Brazil, because, although Gerardus Schrauwen was gentle and a good local superior, he was not a man to take the initiative. The same applied to the other Fathers in the mission. Van Rossum, by contrast, was very well suited to establishing and developing the Brazilian enterprise because he was energetic, courageous and had a great deal of common sense. He was therefore a good complement to Schrauwen. The provincial and his consultors expected that the talents of the two men combined would create a solid basis for success.⁵⁴

Kronenburg gave yet another remarkable reason for his proposal. As rector of the Wittem community, Father Van Rossum lacked one valuable characteristic: he did not know how to gain the affection of his subjects. When he was prefect of students, everyone obeyed him and he was respected on account of his virtue and erudition, but there was not one student who really liked him. Now that he had become rector, many were suffering under his excessively strict authority. How different he had been – even cheerful – when he was just a simple priest. Kronenburg and his consultors regarded him as a burden on the Dutch province, but believed he would come into his own in Brazil. Kronenburg had fixed the date of his departure for September 1895.⁵⁵

Raus replied to Kronenburg's and his consultors' proposal from Vienna on 29 July, telling them that he did not approve. It would be a waste to bury Van Rossum's admirable talents in Brazil. In fact, the superior general had other tasks in mind for him in Rome, where he would be able to put his qualities to much better use. He wished to discuss this further with Kronenburg during their planned meeting in Prague, at which they would also decide when Van Rossum could best move to Rome; this was

⁵³ No letter confirming this was found in AGHR.

⁵⁴ AGHR, *Correspondence between Raus and Kronenburg, 1895*: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 18 July 1895.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Kronenburg also proposed two other Fathers and two Brothers for appointment in Brazil.

not to be during the dog days of July and August when the Eternal City was too hot. In the meantime, Van Rossum should stay in his post as rector of Wittem.⁵⁶

Kronenburg answered by return of post: “Sicut Domino placuerit, ita factum est” (As it will please the Lord, so is it done). Although the Dutch province could use each one of its scarce priests, he fully accepted Raus’s decision to earmark Van Rossum for Rome. He also decided to keep Simon Boddeke in Rome; he would send Henricus de Jong instead, whose talents as an organist would be useful in Brazil.⁵⁷

Kronenburg’s decision to send Van Rossum to Brazil is odd.⁵⁸ Provincial superiors were not strictly speaking obliged to take the views of their subjects into consideration, but Van Rossum had never shown the slightest interest in working in the overseas missions, and his weak health surely also disqualified him.⁵⁹ It appears that Kronenburg never discussed this option with Van Rossum before sending his proposal to superior general Raus. Van Rossum’s letters do not contain any reference to a possible appointment in Brazil.

It is possible that Kronenburg was banking on the likelihood that his plans for Van Rossum would be rejected in Rome, where their mentor Petrus Oomen was still influential. In his biography, Drehmanns commented that Oomen did what he could to block the appointment in Brazil. According to Drehmanns, Oomen was the first to suggest that Van Rossum should come to Rome, where he could help prepare the foundation of the Schola Major, which the recent general chapter had approved.⁶⁰ Dubois, a member of the general government and Van Rossum’s old prefect of students, similarly expressed objections to the plan to send his former pupil to Brazil: “We have so few men of talent who love books, (...) while there are many who are suited only for apostolic work, and who could be sent to Brazil.”⁶¹

56 AGHR, 0900: M. Raus to J. Kronenburg, Vienna 29 July 1895. Raus was not positive about Boddeke’s appointment either. Van Rossum somehow learned of his appointment in Rome that same month. KDC, ROSS, no. 67: W. van Rossum to L. de Swart, 6 January 1896.

57 AGHR, *Correspondence between Raus and Kronenburg*, 1895: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 2 August 1895.

58 J. Drehmanns suggested in his *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 23–24, that Van Rossum had been earmarked for the first group of missionaries sent out to Brazil, which makes the appointment seem more plausible. He added that this appointment would have been a great change for the 41-year-old, but that Van Rossum would have been fully prepared to submit to the wishes of his superiors.

59 Various works suggest that Van Rossum had joined the Redemptorists because he was interested in working in the overseas missions; see for instance: *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 10. No evidence for this hypothesis has been found in the archives. Van Rossum discusses the importance of the promising mission in Brazil in AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government*, 1886–1895: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 30 June 1894, but without any hint of a desire to go there himself.

60 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 23–24. In his biography of Petrus Oomen, Kronenburg similarly contended that Van Rossum’s appointment in Rome was Oomen’s doing, but he omits to mention that he himself intended to send him to Brazil beforehand. See Kronenburg, ‘Stille krachten. VIII. Te Rome. Pater Oomen en Kardinaal van Rossum’, 36–44.

61 AGHR, *Correspondence between Raus and Kronenburg*, 1895: E. Dubois to M. Raus, 13 August 1895.

Van Rossum's appointment in Rome was officially announced in a letter from Raus to Kronenburg on 7 October, which came with a personal letter for Van Rossum.⁶² Van Rossum – and possibly also Kronenburg and the majority of the Wittem community – will have been relieved to see official confirmation of his transfer to Rome. In a later letter, he thanked Raus for the trust placed in him and promised to do his utmost for the congregation, “to which I owe everything”.⁶³ Kronenburg – who had been quite happy only very recently to ‘bury’ Van Rossum and his academic qualities in Brazil – wrote to the superior general that Van Rossum's departure for Rome was a true loss “for the province, particularly from the point of view of scholarship, but (...) it is a gain for the congregation, for he will do more [for it] in Rome than here.”⁶⁴

Van Rossum visited all the houses of the province and his family, and a farewell gathering was organised for him on 19 November 1895. Despite their disagreements, the provincial superior attended the event, as did the rectors of Roermond, Brussels, Liège and Sint-Truiden. The next day Kronenburg accompanied Van Rossum to the station in Liège, where they parted ways.⁶⁵

7 Oomen and his protégé

In retrospect, we can see how carefully Petrus Oomen tightened discipline in the Dutch Redemptorist province, all the while paving the way for the careers of his most promising pupils, Jan Kronenburg and Willem van Rossum, especially after his own appointment in Rome in 1891. Whereas Kronenburg – orthodox and unbending, but diplomatic and prepared to compromise – was to play a very influential role within the Dutch province from the moment he was first appointed provincial superior, Oomen brought Van Rossum to the generalate in Rome. He had already, and extensively, drawn the general government's attention to his pupil, and had carefully arranged the presentation of his treatises to the superior general and his consultants. There is no doubt that Oomen did this to lay the foundations for an important role for Van Rossum in the general government of the congregation, where his work defending the true doctrines of Alphonsus had been well received.

62 AGHR, 0900: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 11 October 1895.

63 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 18 October 1895.

64 AGHR, 0900: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 11 October 1895.

65 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 25 October and 10 December 1895; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 24–25.

Although they belonged to different generations, Oomen and Van Rossum were kindred spirits. Their *solli* letters show a growing attachment between them over the years. They wrote each other often, particularly when they were experiencing difficulties. In 1888, Oomen consoled Van Rossum in his “spiritual distress and sorrows” by reminding him that they must pray and suffer much for the congregation they both loved.⁶⁶ Oomen wrote candidly from Amsterdam in 1890 about the trials and anguish he himself had to undergo.⁶⁷ They regarded themselves as true partners in suffering, *socii in poena*, as Oomen wrote in a letter in 1891. At the time, Oomen felt useless and appreciated by no one. After having served as provincial superior for a long time and receiving only respect and love in this position within the congregation, he now felt like an outcast almost nobody cared about.⁶⁸

While Oomen taught Van Rossum that obedience to the rule was sacred, he also showed his pupil that it was not necessary to submit to decisions by an immediate superior if he regarded them as incorrect. There was always a higher authority: the superior general, Saint Alphonsus or God. Thus, when Van Rossum was prefect in Wittem in 1891, he had to deal with opposition by provincial superior Jacobus Meeuwissen, who criticised the way he discharged his duties as prefect.⁶⁹ Oomen told him not to take any notice and to seek consolation in prayer. After all, he had been appointed by the superior general, “that is, by God himself”. As long as he remained true to the teachings of Alphonsus, he was on the right path, whatever objections the provincial might raise. Oomen asked him expressly to destroy his letter immediately after reading it, and underlined the word *solli* three times, “as I want to prevent absolutely that it should ever fall into anyone else’s hands”.⁷⁰

This is not to say that Oomen was uncritical of Van Rossum. On occasion, he regarded Van Rossum’s strictness in applying the rule and the constitutions as excessive. In 1893 he concluded a confidential letter with a frank and grave reprimand after Van Rossum had complained about the actions of various confreres. Oomen asked him to carefully examine his own conduct, because Van Rossum was not always friendly and prudent in his dealings with other people. Oomen remembered that, when he was still in the Netherlands, he had been told more than once that “Your Reverence [Van Rossum] was somewhat too absolute and rigid, that you were lacking in fatherliness, in tenderness towards subjects, and were always given to strictness. Well then, my good Father, apply yourself to this virtue, which is so

66 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 6 June 1888.

67 *Ibid.*: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 3 July 1890.

68 *Ibid.*: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 2 March 1891.

69 *Ibid.*, 2 March 1891. Van Rossum clashed with Meeuwissen again in 1892. AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to N. Mauron, 7 August 1892.

70 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 2 March 1891.

necessary in the community life and (...), if it pleases God ever to raise you up, to carry out your office in the spirit of goodness.”⁷¹ But Oomen’s admonitions do not appear to have made much of a difference to Van Rossum’s conduct, given Kronenburg’s view that he lacked one valuable characteristic: the ability to make himself loved. The same could in fact also be said for Petrus Oomen himself: he, too, lacked this gift.⁷² Nonetheless – or perhaps because of it – many students in Wittem and Roermond wrote cordial farewell letters to Van Rossum when he left for Rome, letters he would keep for the rest of his life.⁷³

8 Kronenburg: friend and rival

The general chapter of 1894 had important consequences for Willem van Rossum’s career. It was held at a time of considerable growth for the congregation in Western Europe and the United States. During his forty years as superior general, Mauron, who died in 1893, presided over the expansion of the congregation from five hundred to three thousand members. The Dutch province also flourished. Between 1873, when Van Rossum joined the Redemptorists as a novice, and 1895, when he left for Rome, the number of members grew from 136 to 227.⁷⁴

The canonisation of the founder, Alphonsus Liguori, in 1839 and his proclamation as doctor of the church in 1871 certainly played a role in this. Alphonsus was known primarily for his writings on moral theology, but he had also published certain works in the field of dogmatic theology, particularly on the status of Mary. It was a great fillip to the congregation that he was made a doctor of the church. This meant he was now part of a small, select group of learned saints that included old church fathers as well as Thomas Aquinas and Bernard of Clairvaux. His new stature raised the question – both within and outside the congregation – what Alphonsus’s teachings and ideas actually were. To ensure that he would occupy a place of his own within the wider ecclesiastical narrative, it was necessary to have scholarly studies of his doctrine published. Many in the congregation were preoccupied not just with

71 *Ibid.*: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, Rome 17 May 1893. In his reply, Van Rossum thanked Oomen for his comments and said that they had really helped him. Oomen appreciated this, as he revealed in his own reply of 21 June 1893. This letter also contained a short comment with the same date, in which Oomen states that after his death, all his papers held by Father Bührs in Amsterdam should be given to Van Rossum, “who will dispose of them as he sees fit in the interests exclusively of the Fathers of our Congregation”.

72 Lathouwers, ‘Iets over het karakter van pater P. Oomen’, 94–95.

73 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, fasc. B, 22–23.

74 These 227 members comprised 109 seminarians, 9 novices for the priesthood, 61 brothers, 15 lay brother novices and 6 lay brother postulants. In addition, there were 41 ‘juvenists’ enrolled in the minor seminary. ENK, ANPR, no. 5.

the correct interpretation of his teachings, but also with what Alphonsus thought about the organisation of the congregation and the formation of aspiring new members. How should his rule be interpreted and how strictly should it be applied?

These questions – as well as the election of a new superior general – were on the agenda of the chapter of 1894. All Redemptorists expected uniform guidelines from the general chapter, which exercised the highest authority in the congregation. One of the most ardent advocates of a strict interpretation of Alphonsus's teachings and ideas was Petrus Oomen. His influence had grown after he was transferred to Rome as *consultor generalis* for the Belgian-Dutch provinces in 1891. During the 1894 general chapter, he was a strong candidate to succeed Mauron as superior general and was the most serious rival of the man who won, Matthias Raus. Oomen's plea for a strict interpretation of Alphonsus's teaching found majority support. One of the consequences was the chapter's decision to change local traditions and dispensations from the rule.

For the Dutch province, this meant that the previously granted dispensations from the smoking ban were withdrawn. The decision proved unacceptable to the majority of the Dutch Redemptorists. Not only did they regard smoking as part of Dutch identity, but given the clerical and ecclesiastical situation in their country, a ban on smoking would seriously compromise the congregation's status and therefore its competitive position. They demanded that their own national traditions be respected within the congregation. While Jan Kronenburg, appointed provincial superior in 1894, tried to have the measure mitigated through diplomatic compromise and by using loopholes in the rule, Willem van Rossum took an unequivocal stand against his policy. Like Petrus Oomen, he supported the literal interpretation of Alphonsus's doctrine, an interpretation which he believed should be identical for all Redemptorists. He presented himself as a convinced hardliner in letters to the superior general: Oomen had taught him not to hide his opinions. In the dichotomy that existed between nationalism and universalism, Willem van Rossum clearly opted for the latter. The issue was obviously important enough for Van Rossum to ignore the rule of obedience and go behind his immediate superior Kronenburg's back by writing directly to Raus.

This situation placed a great strain on the relationship between the two old friends. Was Van Rossum fishing for the post of provincial superior himself, to follow in the footsteps of his mentor, Petrus Oomen? His name was on the list of potential candidates and Oomen, too, had become provincial after having served as rector of Wittem. He possibly viewed the provincialate as a legitimate promotion. Moreover, the interaction between the two old friends during this conflict looked more like competition between brothers than the fruit of genuine concern for the congregation. It is important to realise that they had both gone to a Jesuit school: their ambition to play

a leading role in the church may have been formed at this time. It was surely no coincidence that these two Redemptorists contended with each other over who would be the dominant influence in the Dutch province, as they would once again be rivals during the election of a new superior general at the 1909 general chapter.

Kronenburg tried to rid himself of a troublesome critic in the Dutch province by appointing Van Rossum to Brazil. He had perhaps expected that this appointment would not be acceptable to the general government. But it is also possible that Kronenburg, Oomen and Van Rossum were in cahoots with each other. Van Rossum wanted an academic career, and the best place for this was Rome. Raus had already shown his appreciation for Van Rossum and the latter’s interpretation of Alphonsus’s dogmatic teachings. It is telling that Kronenburg, when told that Van Rossum would go to Rome, expressed regret at losing Van Rossum’s academic talents for the Dutch province, even though he had himself only recently attempted to send him to Brazil, where he would never have been able to put these qualities to optimal use. In Rome, Van Rossum’s talents would soon lead to a new and unexpected turn in his career; with Oomen’s help, who was now best placed to give it.

The generalate in the Eternal City

1 Sant'Alfonso

After a visit to the “famous sanctuary of Lourdes”, where he and a confrere “assaulted” the Blessed Virgin with prayers, Willem van Rossum reached the city that would be his home for the rest of his life.¹ The *Cronaca della casa generalizia* records his arrival in the Redemptorist house in Rome on 9 December 1895.² The monastery of Sant'Alfonso was situated on the Esquiline Hill, not far from Santa Maria Maggiore. At the time, the building, the former Villa Caserta, stood perpendicular to the stately Via Merulana and was set in an attractive garden.³

The Redemptorist monastery was located in a part of Rome that was undergoing rapid development, the area around Termini railway station, which had opened in 1867. The city at the time numbered approximately four hundred thousand residents. Its character had changed profoundly after Rome was taken by the Italians and the old *Città Santa* became the capital of the new kingdom of Italy. It was now governed by a secular government. City planning, the composition of the population, social and cultural life and the economy all underwent rapid change, propelling the Italian capital into a modernising world. And yet Rome long remained a city of contrasts, where shepherds drove their flocks through the streets, where peasant women and aristocratic ladies could be seen sharing the same urban space, and where foreign journalists and artists lived, immortalising the old city.⁴

Under King Victor Emanuel II (1870–1878) and his son Umberto I (1878–1900), the role of the church was curtailed in many areas, including education and marriage.⁵ But Rome was still the centre of the worldwide Catholic church, home to the papal see, countless churches, pilgrims and religious of every order and congregation imaginable. In the words of the Italian historian Giuseppe Croce, the Holy See continued to dominate the city even though it no longer owned it.⁶ Throughout

1 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 3 December 1895; ENK, ANPR, no. 11903; Th. van Bendorp to M. Raus, 5 March 1896.

2 AGHR, *Domus Generalis (DG) II*, 10 December 1895.

3 Aloysius Walter, *Villa Caserta. Ad aureum domus generalitiae jubilaeum 1855–1905*, Rome 1905.

4 Giuseppe M. Croce, ‘Regards sur la Curie romaine de 1895 à 1932’, in: *Life with a Mission*, 53–65, at 53–54.

5 Martin Clark, *Modern Italy 1871–1995*, Harlow etc. 1996², 81–88.

6 Croce, ‘Regards sur la Curie romaine’, 54.



The church and monastery of Sant'Alfonso on Via Merulana, Rome, c. 1900

almost the entire time that Van Rossum lived in Rome, relations between the Holy See and the Italian state were overshadowed by the Roman question: the capture of papal territory in 1870 had turned the pope into the ‘prisoner of the Vatican’. The Roman curia never tired of complaining loudly about this ‘unjust treatment’, until the question was resolved in 1929 in the Lateran Treaty. On 11 February of that year, Benito Mussolini, the Fascist leader of Italy, and Cardinal Pietro Gasparri, acting on behalf of the Holy See, signed the treaty that established Vatican City as a sovereign and independent state and financially compensated the pope for the loss of his possessions in 1870.⁷

The Holy See underwent a number of important changes after the loss of the Papal States. For centuries, the popes had held both secular and religious power: throne and altar were one. This was reflected in the papal household and in the civil service and government of the Papal States, where prelates busied themselves more with the business of state than with the salvation of souls. After 1870, the administrative apparatus of the Roman curia was inevitably transformed into a ‘government without a state’. The religious component became much more important than it had been. This was a major aspect of the centralisation of the church and the concentra-

⁷ Clark, *Modern Italy*, 254–256; Croce, ‘Regards sur la Curie romaine’, 54–55. See also Chapter 20.3.

tion of power in the Roman curia over which Pius IX presided. The definition of the dogma of papal infallibility by the First Vatican Council (1869–1870) was an important theological trump card in this development.⁸

Religious institutes increasingly moved their generalates to Rome in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the curia strongly stimulated this development. Orders and congregations had always been mainstays of papal power, and their role now increased even more. They were present in a wide geographical, social, religious and missionary field, and provided a relatively cheap workforce; not an insignificant consideration for a curia strapped for cash after losing its worldly possessions.⁹

The Redemptorists were one of these papal mainstays. The congregation was founded by Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787) in the then kingdom of Naples in 1732. The institute's development and growth benefited greatly from the persecution and ultimate expulsion of the Jesuits from the realm in 1767, which allowed them to take over many Jesuits activities. A few years later, in 1773, Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus altogether, which boosted the development of the Redemptorists outside Naples; thus they were given a former Jesuit school in the papal enclave of Benevento. By contrast, the restoration of the Society of Jesus in 1814 dampened Redemptorist prospects. Their plan to open a seminary in Rome for the training of priests who could be sent to the Protestant areas of Germany was well-received but regarded as inopportune given the recent restoration of the Jesuits. The relationship between the two institutes after the restoration appears to have been somewhat strained and competitive. The fact that the Redemptorists were known as the 'ordinary people's Jesuits' reveals their respective places in the pecking order.¹⁰

The kings of Naples had long regarded the Redemptorists as a politico-religious instrument of their own. Despite papal approval of the rule by Benedict XIV in 1749, and their establishment in Benevento in 1755, persistent tensions between the Neapolitan and other houses continued to plague the congregation.¹¹ Ultimately, this required the splitting up of the institute by Pius IX into a Transalpine and a Neapolitan congregation. The Neapolitan branch, headquartered in Pagani, was the oldest.

8 François Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine de Pie IX à Pie X. Le gouvernement central de l'église et la fin des états pontificaux* (Rome 2007), 399–424; Croce, 'Regards sur la Curie romaine', 56–58.

9 John F. Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy. Financing the Vatican, 1850–1950*, Cambridge 2005.

10 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 13–19, 47–61, 86–87, 130. The Redemptorists were often disparagingly called 'Jesuits in disguise'.

11 *Ibid.*, 95–97, 157. According to De Meulemeester, the Neapolitan regalistic position was to regard the Catholic church not as a religious community, but as a foreign power that was encroaching upon its territory. The government's anti-monastic policy involved a ban on religious organising themselves as international congregations, and the requirement that religious' primary loyalty should be to the king. Nonetheless, the group around Alphonsus more or less lived a community life with vows, including the vow of 'perseverance': this was necessary because many members gave up quickly due to the 'regalistic and Jansenist' mentality in Naples.

But the Transalpine branch, founded ‘across the Alps’ by Clement Mary Hofbauer in Vienna and Warsaw in 1785, expanded rapidly and had a strongly ultramontane ethos. In his decree *Cum ob peculiaris* of 8 October 1853, the pope instructed the Transalpine congregation to establish its generalate in Rome, and this is why it purchased the Villa Caserta. The Austrian Redemptorist Rudolf von Smetana, appointed vicar general by Pius IX, was given the task of organising a general chapter in Rome.¹²

During this chapter, held in 1855, the young Swiss Redemptorist Nicolas Mauron was elected superior general, a position he held for more than 38 years, until his death in 1893.¹³ In 1869, after the annexation of the kingdom of Naples by the Piedmontese, the Neapolitans reunited with their northern brethren to form one single Redemptorist congregation. Attempts were made to bridge the differences of mentality between the two branches – of ‘spiritual and emotional’ Neapolitans versus ‘active and sober’ Transalpines – by emphasising a common focus on the life and teaching of Alphonsus. Different traditions had developed over the years due to difficult communications between the two branches, for example by the ban which governments such as the Neapolitan, the Polish and the Austrian imposed upon contact with foreign superiors.¹⁴ This gave rise to problems, particularly with respect to the vow of poverty. The general chapter of 1793 had permitted a certain accumulation of property, thus derogating from the stricter papal rule of 1749. The Transalpine region had not been represented at the 1793 chapter due to the disturbances of the time, and was therefore unaware of the mitigation, which in any case found few supporters outside the Neapolitan branch. Fierce debates periodically erupted within the congregation between supporters and opponents, until Pope Pius X finally settled the matter in favour of the stricter observance in his decree *Ut tollatur* of 31 August 1909. The pontiff no doubt acted on the advice of, among others, Willem van Rossum, with whom he entertained warm relations.¹⁵

12 Jean Beco, ‘Les cent cinquante ans de la maison ‘Sant’Alfonso’ à Rome’, in: *SHCSR*, 54(2006), 3–36, at 4–8. The Anglo-Dutch province was split off from the Belgian province and erected as a separate circumscription just before the chapter, to balance out the number of capitulars from various regions. The capitulars for the Anglo-Dutch province were the provincial Joannes Swinkels, Bernard Hafkenscheid and Antoon Konings; for Belgium: Franciscus Verheyen, Frederich Von Held and Victor Dechamps.

13 Nicolas Mauron (Fribourg, Switzerland, 1818–Rome 13 July 1893) was the superior of the French-Swiss province in 1851 and attended the chapter in that capacity. He was also appointed Rector Major, the title traditionally borne by Alphonsus Liguori and his successors in Naples. Boland, *Dictionary*, 230–231.

14 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 100–102, 107–118. The Transalpine Redemptorists also worked in education and parishes, activities eschewed by their Cisalpine brethren on the basis of the rule. The 1894 general chapter decided that parish ministry in mission stations was permitted (184).

15 Beco, ‘La maison ‘Sant’Alfonso’’, 6; Boland, *Dictionary*, ‘Poverty’, 300–301; De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 146–159, 170.

Construction of a church dedicated to the Most Holy Redeemer and Saint Alphonsus had begun on Via Merulana even before the 1855 chapter had ended. The church was completed in 1859, and the future archbishop of Mechelen, Cardinal Victor Dechamps C.Ss.R., was consecrated bishop there in 1865. Its neogothic style made it somewhat of a rarity in the streets of Rome. In 1866, the Redemptorists, strong protagonists of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and of ‘re-Marianisation’, received permission from Pius IX to move the fourteenth-century icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour to their church. They soon became ardent promoters of this Marian devotion across the world. According to the Belgian historian and Redemptorist Maurice De Meulemeester, it was not easy to repopularise this cult, which had almost vanished under the “icy breath of the Aufklärung, of Philosophism and Jansenism”. Bishops sometimes opposed it because they feared its simplicity might shock educated observers. But De Meulemeester regarded the devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour as particularly effective “in fructifying the priestly ministry, and in bringing back lax Catholics to the practice of their religious duties”.¹⁶

Under Nicolas Mauron, the Redemptorists eagerly exhibited their papalism. During the First Vatican Council, the Roman generalate served as a meeting place for the proponents (“*conspirateurs*”) of a definition of papal infallibility. They included Archbishops Henry Manning of Westminster and Dechamps of Mechelen, the latter reputedly one of the most fervent infallibilists. He based his stance on “the solidly Catholic teachings of St. Alphonsus”.¹⁷ It was an important time for the Redemptorists, as Alphonsus Liguori was often heralded, also by non-Redemptorists, as the vanquisher of the “pest of Jansenism”.¹⁸ This contributed significantly to Alphonsus’s proclamation as doctor of the church in 1871. The meetings of infallibilists in the monastery on Via Merulana permitted Mauron and the Redemptorists to build an informal network within and outside the curia.¹⁹

In September 1870, when papal Rome was conquered by the Italian kingdom, Sant’Alfonso was spared because the British flag fluttered over it. A deal made with the then rector, a Scot, marked the monastery and church as British property ten days before the fall of Rome. Nonetheless, a large part of the gardens was confiscated by the civil authorities in 1873. The horrified annalist subsequently spotted ladies walking in the former monastery gardens: *o tempora, o mores*.

16 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 126–127, 181.

17 *Ibid.*, 187; Beco, ‘La maison ‘Sant’Alfonso’’, 11–12. These meetings in the generalate are commemorated on a memorial stone inaugurated by superior general Raus on 8 January 1907. A. Sampers, ‘Congregatio SSmi Redemptoris et Concilium Vaticanum I’, in: *SHCSR*, 10(1962), 424–449, at 439.

18 Rosa, ‘S. Alfonso Maria de Liguori e la lotta contro il Giansenismo’, 223. See also Cacciatore, *S. Alfonso de’ Liguori e il Giansenismo*.

19 Beco, ‘La maison ‘Sant’Alfonso’’, 11–12.

Sant'Alfonso's status as foreign property helped the congregation to keep the government at arm's length in many court cases.²⁰ Nevertheless, the Redemptorist house became gradually wedged in between new buildings and new streets, and the Villa Caserta, once set in almost rural surroundings, was swallowed up by the growing and industrialising city. In 1883, the Redemptorists decided to build houses themselves on Via dello Statuto and Via Pellegrino Rossi, thus enclosing the monastery terrain and preventing the parcelling up of their property in the context of urban development plans. Moreover, the rent that these houses yielded provided an important source of income. The population of Rome was growing and demand for new housing was high.²¹

Moving the congregation's headquarters from Pagani to Rome proved to be a propitious step. Under Mauron's government, the Redemptorists developed into an international institute whose close links with the pope opened many doors for them. After previous foundations in European countries and the United States, they now also spread to Latin America, Canada and Australia and accepted their first missions in the Danish Antilles (now the Virgin Islands), staffed by Belgians, and Suriname, staffed by Dutchmen. Membership increased during Mauron's nearly forty-year-long generalate from circa five hundred to almost three thousand. This expansion was assisted by the beatification of two Redemptorists: Clement Mary Hofbauer and Gerard Majella, in 1888 and 1893 respectively.²²

2 The Roman community

When Willem van Rossum arrived in Rome, the monastery of Sant'Alfonso was home to some forty Redemptorists, who together formed a very international community. His compatriots Petrus Oomen, Aloys Walter and Simon Boddeke surely gave him a warm welcome, and he also knew a few other members of the community. The general government consisted of the Luxembourger Matthias Raus, who had succeeded Mauron in 1894, and six consultors who were each responsible for a particular geographical area. One of them, Ernest Dubois, was Van Rossum's old

20 *Ibid.*, 12–13. Many orders and congregations managed to avoid the confiscation or closure of their monasteries through various legal expedients, for instance by emphasising their social activities (such as education or nursing), although this did require obtaining the necessary certificates from the civil authorities, see Clark, *Modern Italy*, 81–88.

21 Croce, 'Regards sur la Curie romaine', 54; Walter, *Villa Caserta*, 36–37, 178–179. The Redemptorists' possessions initially extended beyond Via Macchiavelli as far as Piazza Vittorio Emanuele and Via Carlo Alberto; Beco, 'La maison 'Sant'Alfonso'', 12–13. AGHR, PG *Bona Immobilia*, E VII 1; E VII, *Varie* 1910–1930, I; E IV 2.

22 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 161–175; Boland, *Dictionary*, 230–231.

prefect of students in Wittem.²³ The house also accommodated the noviciate and a seminary for six seminarians from the Roman province.²⁴ Housekeeping was in the hands of ten lay brothers and nine of their novices, and the rector was the Scot Edward Douglas.²⁵

The transition from Van Rossum's busy and influential post as rector of Wittem to a rather anonymous existence in the generalate in Rome was drastic. Life in the house in Rome was very different from that in the Dutch monasteries, as Petrus Oomen had explained at length to his pupil in a letter four years previously. To his own surprise, Oomen had found the transition from being rector of Amsterdam and provincial consultor to consultor generalis quite agreeable. His lifestyle in Rome was totally unlike that in the Netherlands. "I live here as a true hermit among a large community and in a busy city. I have literally nothing to do, other than what I want to do myself."²⁶

Oomen had quickly caught up on outstanding correspondence and then focused on learning Italian. This was more difficult than he thought, because he was usually seated beside Germans or Frenchmen during recreation. "Everyone has their own fixed place and speaks only to one or at most two companions. If I go for a walk, it is usually with Fathers Walter and Boddeke or with a German." Oomen said he had had to learn Italian mainly from books, as he had heard that plans were afoot to give him a confessional in the church. This meant he would have to take an exam required by the Italian government: "imagine, a man of nearly 56 years old will be sitting an exam for the first time in his life!" Outside recreation, he had little contact with anybody and there were Fathers with whom he never conversed. "No one takes much notice of me; they simply leave you to your own devices; you're on your own, [that] is the general principle here. The consequence is that you don't get attached to anyone and gradually look only to God. May God grant that this will be the precious fruit of my life of solitude and seclusion!"²⁷

The food and the horarium were very different too. "The table is very different from ours in Holland and yet I have managed to adapt to it, although it is rarely or

23 In addition to being superior generalis, Raus was also given the title of rector major – both positions were for life. The consultors were the Italian Ernesto Bresciani, who was also secretary and vice-rector, Ernest Dubois (Belgium), also admonitor, Augustin Berthe (France), Karl Dilgskron (Austria), John Magnier (Ireland) and Joseph Schwarz (United States). Raus's secretary was the Alsatian Franciscus Xaverius Reuss.

24 Beco, 'La maison 'Sant'Alfonso', 8–9 mentions that most students moved to Cortona in Tuscany in 1892. See also Boland, *Dictionary*, 435.

25 AGHR, DG II, 1 January 1896. Beco, 'La maison 'Sant'Alfonso', 34 on the contrary says that Douglas was succeeded by Ernesto Bresciani in 1894. See also Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 24–25.

26 ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, 25 May 1891. He concluded by asking that the letter be destroyed after Van Rossum had read it.

27 *Ibid.*

never really to my taste. Imagine, on a day of fasting you'll get a portion of boiled macaroni with some oil in the evening (...). The piece of bread they give you and wine are the accompaniments. (...) The horarium is very different too. We rise at 5 o'clock and currently go to bed at 10.30. To make up for this, you can take an hour and a half to rest in the afternoon. Thirty minutes or a little longer are more than enough for me. Evening meditation is at 8 o'clock, supper at 8.30; this means the afternoon is very long. But the heat makes it impossible to do much." Religious life in the monastery was a disappointment. "Every day is the same here for me – no High Mass even on Pentecost, but this caused me little or no grief. *Terra enim in quo stas terra sancta est* [Exodus 3:5: 'For the ground you are standing on, is holy ground']. God gives strength and graces to match the trials, I feel this very clearly."²⁸

The transition to Rome was no less acute for Van Rossum. As his biographer Joseph Drehmanns observed, at 41 years of age, he had to begin a wholly new career "in a foreign country and among foreigners". He also had to learn Italian and prepare for the exam required to hear confessions, "that humiliating test", as Drehmanns called it, which the civil authorities in Rome imposed.²⁹ One thing Van Rossum would find very difficult to bear in Rome throughout his life was the summer heat. He often complained of this in his letters to relatives in the Netherlands, and whenever possible he left the Eternal City during these months. In the early years, he sometimes went to the Redemptorist house in the mountainous hamlet of Scifelli, more or less halfway between Rome and Naples – "a backwater if ever there was one", where people lived underground: "I have never seen such poverty and roughness",³⁰ – but he preferred to spend the summer in Ariccia, in the hills just outside Rome, where the temperature was pleasant.³¹ And he also looked on the bright side of the Roman climate, where fresh peas, beans and new potatoes could be had as early as April. "You just sow or plant something here, and a few weeks later you can eat it", he wrote to his family.³²

28 *Ibid.* Van Rossum, too, complained of the 'strange' cuisine. KDC, ROSS, no. 67: W. van Rossum to L. de Swart, 6 January 1896.

29 Clark, *Modern Italy*, 81–88; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 25–26. H. Aukes, *Kardinaal de Jong* (Utrecht/Antwerpen 1956), 78 mentions that De Jong, the future archbishop of Utrecht who was created a cardinal in 1946, was Van Rossum's penitent when he was a student in Rome from 1908 to 1912. He ascended the steps to Van Rossum's rooms every fortnight to receive "pious and simple" counsels. The Utrecht priest and later vicar apostolic of Norway, Jan (Olav) Smit (1883–1972), who studied in Rome from 1906 and 1912 and was an assistant in Santa Maria dell'Anima, was another penitent of Van Rossum's. Vefie Poels, *Een roomse droom. Nederlandse katholieken en de Noorse missie 1920–1975* (Nijmegen 2005), 141.

30 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 32–33, Scifelli 13 September 1906.

31 He used to stay with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth. He was the confessor of the foundress of this congregation, the Polish Sister Franciszka Siedliska, from 1898 until her death in 1902. ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1918: Memoria by Van Rossum, 15 October 1918.

32 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 21–22, Rome 20 May 1901.

Although his life took place mainly within the confines of the monastery, he was no hermit. As his letters show, he liked to visit sites of religious, historical or cultural significance in the locality as soon as the opportunity presented itself. And his position in the curia from late 1896 onwards brought him into regular contact with life in the Italian capital. The Vatican was about five kilometres from Sant'Alfonso. Occasionally, he took "St. Peter's tram", that is, he walked – as Oomen did, "from a spirit of poverty"³³ – but his letters show that he normally travelled to the Vatican by tram, mingling with the 'ordinary' Romans at least four times a week.³⁴

It allowed him to observe from up close the reactions in Rome to the assassination of King Umberto I (*il Buono*) in 1900. He described the situation, not without *Schadenfreude*, to François-Xavier Reuss, secretary to the superior general, who was on a foreign visitation journey at the time. "This morning around 5.30 we received news that poor Humbert was assassinated in Monza." There was little evidence of mourning in Rome, Van Rossum continued. On his way to the Holy Office that morning, only a few persons on the tram had commented on it. "You really see once more that Humbert was neither the master of Rome, nor the king of this people. They say preparations for a revolution were underway and that it was about to be launched, but has now been deferred. *Et nunc reges intelligite*,³⁵ we might say."³⁶ Van Rossum's assessment that the Italians were indifferent to their king was perhaps customary in clerical circles – Umberto I was known for his uncompromising stance towards the Vatican –, but the historian Martin Clark has shown that the brutal murder of Victor Emanuel II's son elicited great indignation across Italy.³⁷

Like many priests, Van Rossum was squarely on the pope's side. The situation in Rome was a thorn in his side. The Italian government's drive to curb the influence of the Catholic church in Rome was on display daily in the form of the huge monument for Victor Emanuel II that was being built on the site of a former Franciscan priory. Construction went on from 1895 to 1911. Moreover, much energy was expended on restricting all kinds of Catholic charitable institutions, including institutions in which the Redemptorists participated.³⁸ Van Rossum referred on several occa-

33 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 13 April 1915.

34 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 28, 31, 20–21 July 1905.

35 *Et nunc reges intelligite erudimini qui iudicatis terram* (Psalm 2:10): 'So now, you kings, come to your senses, you earthly rulers, learn your lesson'.

36 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to F.X. Reuss, 31 July 1900.

37 Clark, *Modern Italy*, 117. Umberto I (1844–1900) was reviled in left-wing, anarchist circles because of his conservative and repressive policies. He concluded alliances with Austria-Hungary and Germany and promoted colonial expansion (Eritrea, Somalia, and Tianjin in China after the Boxer Rebellion of 1900).

38 Croce, 'Regards sur la Curie romaine, 53–55; Clark, *Modern Italy*, 105. On the Redemptorists' charitable activities for the poor, see 'Brief van den zeereerw. Pater W. van Rossum', in: *De volksmissionaris*, 18(1896/97), 142–144, on the occasion of the bicentenary of Alphonsus's birth.

sions to the pope's 'unjust' position. "O, when will he again truly be Rome's King!", he sighed in 1902 in a letter to his family after attending a great event in the Vatican. The papal charm offensive launched on that occasion involved treating fifteen hundred of the city's poor to a good lunch at Leo XIII's expense.³⁹ A week before the pope's death on 20 July 1903, Van Rossum wrote that the international interest in the last months and weeks of the "poor imprisoned old man" of the Vatican showed clearly that "Holy Church and her Head occupy the first place in the world".⁴⁰

In letters to his family in the Netherlands during the first years of the new century, Van Rossum regularly expressed his fear that the situation in Rome and Italy was unsafe, particularly for clergy and religious. Leo XIII's successor, Pius X, who was elected on 4 August 1903, shared these feelings. Pius lived in constant fear and expectation of social unrest and conflict with the anticlerical elements of Italy's political class. There were a few moments of acute tension. Thus, a crowd of thousands of workers, "with the red banner up front, shouting revolution", marched through Via Merulana in July 1906. The police and protesters clashed just in front of the Redemptorist house, and the army had to be called in to relieve the police. "There is unrest everywhere; there are signs everywhere of a coming great explosion and a life-or-death struggle between Holy Church and the powers of hell. (...) Truly, the time of the pagans is returning." He predicted that the ministers of the church would perish as martyrs amid political and social trouble in Rome.⁴¹

There were revelations in 1907 of financial abuses perpetrated by religious with regard to costs incurred for the children entrusted to their care, and tensions mounted further. On 7 July 1907, Van Rossum wrote to the superior general that Pietro Gasparri had told him during a meeting of the codification commission, of which he had been a member since 1904, to warn his superior that the church and religious were in a dire political predicament in Italy.⁴² Orders and congregations should take timely measures.⁴³ Van Rossum told his family late that year that the city "was governed by a socialist council, headed, as the mayor of the eternal and holy city, by a Jew and a Freemason, the former grand master of the lodge, Nathan. He has found several ways already to display his hatred of religion." Van Rossum feared the

39 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 22–23, Rome 19 July 1902.

40 *Ibid.*, 25–26, Rome 13 July 1903.

41 *Ibid.*, 31 and 37, Rome 20 July and 28 December 1906.

42 Pietro Gasparri (1852–1934), an Italian canon lawyer, led the commission for the codification of canon law from 1904 to 1917. On Van Rossum's contribution to the codification commission, see Chapter 8.1. Gasparri was created a cardinal in 1907 and soon became one of the curia's most important cardinals. See also Chapters 13.7 and 20.

43 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 7 July 1907. Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 92–94, mentions legal problems concerning the congregations' own possessions.

worst after the elections, which might result in “a government of real haters of religion and the church”, bent on leading the masses away from the faith.⁴⁴

In response to the government’s anticlerical policies, Pope Leo XIII set up a commission of cardinals entitled ‘Work for the Preservation of the Faith’ (Opera “Præservationis Fidei” in Roma) in late 1902.⁴⁵ Very soon – possibly even during Leo XIII’s pontificate, but in any case in 1904⁴⁶ – Father Van Rossum was given the task of promoting this organisation in the Netherlands. According to Drehmanns, Van Rossum was known for his ability to attract benefactors, and he did indeed successfully launch a fundraising campaign in the Netherlands, with the help of the Redemptorists and their journal *De volksmissionaris* (‘The Parish Missionary’), which was widely read by Dutch Catholic families.⁴⁷ He went to the Netherlands for this in 1904 and again in 1905, travelling up and down the country. It was all very tiring, and in 1906 he wisely decided to spend the summer near Rome instead.⁴⁸

But propaganda could also be done by pen and paper. In a contribution in *De volksmissionaris*, Van Rossum told his compatriots that Protestantism had now even penetrated the confines of the Eternal City. He appealed to their generosity to combat “Satan’s cronies” who were directing their blows at “the centre of the world, in the fortress of the city of God, in Rome”. “Modern paganism” and “heretical sects” had to be repelled. Dutch Catholics, engaged in a constant war of competition with their Protestant fellow Dutchmen, proved receptive to this kind of rhetoric.⁴⁹ To his relatives, he expressed his fear of a general apostasy: “in a few years’ time, Italy [will be] an entirely non-Christian country”. It would lead inevitably to a terrible revolution, whose “first victims will be us priests and religious”. He added, not without humour, that this “might at least mean he had a chance of going to heaven”.⁵⁰

But for Van Rossum, there was more to Italy than apostasy. He was impressed by the exuberant expressions of the faith in which Italian Catholics indulged, and

44 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 38, Rome 29 December 1907; Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 92–93.

45 *Acta Sanctae Sedis (ASS)*, 35(1902/03), 265–266. This commission of cardinals was created on 25 November 1902 and its members were the cardinal vicar (the ‘bishop of Rome’), Pietro Respighi, and the Cardinals Serafino Cretoni, Francesco di Paola Cassetta, Sebastiano Martinelli and José de Calasanz Vives y Tutó. Van Rossum joined in 1912 as cardinal (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)*, 4(1912)); *Annuario Pontificio*, 1923, 698. It was then headed by Cardinal Vicar Basilio Pompilj.

46 ENK, ANPR, no. 8541: W. van Rossum to Dear Brother and Sister, Rome 24 July 1905, where he writes that he might come to the Netherlands again for the Work for the Preservation of the Faith “which I started in Holland last year”. *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 28, Rome 21 July 1905.

47 A list of gifts was published regularly in *De volksmissionaris*. Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 23.

48 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 16 August 1906.

49 ‘Uit Rome. Brief van den Zeereerwaarden pater W. van Rossum’, in: *De volksmissionaris*, 29(1907/08), 165–167.

50 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 50, Rome 30 December 1910.

which were so different from the rather stiff Catholic life in the Netherlands. In one of his first letters from Rome to his stepfamily, he described a pilgrimage he made together with Petrus Oomen to the Marian shrine of Valle di Pompei, the 'Italian Lourdes', south of Naples. Their train consisted of more than thirty carriages, and prayers and Marian hymns ascended all night from every carriage. At their destination, he observed the thronging crowds at the church: "A strange people; there was another group that entered the packed church, or rather pushed their way in, and they were scarcely one foot inside the church or they cried very loudly: *Evviva Maria! Evviva Maria!* A little further, others were loudly praying the Rosary, and elsewhere again there were cries of '*Evviva la Madonna*' 'Long live the Mother of God!' All of this inside the church of course. There is constant movement and bustle, such as nobody in Holland could imagine. Outside in the portal, yes even in the Sacristy, I saw God knows how many mothers sitting on the floor, one breast-feeding her infant, the other cleaning it up, etc. etc. All this happens in public, they're not easily embarrassed (...) It is the same here in Rome." His long letter did not mention the excavations that were being conducted in the adjoining fields, where ever since the 1860s the buried Roman town of Pompei was being unearthed at Garibaldi's and King Victor Emanuel II's initiative.⁵¹

Van Rossum made this pilgrimage in 1896 on the occasion of the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the founder of the Redemptorists. He visited all places of historical significance in the life of Alphonsus Liguori and of the congregation, coming into contact with the oldest roots of his congregation. One of the highlights was a visit to the grave of Alphonsus in Pagani. "I had the good fortune to be allowed to say Holy Mass over the grave itself of Saint Alphonsus. He lies there, below the altar, as you see him depicted on the card, in episcopal vestments with an expression of sweet, blessed peace on his countenance." The room to which Alphonsus retired after resigning his episcopal duties and where he died similarly made a great impression. Above his bed there was still the same painting of Our Lady of Sorrows, "which at the time of his death emitted radiant light, enveloping the Saint with a halo". Van Rossum also said Mass at the altar where Alphonsus had once purportedly levitated in ecstasy. "You can well imagine that this is a precious and attractive place for a child of St. Alphonsus. I was truly happy."⁵²

The journey continued to Naples, "delightfully, beautifully and gorgeously" situated, and, with more than half a million inhabitants, a much larger city than Amsterdam. Here too he marvelled at the lively, noisy and unabashed people, "who shout and hurry in true cacophony". Hundreds of carriages galloped through the streets,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 15–16, Rome 20 October 1896.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 16–17.

where people lived out their daily lives. Craftsmen worked on carpentry, hammered, repaired and cast tin, all outside on the street, mothers washed and looked after their children, and cooked and sewed there. Herds of goats and cows were milked on the spot, and slaughtered animals were offered for sale. Amid this bustle there were little altars with statues of Mary, to whom the “deeply religious” people prayed and sang. He visited the chapel that had a phial of Saint Alphonsus’s clotted blood, and witnessed the miracle of its liquefaction, “as if it were fresh blood. Surely no need to tell you that this will be one of the most joyous and consoling memories of my entire life!”⁵³

While Van Rossum was slowly getting to know the attractive and less attractive sides of Italy, he never forgot his fatherland. He stayed in touch with the Dutch Redemptorists, and the Catholic daily *De Tijd*, to which Petrus Oomen had a subscription, kept him abreast of current affairs. Acquaintances from Zwolle and the surrounding countryside regularly visited Van Rossum in Rome, bringing news of his relatives and former neighbours. And he sent news of the Eternal City to friends and acquaintances back home, such as a description in 1901 of the consecration by Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering of the Dutch altar of Saint Willibrord in the church of San Gioacchino (Saint Joachim), in the neighbourhood of Prati. It was attended by some thirty Dutch nationals, laypeople but mainly religious priests and a few secular clergy. “The whole Dutch colony”, with the exception of the leading Dutch politician Msgr. Herman Schaepman, who had already departed, gathered afterwards in the Redemptorist house for a convivial afternoon. Oomen in particular had been one of the main protagonists behind the new altar.⁵⁴ Van Rossum regularly concluded such letters by sending greetings to the dean of Zwolle, Nicolaas van Balen, his curates, and the Tilburg Sisters of Charity.

But above all he remained very much involved in the life of his immediate family.⁵⁵ He never missed his stepfather’s or other relatives’ birthdays, he said Masses

53 *Ibid.*, 18–19. They also attended ceremonies in Marianella (Alphonsus’s birth place), Caposele where Gerard Majella is buried, Scala and Sant’Agata de’Goti, where Alphonsus was bishop from 1762 to 1775: for the liquefaction see: Giovanni Pepe, ‘The Relic of the Blood of Saint Alphonsus M. de Liguori’, *Scala News. News from the Redemptorist World*, 14 October 2022, <https://www.cssr.news/2022/10/the-relic-of-the-blood-of-st-alphonsus-m-de-liguori/>.

54 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 21–22, Rome 20 May 1901; see also *De Tijd*, 1 May 1901. Saint Joachim’s church (San Gioacchino), a gift of the Catholic community to Pope Leo XIII on the occasion of the golden jubilee of his ordination, was entrusted to the Redemptorists by the pope in 1898. De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 192–193. Because the rule banned the accepting of parishes, Matthias Raus in 1905 asked – and was granted – papal permission for the Redemptorists to exercise pastoral ministry in this parish. Alejandro M. Dieguez, *L’Archivio Particolare di Pio X. Cenni Storici e inventario* (Vatican City 2003), 10.

55 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 14–21, Rome 20 October 1896. These longer letters were intended as circulars. On his relationship with his family, see also Lankhorst, ‘La jeunesse de cardinal van Rossum et son lien avec Salland’, 33–35.

for their intention, regularly sent them “the special blessing of the Holy Father” and prayed fervently that they would maintain mutual love and unity.⁵⁶ “This is why the good God has given us the joy of family ties, so that we would help each other, make life easier and help bear crosses and difficulties for each other, please one another, support [one another] in the struggles of life and help [one another] to achieve eternal salvation.”⁵⁷

In 1904, when Van Rossum was in the Netherlands for the Work for the Preservation of the Faith, and also to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination in Wittem, his oldest brother Kobus died in Zwolle, “after [I] consoled him by administering the last rites myself”. It had pleased God to add “some bitterness” to the sweet moments of his visit. His youngest sister was in hospital at the time, and he feared she might not recover either.⁵⁸ Hendrika Gerritdina van Rossum in fact died in Amsterdam a year later, on 14 June. Van Rossum received permission once again to travel to the Netherlands, but only in July.⁵⁹

After her death, Van Rossum played a decisive role in the distribution of her inheritance, even though his younger brother was the executor. He was prepared to cede the interest on his share, and in due course even his entire share, to his younger brother and his children, if they would manage the funds wisely. He stipulated precisely how the sum could increase through interest, and that this would make it possible for example to start a small business. Van Rossum took a more critical view of his deceased brother’s children. On a previous occasion, through the mediation of his stepbrother in Zwolle, he had “paid off the debts of [his] late brother K. [Kobus]” with two doctors, a solicitor and a pharmacist. Kobus’s widow received a small sum. Van Rossum realised that his deceased sister would not have approved of this, “because nothing good is to be expected from any of the children; but as she gave me full and general power, I decided it was best to settle it in this way.” Sister Gerulpha, his sister, also received a small amount.⁶⁰

56 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 44–45, Rome 20 July 1909.

57 *Ibid.*, 16–17, Rome 20 October 1896.

58 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Wittem 19 October 1904. Jacobus van Rossum died on 4 October 1904. Van Rossum was in the Netherlands to prepare Raus’s 1905 visitation, and he told the superior general that he had been received everywhere “with the greatest charity and brotherly goodness” and had found everyone quite content. Because his brother and sister were gravely ill, he was bound to “pay them a little visit”, as he wrote to Raus on 22 September 1904.

59 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 31 July 1905. Against all expectations, the codification commission had already begun its summer recess: Gasparri needed complete rest. But the Holy Office’s work continued, certainly until September.

60 ENK, ANPR, no. 8541: W. van Rossum to Dear Brother and Sister, Rome 24 July 1905. His sister’s inheritance, more than a thousand guilders, was lodged in an account in Amsterdam in the name of Father Schweigman, the bursar of the Redemptorists.

3 The Schola Major

Van Rossum's move to Rome was connected to the plans of the Redemptorists to establish an international house of studies.⁶¹ Ever since Alphonsus had been made a doctor of the church in 1871, there had been a number of Fathers in the generalate who dedicated themselves to scholarly studies. The history of the congregation and the biography and theology of Alphonsus were their main subjects of research. The role of the founder in the drafting of the constitutions and in the history of the congregation was not fully clear in every respect and was sometimes contentious, even within the congregation, for instance because Alphonsus had on occasion acceded to regalist demands from the Neapolitan crown.⁶² Raus notably banned all debate in the Dutch province of the thesis that Alphonsus had changed his teachings over the course of time, as this would naturally have diminished their absolute status.⁶³

The research in Sant'Alfonso resulted in a number of publications. The general archivist Frederick Kuntz (1832–1905), a native of Strasbourg, wrote a three-volume *Annales Congregationis SS. Redemptoris*. According to De Meulemeester, this work was not without its flaws, but the Viennese consultor Karl Dilgskron, consultor generalis since 1883, published one of the “better hagiographies” of Alphonsus.⁶⁴ Various theologians focused on clarifying and disseminating Alphonsus's teaching. From 1887 onwards, the Frenchman Léonard Gaudé (1860–1910) worked on an edition of the *Theologia Moralis*, and the Dutchman Aloys Walter (1859–1932) earned his spurs in Rome by translating Alphonsus's ascetical works into Latin.⁶⁵

The 1894 general chapter advocated the foundation of an academic institute of the congregation, a so-called Schola Major, where talented young Redemptorists would come to study Alphonsus's theological works. This plan was at least partially inspired by competitive motives. The Jesuits had their own academic institute, the Gregorian university, and the Dominicans had the Angelicum. These two orders were great promoters of the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. In a Redemptorist academy, the focus of research and teaching would be on the thought of Alphonsus, specifically on his moral theology. Van Rossum was expected to assist in the preparations for the found-

61 AGHR, DG II, 10 December 1895: this was explicitly mentioned in the annals upon Van Rossum's arrival. See also Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 24.

62 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 73–104.

63 AGHR, 0900: M. Raus to J. Kronenburg, 7 April 1896.

64 De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 27, 186. Karl Dilgskron, *Leben des heiligen Bischofs und Kirchenlehrers Alfons Maria de Liguori*, Regensburg 1887. Oomen's comment in a letter to Van Rossum is telling: “I will leave it to your prudence to omit for the students those things in the history of the Congr. that you deem suitable.” ENK, ANPR, no. 8416: P. Oomen to W. van Rossum, *Soli*, Amsterdam 3 March 1891.

65 Boland, *Dictionary*, 109, 136, 190.

dition. He went to various universities and attended lectures there to see whether the curricula might be useful for the new institute.⁶⁶

Plans for a Schola Major were at a very early stage when Van Rossum arrived in Rome, although the monastery complex was already being rearranged with a view to accommodating the future institute. The old main building, which was connected to the church through the sacristy, housed the parlours, the kitchen and two refectories, one large and the other small. The noviciate was situated behind the church, along Via di San Vito. A new wing attached to the main building, completed in 1899 and stretching all the way to the corner of Via Pellegrino Rossi and the Arch of Gallienus,⁶⁷ enclosed a smaller courtyard. Part of this new wing, which rivalled the main building in size and which was still partially used as a noviciate in 1905, was earmarked for the Schola Major. The lecture halls of its successor, the Accademia Alfonsiana, are today still located in this building. But the institute would not open until 1909.

If Drehmanns's biography is to be believed, this delay turned Van Rossum's sojourn in Rome into a great disappointment.⁶⁸ But this is unlikely to have been true. Van Rossum had no other lecturing or managerial duties and could therefore dedicate himself with undivided attention to his studies of Alphonsian dogmatic theology, although given his previous building experience, he probably interfered with the building plans that were underway in the generalate. His first project was the revision of the *Dissertatio de Praedestinatione D.N. Jesu Christi*. As has been seen, he had translated this work from Italian into Latin in 1885. On Raus's instruction, he showed his new version, including an introduction and footnotes, to a number of Fathers in the house, who gave their observations. They were all very pleased with the work, Van Rossum told the superior general on 5 September 1896, who was then visiting the Dutch and Belgian houses.⁶⁹

Around the same time, Van Rossum also ventured into the field of moral theology by writing a response to the Italian theologian Giovanni Battista Pighi (1847–1926), who had criticised Alphonsus's interpretation of the sacrament of confession.⁷⁰ The question was how to treat sinners who relapsed in their behaviour or refused to avoid occasions of sin. In his 1897 review of Pighi's book, Van Rossum adopted a

66 KDC, ROSS, no. 67: W. van Rossum to L. de Swart, 6 January 1896.

67 Rededicated in 262 CE, it was originally the Esquiline Gate in the Servian Wall, which was rebuilt under Augustus in 7 BCE.

68 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 24.

69 G.M. van Rossum, *Dissertatio de Praedestinatione D.N. Jesu Christi auctore S. Alphonso Maria de Liguorio ecclesiae doctore. Nunc primum edita cum versione Latina, introductione et adnotationibus*, Rome 1896; AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum (Rome) to M. Raus (Vaals), 5 September 1896.

70 G.M. van Rossum, *Commentarius de Iudicio Sacramentali Joannis Baptistae Pighi S. Theol. Doct. ad trutinam vocatus*, Rome 1897.

relatively strict position, based on Alphonsus, by contending that absolution could only be given once the sinner truly improved his or her situation or attitude.⁷¹ Pighi, a professor at the diocesan seminary of Verona, took the trouble of adding an appendix to the second edition of his work in which he defended himself against Van Rossum's accusations that his views were "falsa", that is, contrary to Alphonsus's.⁷²

Van Rossum then completed his treatise on the Eucharist, which was already well-advanced before he was appointed rector in Wittem, but which he had left unfinished thereafter for lack of time. It was never published separately. The text was included in a volume of dogmatic-theological treatises for use within the congregation in 1899.⁷³

It must surely have been a disappointment to him that he was never able to realise his great dream, the publication of a fundamental study of the dogmatic works of the founder. Other activities increasingly demanded his attention. Instead, his Dutch confrere Aloys Walter edited Alphonsus's *Opera dogmatica*, published in two volumes in 1903, incidentally including a number of texts translated and annotated by Van Rossum.⁷⁴

Walter's publication occasioned a curious initiative by Van Rossum which clearly highlights the great desire of the Redemptorists to have their founder acknowledged alongside Thomas Aquinas. After the *Opera dogmatica* appeared, Van Rossum contacted Benedetto Lorenzelli (1853–1915), then nuncio in France. Since the 1880s, Lorenzelli, a former professor of dogmatic theology in the Seminario Romano, had been a member of the Pontifical Academy of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Pontificia Accademia di S. Tommaso), founded in 1879 by Pope Leo XIII to study, explain and disseminate the work of Thomas Aquinas.

Van Rossum had first met Lorenzelli when he was rector in Wittem and Lorenzelli was internuncio in The Hague, where the latter was working to improve the formation of the Dutch diocesan clergy.⁷⁵ They clearly trusted each other, because Van Rossum asked him to publish a positive review of Walter's edition. Lorenzelli was happy to oblige, he replied, but every time he sat down to read, he was interrupted by something else. He asked Van Rossum to write a review himself, which Lorenzelli would then disseminate under his own name. Van Rossum promptly penned an elaborate commendation. Lorenzelli complemented and embellished this "éloge"

71 Corsius, 'Theological tradition', 47–48.

72 G. B. Pighi, *Appendice al Commentario de Iudicio Sacramentali*, Verona 1897.

73 G. M. van Rossum, 'Tractatus de ss. Eucharistia', in: Harte, Schoupe, *Dictata theologico-dogmatica*, vol. 2, 490–573. See also Van Eupen, 'Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de dogmatische theologie in Wittem', 97–118.

74 S. Alphonsi Mariae de Ligorio *Opera dogmatica. Ex italico sermone in latinum transtulit ad antiquas editiones castigavit notisque auxit Aloysius Walter*, Rome 1903.

75 De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 278–279.

even further, and it was then printed and distributed. Elaborating on Van Rossum's draft, Lorenzelli spoke of "the perfume of piety and sacerdotal zeal" which wafted from Alphonsus's dogmatic writings. Even more so than Van Rossum in his draft, he stressed that there was no conflict with the teachings of Thomas. He had concluded to his great joy that Alphonsus showed great and exemplary fidelity to Thomas's doctrines, both in the field of moral theology and in that of dogma; Lorenzelli even went so far as to say that certain teachings of Thomas's "grew in value and shone with new brilliance" under Alphonsus's pen.⁷⁶ It is not known whether this eulogy to Alphonsian doctrinal theology by an eminent Thomistic scholar found wide acclaim, but we may be sure Van Rossum did his utmost to disseminate it in the curia.

Van Rossum also helped to propagate Alphonsus that year by preparing an attractive publication to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception.⁷⁷ The drafters of the bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, which contained the definition of the dogma and had been issued by Pius IX on 8 December 1854, had depended strongly on Alphonsus's work, as had the dogmatic constitution on papal infallibility in 1870. Van Rossum's book was directed at a clerical audience. It contained the original Italian texts of Alphonsus on the Immaculate Conception, accompanied by Latin translations, and consisted of three parts: *Dogmatica*, *Ascetica* and *Poetica*. In translating this last part, he had benefited from the assistance of the superior general's secretary François-Xavier Reuss (1842–1925), a renowned and celebrated expert on Latin poetry. Reuss, who was in Ireland accompanying Matthias Raus on a canonical visitation, did not submit his translations fast enough to Van Rossum's liking, and he therefore threatened to ask another translator instead. Van Rossum apologised to the superior general for putting him under pressure, but he saw no other option as time was running out.⁷⁸

Van Rossum suggested to Raus that the imprimatur should state explicitly that he had added footnotes "which are like a thread stringing together everything that the Saint wrote about this subject, highlighting the unity, completeness and beauty of the Holy Doctor's teaching on the Immaculate Conception".⁷⁹ The work, in two-colour print, contained illustrations by his Bavarian confrere Brother Max Schmalzl (1850–1930), a renowned artist who counted the Vatican among his clients.

76 AGHR, LX 2c: B. Lorenzelli to W. van Rossum, Paris 11 January 1904; draft letter in Van Rossum's handwriting, undated [16 January 1904]; B. Lorenzelli to A. Walter CSR, Paris 29 January 1904 (printed letter); B. Lorenzelli to W. van Rossum, 6 February 1904.

77 G.M. van Rossum, S. Alphonsus M. de Ligorio et Immaculata Conceptio B. Mariae Virginis, Rome 1904. See also Van Eupen, 'Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de dogmatische theologie in Wittem', 97–118.

78 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 30 July 1904. For F.X. Reuss see Boland, *Dictionary*, 317–318.

79 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Ariccia 20 July 1904.

Schmalzl drew a face of the Blessed Virgin for the publication, “according to St. Alphonsus’s description of the apparition in Foggia”, where Mary had appeared to him as a young girl in 1731.⁸⁰ Five hundred copies of the work were printed by Propaganda Fide – this would suffice, according to Raus – and Van Rossum offered it as a present to important relations on several occasions.⁸¹

4 Van Rossum’s position in the generalate

The correspondence between Willem van Rossum and the general government, and specifically the superior general, in the Redemptorist general archives shows that his position in the generalate was growing ever stronger, even though he had no official role in the government of the congregation. During the superior general’s lengthy absences on visitation journeys, it was apparently not unusual for Van Rossum to be the one to update him on developments in the generalate. He would write about illnesses and deaths in the community, but also about external relations. Similarly, Van Rossum dealt with legal issues ranging from inheritances from wealthy benefactresses, one of whom left a house to the congregation and another established a fund for the formation of young Redemptorists, to the threat of legal proceedings in a financial dispute in Naples. He frequently operated independently in such affairs, in the spirit of “Your Paternity”.⁸²

Van Rossum also helped advance several Redemptorist causes for beatification. When he was in the Netherlands and Belgium in 1899 together with Petrus Oomen, who was visiting a number of houses of Redemptoristines, he made a point of collecting evidence for miracles that might contribute to the canonisation of Gerard Majella. He sent the result of his endeavours to his confrere, the Italian Claudio Benedetti, consultor of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, who also acted from 1890 to 1922 as postulator for Redemptorist causes for beatification and canonisation.⁸³ And Van Rossum went to see the bishop of ’s-Hertogenbosch, who was happy to support the introduction of a cause for the beatification of Father Donders,

80 *Ibid.* For Max Schmalzl see Boland, *Dictionary*, 354; Leonhard Eckl, *Bruder Max. Lebensbild des Künstlers Fr. Max Schmalzl*, Regensburg 1930.

81 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 3 July 1904; M. Raus to W. van Rossum, Belfast 10 July 1904.

82 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 2 June, 6 and 31 July, 5 September 1900, 29 July and 27 September 1902.

83 Claudio Benedetti published *Servorum Dei e Congregatione Sanctissimi Redemptoris album quod in eorum causis actor apud ss.RR. Congregationem concinnavit* (Rome 1903) on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Matthias Raus’s ordination. It included an overview of the congregation’s saints (Alphonsus), blesseds (Hofbauer and Majella), venerables (Sarnelli, Sportelli, Passerat) and ‘mere’ servants of God (including Petrus Donders and J. Neumann) at the time.

a Dutch missionary in Suriname. To the congregation's and Van Rossum's great joy, Gerard Majella was canonised in late 1904.⁸⁴

Aside from these contacts with Benedetti and the German Georg Schober, consul-tor of the Congregation of Rites, the Redemptorists' relations with the curia went through Petrus Oomen, whose portfolio as procurator generalis included contacts with the Vatican.⁸⁵ By his own admission, Oomen's relations with the members of the general government were not great. He had written to contacts in the Netherlands as far back as 1894 that his actions during the general chapter had cost him his position within the generalate. He had scraped through the election as procurator general, and his position had been difficult from the start. He had not dared to decline the post for fear of going against God's will.⁸⁶ "Formally", he wrote to Jan Kronenburg in 1898, "I have an honourable position. A Procurator General is regarded in Rome as the first officer after the General and as the Order's representative to the Holy See. But in fact, I'm no more than an errand boy and a cashier. I am never consulted, even on matters concerning the province of Holland, which I governed for so long. It is as if they fear that the procurator will make himself too important. If only God would grant that they would recognise the value of a despised and humiliated life."⁸⁷

Oomen may have been ostracised within his own congregation, but Van Rossum observed that the procurator was much appreciated in the Vatican and was consulted by many colleagues in other orders and congregations. Several cardinals held him in high esteem.⁸⁸ In his capacity as procurator, Oomen was well placed to exercise influence. When the Holy Office in 1896 asked for a Redemptorist who could carry out a study of certain views of the founder, he proposed the name of his pupil, Willem van Rossum.

Van Rossum quickly felt at home in the generalate. Although the establishment of the Schola Major, where he was supposed to become professor of dogmatic theology, was delayed until 1909, he was given every opportunity to further deepen his expertise in the work of Alphonsus and to disseminate his teachings. Remarkably,

84 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Brussels 15 September 1899; Wittem 9 October 1899; Wittem 14 November 1899; Civitavecchia 14 August 1904. Van Rossum visited the thermal baths of Civitavecchia to treat rheumatic symptoms.

85 In an undated overview, probably compiled in late December 1896, Van Rossum refers to Dilgskron as consul-tor of the Congregazione delle Indulgenze e Reliquie. ENK, ANPR, no. 8539: 'Notes on the curia'.

86 ENK, ANPR, no. 8419: P. Oomen to [W. van Rossum], *Soli*, 27 May 1894.

87 ENK, ANPR, no. 8419: P. Oomen to J. Kronenburg, Rome 12 August 1898, *Soli*.

88 Mulders, 'Levensschets van de Hoogerw. pater Petrus Oomen', 78–79.

he also occupied himself with all manner of other issues that arose in the generalate – a habit developed in Wittem – and Raus and his government clearly tolerated this. But his expertise in the field of Alphonsus would soon bring him much further than the generalate could ever do: to the Roman curia. Oomen seized the opportunity to introduce him to the highest ecclesiastical circles, and thus to secure a stronger position both for the congregation and for Alphonsian doctrine.

Within the Vatican's walls

1 First task: vindicating Alphonsus

In the first half of 1895, superior general Matthias Raus received a letter from Tancredi Fausti, the assessor of the Holy Office, who asked him to nominate a suitable candidate for the post of consultor of this dicastery. The Holy Office (renamed the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by Paul VI in 1965), also called the Suprema, was one of the most important departments of the curia, and was headed directly by the pope as its prefect. It had been founded in 1542, was charged with the task of preserving the purity of the faith, and during the first centuries of its existence it was known primarily as the Inquisition. Its acting head in 1895 was the Cardinal Secretary, Raffaele Monaco La Valletta, who was succeeded the following year by Cardinal Lucido Parocchi.¹ Raus gave Fausti – whose task as assessor was the daily management of the Congregation – the names of two possible Redemptorist candidates: Claudio Benedetti, postulator and consultor, and Petrus Oomen, former provincial of the Dutch province and currently procurator.² Fausti died shortly afterwards, and there the matter rested.³

As the Italian historian Giuseppe Orlandi has shown, Fausti's request was occasioned by a case involving *falso misticismo* and 'diabolism' in Santiago de Chile. Priests in that diocese were finding it difficult to determine whether people who were 'speaking in tongues' were inspired by God or possessed by the devil. And if the latter, the question was whether or not they could be held responsible for their deeds and receive absolution. There were opposing views in the diocese, and the works of Pier Matteo Petrucci, Michael de Molinos and Alphonsus Liguori had been cited in support of the various viewpoints. The case was further complicated by the fact that the quietist mysticism of Petrucci and Molinos had been condemned by the Holy

1 N. del Re, *La Curia Romana. Lineamenti storico-giuridici* (Vatican City 1998), 95–107; Hubert Wolf, Herman H. Schwedt, Tobias Lagatz, *Prosopographie von Römischer Inquisition und Indexkongregation 1814–1917* (Paderborn etc. 2005), vol. 2, 1016–1018.

2 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: M. Raus to Tancredi Fausti, Trinity Sunday, 9 June 1895. Remarkably, these letters are among Van Rossum's correspondence with the general government in the Redemptorist archives. This is further indication that Van Rossum was sent to Rome at least partly in connection with this request. AGHR, 0900: M. Raus to J. Kronenburg, Vienna 29 July 1895.

3 Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 1, 561–562. Fausti died on 23 September 1895.



View of Saint Peter's basilica and the Vatican, c. 1855

Office and by Pope Innocent XI in 1687, whereas, by contrast, Alphonsus's teachings had received official sanction by his proclamation as doctor of the church in 1871. Alphonsus referenced Petrucci in several of his works, particularly *Homo apostolicus*, *Praxis confessarii* and *Via della Salute*. Petrucci's proponents were pointing to these references to defend their views.⁴

The issue of 'false mysticism' had already been addressed by the consultor José de Calasanz de Llevaneras O. F. M. Cap. (better known as the later Cardinal Vives y Tutó), in two reports submitted to the Holy Office in 1890 and 1892, but it had not been satisfactorily resolved due to deficient knowledge of the work of Alphonsus Liguori.

4 Giuseppe Orlandi, 'S. Alfonso negli archivi Romani del Sant'Ufficio. Dottrine spirituali del Santo Dottore e di Pier Matteo Petrucci a confronto, in due voti del futuro cardinale W.M. van Rossum', in: *SHCSR*, 47(1999), 205-238.

On 22 June 1892, the cardinals of the Holy Office requested a new study on the basis of the expected new edition of the works of Saint Alphonsus. As publication of this work kept being deferred, a request was sent to the Redemptorists on 5 August 1896, asking them whether someone from their congregation could check Alphonsus's writings for 'Molinism' and 'Quietism'.⁵

Such requests from the Holy Office landed on the desk of the procurator, in this case Petrus Oomen. He replied to the new assessor, Casimiro Gennari, that there was a Dutch Father, previously a prefect of students and a professor, who was known for his grasp of Alphonsus Liguori's theology. This Father was in fact working on a study of Alphonsian dogmatic theology. He was also an exemplary religious, a sensible and talented man. With such a recommendation, it was not long before Van Rossum was summoned to the Holy Office. He first entered the palazzo south of Saint Peter's on Thursday 13 August, to take the oath of secrecy and accept – gladly, “di gran cuore” – the task entrusted to him. He was to send his final report to Father Llevaneras, who would then add it to the file. Van Rossum set to work straight away – the Holy Office files from 1896 do not yet mention him by name but refer to him as “the Redemptorist Father” (“il P. Liguorino”).⁶ A month and a half later, on 29 September, he submitted his report, entitled ‘De S. Alphonso M. de Ligorio Ecclesiae Doctore et de Petro Mattaeo Petruccio Card.’⁷

His report or *summarium* was very well-received, both because of its meticulousness and the speed with which it was submitted. The first part discussed how Alphonsus viewed mysticism and the various stages of prayer (“supernatural meditation, quiet prayer and mystical union”). In the second part, Van Rossum addressed the importance Alphonsus attached to ordinary meditation and passive contemplation; the latter was the preserve of a few elect. Van Rossum also dealt with the errors of the ‘Quietists’ and the doctrines of Molinos and other ‘false mystics’. In the last part, he discussed Alphonsus's moral and ascetical writings, and cleared the founder's name of all allegations of false mysticism. According to Van Rossum, Alphonsus had only cited Petrucci's works in reference to doctrinal issues that were absolutely safe.⁸

5 *Ibid.*, 216.

6 *Ibid.*, 216–217.

7 Vatican City, Archivio del Dicastero per la Dottrina della Fede (ADDF), SO (*Sanctum Officium*), *Rerum Variarum*, 1900, no. 8: *votum* by G.M. van Rossum CSSR, dated 29 September 1896, festo S. Mich. Arch. Van Rossum's advice was sought again in 1900, on this occasion to ask how Petrucci might be quoted in future editions of Alphonsus's work without inviting a repetition of the Santiago case. Van Rossum proposed adding a preface or warning: it was no use simply to omit the passages in question, as there were other editions of the works already in print. *Ibid.*: ‘De emendatione operum S. Alphonsi propter allegatam Card. Petrucci damnatam doctrinam. Relatio et Votum G.M. van Rossum CSSR Consultoris, [30.v.1900]’. The two texts are included integrally in Orlandi, ‘S. Alfonso negli archivi Romani del Sant’Officio’, 220–238.

8 ADF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1900, no. 8: *votum* by G.M. van Rossum CSSR, ‘De S. Alphonso M. de Ligorio Ecclesiae Doctore’, Orlandi, ‘S. Alfonso negli archivi Romani del Sant’Officio’, 218–219.

This first report by Van Rossum in the archives of the Holy Office is testimony not only to his zeal and precise style of argumentation, but also to his monastic asceticism. Every inch of every page was used, and the text contained many deletions and glued-in additions. Despite Van Rossum's easily decipherable and clear handwriting, the report as a physical object makes a rather shoddy and poor impression. During his first years in the service of the curia, he often submitted documents like this. But perhaps his sense of economy was regarded as an asset by the cash-strapped Roman curia under Leo XIII and Pius X.⁹

2 Consultor of the Holy Office

The Holy Office was so satisfied with Van Rossum's report that it repeated its request to the Redemptorists for a consultor. Raus replied on 19 November 1896 in a lengthy letter in which he recommended Van Rossum and the Englishman Oliver Vassal-Phillips. Raus mentioned the Dutchman first. He rather embellished the results of Van Rossum's studies in Culemborg, saying that he had completed his studies in letters "with great success" at this Jesuit-run seminary. No such commendation can in fact be found in the Culemborg archives.¹⁰ According to Raus, Van Rossum had then distinguished himself by his religious attitude as an exemplary student in the congregation. As professor of dogmatic theology, he had thoroughly familiarised himself with the works of Thomas and Alphonsus. He spoke fluent Dutch, French, German and Italian and had published various theological treatises. Not only was he an exemplary religious, he had also proven his organisational talents during the renovation of Wittem monastery. With surprising candour, Raus added that, although Van Rossum was a model of observance of the rule, he practiced this and imposed it upon his subjects with such rigidity, that he had been respected as rector but not much loved.¹¹

It became clear the next month that the Holy Office had selected Van Rossum. "Two evenings ago" (24 December 1896), Van Rossum wrote excitedly to his confreres in Wittem, "a messenger from the Vatican arrived here to hand me a letter from the Cardinal Secretary of State, Rampolla, saying that it had pleased His Holiness to appoint me Consultor of the Congregation of the Holy Office. Truly a great tidings!" The appointment, he himself intimated, stemmed from the "grave theological work" he had performed for the Holy Office, having "first taken a strict

⁹ Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 69–72, 86–87.

¹⁰ See Chapter 2.

¹¹ AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: M. Raus to the Holy Office, 19 November 1896 (copy). On Vassal-Phillips see Boland, *Dictionary*, 403–404.

oath of eternal secrecy". This work had established his reputation, which was further strengthened by the fact that his revised edition of Alphonsus's *Dissertatio de Praedestinatione* had appeared immediately afterwards. "The Most Rev. Father General was then petitioned to permit my nomination. This was made in the assembly of Cardinals and, as Msgr. Gennari, the Assessor of the Holy Office, told me, it passed unanimously, (...) as proof of the esteem which our Congregation enjoys."¹² Van Rossum was apparently unaware – at least he did not mention it – that Raus had also nominated a second candidate.

The following morning, Christmas Day, Van Rossum went to the Vatican to thank Cardinal Rampolla and Pope Leo XIII – in that order, according to his letter. On Wednesday after Epiphany, he took the oath of secrecy that was required of consultors of the Holy Office.¹³ "As the Congr. of the Holy Office is the first and principal Roman Congr. – this appointment is an honour for our Congregation. I hope that the good God will give me the grace to serve Holy Church through this appointment and do credit to our Congregation. I would regret one thing: if the new work (for I have been assured that there is an immense amount of work), were to prevent me from completing the Dogmatic Theology of St. Alph. further. However, D[ominu]s providebit."¹⁴

And, true enough, Van Rossum would never complete a comprehensive Alphonsian dogmatic theology, his 'life's work'. As we have seen, he left this task to his compatriot Aloys Walter.¹⁵ He added in his letter that such "momentous positions" as his were an honour for the congregation, but that they also unfortunately had a great impact on religious and community life. Work for the curia had a higher priority than work for the Redemptorists – absences for visitation journeys had to be signed off beforehand by the assessor.¹⁶ Nor were the curia's office hours adapted to the set times that regulated religious life.

12 ENK, ANPR, no. 8539: W. van Rossum to the Wittem house, 26 December 1896. Copy of a letter including notes by Van Rossum on the curia, the tasks of the Holy Office, the Index and the Roman tribunals, and Redemptorist consultors at the time.

13 Functionaries of the Holy Office took a special, particularly solemn oath of secrecy. It is unclear how the oath Van Rossum swore on 13 January 1897 differed from his previous oath taken on 13 August 1896. ADDF, SO, Stanza Storica (St. St.), Juramenta (1872–1905), lettera S, n. 20. Domenico Serafini and David Fleming O.F.M. took the oath on the same day. When the file in ADDF was consulted, it contained only Serafini's and Fleming's oaths, not Van Rossum's. According to Fritz Leist, *Der Gefangene des Vatikans. Strukturen päpstlicher Herrschaft* (Munich 1971), 233, the requirement to swear such oaths is proof of the totalitarian character of the bishop of Rome and his curia. Cardinals, bishops and professors of Scripture also had to swear an oath, and in addition, all clerics were required to take the anti-modernist oath of 1910.

14 ENK, ANPR, no. 8539: W. van Rossum to the Wittem house, 26 December 1896.

15 See Chapter 6.3.

16 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum (Wittem) to M. Raus (Rome), 9 October 1899; M. Raus to W. van Rossum, 2 November 1899.

From 1897 to 1932 – for 35 years – Van Rossum attended the Holy Office’s weekly sessions almost without interruption: up to November 1911 in the capacity as a consultant, from April 1913 onwards as a member of the Holy Office.¹⁷ This means he was privy to all important doctrinal issues. According to Drehmanns, who himself was a consultant of the Holy Office from 1912 to 1930,¹⁸ the cases that came before the consultants included matters of faith and morals, but also all other important issues and questions that caused specific difficulties.¹⁹ In addition, from 30 November 1911 onwards, Van Rossum attended the sessions of the Congregation of the Index, as a member of this dicastery that was charged with reviewing publications suspected of deviating from the orthodox teaching of the church. The bonds between the two congregations were close, and the Congregation of the Index was ultimately integrated into the Holy Office in 1917.²⁰

The importance of Van Rossum’s appointment as one of the approximately twenty consultants of the Holy Office is further underlined when we look at the prosopography of officials of the Holy Office and the Congregation of the Index which the German historian Hubert Wolf has published. A glance at the biographies of the consultants shows that many of them later became archbishops, bishops, nuncios, cardinals or even pope.

In the weekly meetings, Van Rossum encountered his fellow consultant de Lleveras O.F.M.Cap. (Vives y Tutó), as well as the future cardinals Andreas Frühwirth, Francesco di Paola Cassetta, Domenico Serafini (all four from 1896 onwards), Filippo Giustini and Luigi Veccia (from 1902 onwards), Giacomo Della Chiesa (the later pope Benedict xv) and Pietro Gasparri (both during the years 1901–1907), Nicola Canali (since 1908), Louis Billot S.J. (since 1909) and other influential clerics, such as Franz Xaver Wernz S.J. (later general of the Jesuits), David Fleming O.F.M. (the first secretary of the Biblical Commission), Pie de Langogne O.F.M.Cap. (the religious name of Pierre-Armand Sabadel) and Domenico Palmieri S.J.²¹ He was now in the highest echelons of the curia, where everyone knew everyone else and where the important decisions were taken.

The consultants met every Monday morning, after which Van Rossum would return to Via Merulana around one o’clock. Discussions within the Holy Office were

17 ADDE, SO, Priv. SO 1912–1914, no. 49: S.O. Roma. Sulla nomina del Cardinale Vicario Pompilj e del Cardinale Van Rossum ad Inquisitori Generali del Sant’Uffizio, 13 April 1913.

18 AAS, 4(1912), 358. On Drehmanns’s appointment and work as a consultant, see Chapter 19.1.

19 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 26–27.

20 Herman H. Schwedt, ‘Die Römischen Kongregationen der Inquisition und des Index: die Personen (16.–20. JH)’, in: Hubert Wolf (Hrsg.), *Inquisition, Index, Zensur. Wissenskulturen der Neuzeit im Widerstreit* (Paderborn etc. 2001), 89–101; Otto Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum. Willem Marinus van Rossum im Heiligen Offizium und in der Indexkongregation’, in: *SHCSR*, 58(2010), 85–138, at 87.

21 Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, ‘Anhang’, 1600 ff.

strictly secret. The consultors were asked for their opinion on the cases before them, and a tally was made of support for or opposition to whatever decision had been proposed and its possible alternatives. The consultors' reports and recommendations were then debated, either the same but usually the following week, in the meeting of the cardinal members of the Holy Office held on Wednesdays. In addition, there were ad hoc meetings of special committees. Van Rossum was first selected for one of these in July 1900 and again on Ascension Day 1901, when he was "called up for an extraordinary meeting".²² Such meetings sometimes even took place on feast days or Sundays.

Van Rossum regularly commented on the high workload consultors of the Holy Office faced. Sessions often continued well into the hot summer months of July and August, and he found the heat difficult to bear. In July 1905, the temperature soared up to 41 degrees for weeks on end. This did not bother him too much during the sessions themselves – "those old Roman palaces with walls two metres thick stay relatively cool in summer" – but when he stepped outside, the air was "like fire, and it was a deed of heroism to cross St. Peter's Square, which is like a burning glass, in the midday sun to take the tram on the opposite side".²³ It was usually not until early September that he was allowed, "with utter delight", to give "his wearied head some rest and relaxation". He was completely burned out in September 1906 due to "overwork and exhaustion of the mind", so that he could not sleep anymore. He was slowly able to unwind only in the remote Redemptorist monastery of Scifelli.²⁴

The sessions of the Holy Office started again in the second half of October.²⁵ But he was often well rested by then, he wrote in November 1903: "I could easily rise at 3 o'clock in the morning, but I fear I would be straining my forces. I don't rise until a quarter past four, then do my meditation at half past four, say Holy Mass at 5, make my thanksgiving from 5.30 to 6, have breakfast, potter around a bit and then at 6.30 I'm at my desk until twelve, interrupting my work only to say my breviary or rosary."²⁶ Clearly his daily rhythm had become even more rigid than what he had been taught in Wittem.

Van Rossum was not involved straight away in the preparation of reports, recommendations and memorandums, normally the lion's share of what consultors

22 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus (Lille), 6 July 1900. It was a commission of two cardinals and two consultors: "I am one of the two"; *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 21, Rome 20 May 1901. It is not known what topics these commissions dealt with.

23 *Ibid.*, 28, Rome 21 July 1905.

24 *Ibid.*, 34, Rome 1 November 1906.

25 *Ibid.*, 24, Rome 20 October 1902.

26 *Ibid.*, 27, Rome 23 November 1903.

of congregations of the curia did. In the first years, he worked mainly as the Holy Office's archivist.²⁷ The archives of the old Inquisition had been scattered in the nineteenth century. After Napoleon took the pope away from Rome as a prisoner in 1809, he decided in early 1810 to bring the archives of the Holy Office to Paris. The files were returned to Rome after Waterloo, but they were damaged and certain sections had been lost. At the end of the nineteenth century, part of this material was still spread in disarray across the attic of the Apostolic Palace.²⁸ According to Drehmanns, "months and months (...) were spent searching for dusty papers in scorching attic rooms", although the work was sometimes rewarded by the discovery of real treasures.²⁹

Van Rossum was assisted in this project by Petrus Christiaan van den Eerenbeemt (born in 's-Hertogenbosch in 1840), in Drehmanns's estimation a wealthy and very pious man. This Dutch journalist, publisher and businessman had established himself in Rome after a spell as the Roman correspondent of several Dutch Catholic journals during the First Vatican Council and the annexation of Rome in 1870. Dutch newspaper articles show that he subsequently tried to make a living by offering his services as a representative for Dutch tourists in Rome and as a trader in Italian products. Van den Eerenbeemt married the Italian countess Giovanna Negri, and a number of their eleven children entered the religious life.³⁰

According to Drehmanns, the Van den Eerenbeemts were rich, but a letter from Petrus Christiaan's son Ubaldo to his brother Lorenzo in 1958 shows that they had also known hard times, and Van Rossum and the other Dutch Redemptorists in Rome were true benefactors to them. At the Van den Eerenbeemts' silver wedding anniversary in 1899, the children had been tasked with getting rid of callers, as they could not afford to entertain guests. But unexpectedly there was a knock at the door, and to their amazement exquisite foods, wine, fruit, pastries and fine liquors were brought in, and a great feast was had after all. This largesse was attributed to their *protettore* Van Rossum, who had clearly adapted himself very quickly to the Italian patronage system.³¹

27 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 87; Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, 1276–1279.

28 Alejandro Cifres, 'Das Archiv des Sanctum Officium: Alte und neue Ordnungsformen', in: *Inquisition, Index, Zensur*, 45–69, at 64–66.

29 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 28.

30 *Ibid.*; *De Tijd*, 26 February 1885.

31 Van Rossum continued his role as protector of the family after he was created a cardinal, and he supported Hector/Lorenzo van den Eerenbeemt (1886–1977) when the latter, a Carmelite, founded a missionary congregation of Sisters of the Third Order of the Carmel. Cecilia Tada Emiko, *P. Lorenzo van den Eerenbeemt, fondatore e apostolo dell'amore* (Rome 2012), 365–366; KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Lorenzo Cristiano van den Eerenbeemt to W. van Rossum, S. Marinella, 6 August 1925.

An apostolic visitation audited the state of the Holy Office archives in 1900, and in the aftermath, Van Rossum and his fellow consultant P.M. Stagni decided to introduce a modern archival system. A number of existing series was continued, such as the *Censurae Librorum*. At the same time, they made a start with transferring the archival material from the Apostolic Palace to the palazzo of the Holy Office. Material that was not of current interest was deposited in a separate room now known as the Stanza Storica. Van den Eerenbeemt was put in charge of the moving operation, and he subsequently organised the archive on the basis of a subject index drafted in the old tradition of the Holy Office. It was completed in the 1940s.³²

Van Rossum's name appeared for the first time as the drafter of a *votum* (a – normally lengthy – memorandum containing a recommendation) for the Holy Office in May 1900. The document in question discussed the writings of Father Stephan Lederer (1844–1923), a parish priest in the German diocese of Speyer, who was opposed to a catechism that had been introduced in Bavaria by the Jesuits. In his report, Van Rossum concisely refuted every argument advanced by Lederer, and concluded that the nuncio in Bavaria should admonish him and he should submit to his bishop. Van Rossum's *votum* settled the case, at least for the time being.³³

In the same year, he dealt with complaints about the Salesians. This congregation founded by Don Giovanni Bosco had received papal approbation in 1869, and its main focus was on youth work. In 1896, a number of Salesians reported the confessional practices advocated by general superior Michele Rua to the Holy Office.³⁴ Following in Don Bosco's footsteps, Rua believed the Salesians should have an immediate and close bond with the children entrusted to their care, and he therefore determined that all superiors should themselves hear the children's confessions. A first – hand-written – *votum* by Van Rossum, dated 21 July 1900, characterised this Salesian practice as conducive to 'grave sacrilege'.³⁵ It was absolutely forbidden to compel any Catholic to go to a specific confessor: the faithful were free in conscience

32 Francesco Beretta, 'Die frühneuzeitlichen Bestände des Archivs der Glaubenskongregation', in: Hubert Wolf (Hrsg), *Verbotene Bücher. Zur Geschichte des Index im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn etc. 2008), 181–208, at 194. Beretta calls Van den Eerenbeemt an "Oberdienstmann". See also E. Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral. Un réseau secret international antimoderniste: La "Sapinière" (1909–1921)* (Tournai-Paris, 1969), 414.

33 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 87–88.

34 Michele Rua oversaw the great expansion of the congregation between 1888 to 1910: from 57 houses to 345, and from 774 members to 4001. Marie-Antoinette Willemsen, *Toegewijd aan de jeugd. De Salesianen van Don Bosco in Nederland 1928–2013* (Brussels 2014), 23.

35 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1902, no. 9 (S.O. Congregazione Salesiana): Dubbi sul Decreto 24 aprile 1901 riguardante i Salesiani. De consuetudine obligandi subditos ut confiteantur sua peccata propriis superioribus. Votum Von [sic] Rossum. The "voto sopra l'abuso dell S. Confessione presso i Salesiani" of 21 July 1900 in the file ("ut alumni apud solos proprios superiores confessionem instituant, eamque rem gravium sacrilegiorum causam esse") also mentions another grave abuse: the children »

to choose whomever they wished.³⁶ But the Salesians continued with their practice, ignoring a decree imposed upon them on 29 May 1901. Don Rua then asked for a judgement from two moral theologians. This was a clear provocation of the Suprema, and it resulted in an extensive second *votum* by Van Rossum on 24 July 1901. Don Rua was summoned to Rome on 22 August 1901, where he was severely censured and threatened with further and stricter decrees.³⁷ Van Rossum wrote a third report dated 8 June 1902, after which the congregation promised to adhere more faithfully to the rules for confession.³⁸

The Salesian case inspired Van Rossum to take a closer look at the Redemptorists' own confessional practice. In 1900, he warned Matthias Raus, then on a visitation journey in France, that the situation in the French juvenate, where the director was also the confessor of the students, was contrary to the church's policy. The Holy Office had forbidden this custom for communities and seminaries in Rome and advised against it for institutes outside Rome in a decree dated 5 July 1899. Although he did not reveal anything relating to the Salesian case in his letter, he encouraged Raus to address the issue during his visitation and put an end to the practice. This would prevent any possible measures by the Holy Office, which would ban the custom as 'an abuse' if it were ever to find out about it.³⁹

Another issue presented to Van Rossum for adjudication was relatively straightforward. It was a doctrinal question on whether children could be baptised with water mixed with boric acid or mercury (II) chloride.⁴⁰ Given the many files that this issue generated in the Holy Office, it was considered an important question. The first question sent to Van Rossum came from the archbishop of Utrecht, Henricus van de Wetering, who, given the secrecy that surrounded the Holy Office, possibly never realised that his old schoolfellow was the official dealing with his query. In his letter to the Holy Office dated 21 May 1901, Van de Wetering wrote that Catholic doctors in emergencies sometimes baptised children in utero using water mixed with 1 per

» were not wearing the correct costumes when appearing as ecclesiastical functionaries such as popes and cardinals in performances and plays etc.

36 The 1917 Codex would stipulate that superiors might not habitually hear their subjects' or students' confessions. *Codex Iuris Canonici. Pii X Pontificis Maximi iussu digestus Benedicti Papae XV auctoritate promulgatus. Praefatione, fontium annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico ab eminentissimo Petro Card. Gasparri auctus* (CIC 1917) (Rome 1917), c. 518, par. 1–3.

37 Jan Klein, *Don Rua* (Private edition, Annen 2010), 101–106. Previously published in *Salesiaans Nieuws*, 17(1958), no. 11(Dec.), [4], 18(1959), no. 1(Jan.), [4].

38 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1902, no. 9: report, 8 June 1902 by Van Rossum: 'Salesiani decreto sulla confessione'.

39 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 2 June 1900. The juvenate in question was that of Uvrier in Switzerland, which also served as the minor seminary for the province of Lyon.

40 ADDF, SO, D.B. 1897–1907, no. 59.

mille of a mercury compound for disinfection. Van de Wetering asked whether such baptisms were valid, whether this kind of water could be used for baptism if there was danger of infection, and whether it could also be used if there was no danger of death.

In his report, which he completed in the space of ten days, Van Rossum underpinned his argument with references to Alphonsus's assertion that baptisms with accidentally boiled or poisoned water were valid. His reply to Van de Wetering's first question was in the affirmative, as long as there was a danger of disease, which also answered the second question. In all other cases, this type of water could not be used, so that the response to the third question was negative. Ever scrupulous, Van Rossum wrote that a definitive judgement was possible only if it could be determined at what point dilution had altered the essence of water to the extent that it was no longer truly water. Despite this caveat, the *votum* was accepted by the cardinals, and on 23 August 1901 by Pope Leo XIII.⁴¹ Van Rossum's ruling thus entered into the handbooks, where it remained for decades. It appeared in Denzinger's standard work *Enchiridion Symbolorum* under no. 3356; the 1960 edition specified that water mixed with boric acid was valid, unlike baptism with saliva or beer.⁴²

In later years, Van Rossum again dealt occasionally with the validity of baptism. Thus, he had to decide whether baptism was valid if a doctor poured the water over an infant's chest and shoulders rather than its head. In his lengthy, hand-written advice dated 4 February 1906, he quoted casuistic arguments rejecting validity in previous cases from 1770, 1835, 1856 and 1896, as well as the writings of Alphonsus Liguori, Thomas Aquinas and Benedict XIV.⁴³ Questions with more far-reaching repercussions concerned the validity of a convert's previous, non-Catholic baptism. In August 1907, the prefect of Propaganda Fide, Girolamo Maria Gotti, instructed the Oriental division of his congregation to submit the following question to Giovanni Battista Lugari (1846–1914), the assessor of the Holy Office since 1902: should two Syrian children from Aleppo – who had a Catholic mother and a Protestant father – be rebaptised conditionally and could they transfer to the Latin rite at their own request. In his report dated 23 August 1907, Van Rossum argued that the answer to both questions was yes.⁴⁴

41 *Ibid.* Van Rossum's reference to Alphonsus is to "Lib. VI, n. 106". A similar question that Van Rossum dealt with was ADDF, SO, D.B. 1897–1905, no. 110 Pragensis. *Dubium circa materiam remotam Baptismi: 1. potesne uti aqua antiseptis admixta? 2. Quatenus affirmat: qua mensura moderanda est admixtio?* The corresponding report was signed by Van Rossum on 12 June 1904.

42 Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum. Definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum. Kompendium der Glaubensbekenntnisse und kirchlichen Lehrentscheidungen*, 39th rev. ed. by Peter Hünermann (Herder, Freiburg etc. 2001), 1901; see also the 1960 edition, 31st ed., 557 'De materia baptismi'; Index Systematicus [41].

43 ADDF, SO, D.B. 1897–1907, no. 136.

44 *Ibid.*, no. 139. For Lugari, see Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, 902–903.

The following day, Van Rossum signed a *relatio* (report) on a baptismal question in Ten-Chin Fo Kien in China. The London Society (“a Protestant sect”) was christening children there using the following formula: *Ego in Patris, Filii, Sancti Spiritus nomine perficio baptismi ritum tibi*. The question that the prefect apostolic, Francisco Aguirre O.P., had submitted was whether these baptisms were valid and whether, by consequence, rebaptism should be performed ‘absolutely’ or ‘conditionally’.⁴⁵ In order to come to a correct judgement, Van Rossum contacted Luigi Veccia (1842–1911), secretary of Propaganda Fide, to ask what the baptismal formula was in its Chinese context, as the correct interpretation of the Chinese language was important here.⁴⁶ Veccia passed the question on to Giovanni Bonzano (1867–1927), rector of the Urbaniense and a former missionary in China. Bonzano proposed two literal translations of the ‘Chinese baptismal formula’.⁴⁷ In his lengthy *votum* of 24 August 1907, which drew extensively on previous cases in China and corresponding rulings by the Holy See – the consultors had often failed to reach agreement – Van Rossum presented twenty arguments which all led to one unambiguous conclusion: the baptism was invalid and there could therefore be no question of conditional rebaptism.⁴⁸

3 Preparations for the Pontifical Biblical Commission

Whereas Leo XIII looked to the modernising world with a relatively open mind, claiming a place in it for the church, for example in his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, forces within the church that advocated a turn away from the world began to mobilise towards the end of his pontificate. Very soon after *Rerum Novarum*, rigid antimodernists – also called integralists – developed their theological strategy and ecclesiastical politics.⁴⁹ This intransigent countermovement rejected liberalism and mistrusted democratic and scientific developments.

In the ecclesiastical sphere, the debate initially focused on whether or not the new historical-critical method of exegesis, which placed biblical narratives in their historical context, was acceptable. This method had emerged from German Lutheran

45 ADDF, SO, D.B. 1897–1907, no. 143.

46 *Ibid.* Van Rossum sent a card to Veccia in early August 1907 saying he was sorry he did not have the chance to discuss the issue with him in person. On Veccia, see Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, 1535.

47 *Ibid.* A note on the back of the proposal dated 3 July 1906 says that the unique feature of this case was that “Mulier quaedam baptizavit suos liberos dicens in lingua vernacula Ego volo ministrare tibi Sacramentum baptismi peccatorum in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti Amen.” The file also contains a letter with Chinese characters.

48 See also Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum’, 98.

49 Claus Arnold, Giacomo Losito, *La censure d’Alfred Loisy (1903). Les documents des Congrégations de l’Index et du Saint Office* (Rome 2009), 9–11; Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*.

theology and had attracted the attention of a number of Catholic theologians, who were now applying certain of its principles to their work. During the last decade of Leo XIII's pontificate there were circles in the Catholic church who were sympathetic to this new biblical criticism, including the pope himself. Leo XIII, a great promoter of scholarship, set out the framework for biblical studies in his 1893 encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*. This encyclical paved the way for the establishment of the *Commissio Pontificia de re Biblica*, the Pontifical Biblical Commission, of which Van Rossum would be president from 1914 to 1932.

The historian Francesco Turvasi has been able to reconstruct on the basis of the writings of the Italian exegete Giovanni Genocchi M. S. C. that the discussions during the preparatory phase focused mainly on whether the Biblical Commission should become a full research institute or simply a commission to check whether exegetical publications erred in their interpretation of Holy Scripture. This latter task had so far always been the responsibility of the Holy Office and the Index. The second option was ultimately chosen, and a separate Biblical Institute was envisaged, to be founded in Rome to conduct exegetical studies alongside the Commission.⁵⁰

In the run-up to the foundation of the Biblical Commission, the views of the more open-minded Catholic exegetes came under increasing pressure through criticism and allegations from opponents of the historical-critical method. The French Dominican Marie-Joseph Lagrange (1855–1939), founder of the famous *Ecole Biblique* in Jerusalem (1890) and of the international journal *Revue Biblique* (1892), who incorporated historical and archaeological findings in his exegesis, was criticised, primarily by Jesuits, for his views on the authorship of the Pentateuch.⁵¹ These first five books of the Bible were traditionally attributed to Moses. In the Netherlands, the exegete and Roermond diocesan priest Henri Poels, who held a doctorate from Leuven where he had studied under Albin Van Hoonacker, similarly ran into problems on account of his work on this subject. After he published an article in the journal *De Katholiek* in 1899, Bishop Caspar Bottemanne of Haarlem delated him to Propaganda Fide (the Netherlands still fell under this congregation at the time).⁵²

That same year, Alfred Loisy in France wrote to Genocchi, mentioning Lagrange's and Poels's difficulties and similarly identifying the Jesuits as the evil geniuses.⁵³

50 Francesco Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista* (Rome 1974), 217–220; Maurice Gilbert, *L'Institut Biblique Pontifical. Un siècle d'histoire (1909–2009)* (Rome 2009), 5–30.

51 M. J. Lagrange, *Le Père Lagrange. Au service de la Bible. Souvenirs personnels*, Paris 1967. Gilbert, *L'Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 18–29 points out that diverging viewpoints existed among the Jesuits themselves. Thus, F. Prat, whose plan for the institute was approved by Leo XIII in June 1903, belonged to a more open strand, whereas Leopold Fonck was a fervent opponent of Lagrange's ideas.

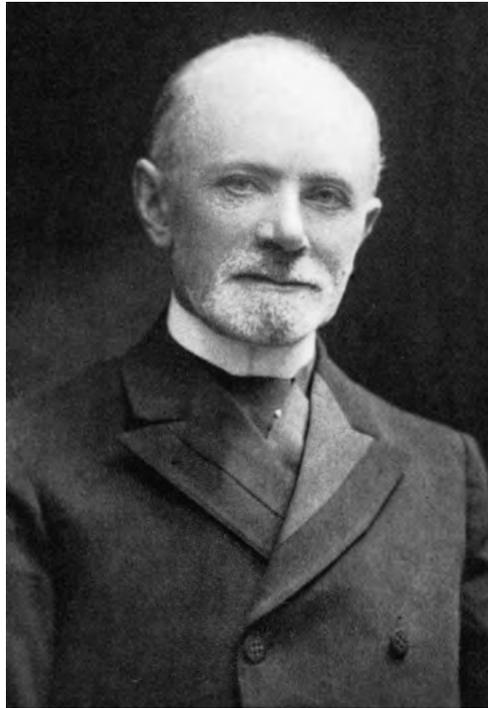
52 On the conflict between C. Bottemanne and H. Poels, see De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 173–191.

53 Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista*, 137–143.

The priest, exegete and historian Alfred Firmin Loisy (1857–1940), professor at the Institut Catholique in Paris, would himself soon become *the* symbol par excellence of the antimodernist witch hunt in the Catholic church.⁵⁴ Loisy's 'rationalistic exegesis' had already been reported as suspicious to Rome in 1893. But at the turn of the century, seeing the problems of Lagrange and Poels, Loisy began to realise that he was about to face serious difficulties. In 1900, the French Cardinal Richard, archbishop of Paris, rejected an article by Loisy on the history of Israel and informed the Congregation of the Index of his decision. "From this point on", Loisy wrote in his *Mémoires*, "they began to almost make a heretic of me, and it was not difficult to foresee that they would soon brand me a heresiarch."⁵⁵

4 Van Rossum delates Loisy

Van Rossum belonged to the ecclesiastical countermovement that rejected modern biblical criticism and, more generally, the rise of modern and democratic views within the church. He had been a conservative and a proponent of hierarchical policies already in Wittem. As has been seen, he wrote letters to the generalate accusing his Dutch confreres, including the provincial superior Kronenburg, of laxity and a lack of observance of and respect for the rule. In a letter to his superior general in 1894 he expressed his concern at their modern democratic views, which were a threat to the religious life.⁵⁶ In the theological field, too, he had made his conservative standpoint known in his 1888 exegetical treatise



Alfred Loisy, the French exegete delated to the Holy Office by Van Rossum

54 Claus Arnold, 'Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X. Von Alfred Loisy bis Charles Maurras', in: *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 125(2005), 153–168, at 155.

55 Alfred Loisy, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire religieuse de notre temps. Tome deuxième, 1900–1908* (Paris 1931), 5. There is no mention of Van Rossum in the three-volume *Mémoires* (c. 2000 pages).

56 See Chapter 5.3.

Hexameron seu Officium sex dierum, where he advocated a literal interpretation of the creation narrative of six 24-hour days.⁵⁷

Van Rossum found kindred spirits in the curia, men who had the same desire to protect religion and the church against anything that could detract from the “eternal values” that they represented. During the first assignment he performed for the curia he was in close contact with one of the most important leaders of the conservative, antimodernist strand within the church, the later Cardinal Vives y Tutó (1854–1913).⁵⁸ Father de Llevaneras was a consultor of the Holy Office at the time, and was very pleased with Van Rossum’s first report. As it turned out, Van Rossum and his Spanish Capuchin contemporary held similar views on many subjects. Vives y Tutó wrote a compendium on moral theology and several dogmatic works on Mary. He was closely involved in the celebrations to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the definition of the Immaculate Conception – Van Rossum published a volume himself on this occasion, as has been seen in the previous chapter – and had a great devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, whose icon was venerated in the Redemptorist church. When Vives y Tutó was created a cardinal in June 1899, Van Rossum expected that he would soon ask him for a copy of the icon, because as a cardinal it would be difficult for him to continue his regular visits to the Redemptorist church. It seemed judicious to Van Rossum to pre-empt the Capuchin’s request and present him with an identical copy of the painting on behalf of the superior general; and this is what he did.⁵⁹

Vives y Tutó was regarded as a confidant of Pius x. He was made prefect of the Congregation for Religious and confessor to the pope in 1908.⁶⁰ There is no doubt that Vives’s position helped Van Rossum on his ascent through the curial ranks. They worked together in various bodies, for example the Holy Office, the Work for the Preservation of the Faith in Rome and the codification commission. They kept in close touch with each other, and in 1912 Vives reportedly remarked that he and Van Rossum

57 See Chapter 4.3.

58 Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, 1556–1562; Valenti Serra de Manresa, ‘El capuchino José de Calasanz de Llevaneras, cardenal Vives y Tutó (1854–1913). Su actuación durante los pontificados de León XIII y Pío X’, in: *Archivum historiae pontificiae*, 44(2006), 173–205. He became a consultor of the Holy Office in 1887 and subsequently a consultor of Propaganda Fide, the Congregation of the Council and the Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari. He also briefly worked as a professor of moral theology in the Seminario dell’Apollinare.

59 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 2 June and 6 July 1900.

60 Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 587 quotes his obituary from 1913, which calls him “one of the most listened to counsellors” of both Pius x and Merry del Val. It is not known who succeeded Vives y Tutó as Pius X’s confessor in 1913. Merry del Val, De Lai and Vives y Tutó are regarded as the three most important cardinals under Pius x. See also Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 97, who mistakenly calls Vives y Tutó “Secretary of the Inquisition” (that was Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro).

were one in all they did and thought.⁶¹ The two religious shared a vision on the supernatural character of the church and had strict views on the religious life, although in this respect Van Rossum met his match in Vives y Tutó, who was reputed to be a religious fanatic; there was even talk of “attacks of religious mania” at his death.⁶²

Whether it was a coincidence or not, but shortly after Vives y Tutó became a cardinal, Van Rossum emerged from the shadows as archivist and wrote his first *vota* for the Holy Office. Two years later, he instigated what would become a far-reaching antimodernist campaign against Alfred Loisy. As consultor of the Holy Office, he wrote a letter to the members of the Holy Office on 18 July 1901, on the advice, as he said, of one of the cardinals of the Suprema, in which he denounced the views of “a certain Loisy”, whose ideas were increasingly spreading across France. He did not mention the cardinal’s name, but given his good relations with Vives y Tutó and their agreement on so many things it is likely that it was him.⁶³

Van Rossum wrote that Loisy was using multiple platforms to broadcast the view “that the Gospel of St. John is *not* historical but merely *symbolical, mystical*”.⁶⁴ He believed that the Holy See should act immediately to stop this, even before the Biblical Commission was established, because such statements were likely to ruin the faith of many believers. Non-intervention by the Holy See would also render its previous pronouncements on the so-called Johannine Comma incomprehensible.⁶⁵ Van Rossum proposed tough measures: Loisy’s theory that the Gospel of John was less historical than the other gospels, and that the stories of the healing of the man born blind and the resurrection of Lazarus were not historical, was to be condemned as erroneous and heretical.

Van Rossum wrote this letter at a time that the plans for the Biblical Commission were taking shape and a list was being drawn up of the most important exegetes as possible consultors for this commission. A month and a half later, on 30 August 1901,

61 AGHR, LX 2c: J. Vives y Tutó to W. van Rossum, [January 1912]; J.M. Drehmanns, *Zuster Octavienne Ostermann van de congregatie der zusters van Liefde – Tilburg (1852–1935)* (Tilburg 1936), 42. Van Rossum was also in contact with his brother Joaquim; he was a consultor of the Opera Praeservationis Fidei; his brother was a member of the commission. See KDC, ROSS, no. 9: Joaquim Vives y Tutó to W. van Rossum, Madrid 3 December 1911.

62 Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 587.

63 The following cardinals were members of the Holy Office in 1903: Lucido Maria Parocchi (secretary), Serafino Vannutelli, Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, Angelo di Pietro, Girolamo Maria Gotti, Pietro Respighi, Domenico Ferrata, Andreas Steinhuber, Francesco Segna and José Vives y Tutó. *La Gerarchia Cattolica*, 1903, 723. Like Vives, the Carmelite Gotti was similarly known for his antimodernist views.

64 ADDF, 50, St. St. S 5 n – p (3 pezzi), f 63 and 66: W. van Rossum to “Eminentissimi e Reverendissimi Padri”. The letter is signed “S. Alfonso, 18 Luglio 1901, G.M. van Rossum CSSR, cons. S. Off.” (underlined in the original). The letter was published in *Life with a Mission*, 66.

65 A similar argument can be found in ASPF, *Carte van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder ‘Lettere Ufficiali varie e non datate’, in a draft report by Van Rossum for the Holy Office, dated 6 January 1905, on abrogating a decree on the authenticity of the Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7, a text that does not appear in certain manuscripts).

a preparatory commission for the Biblical Commission was established, presided over by Cardinal Parocchi, and with Cardinals Vives y Tutó and Segna as its members. The first twelve consultors of the Biblical Commission were also announced, including Poels and the Leuven exegete Van Hoonacker. Loisy was not among them, nor were Lagrange and Genocchi. The latter two were eventually appointed in early 1903, bringing the number of consultors at the time up to 41.⁶⁶

Van Rossum took a stand against Loisy, but it appears that, behind the scenes, he supported Poels. Propaganda Fide had passed on Bottemanne's denunciation to the Holy Office. Poels recounted later, in 1929, that Cardinal Parocchi had ruled in favour of his work and had also apprised his bishop, Josephus Drehmanns of Roermond, of this judgement, but that the latter never informed him of this. When Poels had still not heard anything after two years, he travelled to Rome in September 1901 – rumours of his appointment as consultor on 30 August had possibly reached him –, where Cardinal Parocchi explained that a letter had been sent to his bishop long ago. “The Consultor – now a Cardinal himself – charged with writing his letter proved that there was not the slightest doubt that it had been delivered at its destination in the Netherlands.” It is generally assumed that the consultor in question was Van Rossum.⁶⁷ Van Rossum was well-known in the diocese of Roermond, if only because the Redemptorists were frequent visitors to the diocesan seminaries.

The names of the consultors were announced in early December 1901.⁶⁸ According to Poels, who wrote to Bishop Drehmanns on 3 January 1902, the future Biblical Commission's objective was “to solve the great biblical questions that are pending”. “First, we received a large printed document of 16 pages in quarto describing c. 70 issues. Every Consultor can add further issues; these will then also be printed in Rome and sent to the 12 consultors. We will then have to answer these questions in writing.” The consultors would then meet in Rome, where everyone would have to defend their own text.⁶⁹ This first meeting took place on 23 January 1902. The subjects presented to the consultors included the question whether it was opportune to establish an up-to-date ‘Biblioteca Biblica’; they agreed, as long as it would be open only to the members of the commission. Pope Leo XIII established the Pontifical Biblical Commission in the same year, in his apostolic letter *Vigilantiae Studii* of 30 October 1902.⁷⁰

66 Gilbert, *L'Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 13.

67 De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 189–190; Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 514; J. Colsen, *Poels* (Roermond/Maaseik 1955), 120. See also Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista*, 142–143.

68 Francesco Turvasi, *The Condemnation of Alfred Loisy and the Historical Method* (Rome 1979), 46.

The names in question were D. Fleming (secretary), G. Vigouroux, T. Esser, F. von Hummelauer, E. Gismondi, A. Van Hoonacker, C. Grannan, A. Amelli, R. Clarke, U. Fracassini, H. Poels and R. Torio.

69 Colsen, *Poels*, 130.

70 Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista*, 218–221. Loisy was discussed during the second meeting of the commission.

The preparations for the establishment of a Biblical Institute alongside the Biblical Commission in Rome were at an advanced stage by mid-1903; the only obstacle was finding a suitable location.⁷¹ The appointment of staff had been decided: Leo XIII was very keen to see this institute, the last project of his life, off to a successful start.⁷² Lagrange would be the director; the pope had agreed to allow him to stay at his *Ecole Biblique de Jérusalem* for six months every year. Fleming, the secretary of the Biblical Commission, would be the deputy director, and Poels – who moved to Rome in June of that year at Fleming’s request “in the name of the Cardinals” –, Salvatore Minocchi, Genocchi and Ferdinand Prat S.J. the professors.⁷³ But the death of Leo XIII on 20 July 1903 temporarily halted these plans. The *Biblicum* was eventually founded in modified form by Pius X in May 1909, and entrusted wholesale to the Jesuits. This decision was greeted with joy by those who had regarded the institute in its original form of 1903 as “the plague of the Church”.⁷⁴

Through Oomen’s mediation, Van Rossum was given a ‘test assignment’ in 1896 by the Holy Office, which allowed him to demonstrate both his knowledge of Alphonus and his orthodoxy. He passed with flying colours. Moreover, he showed he could argue clearly and work quickly and accurately. His work and his doctrinal vision pleased one consultant of the Holy Office in particular, the later Cardinal Vives y Tutó, a man known for his religious fanaticism and antimodernist views. Van Rossum became his colleague that same year, thus gaining access to the highest levels of the Roman curia. He was initially assigned to the task of organising the Holy Office’s dispersed archival collections. From 1900 onwards, he was regularly asked to write policy documents and recommendations, in which he distinguished himself once more by his lucid argumentation and defence of orthodox church doctrine. He was the official who took the first step in the prosecution of the French exegete Loisy, a case which became the symbol par excellence of the antimodernist witch hunt within the Catholic church.

71 Cardinal Rampolla del Tindaro had in the meantime succeeded Parocchi as president of the Biblical Commission in January 1903, after the latter’s death.

72 Gilbert, *L’Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 14. Gilbert also points to a lack of funding, which was purportedly another reason for Pius X to defer the project. However, in his letter *Scripturae Sacrae* of 23 February 1904, the pope granted the Biblical Commission the right to award academic degrees in Holy Scripture. *Ibid.*, 16–17.

73 Colsen, *Poels*, 152–156. After Leo XIII’s death, Poels lectured at the Catholic University of Washington from 1904 to 1910, but he returned to the Netherlands after further accusations of modernist views. See F. Neiryck, *A Vindication of my Honor by Henry A. Poels*, Leuven 1982; John Tracy Ellis, *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons: Archbishop of Baltimore, 1834–1921* (Milwaukee 1952), vol. 2, 169–182.

74 Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista*, 220; Gilbert, *L’Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 11–29.

Fighting the virus of modernism

The papal election held in the summer of 1903 heralded major changes for the church. The French historian Jankowiak has spoken of a transfiguration of the Roman curia. No longer looking out to the world, the Roman church turned in on itself. Pope Pius X set to work on two important internal projects.¹ The first was curial reform, culminating in the constitution *Sapienti Consilio* of 29 June 1908. This initiative was regarded as most urgent, given that the existing organisation of the curia dated from 1588. Initially, the governmental structure of the Holy See had served as a model for civil states, but in the meantime its head start had become somewhat of a handicap. Its structure was no longer fit for purpose in modern times, not only because the Papal States no longer existed, but also due to the enormous social, political and ecclesiastical changes that had occurred. Thus, certain dicasteries of the curia had little to do, whereas others groaned under the weight of their workload. The competencies of the various congregations were often ill-defined, so that several might be working on the same case at the same time. All this created unnecessary bureaucracy, and also left dicasteries vulnerable to manipulation by stakeholders who wished to play them off against each other.²

Not that the 1908 reform created a clearly structured, hierarchical and institutional centre of power alongside the pope, as the Italian historian Enrico Galavotti has shown. How much power curial organs wielded continued to depend on circumstance, such as synergy between the pope and the head of a dicastery, the urgent demands of current affairs or papal weakness. A great deal was made at the time of the menace of modernism, and this was one factor that caused decision-making to be concentrated around the leaders of the antimodernist campaign, Rafael Merry del Val (1865–1930), Secretary of State, and Gaetano De Lai (1853–1928), cardinal-secretary of the Congregation of the Consistory since 1908.³

Van Rossum had little involvement in the drafting of *Sapienti Consilio* or its implementation,⁴ but from 1904 onwards he participated actively in the second great

1 Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine de Pie IX à Pie X*, 517–675: Chapitre 6: 'La Curie romaine transfigurée (1904–1917)'.

2 G. Vian, 'Convergenze e divergenze nella curia romana di Pio X', in: G. La Bella (ed.), *Pio X e il suo tempo* (Bologna 2003), 481–519.

3 Enrico Galavotti, 'Sulle riforme della curia romana nel Novecento', in: *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 35(2014), 849–890, at 863.

4 See Chapter 21.3.

project that Pius X launched: the codification of canon law. This undertaking was crowned in 1917 with the publication of the code of canon law, or *Codex Iuris Canonici*.

1 The codification commission

Canon law had evolved over the centuries and consisted of many miscellaneous components. The desire to clarify and update this system had already been expressed during the First Vatican Council. According to the Italian legal historian Carlo Fantappiè, the challenge was to devise a text that would please the adherents both of traditional and more open views. The fact that Pius X commenced the work of codification so quickly after his election shows that it was one of his policy plans. In fact, codification was part of a wider theological-ideological campaign focused on rooting out modernism.⁵

Pius X established a pontifical commission of sixteen cardinals in March 1904. The core of this commission consisted of four cardinals charged directly by the pope with the task of codifying canon law, and Vives y Tutó was one of the four. In the same month, this commission of cardinals set up an executive committee of consultants or specialists, chaired by the canon lawyer Pietro Gasparri, with a young Eugenio Pacelli (1876–1958) – the later Pope Pius XII – as its secretary. A letter to the bishops of the world invited them to communicate their desires with regard to canon law and to nominate experts in canon law and theology. The missive already contained a preliminary division into categories: general norms, persons, things, procedures, and delicts and penalties.⁶

Willem van Rossum belonged to the first group of seventeen experts or consultants of the advisory committee.⁷ According to Fantappiè, the Dutch Redemptorist was one of the few among this select group to be appointed directly by Pius X, which shows that his expertise was respected at the very top of the Catholic church.⁸ According to the Italian legal scholar Anna Casiraghi, a letter from the internuncio in The Hague and a note written by Gasparri indicate that Van Rossum was chosen as

5 C. Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2: *Il Codex iuris canonici (1917)* (Milan 2008), 718–719, 884–897.

6 Anna Luisa Casiraghi, ‘The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law and the Contribution of Willem van Rossum’, in: *Life with a Mission*, 82–95; Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 718–719, 893–894, 1166.

7 The seventeen members were A. Pillet, A. Lépicier, A. Vecchia, A. Eschbach, B. Klumper, G. De Lai, C. Lombardi, F.-X. Wernz, G. Sebastianelli, W. van Rossum, L. Janssens, M. Kaiser, P. Valenzuela, P. Giustini, Pie de Langogne, Th. Esser and V. Fernandez y Villa. Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 619–620 has observed that the group was quite evenly divided between nationalities: five Italians, four Frenchmen, four Germans, one Belgian, one Luxembourger, a Spaniard and a Chilean. It is not clear which nationality he assigns to the two Dutchmen, Klumper and Van Rossum.

8 Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 884–897.



Pietro Gasparri, chair of the codification commission

the Dutch bishops' representative on the codification commission.⁹ Fantappiè has similarly contended that Van Rossum's appointment was due in part to the support of the Dutch bishops.¹⁰ Very soon, 25 other experts were added to the committee.

The first meeting of the consultors was held on Sunday 17 April 1904 – the committee usually met on Sundays.¹¹ The consultors debated a list of subjects that Gasparri had drawn up, as well as rules and procedures: every subject would be treated by at least two consultors, and the best qualified consultors would be selected for every subject. The reports (*vota*) would have to be submitted between October 1904 and May 1909, and would then be discussed in the commission of cardinals. During this first meeting, Van Rossum, like most consultors, voted to adopt the proposed procedure.¹²

Van Rossum was assigned four subjects from the section *De rebus*, with tight deadlines. The first two were on the sacraments of confirmation and extreme unction, *De confirmatione* (deadline in December 1904) and *De extrema unzione* (March 1905). The other two were on matrimony – there were no fewer than twelve chapters on this subject – and the topic assigned to Van Rossum were the matrimonial impediments: *De impedimentis impediētibus* and *De impedimentis dirimentibus* (both May 1905).

Like most of his colleagues, Van Rossum worked on his *vota* together with one or more experts from within or outside the curia. For *De confirmatione* and *De extrema unzione*, he collaborated with the Dutch Franciscan and general superior of his order (1921–1927), Bernard Klumper, and for extreme unction also with the Jesuit Juan Bautista Ferreres, later beatified. For the questions on marriage, he worked with Johann Heinrich Schroers, professor of theology at the university of Bonn, and Auguste Boudinhon, professor of canon law at the Institut Catholique of Paris. Schroers and Boudinhon were known to have moderate views, which begs the question whether the teams had perhaps been selected to reflect a certain diversity of opinion.¹³ We do not know to what extent it was truly team work, and Van Rossum was in any case the only one to sign the four ensuing reports.¹⁴

9 Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 85.

10 Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 713, 1214.

11 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 28–29.

12 Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 84–86; AAV, *CIC*, scat. 1–2.

13 AAV, *CIC*, scat. 1: 'Indice delle materie del Codice di Diritto can. col nome ed indirizzo dei Sigg. Consultori ed il termine per la consegna del lavoro'. Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 893, 1219, 1232–1233.

14 The *vota* drawn up by Van Rossum are kept together with the minutes of the discussions. AAV, *CIC*, scat. 37. In this case: no. 62: '(Sub secreto pontificio). Codex Iuris Canonici. Liber Tertius. Titulus VII. De Matrimonio. Cap. v. De impedimentis dirimentibus disparitatis cultus, consanguinitatis, affinitatis, publicae honestatis, cognationis legalis. Votum RMI P. G. M. van Rossum CSSR consultoris', Romae Typis Vaticanis 1905; no. 59: 'De Matrimonio. Cap. IV. De impedimentis matrimonium impediētibus. (etc.)' Rome, 25 March 1905; no. 61: '(Sub etc.) De Matrimonio. Caput v. De impedimentis dirimentibus etc.', Ad. S. Alphonsi die 28. Octobris 1905.

Other than many of his colleagues, Van Rossum had neither a doctorate nor a professorship, but he had some scholarly experience. Drehmanns wrote that, as a former lecturer in dogmatic theology, Van Rossum filled the lacunae in Gasparri's knowledge, that "extraordinarily excellent canon lawyer", so that he became a "great help" to Gasparri, in fact his "right-hand assistant".¹⁵ He was able to put the experience and expertise to good use that he had since acquired through his work in the Holy Office. Moreover, he distinguished himself through his thorough knowledge of the works of Alphonsus Liguori, which he regularly consulted.¹⁶ Alphonsus had been a lawyer, and his texts are marked by a legal-casuistic style of reasoning. Although canon law was a different discipline than moral theology, there was considerable methodological common ground between the two disciplines.¹⁷

In addition to disciplinary rules, the new code was also to contain principles from natural law and dogmatic theology. Van Rossum based his reports primarily on the *Instructiones, Responsa* and *Decreta* of the Holy Office, Propaganda Fide, and the Congregation of Rites, the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent and other councils, Gregory IX's *Decretales* and the *Decretum Gratiani*, canonical laws issued by the popes (particularly Benedict XIV), the Roman Catechism and the *Pontificale Romanum*. Although he had no degree in canon law, he became an internationally renowned canonist during these years.¹⁸

Unlike many of his colleagues, Van Rossum usually wrote his *vota* according to the format that was customary within the Holy Office: he began with an extensive exposé of the existing rules and customs and then formulated a proposal for the canons of the new codex. The content of his *vota* shows his high regard for the tradition of the church and his desire to confirm existing rules, which was fully in accordance with the guidelines Pius X had given in his *motu proprio De ecclesiae legibus in unum redigendis* of April 1904.¹⁹ One of the grounds that Van Rossum advanced for retaining traditional views was that it could otherwise be thought that the church had previously erred, an argument he regularly used in other reports too, including for the Holy Office.²⁰ He did not leave much room for possible reform or changes, and many of the canons he formulated ended up more or less intact in the code.

Van Rossum's proposals were regularly criticised by his colleagues, who felt he was too strict. His *votum De confirmatione*, the printed version of which was debated

15 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 28–29.

16 Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 86.

17 Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 592.

18 Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law'; Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 628; Gisbert Brom, in: *De Tijd*, 11 November 1911.

19 *ASS*, 36(1903/04), 549–551.

20 Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 88. She refers to *AAV, CIC, scat. 52: Consulte parziali del 14 e 21 maggio 1905*.

on 13 December 1904, argued that confirmation must be administered by the bishop in person, so as not to deprive the faithful of this very important gift of God.²¹ The memorandum was discussed on three occasions before a final version – a ‘schema’ – was drafted on 28 May 1905. These schemata were later submitted to the commission of cardinals and, after further debate and emendation, to the bishops of the world. In the final version, Van Rossum’s proposal had been toned down to allow bishops to delegate other ministers to confirm in their stead.²²

Van Rossum again took the stricter line in his *votum* on extreme unction, which was debated for the first time on 17 February 1905. In his view, the sacrament could be administered only to dying persons who had explicitly requested it before losing consciousness. This proposal, too, was watered down: the code in fact stipulated that the recipient’s request could also be ‘implicit’. Van Rossum also believed that the administration of this sacrament should be reserved to the parish priest, and he even included the penalty of excommunication for any priest who, without good reason or the consent of his bishop, anointed Catholics who were not his own parishioners. This draft canon encountered a lot of resistance from the other consultors, who regarded it as a ‘relict of the Middle Ages’. Van Rossum’s proposal to deny the sacrament to the excommunicated or to Catholics who were in a state of sin but showed no contrition was similarly mitigated: the code included the possibility of giving the sacrament *sub conditione* (conditionally) if there was doubt as to these points.²³

Van Rossum prepared two *vota* on matrimonial impediments: *De impedimentis impedientibus* and *De impedimentis dirimentibus*. The former were impediments that make a marriage illicit, the latter made it invalid. According to the original time schedule, Van Rossum should have had his *vota* ready by May 1905, but on 17 May 1905, Pius X appointed him to a special commission for matrimonial cases which was to consider the ‘*canones praeliminares de matrimonio*’, and this caused a delay.²⁴ The other members of this ‘*Consulta parziale*’ were Gaetano De Lai, Guglielmo Sebastianelli, Basilio Pompilj, Franz Xaver Wernz S.J. and Domenico Palmieri S.J. From 25 May 1905 onwards, it met every Thursday morning from 9 to 12 o’clock, in the room of

21 AAV, CIC, Scat. 3: ‘(Sub secreto pontificio). Codex Iuris Canonici. Liber Tertius. Titulus II. De Confirmatione. *Votum G. M. van Rossum CSSR*’, Rome 1904; the second, third and final versions were debated on 17 February, 14 and 28 May 1905 respectively.

22 Casiraghi, ‘The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law’, 84–85.

23 *Ibid.*, 89–90.

24 Fantappiè mentions that Pius X separately and confidentially sent Pie de Langogne and Van Rossum two opinions on the content and form of the sacraments (*Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 894, note 233, 1214).

the “Segreteria degli Affari EE. SS.”, with Gasparri in the chair and Pacelli as the secretary.²⁵

The enormous workload involved in the codification project soon took its toll on Gasparri’s health. Van Rossum wrote to his superior general on 31 July 1905 that the work had been paused because Gasparri needed complete rest; he had even missed the last session.²⁶ Gasparri was clearly much better after the summer, and Van Rossum’s *votum De impedimentis impediētibus* was debated during six sessions in November and December 1905. Among the impediments in question were religious vows and mixed religion. Van Rossum had grave objections against mixed marriages. This was possibly due in part to his experience of the situation in the northern half of the Netherlands, where marriages between Protestants and Catholics were a frequent ‘problem’. According to Van Rossum, such alliances were strictly prohibited by both divine and natural law, but a number of colleagues retorted that if this were true, it was strange that dispensation was possible at all. Seeing that his proposal would not make it, Van Rossum then demanded safeguards that the faith of the Catholic spouse and the Catholic education of the children would be sufficiently protected. He also argued that mixed marriages should not be celebrated in a Catholic church and no nuptial blessing should be given. Lastly, he insisted that the spouses should be excommunicated if they contracted matrimony without dispensation before a non-Catholic minister of religion. All this went too far for his colleagues. They pointed out that it was important that mixed marriages should be celebrated before a minister of the church – *coram Ecclesia*. And they did not think that excommunication was a suitable penalty in this case. It was the parish priest’s duty to ensure that couples were informed of the various ecclesiastical obligations and prohibitions.²⁷

Van Rossum also wished to apply the strict rules for mixed marriages to marriages between Catholics and Freemasons, and he drew up a special canon for this purpose. His colleagues again balked at his proposal: this might encourage such couples to dispense with marrying in church altogether and have a civil wedding only. A passage on the parish priest’s duty to discourage the faithful from such unions was adopted, however, as was a stipulation that priests could not preside at weddings of public sinners and the excommunicated without the bishop’s permission, as Van Rossum had proposed.²⁸

25 AAV, CIC, scat. 1, f 270. The reports of the meetings are in scat. 55: Liber III. De rebus. Verbali De Matrimonio, f 53–56.

26 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 31 July 1905.

27 Casiraghi, ‘The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law’, 90–91.

28 *Ibid.*

Van Rossum's fourth and last *votum*, *De impedimentis dirimentibus*, treated of matrimonial impediments that invalidated a marriage. This report was debated in December 1905 and January 1906. Consanguinity up to and including the third degree was one such impediment. Some consultors argued that this should be reduced to the second degree, to reflect civil law in certain countries, but Van Rossum held firmly to the stricter rule, which was eventually adopted. Much-debated issues were the invalidity of marriages between an unbaptised and a Catholic spouse – marriages between a non-Catholic Christian and a Catholic were only illicit, not invalid – and the question whether it could be assumed that someone who had been raised in a Catholic or Protestant environment had been baptised. The former question was settled in the affirmative and the latter in the negative, a decision which the American bishops successfully appealed in 1906.²⁹

This concluded Van Rossum's contribution to the codification commission, at least in the form of *vota* of his own, and possibly also of involvement in special committees. He attended the sessions of the 'Consulta parziale' of 19 April 1906 and of 26 April, when Laurentius Janssens O.S.B. joined the group. But Van Rossum's name no longer appears in the minutes of this committee after 17 June 1906.³⁰ This may have been due to the burnout he had at the time. Gasparri was a demanding boss, not only for himself but also for his associates: Van Rossum once purportedly said jokingly to Gasparri, "you are killing me".³¹ He suffered insomnia due to the excessive workload, and in September 1906 he had to go to the remote Redemptorist house in Scifelli to regain his forces. The experienced infirmarian in this monastery helped him find the night's sleep and healing he needed.³²

Further debate of the draft canons was left to the cardinals; the commission for matrimonial affairs that met on 20 May 1907 consisted of Cardinals Martinelli, Genari, Cavicchioni and Vives y Tutó, in addition to chairman Gasparri and secretary Pacelli.³³ In 1914, Van Rossum, then a cardinal, joined a previously established special commission together with Cardinals Lega, De Lai, Martinelli, Pompilj, Giustini and Bisleti, all experienced canonists. This small cell acted as the overall *praesidium* to scrutinise the reports produced by the various subcommittees that worked on the codification. He was also involved in the final drafting of the code, as his correspondence with Gasparri between 1915 and 1917 proves. As Major Penitentiary at the time,

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 92–93.

³⁰ AAV, CIC, scat. 55: Reports of the Consulta Parziale De Sacramentalibus.

³¹ Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 29.

³² *Ibid.*; *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 32–34, Scifelli 13 September 1906 and Rome 1 November 1906.

³³ AAV, CIC, scat. 55: Reports of the commission of cardinals.

he commented on several aspects of the final text, including that of the canon on matrimonial impediments that arise from public or private concubinage.³⁴

Throughout the process of the codification of canon law, there were frequent clashes between a group that advocated more open and modern legal views and a group that held firm to orthodox and more traditional opinions. Van Rossum's work and his contribution to the debates left no room for doubt that he identified with the latter camp. According to Fantappiè, the dividing line ran between Pietro Gasparri and a number of canon lawyers from the Seminario dell'Apollinare on the one hand and the integralists on the other. The most important and influential member of this latter group was Vives y Tutó. Fantappiè has also included Cardinals Gennari and Gotti, Bishop Gilbert and the consultors De Lai, Van Rossum, Pie de Langogne and Pacelli among the integralists. They had the support of Pius X, who, as Fantappiè has shown, was in close touch with Vives y Tutó and the consultors Pie de Langogne and Van Rossum. This gave the pope a certain degree of control within the various commissions.³⁵

Van Rossum's reports for and participation in the codification commission demonstrate clearly that his ideas were often close to the integralist position. He was very orthodox in his *vota*, averse to reforms and strict in his judgement of those who erred. However, this is not sufficient evidence to conclude that he was a member of the so-called Sodalitium Pianum, as Fantappiè has done.³⁶ I will return to this issue later, but it is clear even now that Van Rossum's agenda in the codification commission was entirely consistent with his agenda in his own religious congregation and with the 1901 letter, mentioned previously, in which he attacked Loisy.

2 Preparing *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*

As has been seen, Van Rossum's letter of 18 July 1901 was the opening salvo in the Holy Office's case against Alfred Loisy, which would ultimately result in the decree *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* of 3 July 1907, followed by the papal encyclical *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* of 8 September 1907. The papal anti-modernist programme reached its

34 AAV, CIC, scat. 56: 'De Matrimonio', W. van Rossum to P. Gasparri, 10 March 1916, 1 and 28 February 1917. See also Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 93–94; Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 628, n. 450; KDC, ROSS, no. 18: P. Gasparri to W. van Rossum, 6 November 1916; W. van Rossum to P. Gasparri, 20 December 1916 (on can. 2281) and P. Gasparri to W. van Rossum, 23 December 1916, in which he thanks Van Rossum for his excellent suggestions.

35 Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 718–719, 884, 891–894, 1166.

36 *Ibid.*, 1214. He refers on 891 to Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, in evidence of his categorisation of Van Rossum as a member of the Sodalitium. But Poulat does not himself draw this conclusion.

zenith a few years later with the introduction of the anti-modernist oath in the motu proprio *Sacrorum Antistitum* of 1 September 1910.³⁷ The decree and the encyclical have gone down in history as the “minor syllabus errorum” against the errors of modernism (the ‘great’ *Syllabus Errorum* was published by Pius IX in 1864 and attacked such things as socialism, liberalism, rationalism and the separation of church and state). They led to a chain reaction of anti-modernist measures that had far-reaching consequences for the church’s attitude to the modernising world and to churchmen suspected of modernist ideas.

Van Rossum’s role as ‘guardian of the faith’ in this anti-modernist chain reaction has been studied extensively by the German historian Otto Weiss.³⁸ Weiss has shown that Van Rossum’s letter led to the drafting of a report by his fellow consultor David Fleming O.F.M. This Franciscan discovered yet further errors in Loisy’s work, but unlike Van Rossum, he proposed only disciplinary measures: the archbishop of Paris was to summon Loisy and ask him to make a profession of faith and recant his errors. In addition, Loisy was to be banned from ever publishing on exegetical questions again. If he failed to comply, he would be summoned to Rome. The same method had been used in the case of the Irish Jesuit George Tyrrell – with the desired result. Unlike Van Rossum, Fleming did not think Loisy’s writings should be qualified as errors against the faith. A majority of the consultors apparently agreed with Fleming, because they decided to forward his report, not to the cardinals of the Holy Office but to the Congregation of the Index, which was not competent in matters of doctrine. The secretary of the Index, the Dominican Thomas Esser, who was generally sympathetic to the historical-critical method, took a conciliatory approach to Loisy.³⁹

What Van Rossum was unable to achieve – bringing Loisy’s work before the Suprema for judgement – ultimately did happen, a year and a half later, after the papal succession. This was due to a harsh report drawn up by Louis Billot S.J. in January 1903.⁴⁰ The French Jesuit Billot, a great intellectual and convinced anti-liberal, had been brought to Rome by Leo XIII after the publication of *Aeterni Patris* (1879) to teach Thomas Aquinas at the Gregorian university. He was regarded as one of the

37 Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum’, 88–98; Id., *Der Modernismus in Deutschland. Ein Beitrag zur Theologiegeschichte* (Regensburg 1995), 22. Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 84, says that great sums of Peter’s Pence contributions were received after the publication of these papal documents.

38 Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum’, 85–138; an abridged version of this text in: *Life with a Mission*, 67–81.

39 Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum’, 90–91.

40 On Louis Billot S.J. (1846–1931), see Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 1, 179–181. Billot became Van Rossum’s colleague as a consultor of the Holy Office in 1909. He was created a cardinal together with Van Rossum in 1911.

most gifted theologians and experts on Thomas of his time.⁴¹ Like Van Rossum, Billot similarly discerned modernist heresy in Loisy's work. According to him, Loisy and his ideas were a greater menace to the Catholic church than it had ever known before. It was not enough simply to place Loisy's writings on the Index: essential questions of the faith were at stake, and they had to be judged by the Holy Office itself.

On 6 November 1903, the assessor, Lugari, told Esser that it was Pius X's desire that judgement of Loisy's work should be reserved to the Suprema after all. The Capuchin Pie de Langogne, consultant of the Index and the Holy Office, a good friend of Vives y Tutó's and of Pius X's, had already begun to draw up a list of heretical statements in Loisy's writings at the request of the prefect of the Congregation of the Index, Andreas Steinhuber S.J.⁴² The consultants of the Holy Office, including Van Rossum, debated Langogne's report on 14 December 1903, and the outcome was that they recommended that five of Loisy's works should be placed on the Index of Forbidden Books. Two days later, the cardinals of the Holy Office approved this recommendation. The condemnation was published in the *Osservatore Romano* on 24 December 1903.⁴³

In the meantime, on 23 November 1903 the members of the Holy Office had entrusted the task of drawing up an *Elenchus errorum* of Loisy to the consultants Pie de Langogne and Palmieri; each was to make an individual list. On 5 April 1905, Van Rossum was asked to consult with Langogne and Palmieri to combine the two lists into an *Elenchus unicus*. He managed to reach a compromise on points where the two consultants disagreed; a remarkable achievement given Van Rossum's habit of sticking unflinchingly to his own opinions. As this case shows, he was quite able to adapt if there were practical and opportunistic reasons for doing so, for instance to smoothen or facilitate the execution of a policy he favoured.⁴⁴

The joint list of 96 propositions that was thus created formed the basis for the decree *Lamentabili* of 1907. It was debated thoroughly beforehand by the members of the Holy Office, and on the advice of the influential papal court theologian Alberto Lepidi O.P. (1838–1925), several points were toned down to permit a minimum of historical research.⁴⁵ The list came with an appendix containing a number of virulent errors in the works of other authors, and several questions for the Biblical Commission were added concerning the inspiration, historicity and dogmatic relevance

41 Aukes, *Kardinaal de Jong*, 68–71, 81–86, writes that during the first decade of the twentieth century, for young priests “one name [was] the greatest, that of Billot, the professor of dogmatic theology, a man of world fame”. De Jong, later archbishop of Utrecht and a cardinal but then a student in Rome, did not yet suspect that Billot was “one of the most powerful protectors of Benigni, the arch-intriguer”.

42 Arnold, ‘Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X’, 157.

43 Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum’, 92–93.

44 *Ibid.*, 95.

45 Arnold, ‘Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X’, 158. Lepidi was the Magister Sacri Palatii.

of the books of the Bible. These were issues that would later occupy Van Rossum as member and president of the Biblical Commission.⁴⁶

Van Rossum does not appear to have been involved in the following steps that led to the promulgation of *Lamentabili* by the Holy Office on 17 July 1907, nor in the drafting of the encyclical *Pascendi* of 8 September that same year, which was carried out primarily by Joseph Lémius O.M.I. and Vives y Tutó. He did, however, work with Palmieri to compile a circular letter for all Catholic educational institutions, approved by the pope on 30 September 1907. This letter was intended to protect young people from exposure to error. It demanded the removal of all directors, professors and teachers from Catholic seminaries, schools and universities who held erroneous views or were suspected of holding such views. Seminarians and clerics were banned from writing for suspect journals. Ordination to the priesthood was to be refused if the ordinand was suspect and declined to renounce error. This document ended up as a detailed explanatory note attached to the third, disciplinary part of the encyclical *Pascendi*.⁴⁷

As the German historian Claus Arnold has written, *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* created the impression that Pius X's theological and church political agenda was more or less a continuation of that of Pius IX: a direct line from anti-liberalism to anti-modernism.⁴⁸ The intermediate, scientific agenda of Leo XIII was thus totally obscured. In November 1907, the pope published the motu proprio *Praeantia Sacrae Scripturae*, which threatened anyone who did not fully accept *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi* with the penalty of automatic excommunication ('*latae sententiae*').

3 Loisy condemned as *vitandus*

Loisy submitted somewhat half-heartedly to the authority of the church in a letter to Pius X in 1904, but this was not accepted. It led to a final breach, because Loisy refused to budge any further. In a letter of 29 September 1907 to Secretary of State Merry del Val, he announced that he would not submit to *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*. He contended that the encyclical *Pascendi* represented many of his statements in distorted or corrupted fashion.⁴⁹

The Holy Office then decided to impose the ban of the church upon Loisy, and Van Rossum was given the task of preparing the severe penalty of excommunication as

46 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 94, note 43; ADDF, 50, St. St. S 5 n: Documentazione relativa alle teorie e opere di Alfred Loisy, f 183-193 and 335-341.

47 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 95.

48 Arnold, 'Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X', 161.

49 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 96-97.

vitandus, which meant that Catholics – with the exception of his immediate family – could no longer have any contact with him. Rather surprisingly, Van Rossum raised a number of objections in his *votum* of 29 November 1907, not because he disagreed with the condemnation, but because of procedural defects. Loisy's letter to Merry del Val was a private letter and could therefore not be grounds for such a condemnation. Nor could Loisy be condemned for statements he had made before the promulgation of the encyclical *Pascendi*, Van Rossum argued. A new demand should therefore be sent to Loisy asking him to submit fully. He was to make a public declaration in which he condemned all propositions in *Lamentabili* as heretical and abjured the passages condemned by *Pascendi*. Van Rossum concluded his report by saying, "If he submits, we will have saved a soul. If he does not, which is to be feared, we can proceed to the painful cutting off of a dead member, and he would have no grounds for complaint."⁵⁰

Van Rossum's proposal was adopted. Loisy refused to submit. He responded instead with a sarcastic work denouncing the methods of the curia: *Simple réflexions sur le décret du Saint-Office Lamentabili sane exitu et sur l'encyclique Pascendi dominici gregis*.⁵¹ This met the conditions for excommunication that Van Rossum had formulated, and Loisy was declared *vitandus* on 7 March 1908.⁵²

4 The antimodernist oath

The *Congregatio extraordinaria* of the Holy Office decided on 19 June 1910 that a list of 'modernist errors' was to be drawn up on the basis of *Lamentabili* and *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. Professors of theology at seminaries were to take an oath, in addition to their profession of faith, that they would not teach these errors. This anti-modernist oath was initially intended to protect Catholic seminarians against the teaching of error, but in fact it became an instrument to detect modernist tendencies and establish control over 'the modernists'. Even before its introduction on 1 September 1910 in the *motu proprio Sacrorum Antistitum*, it became clear that the oath would be required for many ecclesiastical offices.⁵³ The entire Catholic clergy would ulti-

50 *Ibid.*; Claus Arnold, Giacomo Losito, '*Lamentabili sane exitu*' (1907). *Les documents préparatoires du Saint Office* (Rome 2011), 78–80, n. 126.

51 Ceffonds 1908.

52 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 98.

53 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 112–120. See also Judith Schepers, "So viel und so rasch wie in der Modernisten-Verfolgung hat die Kurie lange nicht gearbeitet..." Zur kurialen Interpretation des Antimodernisteneides', in: Hubert Wolf, Judith Schepers (Hgg.), '*In wilder zügelloser Jagd nach Neuem*'. 100 Jahre Modernismus und Antimodernismus in der katholischen Kirche (Paderborn 2009), 337–367, at 347ff.

mately be required to take this expanded oath of obedience and orthodoxy between 1910 and 1967.⁵⁴

The task of drawing up a formula for the anti-modernist oath was assigned to Billot and Van Rossum. According to Schepers and Weiss, Van Rossum's role consisted primarily of reviewing and approving the text that Billot wrote. Billot targeted two 'arch-modernist' philosophical trends in particular. He regarded agnosticism – the human mind can never say anything about God with certainty – and immanentism – every religion originates in and is a product of the human emotions and is therefore purely human and natural – as the two foundational principles of theological modernism. All who took the oath had to abjure these principles and accept the basic truths of the faith: that God's existence could be known and proven by reason, that Christ had established the church, and that doctrine had been passed down through the ages intact and unchanged. In addition, Billot launched an attack on the rise of the historical-critical method in exegesis. Everyone had to submit to all declarations and stipulations in *Pascendi* and *Lamentabili*.⁵⁵

It soon became clear that there were two diverging interpretations of the oath within the Holy Office: some afforded it great significance and regarded it as a *professio fidei* or profession of faith, others saw it 'merely' as a matter of obedience. This difference proved important when it had to be decided how to deal with people who refused to take the oath. Pius X asked the Holy Office on 1 January 1911 what to do with such persons, and the question was once again assigned to Billot and Van Rossum. The resulting *votum* was written by Van Rossum.⁵⁶

In this document, Van Rossum continued along the lines he had set out in the Loisy case, taking a harsh stance with regard to people who refused to take the oath. He concluded that their refusal proved that they had defected from the faith, and they should therefore – after a grace period of ten days – be rigorously cut off from the church “so that they do not, like dead and putrid members, spread contamination and death to the others”.⁵⁷ Most members of the Holy Office distanced themselves from this point of view. They regarded the refusal to take the oath not as defection

54 See for example Claus Arnold, *Kleine Geschichte des Modernismus* (Herder Freiburg etc. 2007), 120–122; Schepers, 'So viel und so rasch', 338–343.

55 Schepers, 'So viel und so rasch', 341; she mentions in note 18 that the proposal does not bear Van Rossum's signature; Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 112–120; id., 'Der Katholische Modernismus. Begriff – Selbstverständnis – Ausprägungen – Weiterwirken', in: *Antimodernismus und Modernismus in der katholischen Kirche*, 107–139.

56 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1910, no. 36, fasc. 2: Pius X to Giovanni Battista Lugari, 1 January 1911; *Ibid.*: 'De refractariis iuramenti antimodernistici', *votum* by Van Rossum and Billot. The *votum* was signed on 5 January 1911 by "G. M. van Rossum, c. ss. R. Consultor, L. Billot". Schepers has demonstrated that this date cannot be accurate (the task was only assigned to them on 11 January); the correct date is probably 5 February 1911. 'So viel und so rasch', 347, n. 48.

57 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1910, no. 36, fasc. 2, 15r–17r.

from the faith but as a matter of disobedience that required less severe disciplinary measures. This meant that the priests in question were not to be excommunicated, but merely suspended *a divinis* – their faculties to celebrate Mass and administer the sacraments were to be withdrawn.⁵⁸ In their *Declaratio juramenti antimodernistici* of 13 May 1911, Van Rossum and Billot stuck to their viewpoint, but this once again failed to convince the cardinals when they met.⁵⁹

Debate about the oath was not limited to the curia. In France, criticism came primarily from Le Sillon, Marc Sangnier's Christian Democrat movement. Le Sillon's objective was to mobilise the laity for Christian Democracy, for example through *instituts populaires* (Catholic adult education centres) inspired by *Rerum Novarum*. Pius X condemned the movement in 1910, among other things because he regarded it as too liberal. It embraced the separation of church and state enacted by French law in 1905, which was vigorously opposed by the French bishops and by Action Française, a movement which we will encounter again shortly.⁶⁰ French proponents of anti-modernism and of the oath were to be found primarily in monarchist circles.

The oath also caused a great deal of commotion in Germany, as various German priests refused to take it as a matter of principle.⁶¹ In the Netherlands, by contrast, the later bishop Johannes Aengenent, then professor at the Haarlem diocesan major seminary of Warmond, came out strongly in support of the oath. He dismissed protests like in Germany as “excuses to put up resistance”. Any “obedient son of the Church, rather than going to great lengths to find subtle distinctions, [will] eagerly and wholeheartedly submit as perfectly as possible to the measures taken by ecclesiastical authority and obey as promptly as possible.”⁶²

Among the first exegetes required by the Holy Office's decree of 19 July 1911 to submit unreservedly – and who actually did so – were two consultors of the Biblical Commission, the Dominican Lagrange and Franz von Hummelauer. On 11 August 1911, Lagrange sent a document with the oath from Jerusalem, signed by himself and all his staff, adding that he would retract anything the Holy See required.⁶³ The views of the Jesuit Von Hummelauer had already been investigated within his order by

58 *Ibid.*: reply signed on 24 May 1911 by Lugari. See also Schepers, ‘So viel und so rasch’, 347–348.

59 Schepers, ‘So viel und so rasch’, 349–352, 359; ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1910, no. 36, fasc. 2, f 24–27 and f 34, fasc. 3, f 21: ‘Declaratio juramenti antimodernistici’, *volutum* by Billot and Van Rossum dated 13 May 1911, debated on 21 June 1911.

60 Jacques Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l'Action française: histoire d'une condamnation 1899–1939* (Paris 2001), 91–96; Arnold, ‘Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X’, 153–168.

61 Schepers, ‘So viel und so rasch’, 339, note 11, 347–352.

62 J.D.J. Aengenent, *De antimodernisten-eed* (Leiden 1911), 43–44.

63 ADDF, SO, *Censurae Librorum* 1913, no. 2. The file contains the letter and the signed oath by Fr. M.J. Lagrange, “of the Friars Preachers, Jerusalem, 11 August 1911”. Poels similarly distanced himself explicitly from Loisy around this time, in the *Nieuwe Kerkradsche Courant*, 2 November 1911. See also Neirynek, *A Vindication of my Honor*, 17*–18*.

four censors appointed by Franz Xaver Wernz (superior general since 1906), including the conservative Father Leopold Fonck. Van Rossum, who had in the meantime become a cardinal and a member of the Index, examined the proposals to amend Von Hummelauer's texts. He concluded on 21 May 1912 that there was no need to place his works on the Index, but they had to be revised according to the guidelines issued by the Biblical Commission on 30 June 1909.⁶⁴

5 Sodalitium Pianum

At first sight, Van Rossum's fear of the new and insistence on the old qualify him naturally for membership of the group of conservatives or *integristi* that gathered in 1909 under the name of Sodality of Pius or Sodalitium Pianum (also known as 'La Sapinière') around Umberto Benigni (1862–1934). Benigni was an Italian church historian who had worked for the curia since 1902, including as undersecretary of Affari Straordinari. He became a fervent inquisitor of anything that smacked even remotely of modernism, creating a network of informants and exposing suspects, mainly through newspapers and journals he controlled. This secret society, established in 1909 with the vague purpose of "defending papal instructions", received encouragement from Pius X on 5 July 1911 and again on 8 July 1913, but was never officially approved. Through suspicion, espionage and rumour, the group created a climate of fear and mistrust within the church. Pope Benedict XV banned the group in 1921.⁶⁵

The Italian historian Fantappiè has contended that Van Rossum was a member of the Sodalitium. He based this conclusion on the French historian Poulat's research on anti-modernism. Poulat's *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral* includes a list of cardinals that was drawn up in 1913 and contains Benigni's assessment of every cardinal's 'usefulness' during the following papal conclave. Van Rossum is marked on this list as "good, with us".⁶⁶ But the meaning of these words is not clear. No proper list of members of the Sodalitium Pianum has survived. It is true that historians have linked several contacts of Van Rossum's in the Holy Office and in the codification commission to the Sodalitium. Thus, the Cardinals Vives y Tutó, Gennari and Gotti, and the consultors De Lai, Pie de Langogne and Pacelli were purportedly members.⁶⁷

64 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 116; AAS, 1(1909), 567–569.

65 Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 61–81; Louis Vereecke, 'Les Rédemptoristes et le mouvement intégriste au début du XXe siècle', in: SHCSR, 20(1972), 393–410.

66 Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 1214; Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 330, 414, 465, 552.

67 Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. 2, 893–894, 1166; see also J. Ickx, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum as Penitenziere Maggiore (1915–1918)', in: *Life with a Mission*, 109–121, at 110.

But it is more difficult to position Van Rossum. There is no doubt that he was in the anti-modernist camp on some occasions, but at other times he belonged more to the opposing camp. Two examples demonstrate this: the *Gewerkschaftsstreit* in Germany and the Netherlands and the condemnation of Charles Maurras and his *Action Française* in 1914.

From 1911 to 1914, Germany was the scene of the so-called *Gewerkschafts- und Zentrumsstreit* between a Cologne and a Berlin 'school'. At the end of the nineteenth century, industrialisation and urbanisation had resulted in the establishment by modern German Catholics of large socio-political organisations, including a number of lay-led interconfessional trade unions (*Gewerkschaften*). Archbishop Anton Fischer of Cologne (and the *Deutsche Zentrumspartei*) supported such trade unions, as did Felix von Hartmann (1849–1919), who succeeded him to the see of Cologne after Cardinal Fischer's death on 30 July 1912. Their great opponent was Cardinal Georg Kopp, archbishop of Breslau, a representative of the Berlin school, which preferred purely Catholic organisations led by the clergy. Kopp had the support of circles around Benigni and the *Sodalitium Pianum*, which launched a fervent campaign against "modern manifestations" and "covert Protestantism", such as Christian Democracy, feminism and interconfessionalism.⁶⁸

As a member of the Congregation of the Index, Van Rossum had to deal with two cases that resulted from the *Gewerkschaftsstreit*, the Mausbach and Wacker cases.⁶⁹ The papal letter *Singulari Quadam* of 24 September 1912 in principle endorsed the Berlin school, but left the door open for the Cologne school. The secretary of the Index, Thomas Esser O. P., was greatly perturbed by this. Esser, who had been traumatised in his younger years by the repression of the *Kulturkampf* (which had landed him in prison), saw the interconfessional *Gewerkschaften* as Prussian Protestantism in disguise. The archives of the Congregation of the Index show that Esser made strenuous efforts to change the pope's mind on this issue.

On 17 December 1911, a book by the moral theologian Joseph Mausbach – *Die katholische Moral und ihre Gegner* ('Catholic Morality and its Opponents') – was delated to Esser and the Index for being a mouthpiece of the modernist Cologne school. Esser asked a number of opponents of the Cologne school to prepare a report and a *votum*, which he presented to the pope on 28 December 1912 under cover of a letter in which

68 Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 405–408. ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, fasc. H. 'Lettère private, 1911–1919', contains extensive correspondence between Van Rossum and Fischer's successor Von Hartmann from December 1913 to July 1914, which shows that Kopp was blackening the name of the archbishop of Cologne in Rome with the help of Benigni adherents.

69 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 101–108. Jan Dirk Busemann, *Katholische Laienemanzipation und Römische Reaktion. Die Indexkongregation im Literatur-, Gewerkschafts- und Zentrumsstreit* (Paderborn 2017), 247–254, 346–348, 360–362.

he said he would personally regret it very much if the condemnation of Mausbach's book were to be judged inopportune. But Esser received little support from his own Congregation of the Index for his bitter attack. By contrast with the Loisy case, Van Rossum now adopted a more moderate position.⁷⁰ The cardinals assembled on 4 January 1913 to discuss the case on the basis of a lengthy report he had drafted.⁷¹ Van Rossum began by emphasising that Mausbach was a very well-respected theologian and a convinced defender of Catholic doctrine. Someone who did not know Mausbach's work and had read only the *vetum* commissioned by Esser might think that Mausbach was practically a Protestant. But Van Rossum argued that the author of the *vetum* had allowed himself to be influenced by the current craze for finding heresies everywhere; he individually listed every incorrect judgement in the report.⁷²

Van Rossum did believe that the book contained errors – for instance, it assigned too little authority to the church in the political, economic and social fields, and the hypothesis that there was such a thing as interconfessional Christianity with a moral system common to Protestants and Catholics – but a condemnation would cause great unrest in society and would do more harm than good. He proposed, therefore, to condemn the book, but keep the condemnation secret, a procedure that was not without precedent. It would suffice for Archbishop Von Hartmann to convey this condemnation to Mausbach, offering him the opportunity to produce a revised version of his book that would be in accord with the teaching of the church. Nine days later, the cardinals adopted this proposal with an overwhelming majority, and the pope endorsed it. Mausbach immediately submitted. Esser, by contrast, was greatly disappointed and told the prefect of the Index that he regarded it as outrageous that a condemnation was kept secret because it was regarded as inopportune.⁷³

The problem of interconfessional trade unions also caused tensions in the Netherlands, where there was a 'Leiden school', which favoured Catholic unions, and a 'Limburg school', which was akin to the Cologne school. During his visit to the Netherlands in July and August 1913, Van Rossum supported the interconfessional mine-

70 See also Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 114, 465, 552.

71 Cardinal Francesco S. Della Volpe was the prefect of the Congregation of the Index, and the curial cardinals Gennari, Lorenzelli, Lugari and Van Rossum were the members of the Congregation. Unlike the Holy Office, the Index did not have fixed sessions but meetings were held whenever consultors submitted reports on delated books. Jan Dirk Busemann, Sabine Schratz, "'Examinata fuerunt opera sequentia ...' Vorstellung des Systematischen Repertoriums zur Buchzensur 1814–1917", in: Wolf (Hrsg.), *Verbotene Bücher*, 93–114, point out on 102 that it had only recently become customary for cardinals to draft reports; in the nineteenth century, such reports were written exclusively by consultors.

72 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 105.

73 *Ibid.*, 101–108.

workers' trade unions that Henri Poels led as chaplain to the Limburg mineworkers after his return from the United States.⁷⁴

But the issue in Germany was not over yet. When Von Hartmann argued that, like mixed marriages, interconfessional unions were an expedient to avoid greater evil, this earned him a rebuke from Van Rossum: no one, in whatever circumstance, should recommend mixed marriages. As a result, Von Hartmann feared that he had lost the pope's favour. But in April 1914, Van Rossum reassured him that this was not the case, and encouraged him to submit a problematic speech on the unions issue given by the Freiburg priest Wacker to the Index. On this occasion, Esser supported Von Hartmann.⁷⁵

As the German *Gewerkschaftsstreit* shows, anti-modernism took issue not only with theological modernism but also with modern political and social views. This politico-social dimension was clearly to the fore in the debates within the curia on Charles Maurras's *Action Française* in 1914. Maurras (1868–1952), a French royalist, lapsed Catholic and agnostic, regarded the Catholic church as an ally in his struggle against the secular French republic and against liberalism. His ideology had chauvinist and proto-fascist features and proved very popular among monarchist and integralist French Catholics, including a significant section of high-ranking French clerics, who rejected 'liberal Catholic' Christian Democracy (especially *Le Sillon*). Maurras had a level of support within the curia too, particularly among opponents of Loisy.⁷⁶

It was long thought that Van Rossum was an exception to this.⁷⁷ Pope Pius XI condemned a number of Maurras's works on 29 December 1926. A few years later, in 1928, Nicolas Fontaine published his book *Saint-Siège, Action Française et catholiques intégraux*, in which he revealed that six works by Maurras and his journal *L'Action française* had been condemned by the Congregation of the Index as early as 29 January 1914, on the basis of a report by Cardinal Van Rossum.⁷⁸

A number of Maurras's works had indeed been delated to the Index in 1914. Even before the meeting of the consultants, Pie de Langogne and Lémius, both supporters of Maurras, pointed out to Pius X that a condemnation would be interpreted as papal

74 De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus!*, 252–263: 'De kardinaal en de ketterjager. Het duel tussen W.M. van Rossum en M.A. Thompson, 1912–1914'.

75 Weiss, 'Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum', 101–108. Von Hartmann became a cardinal on 2 May 1914. For further details on this case, see also the correspondence with Von Hartmann in ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4. As regards Van Rossum's further involvement in cases concerning German authors, see Wolf, Schepers (Hgg.), '*In wilder zügelloser Jagd nach Neuem*', 568–663.

76 For an extensive study of this issue, see Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l'Action française*.

77 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 556.

78 N. Fontaine, *Saint-Siège, Action Française et catholiques intégraux* (Paris 1928), 30. Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l'Action française*, mentions on 721 that N. Fontaine was the pen name of Louis Canet, counsellor for religious affairs in the French ministry of foreign affairs.

support for Le Sillon. During the plenary session of the Congregation on Monday 26 January 1914, the *relator*, Van Rossum, explained the state of the Maurras case to the prefect, Della Volpe, and his two colleagues, Lugari and Lorenzelli. Van Rossum, too, had consulted with Pius x before the meeting, and the pope had given him letters which French bishops had written to him in support of Maurras. During the meeting it became clear that Van Rossum supported condemnation of the six works in principle. But he judged it inopportune to place them on the Index of Prohibited Books, and he referred to the ‘highest authority’ in support of this position. However, his colleagues did support condemnation of Maurras’s works and of Action Française’s journal; Benedetto Lorenzelli in particular insisted on the latter, arguing that the church’s silence would be seen as support for Action Française.⁷⁹

Van Rossum had to tell the pope after the meeting that his had been the only vote against placing the works on the Index.⁸⁰ He regretted this very much, because – as Lémieux had suggested – it would be a blow for Action Française, “the only really good Catholic movement in France, which has the sympathy of those bishops who are most learned and most devoted to the Holy See, which does excellent work in the margins of the episcopate, which has anti-liberal, anti-modernist doctrines etc.” This condemnation, Van Rossum continued in his letter to Pius x, would cause consternation in Catholic circles and be a triumph for liberalism, and that on the eve of the French elections.⁸¹

Pius x was reluctant to overrule the decision of the Congregation of the Index. But he decided that the decree should not be made public, so that Maurras and Action Française continued for years unhindered by the church. The condemnation was eventually published in 1926.⁸²

It is clear that Van Rossum cannot be unambiguously placed in the Benigni camp. He chose Benigni’s side on Action Française, but supported the opposite camp in the case of the interconfessional trade unions: the Cologne school in Germany and the Limburg school in the Netherlands. Van Rossum was not interested in politics or political factions, and this made him less of a natural ally for Benigni. But this is not to say that he was uninterested in Benigni’s ideas. Van Rossum read the integralist journal *Fede e Ragione* and kept in touch with Benigni until the early 1920s.⁸³

79 Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l’Action française*, 186–187, 572, n. 181–182;

Arnold, ‘Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X’, 153–168.

80 Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l’Action française*, 183–188.

81 Arnold, ‘Der Antimodernismus unter Pius X’, 165–166.

82 See also Chapter 20.3.

83 *Ibid.*

His correspondence with fellow Redemptorists, currently in the Redemptorist general archives, shows that Van Rossum also had contacts with a number of Redemptorists of the province of Paris who were members of the Sodalitium Pianum, particularly Fathers Alphonse George and Désiré Castelain.⁸⁴ Father George had written to Van Rossum as early as 1897 – after denouncing the French clergy’s lax views on masturbation – to suggest that it might be opportune to bring priests who looked to Alphonsus together as ‘men of principle’ in a league or association.⁸⁵ Van Rossum appears to have agreed with George, who had a certain prestige as the rector of the Redemptorist house in Paris, because he successfully supported the foundation of the Priestly Union of the Eucharistic Heart, whose objective was to exemplify and defend Alphonsian doctrine. Castelain was present on 31 July 1913 when Van Rossum visited the replica of the Roman catacombs in the caves of Valkenburg (the Netherlands), a project that attracted international attention as well as the support of Pius X.⁸⁶ The Union, which had members mainly in France, Belgium and Italy (its centre was the church of San Gioacchino in Rome, since 1903 the headquarters of the archconfraternity of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus), was approved by Pius X in January 1914, and the pope attached a number of privileges and indulgences to membership.⁸⁷ The Union purportedly also published its own journal in 1914, the *Revue des Prêtres du Cœur Eucharistique*.⁸⁸

84 In 1921 Benigni mentioned four Redemptorists of the French province who had been members of the Sodalitium until 1914: A. George (1844–1932), D. Castelain (1863–1934), E. Herbaux and E. Dupuis. The last three did their noviciate in Stratum in the 1880s and 1890s, where George was the rector at the time, and some of them did part of their seminary years in Dongen in temporary locations in the Netherlands. Benigni regarded George as one of the Sodalitium’s ‘best friends’. Vereecke, ‘Les Rédemptoristes et le mouvement intégriste’, 393–410; Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 326, 414, 534 and 583. George met Benigni in Ghent on 25 August 1913. It is not known whether Van Rossum, who had been on a tour of Redemptorist houses in Belgium from 23 August onwards, met either of them at the time. *De Maasbode*, 23 August 1913.

85 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and confreres*: A. George to W. van Rossum, Boulogne-sur-Mer 2 October 1897.

86 Vereecke, ‘Les Rédemptoristes et le mouvement intégriste’, 404 calls Castelain the superior of the French Redemptorist scholasticate in Valkenburg. Paul Post, *De Romeinse Katakomben in Valkenburg. Het verhaal van een unieke kopie* (Nijmegen 2010), 28. Van Rossum was the patron of the Catacombensstichting Valkenburg, the society that ran the site. See KDC, ROSS, no. 403.

87 Indulgences were attached to the devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus in 1903. See ASS, 36 (1903/04), 505. On Van Rossum’s involvement in this devotion, see ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3: ‘Cuore Eucaristico di Gesù’, 1898–1921, including personal notes by Van Rossum, 31 July 1914 ‘Dalle Opere di S. Alfonso de Liguori’, Schema Officii et Missae propriae. See also AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and confreres*: D. Castelain to W. van Rossum, 14 July 1923; A. George to W. van Rossum, 23 November 1923, 12 April 1925 and 1 October 1929. George and Van Rossum met each other near Paris in July 1928 at a convent of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; Van Rossum was the cardinal protector of this congregation. A. George to J. Drehmanns, 18 July and 21 December 1928, which mentions that Camillo Laurenti, prefect of the Congregation of Rites, had been asked to grant privileges to the Union.

88 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and confreres*: A. George to W. van Rossum, 23 November 1923.

On the other hand, Van Rossum remained on friendly terms with Cardinal Lorenzelli, who did not belong to the anti-modernist camp, and when his friend Cardinal Anton Fischer became a target of Benigni's group, he continued to support him; when Fischer was auxiliary bishop of Cologne, he had often visited Wittem to confer priestly ordination. In the Netherlands, too, Van Rossum defended a number of victims of the integralist witch hunt when he believed it went too far. Thus, he combated the Dutch integralist M. A. Thompson, editor-in-chief of the daily *De Maasbode*, whose accusations against P. Geurts, editor-in-chief of the competing newspaper *De Tijd*, occasioned the latter's resignation and appointment as professor of church history at the Roermond major seminary.⁸⁹ In late 1910, Van Rossum also defended the priest Gisbert Brom, the director of the Dutch Historical Institute in Rome, after he became the subject of accusations. He asked Archbishop Van de Wetering to write a warm letter of recommendation for Brom to Cardinal Merry del Val, "expressing your fervent wish that the Dr. may be spared and the Institute with him. I am not sure, but on several occasions the thought has occurred to me that, surely in the best of faith and with the best of intentions, accusations have been levelled against Dr. Brom that are insufficiently certain and are much exaggerated, as happened in much more gross fashion with Dr. Eras."⁹⁰

Van Rossum clearly believed the integralists were taking things too far. He was in fact once accused himself of 'semi-modernism', by a fellow Redemptorist with whom he was on bad terms and who was a supporter of Thompson's. This accusation, in a letter to Merry del Val in 1913, does not appear to have had any consequences.⁹¹

Like Benigni's followers, Van Rossum was conservative and anti-modernist in both the theological and the social domains, and this can explain why Benigni listed him as an ally in the curia, 'with us'.⁹² But the debates on Loisy, Mausbach and Maurras prove that he was not part of a monolithic anti-modernist block in the curia. Moreover, Van Rossum was fiercely critical of Benigni's greatest Dutch adherent, M. A. Thompson, and supported several of the latter's victims. It is possible that Van Rossum was influenced in this by his sympathies for Cardinal Fischer of Cologne, whom he regarded as a personal friend, and Fischer's successor Von Hartmann, as

89 De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 252–263.

90 Utrecht, Het Utrechts Archief (HUA), *Archief Aartsbisdom Utrecht*, no. 135: W. van Rossum to H. van de Wetering, 6 December 1910. Gisbert Brom (1864–1915), a historian, was the former editor-in-chief of *Het Centrum* and, from 1904 to 1915, *De Tijd*'s Roman correspondent. Brom was reputed to be a democratically minded Catholic, and he published his opinions on Roman developments in *De Tijd* under the pseudonym of *Romanus*. Hans Cools, Hans de Valk, *Institutum Neerlandicum MCMIV–MMIV* (Hilversum 2004), 15–17. The reference to Bernard Eras, procurator of the Dutch bishops in Rome since 1908, is unclear.

91 See Chapter 11.3.

92 Fantappiè, *Chiesa Romana e modernità giuridica*, vol. II, 893–894, 1166. Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 330.

well as his Limburg connections in the Dutch case. The position he took in this case raised suspicions as to his own reliability in circles around Benigni.⁹³

Moreover, certain cracks were beginning to show in Van Rossum's armour of rigidity, which can be explained in part by his new status as a cardinal. Up to the end of 1911, it was his task as a consultor to defend the teaching of the church. He did this consistently and with conviction, irrespective of whom he was investigating. When he became a cardinal, his position changed: instead of a servant of the church he was a personal servant of the pope. In this capacity, he sometimes had to make concessions if the pope regarded this as useful. This is why he argued that it would be inopportune to publicly condemn Mausbach. It is even clearer with respect to Maurras and Action Française: although Van Rossum felt that Maurras's works contained serious errors, he still voted against placing them on the Index, because Pius X believed this to be imprudent in view of the letters that he had received from leading French churchmen.

6 Ruthlessness and mercy

Van Rossum had been a proponent of the strict interpretation of Alphonsus's teachings in Wittem, and as a consultor of the Holy Office and of the codification commission he likewise advocated strict adherence to the teaching of the church. He fought to defend orthodoxy and tradition and against the perils of his time, still in the form of Protestants and liberals, but now also, and in fact primarily, of modern and modernist theology.

Van Rossum was a fast, structured and meticulous worker. His thorough knowledge of the teaching of the church – he built up valuable expertise not only as a dogmatist but also as the archivist of the Holy Office, and he became a respected canonist – and his analytical prowess helped him to state problems clearly, reach well-considered solutions and then defend them persuasively. And he was ruthless in his work. According to Drehmanns, during the fifteen years that he worked for the Holy Office preceding his elevation to the cardinalate, from 1896 to 1911, he became one of the most influential consultors, and “in that hidden position did untold good (...) He was able to acquire this influence through his sheer diligence, his deep scholarship, through his clear insight, through his mature judgement. Love for Holy Church, love

93 Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 556: “Le cardinal Van Rossum, ‘un peu suspect d’être favorable à Cologne’”; Vereecke, ‘Les Rédemptoristes et le mouvement intégriste’, 399–402; J. Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*. Bd. 3 (Munich 1936), 165.

for souls, love for his Congregation and love for Saint Alphonsus were the driving forces behind this.”⁹⁴

His Dutch background played a role in his outspoken standpoints, on the one hand in his Calvinist sense of duty and on the other in his clearly anti-Protestant mentality, for instance with regard to mixed marriages. Any deviation from doctrine, any change in the tradition of the church, even very minor or formal, could harm the divine and immutable truth of the faith and the essence of the church. Anyone who did not fully believe everything that the church taught was an unworthy member and should leave the church. His judgement was frequently more drastic than that of his colleagues. The resistance which this prompted did not disconcert him. He undoubtedly kept in mind the advice of his mentor Oomen: perhaps he was a naysayer, but at least he had not kept silent when it was necessary to speak. He had nothing to reproach himself with in this respect.

And yet, Van Rossum was from time to time prepared to compromise. Otto Weiss has recounted that, in a case that was before the Holy Office in 1910, Van Rossum had to decide between two contradictory *vota*: one mild, by Father Dourche, and the other a condemnation, by Louis Billot S.J. Van Rossum managed to steer a middle course and proposed a diplomatic judgement that was acceptable to both sides.⁹⁵ Moreover, as has been seen in the Loisy case, Van Rossum was convinced that everyone should be given the opportunity to be reconciled to the church and its doctrine. This, too, is an echo of Alphonsus’s merciful approach. His work for the curia was an excellent opportunity to demonstrate his love for Alphonsus, to enhance the influence of Alphonsian doctrine and incorporate it more firmly in the tradition of the church.

Throughout his life, Van Rossum would always continue to fight against modernism. There was an example of this in 1918, when the *raison d’être* of the anti-modernist oath was being debated in the Suprema. The question as to how the oath related to the profession of faith continued to generate internal discussion. In 1917–1918, the debate was about whether the anti-modernist oath should be included in the new code of canon law. There were canonical objections, but omitting it would make the oath redundant. The Holy Office refused to accept this, and decided to give the oath a new legal basis in the *Decretum circa consilia a vigilantia et iuramentum antimodernisticum* of 22 March 1918.⁹⁶ This decision was taken by the Holy Office in a session of 20 March 1918 by the cardinals present, Merry del Val, De Lai and Van Rossum.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 27.

⁹⁵ Weiss, ‘Der Glaubenswächter van Rossum’, 100.

⁹⁶ AAS, 10(1918), 136.

⁹⁷ Rafael Merry del Val, Gaetano De Lai and Willem van Rossum, together with Basilio Pompilj, were regarded as the integralist core group in the curia until the late 1920s. See Chapter 20.3.

The latter spoke during the meeting of the dangers of the ‘virus of Modernism’ that necessitated the decree.⁹⁸ A year later, he complained in a letter to the nuncio in Germany, Eugenio Pacelli, of the modernist influence on biblical exegesis in Germany, which was infecting students with “the virus of Biblical modernism”.⁹⁹ These pathogens had to be rooted out rigorously, perhaps somewhat like his attempts in his younger years, when he was the infirmarian in Wittem, to stop the spread of cholera and typhus with carbol and sulphur.

Intriguingly, Van Rossum’s name only appeared in historiography, of the Loisy case for instance, after the archives of the Holy Office were opened, and the work of German historians such as Claus Arnold, Judith Schepers, Otto Weiss and Hubert Wolf has given us a sense of his role. Loisy’s and Lagrange’s *Mémoires* and Francesco Turvasi’s *The Condemnation of Alfred Loisy and the Historical Method* (1979) contain many references to consultors and cardinals like Fleming, Billot, Esser, Lepidi, Merry del Val and Palmieri, but not to Van Rossum. As a simple religious from an unknown part of the world, he remained resolutely in the background. As a Redemptorist, he had learned to keep secrets and he appears to have conscientiously upheld the ‘strict oath of secrecy’ he swore in 1896. As far as can be determined, Van Rossum never mentioned any case he was dealing with at the time in his letters. Drehmanns assumed that Van Rossum’s work as a consultor “would always remain secret, unless the Congregation were to agree to grant the uninitiated a glance in its archives”.¹⁰⁰

98 Schepers says that this expression was first used by Van Rossum during a session of the Holy Office on 20 March 1918. Schepers, ‘So viel und so rasch’, 349–352, 356, note 88, 359.

99 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1919: W. van Rossum to E. Pacelli (copy), 20 May 1919.

100 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 27.

Superior general in waiting

Ever since Pope Pius X's accession to the papal throne in mid-1903, Van Rossum's influence in the curia was on the rise. Although he operated mainly behind the scenes, his impact very soon became unmistakably clear to his colleagues in the Vatican, both with regard to the codification project and to shaping the pope's antimodernist policies. Pius X began to reflect on how to put the Dutch Redemptorist's qualities to best use. The perfect opportunity presented itself in 1908, when rumours began to emerge from the Redemptorist congregation that Matthias Raus, the superior general who had been elected for life, was considering resignation.¹ But Van Rossum first had to be put to the test before he could be designated a good candidate to succeed Raus.

1 Secret mission to Montevergine

In June 1908, Van Rossum received a special and mysterious mission directly from Pius X. Together with his confrere Antonio M. Losito, rector of Pagani and a man "revered as a saint", he was sent to the Benedictine abbey of Montevergine, high in the mountains, to conduct a visitation to reform this monastery.² The visitation was probably ordered to solve a number of problems that had arisen in the abbey.³ The mission was "of great importance [and required] great prudence, wisdom and trust in God".⁴ It was so unexpected that Van Rossum had to ask Raus to inform the Holy Office of his absence. On his way to Montevergine, Van Rossum went to the tomb of Alphonsus in Pagani to pray specifically for the upcoming chapter – he evidently

1 Several members of the codification commission became superiors general, including the German Jesuit Franz Xaver Wernz S.J., general of the Society from 1906 to 1914, and the Dutch Franciscan Bernardinus Klumper, superior general from 1921 to 1927.

2 Antonio Maria Losito (1838–1917) became rector of Pagani in 1907 and provincial of the Neapolitan province two years later. He was a popular confessor. Boland, *Dictionary*, 209.

3 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and confreres*, folder 2: 'Losito-Montevergine', with notes by Van Rossum that show that the visitation was related to the noviciate and the formation of the monks.

4 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: A. Losito to M. Raus with a covering letter by W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Pagani 7 June 1908.



Pope Pius X (1903–1914)

knew as early as 7 June 1908 of Raus's resignation, though this was not announced publicly until 21 June.⁵

The abbey of Montevergine had been founded in 1119 by William of Vercelli, Van Rossum's patron saint.⁶ It was located in a very isolated spot high in the mountains east of Naples, and was inaccessible in winter, when most of the monks, who practiced strict observance of the rule, moved to the foot of the mountain. In the summer months, the abbey church was a popular place of pilgrimage as it was home to a Byzantine icon of the 'black Madonna'.

Van Rossum was there on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin. As he wrote to a fellow Redemptorist, the church swarmed with people: "In the night of 7 to 8 Sept., all the women are locked into the church; I have seen it happen a few times here. A few men, 700, were put up in the guest quarters, and the thousands of others were left to fend for themselves for the night. (...) Thousands of women, including many who bore children on their breast, prayed and sang and clapped the whole night long." The first Mass was said at two o'clock in the morning. "The church remained closed throughout to prevent accidents due to the men surging in. After Holy Mass, the three of us distributed Holy Comm. to the women; thousands approached, but very many could not reach the altar for the crowds. (...) And how do these things go, at night in a closed church with all these women and little children? It goes the way it goes; there are corners and places for the things people need to relieve themselves of. When you enter the church early in the morning, you have to be careful, particularly when passing behind an altar, and the confessors, who have learned this through trial and error, first strike a match and carefully examine the confessional. Thankfully there are carabinieri, even in the church, even at communion, to maintain order among the huge crowds." Even during Mass, groups of women continued to sing, invoking Mary and pleading for her grace, their "Mamma Schiavone [Byzantine Mother]. Truly they behave as her children and put us to shame with their love."⁷

Van Rossum initially thought that the mission would take a few weeks, but as it turned out, he remained at the abbey for three and a half months.⁸ He learned to ride along dangerously narrow mountain paths, and, as Drehmanns noted, observe the general abstinence of meat and dairy products, the monks' so-called "magro

5 *Ibid.* See also *ibid.*, A. Losito to M. Raus with a covering letter by W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Montevergine 23 June 1908, in which Van Rossum asks him to convey his respects and greetings to the consultors Schwarz, Bresciani and Magnier, an unusual feature in his letters.

6 The abbey of Montevergine is renowned for its lavish library, which includes medieval incunabula; the Holy Shroud of Turin was brought there for safe-keeping during the Second World War.

7 ENK, ANPR, no. 8545: W. van Rossum to L. Voncken, 9 September 1908.

8 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 39–43, Montevergine 16 June, 19 July and 23 August 1908.

stretto”.⁹ It is clear from the correspondence between Van Rossum and Raus that he believed on several occasions that the mission had concluded. In a letter dated 30 July 1908, Van Rossum proposed presenting the abbot, Vittore-Maria Corvaia O.S.B., who had governed the abbey since 1884 and was “well known to Your Paternity”, with a copy of Van Rossum’s publication on the *Immaculata Conceptio B. Mariae Virginis* on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. Around that time, Corvaia was appointed bishop and Van Rossum argued that this merited the gift of a relic of Alphonsus. The consecration took place after the abbot resigned his charge of the monastery. He was succeeded in September by Carlo Gregorio Maria Grasso.¹⁰

But Van Rossum was not permitted to return to Rome even after Corvaia was made a bishop. Unexpected messages carried by couriers, sometimes in the dead of night, instructed him to stay where he was until further notice. To his great chagrin, Van Rossum missed the annual feast of Alphonsus on 1 August, whereas Losito was given permission to go to Pagani. Nor was he in Rome to attend the fiftieth anniversary of Raus’s ordination. “Still Montevergine; always Montevergine (...). It is very hard, but we would like to say magnanimously with St. Alphonsus: the Pope’s Will is God’s Will!”¹¹

As a salve for his discomfort, Pius x granted Van Rossum’s sister, Sister Gerulpha, a personal blessing at her brother’s request. It was handed to Raus during a private audience granted to the superior general on 8 August, surely to discuss his succession. Gerulpha van Rossum’s congregation, the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg, had recently decided to send her to its mission in Suriname to care for lepers. The pope wrote to her that this would secure her a place in heaven, but sadly the journey was cancelled when a doctor decided she was not fit to travel.¹²

Even though there are no documents to prove it, it is clear that this sojourn in Montevergine was a deliberate trial to test Van Rossum’s obedience, perseverance and, above all, loyalty to the pope, and this with a view to the upcoming chapter. He passed the test with ease. On 23 September he received word that the Holy Father was satisfied and that the visitors might return to Rome. Van Rossum lost no time in complying. Immediately after their return, the two Redemptorists were received in a lengthy private audience by Pius x, who greeted them very cordially. “Never had I such an audience; I will never forget it”, Van Rossum wrote to his family.¹³

9 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 28.

10 <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dmver.html>; AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Montevergine 14 and 30 July 1908.

11 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Montevergine 15 September 1908. See also *ibid.*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Montevergine 14 July, 23 July and 7 September 1908.

12 ENK, AZLT, no. 1019 (Personal file of Sr. Gerulpha van Rossum): request by G.M. van Rossum and a hand-written apostolic benediction, “Dal Vaticano li 7 Agosto 1908, Pius PP. x.”

13 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 44, Scifelli 3 October 1908; AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*, A. Losito and W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Rome 24 September 1908.

2 Raus resigns

In the meantime, a circular letter dated 21 June 1908 had announced to the congregation that the eighty-year-old Matthias Raus had decided to resign from the post he had held for 15 years. 1 May 1909 was fixed as the date for the new chapter. The Congregation for Religious, headed since 1908 by Cardinal Vives y Tutó, approved of the procedure.¹⁴

Raus's general consultors were not dissatisfied with this course of events. In fact, fearing that the resignation might be derailed at the last minute, they wrote a secret letter to Pius x. They were afraid that a majority of the capitulars might not accept the resignation out of respect for Raus, and because a superior general was elected for life. Another possibility was that the chapter might attempt to appoint a vicar to support the elderly Raus in his tasks. In their letter of 7 August 1908, signed by Ernesto Bresciani, Ernest Dubois, Joseph Schwarz and John Magnier, the consultors stressed that the congregation needed a younger and stronger leader and governor. Raus was pious, humble, charitable and of exemplary conduct, but he was not up to the responsibilities that came with the task. He lacked initiative and, more importantly, the skills and determination required to take the spiritual and secular government of the order in hand. They concluded by requesting Raus's "full removal from government and departure from Rome".¹⁵

The consultors asked Pius x to confirm the resignation straightaway, during the private audience he would grant Matthias Raus on the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood on 8 August 1908. This would leave the capitulars in no doubt as to their duty to accept the resignation. They also asked the pope to ensure that the election of a new superior general would be held at the start of the chapter, so that the new superior general rather than Raus would preside over the remainder. Finally, and intriguingly, they begged Pius to keep their missive a secret as they had not informed the superior general's secretary François-Xavier Reuss and the consultant Karl Dilgskron, because they feared their lack of discretion. The pope replied to Bresciani to say that he had received the message and that they need not worry.¹⁶ As ensuing events would show, Pius x already had a successor in mind.

¹⁴ *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI Congregationis ss. Redemptoris* (Rome 1909), IX–XV.

¹⁵ Dieguez, *L'Archivio Particolare di Pio X*, 64–65. See also Giuseppe Orlandi, 'I Redentoristi nell' archivio particolare di Pio X. A proposito dell' Inventario di Alejandro M. Diéguez', in: *SHCSR*, 52(2004), 513–535. Raus did indeed retire to Bischenberg (Alsace). In 1911, his successor Murray granted him permission to visit Rome and Paganì on the occasion of Van Rossum's elevation to the cardinalate, for which Raus thanked him profusely. *AGHR*, *LIII*: M. Raus to P. Murray, 30 January 1912.

¹⁶ Orlandi, 'I Redentoristi nell' archivio particolare di Pio X', 528–531.



Matthias Raus, superior general of the Redemptorists (1894–1909)

3 Van Rossum v. Kronenburg at the 1909 general chapter

Jan Kronenburg and Frans ter Haar travelled to Rome in the spring of 1909 to attend the first general chapter since 1894. Kronenburg had not served his full term of office as superior of the Dutch province: he had resigned after persistent criticism of his policies on smoking and drinking.¹⁷ He had worked in the Roermond juvenate since 1899, first as prefect and then as president. He was chosen in this capacity by the domestic chapter to represent the house at the provincial chapter in Amsterdam, where a small majority elected him as one of the *vocales* (voting members) for the general chapter in Rome. According to Kronenburg himself, his only goal in going to Rome was to choose a good superior general.¹⁸

As soon as he arrived, Kronenburg went to visit Matthias Raus, who told him there was only one candidate for his succession: Father Van Rossum.¹⁹ There is no doubt that Raus was enunciating Pius X's view in saying this. The general consultors Bresciani, Dubois, Magnier and Schwarz, the signatories of the secret letter to the pope, similarly advised Kronenburg that they regarded Van Rossum as the ideal successor to Raus. Willem van Rossum had apparently managed to secure the support of the entire general government, except for one consultor: the Austrian Karl Dilgskron.

It is not known why Dilgskron refused to support Van Rossum, but interestingly he told Kronenburg that the latter was his preferred candidate. Kronenburg also received the support of other Redemptorists from the German-speaking provinces: a few days later, Franz Němec, provincial of the province of Prague, came to visit him and asked him on behalf of the German and Bohemian Redemptorists if he would accept election as superior general. Kronenburg said yes.²⁰ He had no qualms about running against his childhood friend, even though the latter had the support

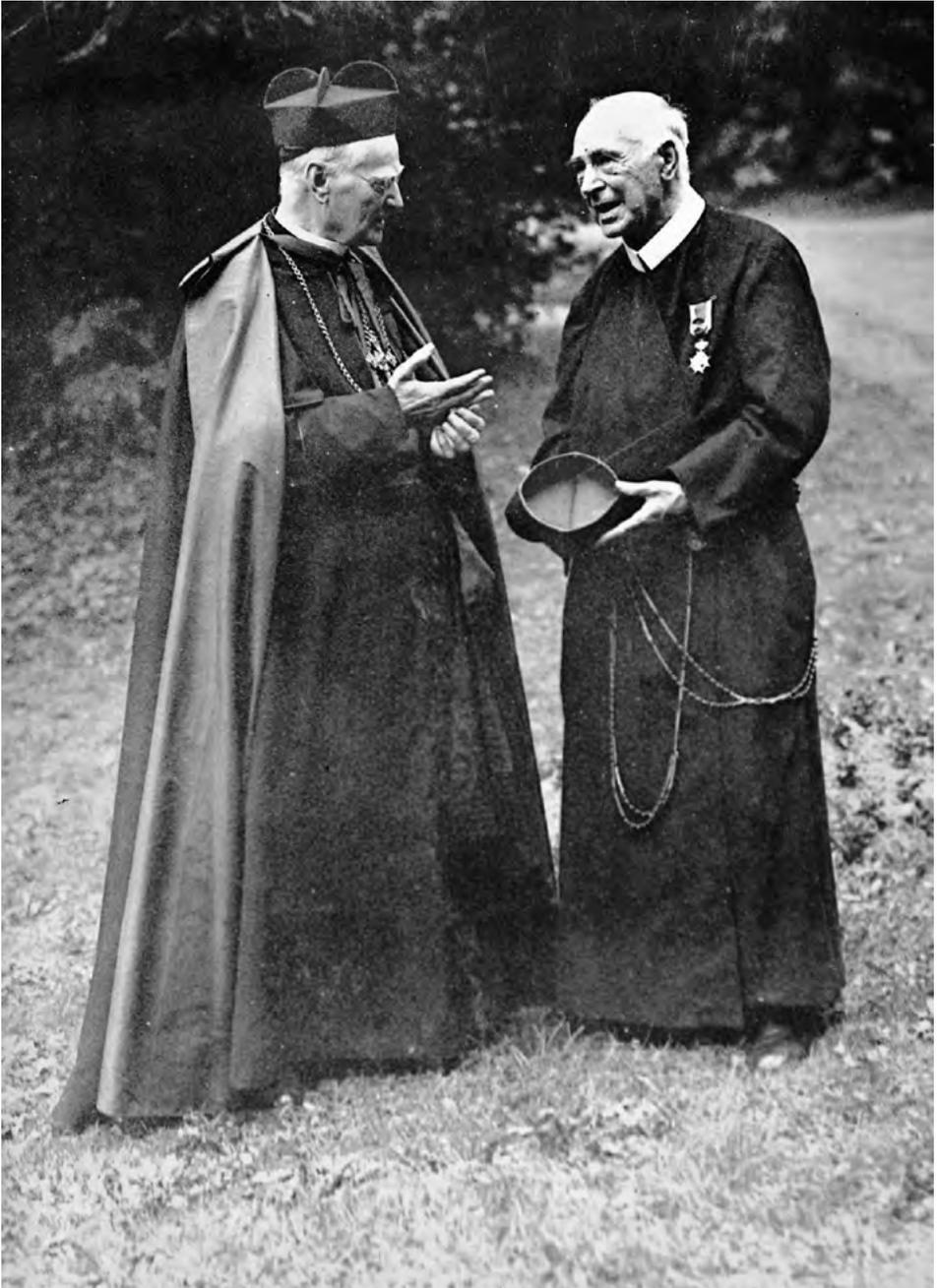
17 See Chapter 5.4. Many within the congregation believed that Raus had forced him to resign. ENK, ANPR, no. 66: Memorandum on the smoking question in 1894–95 by Jan Kronenburg; 'Herinneringen', by Jan Kronenburg, September 1929; AGHR, 0900: J. Kronenburg to M. Raus, 24 January and 29 March 1897; ENK, ANPR, no. 35: R. Van Aertselaer to J. Kronenburg, 2 March 1897, 8 and 22 August 1898. See also AGHR: H. Schäfer, 'Levensschets J. A. F. Kronenburg', 22–25.

18 ENK, ANPR, no. 8124: 'Herinneringen over en aan den stemmingsdag v.h. Kap. van 1909. Na mijn dood ongelezen overhandigen aan R. P. van Grinsven. J. Kronenburg CSSR' (Memories of election day at the Chapter of 1909. To be given to Rev. Father van Grinsven unread after my death. J. Kronenburg C.S.S.R.). The report in this envelope is entitled 'Herinneringen aan het kapittel van 1909'. The text is not dated, but as it mentions Van Rossum's death it must have been written after 30 August 1932.

Marinus van Grinsven (1885–1950) was rector of Wittem from 1930 to 1933, and was subsequently in 's-Hertogenbosch until 1939; L. Dankelman, 'Oversten en officiales', in: *MHPN-CSSR*, 5(1953), 19–32.

19 *Ibid.*, 'Herinneringen aan het kapittel van 1909', 1. For a more detailed description of the chapter, see Vefie Poels, "'The One and Only Candidate': Willem van Rossum at the 1909 Redemptorist General Chapter", in: *SHCSR*, 62(2014), 421–438.

20 Franz Němec (1850–1922) was the superior of the new province of Prague from 1901–1912. Boland, *Dictionary*, 256. If Němec meant the two German provinces (Austria and Bohemia), the number of votes would have been twelve, plus Dilgskron's. *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI*, 10–13.



Cardinal Van Rossum and Jan Kronenburg, 1929

of almost the entire general government. It would in any case be a great honour for the Dutch province if one of their Fathers were to become head of the congregation.

Kronenburg was in a state of nervous anxiety on the morning of the election, 1 May, and no doubt the same was true for Willem van Rossum. Everything pointed to a victory for Van Rossum. The fact that he could not participate in the voting himself because he was neither a delegate nor a vocal had no bearing on his chances. The winning candidate would have to secure two thirds of the votes to become the new superior general. As there were 55 electors, the winning candidate would have to receive 37 ballots.²¹ On one previous occasion in the history of the congregation – when it was feared that the most prominent candidate would not obtain the required number of votes – the chapter had deviated from this rule and determined in advance that a simple majority would suffice.²² Normally, only a few rounds were needed – although there had been seven in 1894 – and the election was expected to be decided in a single day.

In the first round, Willem van Rossum nearly received a majority of the votes, 26, followed by Joseph Schwarz with 21.²³ Van Rossum's majority increased to thirty in the third, fourth and fifth rounds, but this still left him short of the two-thirds majority. Schwarz's supporters must have concluded at this point that they would have to switch to someone else. Various names were put forward, and in the eleventh round, Van Rossum had 26 votes while the remaining ballots were more or less equally divided between Schwarz, the Lyon provincial Jean Baptiste Favre and the Irish provincial Patrick Murray.²⁴

After the eleventh round, Jan Kronenburg's candidature began to gain traction. His vote count went up with each round, probably due also to support from the Belgian Redemptorists.²⁵ He finally overtook his compatriot in the fifteenth round with 25 votes against Van Rossum's 21. The following six rounds were almost exclusively between Kronenburg and Van Rossum, with 28 votes for the former in the twenty-first round and 25 for the latter.

The election seemed deadlocked. Van Rossum's approximately 25 supporters refused to abandon him and a block of almost the same size refused to vote for him. According to Kronenburg's notes, Ernest Dubois said to him privately that the elec-

21 *Ibid.*, 10. It was decided before the election that the threshold would be 37 votes rather than 36.

22 Francesco De Paola failed to obtain a two-thirds majority in 1780, but a dispensation in this rule had been requested. De Meulemeester, *Outline History of the Redemptorists*, 100–101.

23 ENK, ANPR, no. 8124. The results of the 26 rounds as noted by Kronenburg correspond to the notes of F.X. Reuss, the secretary of the chapter. AGHR, XVI Cap. Gen. 1909: 'P. Reuss. Note sul Capit. Gen. 1909'.

24 *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI*, 11. Jean Baptiste Favre (1864–1943) was elected consultor and admonitor of Patrick Murray in 1909; Boland, *Dictionary*, 126. Patrick Murray (1865–1959) was superior of the Irish province from 1907–1909 and superior general from 1909 to 1947; Boland, *Dictionary*, 252.

25 ENK, ANPR, no. 8124 mentions that Kronenburg heard from his Belgian confreres on his way to Rome that they regarded him as the most promising candidate.

tion had to be decided that same day or otherwise the Vatican would intervene. They were in the early hours of the morning after an exhausting voting marathon when a fifteen-minute break was announced in hopes of a breakthrough.²⁶

After voting resumed, the Van Rossum camp began to crumble. While Kronenburg's tally still stood at 28, Van Rossum now received only 13 ballots. For a few minutes it seemed as if Kronenburg would be the new superior general. Kronenburg later said he was so nervous he was unable to continue taking notes. Ter Haar, who was sitting beside him, took over the task of recording the votes, constantly speaking words of encouragement to his compatriot, "Take courage, man! Trust in God!" The more votes Kronenburg got, the more restless Johannes Lohmeijer, the Dutch provincial, became. At one stage he whispered to Kronenburg that he would ask Matthias Raus to burn all correspondence between the Dutch province and the general government about the complaints against Kronenburg's policies, which had led to his resignation in 1898.²⁷

But although Van Rossum's support was floundering, Kronenburg's vote never exceeded 29. Some capitulars refused to vote for a Redemptorist who had been dismissed as provincial superior – and this despite Ter Haar's assurance there and then that Kronenburg had resigned and had not been dismissed.²⁸ Eventually, Patrick Murray's name was put forward as an alternative, and this proved successful. Murray was elected as Matthias Raus's successor in the 26th round. The *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI* only give the results of this last round: Murray 38, Kronenburg eleven, Van Rossum four and the German provincial Adolph Brors two.²⁹

Kronenburg's report ended with an affirmation that his friendship with Van Rossum did not suffer as a result of their hard-fought election battle. The day after the election the two men were standing by a window chatting genially and laughing, when Matthias Raus passed by and said, "Look at yesterday's two antagonists, having a gay time together". Kronenburg answered, "we have always been good friends".³⁰

The opposition to Van Rossum's candidature does not appear to have been due to personal animosity. In the subsequent election of a general consultor for the Belgian and Dutch provinces, Van Rossum received 49 votes against five for Kronenburg and one for Oomen.³¹

It is an intriguing question why Van Rossum, the favoured candidate, was not elected superior general. His track record as proponent of a strict and centralised policy was well-known from his Wittem days, but this was probably a plus rather

²⁶ *Ibid.*; AGHR, XVI *Cap. Gen.* 1909: 'P. Reuss. Note sul *Capit. Gen.* 1909'.

²⁷ ENK, ANPR, no. 8124.

²⁸ *Ibid.* According to Kronenburg, Favre would have voted for him if he had known what really happened.

²⁹ *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI*, 10.

³⁰ ENK, ANPR, no. 8124, 6. See also *ibid.*, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to provincial [Jan Kronenburg], 1 October 1921.

³¹ ENK, ANPR, 8124.

than anything else in the eyes of most general consultors: after the weak Raus, they were looking for a strong leader. Moreover, Van Rossum had the confidence of Pope Pius x and maintained excellent relations with the Roman curia. Good contacts with the Vatican were of great importance for the congregation. But a strong bond between the new superior general and the pope and the curia also had certain drawbacks. The Vatican would then be immediately briefed of everything that happened within the congregation and open or covert interventions might ensue.

This would be a real danger if Willem van Rossum were to be elected superior general. Despite the deep secrecy that enveloped the Holy Office's business, the Redemptorists were surely quite aware that Van Rossum, as consultor of the Holy Office and of the codification commission, was an important figure in the struggle against modernism. As has been seen in the previous chapter, this was making many victims in the first decade of the twentieth century, and orders and congregations were not immune to scrutiny. After the publication of *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, Matthias Raus wrote to Pius x on 1 November 1908 that his congregation was modernism-free. The only (unnamed) professor who had espoused modernist errors in the past was now dead. Raus emphasised that the Redemptorists only used ecclesiastically approved methods in their formation and studies. Moral theology was taught according to the doctrines of Alphonsus, on the basis of the approved editions by Clemens Marc, Joseph Aertnajs and Anton Konings. And dogmatic theology on the basis of Jean Herrmann's study. Raus made a point of saying that a new edition of this latter work had been published containing a list not only of Anglican, Lutheran and other errors, as did the first edition, but also of modernist errors.³²

Van Rossum, who had studied Alphonsian dogmatics since the 1880s and had thoroughly reviewed Herrmann's works, had undoubtedly participated in preparing this new edition, not only because he had been consulted for previous editions but also because modernist errors were his specialism in his work for the curia. It is not impossible that an important group of Redemptorists declined to back the 'hawkish' Van Rossum at the elections simply because they feared he might unleash an anti-modernist campaign within their own institute.

There is a rumour among Redemptorists in Rome that when Pius x was told that Van Rossum was not the new superior general, he replied that he would give him a better, more exalted position instead.³³ But there was no punishment for the congregation: in fact, the pope canonised Clement Mary Hofbauer on 20 May 1909, bringing the number of Redemptorist saints up to three.

32 Dieguez, *L'Archivio Particolare di Pio x*, 68; Orlandi, 'I Redentoristi nell' archivio particolare di Pio x', 532–533.

33 Information communicated to V. Poels by G. Enderle C.Ss.R., member of the Historical Institute of the Redemptorists, Rome 11 June 2009.

4 Consultor generalis (1909–1911)

It is not known how Van Rossum experienced the events of 1 May 1909; he left no record of this.³⁴ But his election as *consultor generalis* gave him formal influence within the general government of his congregation for the first time.³⁵ His post made him a close collaborator of the new superior general Patrick Murray.³⁶ Van Rossum was the only member of the new general government who had been in Rome for years and knew the way the generalate and the Vatican operated. Murray himself had little Roman experience. In any case, Van Rossum's position brought more work, in addition to his already "excessive workload for the Roman Congregations". He slept little, particularly when it was hot, and his activities left "little oil in his lamp".³⁷

His good relations within the Roman curia appear to have paid immediate dividends for the congregation. The Redemptorists submitted a series of requests, in Van Rossum's handwriting, for special provisions, which were all granted by Pius X on 13 June 1909.³⁸ The previous year, after Van Rossum's visitation of Montevergine, the church in Pagani where Alphonsus was buried had already been made a *basilica minor*, and a plenary indulgence had been attached to a visit to Saint Alphonsus's rooms.³⁹

Van Rossum's beloved mentor and "true, faithful friend" Petrus Oomen returned to the Netherlands in the same year.⁴⁰ Oomen took seriously ill before the chapter. The house annals record that an altar was placed in his room after two doctors had reached a very serious diagnosis. Van Rossum said Mass there on Friday 19 March 1909. All confreres were asked to pray for him.⁴¹ Oomen recovered again somewhat, and was able to attend the chapter and the election that pitched his two most important protégés against each other. The fact that neither of them was elected must have been a bitter disappointment to him.⁴² He was no longer procurator after the chapter – his successor was Joseph Schwarz – and he returned to the Netherlands as consultor of the provincial superior, but felt unwelcome in his own province. He died the following year in Amsterdam.⁴³

34 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 29.

35 This was possibly why Van Rossum requested an extract from the baptismal register at this point. ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, fasc. A: B. M. Brom, curate of St. Michael's parish in Zwolle, to W. van Rossum, Zwolle 2 September 1909.

36 *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI*, 40–41. The other consultors were A. Jacovetti, J. Favre, J. Hudeček, F. Speidel and J. Cotter.

37 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 44–45, Rome 20 July 1909.

38 AGHR, XLIV: petitions and requests for indulgences to Pius X, 13 June 1909.

39 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the general government, 1895–1908*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, Scifelli 6 October 1908, with appendix.

40 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 13 April 1915.

41 AGHR, DG II: *Chronica Domus generalis (CDG)*, vol. II-4, 14–19 March 1909, f 237–239.

42 *Ibid.*; *Acta integra Capituli Generalis XI*, 10.

43 See Chapter 3.4; Mulders, 'Levensschets Petrus Oomen CSSR', 33–92; Boland, *Dictionary*, 357–358.

After the chapter, at long last, the Schola Major Sancti Alphonsi or Alphonsianum was inaugurated.⁴⁴ It marked an important change of course by the congregation. Hitherto, very few Redemptorists had obtained doctorates; the doctors among them had usually received this title before they joined. Once the congregation decided to invest seriously in higher studies, its standing among the other orders and congregations improved.

This necessitated a number of changes in the monastery of Sant'Alfonso. The house had been extended and partially renovated during the preceding years.⁴⁵ The number of its inhabitants rose to 65 in 1909. The new institute opened its doors in October 1909, with six professors, to teach a first intake of 24 students from a wide variety of countries. Seven were taking a degree in moral theology, others in dogmatic theology, canon law, exegesis or philosophy. The subjects were not all taught in the institute itself. Joseph Maria Drehmanns, who arrived in Rome on 28 October 1909, studied canon and civil law at the Seminario dell'Apollinare for two years.⁴⁶

Van Rossum had encountered this young, overzealous Redemptorist before. Drehmanns came from an influential family in Roermond. The bishop of Roermond was his uncle, and no fewer than eleven members of his family were priests. His father and later his brother Henri were local politicians. Drehmanns had been intended for the diocesan priesthood, but during his second year of philosophy in the seminary of Rolduc he decided to join the Redemptorists, a decision that met with much opposition from his family. In 1901, an aunt who took him under her care after his mother's death brought him on a trip to Rome. They were received in audience by Leo XIII, who made a great impression on Joseph. They also had a chance meeting at the station with Petrus Oomen and Matthias Raus. Oomen, who was aware of Drehmanns's wish to become a Redemptorist and of his relatives' well-known resistance, introduced them to the superior general. During the meeting, Drehmanns's aunt made no secret of her disapproval of her nephew's plans.⁴⁷

Joseph first met Willem van Rossum during a visit to the Redemptorist church on Via Merulana, where Van Rossum gave him a relic of Alphonsus in the sacristy

44 The Schola Major was not an accredited institute of higher learning. After the Second World War, in February 1949, the Accademia Alfonsiana was established as a higher institute for moral theology. The institute was recognised by John XXIII as part of the pontifical Lateran University in 1960. *Accademia Alfonsiana. Istituto Superiore di Teologia Morale* (Rome 2015), 13–14.

45 Walter, *Villa Caserta*.

46 AGHR, CDG, vol. II-5, 5 October 1909–1919, f 3–10. Drehmanns joined the Redemptorists on 5 September 1905, after having been ordained a priest for the diocese of Roermond. On Drehmanns, see also Chapter 10.3 and 19.

47 Notes by J.M. Drehmanns, written down in 1956–1959 for his “children”, the members of Unitas, a female lay institute he founded, quoted in J.J.M.H. Drehmanns, ‘Genealogische kroniek van de familie Drehmanns’, Vol. 2 [Roermond], October 2003 (unpublished material in the Drehmanns family archive, Roermond).

of Sant’Alfonso. “For years, my life would be most intimately intertwined with his”, Drehmanns wrote in his autobiographical notes.⁴⁸ Thus, in the same year that Van Rossum’s mentor Oomen returned to the Netherlands, the opportunity presented itself to him to develop a similar relationship with Joseph Drehmanns, albeit this time in the role of mentor.

Murray was in the United States on a visitation journey from July to October 1910, and Van Rossum acted as his deputy during this time. He wrote to Murray to keep him abreast of a wide range of issues, from a possible foundation of the congregation in Hungary to problems in the Congo prefecture, pilfering and hypochondriac confreres, the appointment of new professors in the Schola Major, smoking in ’s-Hertogenbosch and deaths in the generalate.⁴⁹ He was also responsible for provisioning.⁵⁰

Van Rossum made several visits during this period to Cardinal Vives y Tutó, the prefect of the Congregation for Religious, who professed concern about the quality of the formation of Belgian novices, but praised the good spirit in Redemptorist houses.⁵¹ Van Rossum hosted the Cardinals Casimiro Gennari, Francesco di Paola Cassetta and Lorenzelli – the latter had been created a cardinal in 1907 – on Via Merulana for the feast of Alphonsus in early August 1910. Gennari distributed communion, Cassetta gave the blessing and Lorenzelli later said another Mass and stayed for dinner. Another guest among the party was Alessandro Verde, *Promotore della Fede* or ‘devil’s advocate’, whose job it was to raise objections against proposed candidates during the canonisation process. Van Rossum availed of the opportunity to lobby him and the sub-promoter, Angelo Mariani, for the beatification of the Redemptorist John Neumann.⁵² The virtues of Father Neumann, subsequently the first male American saint, were to be examined for the first time during the year ahead.⁵³

Van Rossum went on a visitation journey to Belgium in August of the same year, accompanied by Father Reuss, who looked after his correspondence; a trip that took him to several houses. He also had an operation, in Jumet near Charleroi on 16 August. According to Drehmanns, he had to be operated on a fracture resulting from a riding accident during his sojourn in Montevergine.⁵⁴

48 *Ibid.*, [12].

49 AGHR, *LIX1a1*: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 8 July 1910, 8 August 1910, 24 and 28 September 1910, 14 October 1910.

50 AGHR, *PG Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*: 19 September 1910. He submitted an invoice of 1,356.47 lire for victuals as “cons. Gen. e viceger. del Rett. Magg.” on this date.

51 AGHR, *LIX1a1*: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 8 July and 24 September 1910.

52 *Annuario Pontificio* 1913, 337. John Neumann (Prachatitz 1811–Philadelphia 1860) was bishop of Philadelphia from 1852 onwards. He was declared venerable by Benedict XV in 1921, beatified by Paul VI in 1963 and canonised by the same pope in 1977. Boland, *Dictionary*, 257–258.

53 AGHR, *LIX1a1*: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 8 August 1910.

54 *Ibid.*, W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 8 July and 24 September 1910. Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 34, mistakenly dated the operation to the summer of 1911.

After his operation, he returned to Rome via Bischenberg, where he visited Matthias Raus. Raus had left Rome after the chapter and moved to one of the oldest houses of the congregation in Alsace. Van Rossum ensured he received a number of desirable relics, for which Raus thanked him profusely, as well as news from Rome, which Raus no longer habitually received in his isolated new position. He had written to Van Rossum earlier that year that, now the pope had declared Saint John Chrysostom the heavenly patron of sacred orators, and Saint Francis Xavier the heavenly patron of Propaganda, Alphonsus should be declared the *Patron Céleste de la Morale et Pastorale*. He thought it would be possible to obtain this favour from Pius X with the help of Cardinals Vives and Gennari. Almost four hundred bishops had already signed the request. He dared not present the petition to the pope himself, and had instead asked Father Favre, one of the other consultors.⁵⁵

Van Rossum requested an audience with Pius X when he got back to Rome. He had heard from various sources that the pope was worried about Van Rossum's health and the operation. Van Rossum had clearly recovered from any health problems, and the pope entrusted him with another secret mission by appointing him apostolic visitor of the Camillian order.⁵⁶

Van Rossum's most important achievement during this period, one which earned him a great deal of credit within his congregation, was that he saved the oldest Redemptoristine convent, in Scala. The Ordo Sanctissimi Redemptoris (OSSR) was founded in Scala in the Italian diocese of Amalfi on 13 May 1731 by the Italian Maria-Celeste Crostarosa, with the aid of Alphonsus Liguori.⁵⁷ The congregation of the Redemptorists was not founded until a year later. The Redemptoristine Sisters had since founded many convents, but the prospects of the motherhouse in Scala looked grim. Every Redemptoristine convent was essentially autonomous. The community at Scala at

55 AGHR, LX 2a1: M. Raus to W. van Rossum, 7 December 1909 and 13 February 1910; LIX1a1: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 8 August 1910.

56 AGHR, LIX1a1: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 24 September 1910. He also mentions that the Congregations of the Consistory and of the Sacraments made urgent use of his services. His biographer Smit says that Van Rossum was "not infrequently" asked to visit abbeys and religious provinces and to reform seminaries. Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 11. See also *De Tijd*, 30 October 1911, which says that Van Rossum advised the pope in delicate cases, such as seminaries in Southern Italy that had become "woefully degenerate institutions".

57 Boland, *Dictionary*, 93–94. Van Rossum attributed the foundation of the order to Alphonsus. In his preface to the new constitutions, he waxed eloquent about the role of "Your Holy Founder" Alphonsus, who had drafted the original constitutions. Van Rossum also mentioned the role of the local bishop, but there was not a word about Maria-Celeste Crostarosa. *Regels en constituties voor de ordeusters van de instelling van den Allerheiligsten Verlosser. Goedgekeurd door den H. Stoel* (Wittem, year of the second centenary, 1931), 3–7. Crostarosa was beatified in 2016.

the time was small and poor, some of the sisters could neither read nor write, and the convent was dirty and in bad repair.⁵⁸

There had been close bonds between the Redemptorists and the Redemptoristines ever since their foundation. Van Rossum knew the order well from his days as rector of the convent in Partij, near Wittem, in the 1890s. The nuns' revised rule and constitutions of 1931 stressed that their name, origins and much of their rule were identical to those of the Redemptorists. For this reason, the Redemptoristines endeavoured to “offer up in a very special way their prayers and all their small and great sacrifices for the success of the Holy Missions and of all the other apostolic works of their brothers, the Redemptorist Fathers”.⁵⁹

When Van Rossum was elected consultor and member of the general government in 1909, one of his tasks was to work for the revival of the old convent of Scala. During his subsequent journey to Belgium and the Netherlands, Van Rossum also visited the convents of the nuns, and he enquired in the Belgian houses whether there were sisters who would be willing to go to Scala. A number of nuns agreed to this, and Van Rossum wrote to Murray on 24 September 1910 that five sisters and two postulants from Belgium would be travelling to Scala, accompanied by the Belgian former provincial Jozef Strybol. The journey was postponed at the behest of a Belgian doctor because there was a cholera epidemic in the area around Naples at the time, but the party arrived in Rome in mid-October. Pius X received the sisters in audience, as did Cardinal Vives y Tutó, who, as prefect of the Congregation for Religious, was very keen to see a revival of the old convent. Vives appointed one of the Belgian sisters superior of Scala, and Van Rossum was made apostolic visitor of the convent.⁶⁰

Van Rossum made another visitation journey through the Netherlands and Belgium in the summer of 1911. From Belgium, he advised Murray to resolve a financial conflict involving the Redemptorist house in St. Anne de Beaupré in Canada before it went to court. The Fathers there had the reputation of being rich, and becoming embroiled in a court case might damage their reputation even further. He believed

58 AGHR, *Correspondence with the Redemptoristines (OSSR)*, folder ‘Scala’: memorandum in Dutch by Van Rossum, undated, on the state of affairs in the convent.

59 *Regels en constituties*, p. 3–5. See also Chapter 4.4. Van Rossum and Drehmanns contributed to the revised constitutions of 1931, and the cardinal received various requests concerning this from the convents. AGHR, *Correspondence with the Redemptoristines*, folder ‘Sambeek’: M. Augustina van de Goddelijke Liefde to W. van Rossum, August 1925; ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: F. ter Haar to W. van Rossum, 14 December 1927.

60 AGHR, LIX1a1: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, 24 September 1910. KADOC, *Archive of the Northern Belgian Province of the Redemptorists*, 9.3.1.1: Cardinal Vives y Tutó to [W. van Rossum], commission for the apostolic visitation, printed, 5 April 1911. Van Rossum remained in touch with the convent, and contacts became more frequent after he was made cardinal protector of the order on 15 February 1913. See also Chapter 18.1.

they should not jeopardise their good name and their work for 100,000 francs.⁶¹ While in Belgium, Van Rossum engaged in spirited debates with two professors who tended towards modernist views, as the Belgian provincial Van de Steene wrote to Murray. Van Rossum explained that they were not really modernists in the proper sense, but that their work was problematic in various respects.⁶²

His journey then brought him to the Netherlands, where he visited several houses and met the superior general in Wittem. On their way back to Rome, he stayed at the Redemptorist house in Mülhausen (Mulhouse) in Alsace together with Murray, Murray's secretary Henri Schäfer, and a sister who was travelling to Scala. While in Mülhausen, he received a telegram instructing him to return to the Eternal City post-haste because of a grave matter. Rumours had been afloat for months, both in Rome and elsewhere, that he was soon to be made a cardinal. He had told his half-brother in early September not to take any notice of such talk, but it became clear that same month that there was substance to the rumours. During a courtesy call on the bishop of Roermond, the bishop had wanted to congratulate him but said nothing because the news was not official yet.⁶³ But on Saturday 28 October 1911, all the world knew that Willem van Rossum was to be a cardinal.

After Giuseppe Sarto's succession to the papacy in 1903, Willem van Rossum soon became part of his circle of confidants. Pius X wished to strengthen the Catholic church internally, both organisationally and as regards canon law. Van Rossum played a prominent role in this campaign, and demonstrated great loyalty to the pope and to traditional church doctrine. His antimodernist crusade as a consultor of the Holy Office and of the codification commission made him a natural ally of Pope Pius. The pope wanted him to be elected superior general of the flourishing Redemptorist congregation. Although almost the entire general government of this religious institute favoured Van Rossum, he failed to secure the required number of votes during a dramatic show-down at the general chapter. This opened the way for Pius to make him a cardinal, a position that would tie him even more closely to the highest authority within the Catholic church.

61 AGHR, LIX1a1: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, Roulers, 30 July 1911.

62 AGHR, *Province of Belgium. Correspondence with the general government*: Camiel Van de Steene to P. Murray, Brussels St Joseph, 28 August 1911; the Fathers in question were Jacques Gielen and René Kremer. AGHR, *Province of Belgium. Extraordinary visitation*: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, Beauplateau 25 August 1911 and Esschen 29 August 1911.

63 KDC, ROSS, no. 51: J.H. Drehmanns, bishop of Roermond, to W. van Rossum, 2 November 1911; *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 51–52, Esschen 3 September and 16 November 1911.

A cardinal's life in Rome

1 The creation

On Monday 27 November 1911, at half past eight in the morning, wearing his ordinary black Redemptorist habit, Father Van Rossum drove to the Holy Office in one of the rental carriages that could be found on every corner in Rome. He was there to attend the customary weekly meeting of the consultors. But it is unlikely that much business was conducted on this occasion, as three of the men present, the assessor Giovanni Lugari, Louis Billot and Willem van Rossum, were to be created cardinal deacons that very day.¹

As the meeting in the Holy Office commenced, not far away, in the small throne room of the Vatican, a secret consistory was underway during which the pope symbolically asked the College of Cardinals whether it approved the appointment of the eighteen new cardinals whose names had been announced a month before, on 28 October.² Each name was read out, followed by the rhetorical question, *quid vobis videtur* (what do you think)? The cardinals rose and removed their *zucchetto* – their red skullcap –, bowing their heads in silence as a sign of their approval. Then Pius X pronounced the ancient formula, mentioning the Dutch cardinal last: “By the authority of Almighty God, of Saints Peter and Paul and our Own, we create and solemnly pro-

1 Tilburgsche Courant, 2 December 1911, on the basis of the Roman correspondent of *Het Centrum*, 28 November 1911; *De Tijd*, 11 and 27 November 1911. Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 306–311; Victor Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie. Tribunaux et offices. La vacance du siège apostolique* (Paris 1930), 32–33; R. Post, J. O. Smit, *Het Vaticaan* (Zutphen 1932), 204–207.

2 The new cardinals were José Maria Cos y Macho (1838–1919), archbishop of Valladolid, Spain; Diomede Falconio O.F.M. (1842–1917), titular archbishop of Larissa, apostolic delegate to the United States; Antonio Vico (1847–1929), titular archbishop of Philippi, nuncio in Spain; Gennaro Granito Pignatelli di Belmonte (1851–1948), titular archbishop of Edessa, nuncio emeritus; John Murphy Farley (1842–1918), archbishop of New York, United States; Francis Bourne (1861–1935), archbishop of Westminster, Great Britain; Franziskus von Sales Bauer (1841–1915), archbishop of Olomouc, Austria-Hungary; Léon-Adolphe Amette (1850–1920), archbishop of Paris, France; William Henry O’Connell (1859–1944), archbishop of Boston, United States; François-Virgile Dubillard (1845–1914), archbishop of Chambéry, France; Franz Xaver Nagl (1855–1913), archbishop of Vienna, Austria-Hungary; François de Rovérié de Cabrières (1830–1921), bishop of Montpellier, France; Gaetano Bisleti (1856–1937), prefect of the Papal Household (Major Domus); Giovanni Battista Lugari (1846–1914), assessor of the Holy Office; Basilio Pompilj (1858–1931), secretary of the Congregation of the Council; Louis Billot S.J. (1846–1931), professor at the Gregorian University, consultor of the Holy Office; Willem Marinus van Rossum C.S.S.R. (1854–1932), consultor of the Holy Office and of the commission for the codification of canon law; in pectore António Mendes Bello (1842–1929), patriarch of Lisbon, Portugal.



Official portrait of Cardinal Van Rossum, c. 1912

claim Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church Guglielmo van Rossum. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”³

In the meantime, people from all directions gathered outside the Holy Office. As etiquette prescribed, Van Rossum had put together his own *Famiglia Cardinalizia* over the previous weeks. This retinue consisted of his secretary Henri Schäfer⁴ and two servants, and for the occasion also Lorenzo Caprara as *gentilhomme* – a lay gentleman-in-waiting to a high prelate – and the Dutch priest Jan Smit as *caudatarius* or train-bearer. They arrived at half past nine. Various friends of Van Rossum’s were already there, such as his confreres Patrick Murray, Jacobus Meeuwissen, vicar apostolic of Paramaribo, Frans ter Haar, rector of the Alphonsianum, and lastly Gisbert Brom, the director of the Dutch Institute in Rome, a good friend of his. All awaited the arrival of papal emissaries bearing the pope’s letter of appointment, the so-called *biglietto*.

The emissaries arrived at the Holy Office at half past ten and went immediately to the hall where the consultors were meeting. Francesco Forti, secretary to Secretary of State Rafael Merry del Val, handed the three cardinals their letters of appointment, which were then read out aloud. Van Rossum and his colleagues were informed that the announcement was made “per sua intelligenza e norma”, a standard formula in papal letters of appointment that indicated that the appointee was aware of the procedure and knew what was expected of him.⁵

The *visite di calore* began at quarter to eleven, congratulatory courtesy visits that were supposed to forebode ‘warm relations’ with the new cardinal. Foreign ministers to the Holy See, bishops, monsignors and superiors general of various orders and congregations with their procurators were in attendance. Other friends and acquaintances of Van Rossum, Lugari and Billot also crowded into the hall of the Holy Office, thronging around the new appointees “to kneel before them and kiss their hands”.⁶

Once the reception had concluded around half past twelve, Van Rossum was the guest of honour at a festive banquet held in the Redemptorist monastery. Murray and Meeuwissen gave speeches, to which a “deeply moved” Van Rossum replied that his elevation to the cardinalate was not on account of his own merits, which, he said, were insignificant, “che sono niente”. His creation was due only to “the Pope’s desire to honour Holland in a Dutch Cardinal, as well as the Congregation of the Most Holy

3 *Tilburgsche Courant*, 28 November 1911. For the ceremony, see Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 28–33; Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 210–211.

4 H. Schäfer C.Ss.R. had accompanied Van Rossum as his secretary on his last visitation journey as general consultor. He continued in this role until Joseph Drehmanns took over in early December.

5 *Het Centrum*, 29 November 1911. The newspaper mistakenly quoted this as “per sua intelligenza enorma”, and corrected the error a few days later.

6 *Ibid.* See also Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 211.

Redeemer”. Van Rossum added that the pontiff had told him this himself during his audience together with Patrick Murray on Tuesday 1 November.⁷ But in a subsequent audience, Pius x stressed that he had elevated Van Rossum due to his own merits as a “holy priest and learned theologian”, qualities which the other cardinals had similarly observed in him.⁸

That same afternoon, the existing cardinals and other high prelates came to pay their respects to the new members of the Sacred College. Van Rossum received them in his ‘private quarters’ in Sant’Alfonso. It is not known whether all cardinals in Rome at the time came to visit him. But both he and Pius x emphasised that his creation had been well-received by the other cardinals. In an interview with Gisbert Brom in the Dutch newspaper *De Tijd*, Van Rossum said that all the cardinals he had met so far were very pleased with his appointment, and in particular he described the cordial congratulations he had received from the cardinal secretary of the Holy Office, Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, who had greeted him joyfully. He had an amusing encounter with the dean of the College of Cardinals, Luigi Oreglia di S. Stefano, who had once been internuncio in The Hague. Delighted that a Dutchman had been raised to the cardinalate, Oreglia greeted Van Rossum with the only words he remembered from his Dutch years, the patriotic-royalist cry of “Oranje boven” (‘Orange on top’), thus honouring the Protestant royal house as a national symbol. Van Rossum underlined in the interview that the support of the other cardinals was a great help for him in assuming the heavy burden that had been placed upon his shoulders. The correspondent then witnessed how Van Rossum warmly welcomed Cardinal Benedetto Lorenzelli, who had been a close friend of his for fifteen years.⁹

The stream of visitors and well-wishers continued unabated on Tuesday and Wednesday. The *visite di calore* resumed on Tuesday morning, and there was a second reception in the Redemptorist house that same afternoon. In the meantime, certain members of the Dutch delegation that had come to Rome for the occasion were attempting to strengthen ties with the pope, an objective which Van Rossum’s creation as cardinal greatly facilitated.¹⁰

There was another highlight in the series of ceremonies on Wednesday afternoon, as the new cardinals received their *berretta cardinalizia* or cardinal’s birettas out of the pope’s hands. Van Rossum and the other new cardinals gathered first in the apartments of Secretary of State Merry del Val on the second floor of the Apos-

7 *De Tijd*, 16 November 1911.

8 During the audience granted to the Dutch delegation on Wednesday morning. *De Tijd*, 29 November 1911.

9 *De Tijd*, 16 November 1911; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 27 November 1911.

10 *De Tijd*, 30 November 1911.

toxic Palace. Escorted by the Swiss Guard, they were then brought to the *Sala Regia* or consistory hall, where they were soon joined by Pius X, accompanied by his court and members of the Noble and Swiss Guards.

The prefect of the *camerieri segreti*, the papal chamberlains, then presented the new members of the Sacred College to the pope before a select audience of three hundred invitees. Van Rossum was the last to make the customary three genuflections and kiss Pius X's foot and hand before receiving the biretta. The pope then embraced them and one of the newly hatted prelates, Diomedeo Falconio, addressed him with words of thanks on behalf of the new cardinals. According to the *Osservatore Romano*, the pope replied benevolently, complimenting Dutch and British Catholics and expressing the wish that their example would expedite the happy return of their Protestant compatriots to the bosom of the church.¹¹

The apotheosis came on Thursday morning with the public consistory, held before three thousand attendants in the *Sala della Beatificazione*. The daily *De Tijd* had organised a journey to Rome for its readers so that they could attend the ceremony. As the newspaper's Roman correspondent reported, Van Rossum applauded the initiative and promised he would reserve 25 places for them and try to arrange a private audience with the pope.¹² He was as good as his word. After the party of Dutch priests and lay visitors had climbed the stairs to the impressive *Sala Regia* and presented their tickets, Swiss guards escorted them to a stand directly opposite the diplomatic corps, from where they had an excellent view of the ceremony.¹³

Van Rossum also organised the promised audience. This privilege befell the visitors the day before, on Wednesday morning at eleven o'clock. Twelve Dutch priests and twenty ladies and gentlemen received instructions from Schäfer at the Bronze Gate and were then personally presented to the pope in the small throne room by Msgr. J. Willemsen.¹⁴ According to etiquette, Van Rossum could not do this himself; he was expected not to appear in public during the days between the secret and the public consistory. While Willemsen availed of the opportunity to stress that Dutch Catholics fully accepted all papal truths, particularly those regarding the "pestiferous doctrine of the so-called modernist errors", the representative of *De Tijd* asked, and was granted, a papal blessing for the editors, staff and readers of his newspaper. Finally, the pope spoke for a few moments with the Zwolle priests Schaeppman, Van Balen and Visser, about Van Rossum's native city.¹⁵

11 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, Busta Separata 180, Concistori, 1911; *Osservatore Romano*, 30 November 1911.

12 *De Tijd*, 14 November 1911.

13 *De Tijd*, 25 November and 4 December 1911.

14 *De Tijd*, 27 November 1911, 4 December 1911.

15 *De Tijd*, 29 November and 1 December 1911.

Pius's affable and gentle side had been in evidence during the audience, but when he appeared again during the public consistory, he was in full panoply as the awesome symbol of ecclesiastical power. At a quarter to ten, while the choir of the Sistine Chapel sang the canticle 'Tu es Petrus', a line of twenty cardinals processed into the hall. Behind them came Pius x, mitred in gold, towering above the crowds on a gestatorial throne carried by twelve *sediarrii*. He was followed by the thirteen new cardinals who were in Rome. Half an hour earlier they had been escorted to the Sistine Chapel by Serafino Vannutelli, Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro and Francesco Salesio Della Volpe, *capi d'ordine*, that is, the oldest cardinals in seniority of the orders of cardinal bishops, priests and deacons, where the choir greeted them with liturgical hymns. At the altar, they took the cardinal's oath before these three brethren.¹⁶

As the train of cardinals processed through the hall, they were watched not only by the group of Dutch Catholics, but also by a large delegation of Redemptorists. Meeuwissen and Murray were there, and Van Rossum was touched to see Murray's elderly predecessor Matthias Raus among the crowds, who had travelled from Bischofenberg together with the Alsatian provincial. The provincials of Northern Germany and Belgium were also in attendance, and the Dutch province had sent provincial Johannes Lohmeijer and the rectors of Wittem, Amsterdam and Roosendaal. Van Rossum's friend and rival at the 1909 elections, Jan Kronenburg, was conspicuous by his absence. The Roman province was represented by six rectors and the Neopolitan by twelve.¹⁷

On Saturday 2 December, the Redemptorists left for the Vatican in a long row of carriages for a private audience with the pope. Among them Father Losito, the aged provincial of Naples, with whom Van Rossum had conducted the Montevergine visitation in 1908. Murray thanked Pius x, but also said that, had it been up to them, they would have preferred to stay out of the limelight. They regretted the loss of an excellent confrere – as a cardinal he was no longer subject to the authority of the superior general although he remained a Redemptorist – but they were happy to make this sacrifice for the Holy Father in the interests of the church. "For even the slightest bidding of the Holy See is a law to the Congregation." In his reply, the pope returned the thanks and pointed out that the spirit of humility that characterised the sons of Alphonsus stood a cardinal in good stead, as his task required constant sacrifice and self-abnegation.¹⁸

Despite Murray's words, Van Rossum's creation in fact was a great sign of recognition for the Redemptorists. Only once before had a Redemptorist become a car-

16 See KDC, ROSS, no. 475: *Constitutiones apostolicae et decreta consistorialia et caeremonialia quae iurantur ac formula iuramenti praestandi a S.R.E. Cardinalibus dum ad cardinalatum promoventur*, Rome 1896.

17 *De Tijd*, 11 and 27 November 1911.

18 *Het Centrum* and *De Tijd*, 4 December 1911.

dinal, the Walloon Victor August Dechamps, archbishop of Mechelen. A great proponent of papal infallibility in 1870, he was given the red hat by Pius IX in 1875. For the Redemptorists, Van Rossum’s appointment meant that lines of communication with the pope and the curia became much shorter. Of course, the converse was also true. That was possibly not to everyone’s satisfaction, as Van Rossum had found to his cost in 1909 at the election of a superior general, where he had been Pius X’s candidate. But as the voluminous correspondence with Van Rossum (and his secretary) in the Redemptorist general archives in Rome shows, his congregation readily contacted him if it wished to bring something to the attention of the pope or the curia.¹⁹

Willem van Rossum was the last in the imposing procession during the consistory of 30 November. Like the other cardinals, he was accompanied by his *gentilhomme* and his train-bearer. Clad in *cappa magna* and purple robe, the new cardinal was then led to the papal throne by two more senior colleagues. After he made his profession of obedience, Pius X embraced him with the “double kiss of peace”, which Van Rossum then also exchanged with the other members of the College of Cardinals.

Then, one by one, the new cardinals came forward, Van Rossum last. Assistants placed the hood of his *cappa magna* over his head, while the red galero was held above him and the pope spoke the following words: “To the praise of Almighty God and the honour of the Holy Apostolic See, receive the red hat, the distinctive sign of the Cardinal’s dignity, by which is meant that even unto death, yes the shedding of blood, you will show yourself courageous for the exaltation of our Holy Faith, for the peace and rest of the Christian people, and for the maintenance and augmentation of the Holy Roman Church.” The galero – a very wide flat hat with a scarlet silk cord on either side with thirty red tassels, which could not be worn but was kept in the cardinal’s titular church – was then removed and the hood turned down again.²⁰

The ceremony was over by eleven o’clock, and the prelates exited the hall in procession.²¹ This was followed by another private meeting: preceded by the pontifical cross, the cardinals joined Pius X in another room where the rite of the ‘closing’ and ‘opening’ of the mouths of the new cardinals was performed, which entitled them to speak in consistories and congregations. Then the pope put a cardinal’s ring on the ring finger of their right hand and assigned each of them one of Rome’s old churches, whose title they would bear.²²

19 The archivist of the Dutch province, J. Vinkenburg, transferred these letters – there are hundreds of them – to the general archives in Rome in the 1990s (AGHR, *Correspondence of W.M. van Rossum with confreres*).

20 *De Tijd*, 4 December 1911; Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 212–213.

21 *Tilburgsche Courant*, 2 December 1911.

22 Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 30–32; Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 213–214. Van Rossum also offered Pius X a gift. *De Tijd* reported on 19 December 1911 that he had presented the pope with a beautifully crafted chalice made by J. Jonkergouw.

At the end of this exhilarating day, at half past five in the afternoon, Van Rossum received the Dutch delegations in audience at Sant'Alfonso. According to the newspaper *Het Centrum*, 64 people gathered in the sacristy to admire Van Rossum in the attire he had purchased during the previous month: "red cardinal's robes with the red *zucchetto* and hat on his head, the cross upon his breast, clad with the crimson mantle, preceded by his secretary and gentiluomo, and followed by his caudatarius and valet. Cardinal van Rossum in his robes of office cuts a fine figure, also among the College of Cardinals, as everyone, including foreigners, observed."²³

Gisbert Brom introduced the members of the group to the cardinal. Amadeus de Bie, abbot general of the Cistercians, addressed him on behalf of the 'Dutch colony' in Rome. Then Anthonius Schaepman, the president of the Utrecht diocesan major seminary, presented him with a gift from a committee of Dutch Catholics under the patronage of Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering.²⁴ When asked what he would like to have, Van Rossum had requested a pectoral cross and chain. The Utrecht goldsmith Jan Brom designed the artefact. It had a medallion on the front with a Redemptor Mundi in enamel, and the arms of the Dutch church province on the reverse (a cross of argent on an escutcheon of gules). As time was limited, the cross was not yet ready, and so Van Rossum was presented with a drawing of the cross and a substantial sum of money. Schaepman then offered him another sum on behalf of the 33 secular priests born in Zwolle.²⁵ The Catholics of Zwolle, represented at the reception by the dean, Nicolaas van Balen, and Father A. Visser, then gave him a gold chalice with paten. With the aid of "a number of industrious ladies" and the munificence of the Van Rossum family, they had raised 1,600 guilders for the chalice, again made by Brom in Utrecht, "richly decorated with enamel, precious stones and filigree".²⁶

The next morning, Van Rossum celebrated his first Mass as cardinal for the Dutch party in Sant'Alfonso. A joint *déjeuner* in the Redemptorist monastery concluded the festivities, which, despite a long succession of highlights, had not been entirely without shadows.

On the personal level, Van Rossum felt the absence of his immediate family, as he told the *De Tijd* correspondent. Apart from his parents, his eldest brother and youngest sister were dead. His youngest brother Jan, who lived in Amsterdam, could not come because of his daughter's illness. His oldest sister Gerulpha was a Sister of Charity of Tilburg, the superior of her congregation's institution in Stratum, but she

23 *Het Centrum*, 4 December 1911.

24 KDC, ROSS, 19: printed circular letter to raise funds for a gift for the cardinal, dated [14] November 1911. Significantly, apart from Van de Wetering, none of the Dutch bishops subscribed.

25 Other speakers were A. Resemans on behalf of the bishop of Breda and J. Lohmeijer on behalf of the Redemptorists. *De Tijd*, 5 December 1911.

26 *Het Centrum*, 22 November 1911; *De Tijd*, 5 December 1911 and 15 March 1912.

had evidently not been permitted to travel to Rome.²⁷ Still, it was remarkable that there was not a single representative of the family, not even his half-brother Johan Janssen, his 'uncle Jaap's' children or his mother's Salland relatives. Van Rossum possibly preferred to keep his modest family at a remove from the splendours of the Vatican and its kind of Catholicism, which was very different than that which they were used to in the Netherlands. Or he was reluctant to draw attention to his background to prevent gossip at the papal court, for instance about his oldest brother who had left the congregation of the Brothers of Maastricht.

A second remarkable fact was that not a single Dutch bishop travelled to Rome in November 1911 to attend the creation of the first Dutch cardinal in four centuries. Only Van de Wetering and Bishop Leyten of Breda sent official representatives. Bishops Drehmanns of Roermond, Van de Ven of 's-Hertogenbosch and Callier of Haarlem – naturally – sent joyful congratulations.²⁸ This perhaps reflected the Dutch episcopate's disappointment that Pius X had chosen not Archbishop Van de Wetering, but the relatively unknown Father Van Rossum, a simple regular priest, for the cardinalate. Van Rossum, too, felt uncomfortable at this thought, as he wrote to Van de Wetering: he had vainly hoped that both of them would receive this honour.²⁹ The promise of a red hat for Archbishop Van de Wetering that Pius X had made in 1908 through Cardinal Fischer of Cologne failed to materialise for Utrecht – and so it would remain until 1946.³⁰ In any case, the absence of the bishops was a sign to Van Rossum not to expect any special support in his new position from the Dutch hierarchy.

A third shadow was the absence of any communication from the Dutch government. During the lunch, Van Rossum announced that he had received congratulatory telegrams from the three Catholic ministers and the Catholic members of the two chambers of the Dutch parliament.³¹ But they had written in their capacity as private citizens and not in name of the government. Van Rossum also revealed that, after consultations with the pope and the secretary of state, he had sent a handwritten let-

27 *De Tijd*, 16 November 1911.

28 KDC, ROSS, no. 51: J.H. Drehmanns, bishop of Roermond, to W. van Rossum, 2 November 1911; ROSS, no. 90: W. van de Ven to W. van Rossum, 1 November 1911; A.J. Callier to W. van Rossum, 31 October 1911.

29 HUA, *Utrecht Diocesan Archives*, no. 135: W. van Rossum to H. van de Wetering, Rome 2 November 1911. He added that it would be his "greatest joy" to see Van de Wetering made a cardinal after all.

30 Vefie Poels, 'Henricus van de Wetering or Willem van Rossum? Pope Pius X's Choice of the First Dutch Cardinal', in: Paul van Geest, Roberto Regoli (cur.), *Chiesa, Papato e Curia Romana tra storia e teologia – The Roman Curia between History and Theology. Scritti in onore di Padre Marcel Chappin, SJ / Essays in honour of Marcel Chappin SJ* (Vatican City 2013), 143–166.

31 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, Busta Separata 180, Concistori, 1911 contains the telegrams from the Catholic members of the Dutch parliament.

ter to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands on the day of his creation, 27 November 1911, to inform her of his elevation to the cardinalate that very morning.³²

It appears that the Vatican assumed that the queen and the Dutch government would reply to this letter according to protocol. But Wilhelmina did not reply personally: she instructed her private secretary to reply with congratulations on her behalf on 2 December 1911.³³ This provoked a panicked letter from Van Rossum's newly minted secretary Joseph Drehmanns to the Catholic statesman and priest Willem H. Nolens, asking for his advice and mediation in this "delicate affair".³⁴ Van Rossum was so disconcerted by the queen's failure to send a personal message that he was even afraid to raise the subject with the pope. He feared the Holy Father might explicitly ask him about it.³⁵ Curial protocol dictated that a cardinal had the same rank as a "prince of the blood" or an heir apparent, and Wilhelmina's failure to acknowledge this meant that Van Rossum could not entertain "any relations" with the queen of the Netherlands, not even during visits to his home country.³⁶ Van Rossum hoped that the court's letter was not indicative of royal displeasure – the queen had previously expressed support for the idea that Van de Wetering should be made a cardinal –³⁷ but was simply due to an administrative error. Drehmanns asked Nolens to help solve the problem, for example through the intervention of the Catholic minister Maximilien Kolkman, who might inform the queen of the difficulties which her secretary's missive had occasioned.

Nolens was eager to help. In his reply of 6 January 1912, he answered that the mistake was probably due to the fact that "the court [was] unaware of the customs on such an occasion".³⁸ It was, after all, the first time during the existence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands that a Dutchman had been made a cardinal of the Church of Rome. The Hague had no script prepared for such an occasion. And yet the government had in fact discussed the issue in 1908, with a view to the expected appointment of Van de Wetering. It had concluded at the time that the presence of a Dutchman in the College of Cardinals might be advantageous even for a Protestant country like the Netherlands.³⁹

32 KDC, ROSS, no. 19: W. van Rossum to Queen Wilhelmina, Rome, 27 November 1911 (copy).

33 KDC, ROSS, no. 29: F.M.E. van Geen to W. van Rossum, The Hague, 2 December 1911.

34 Willem H. Nolens (1860–1931), Catholic priest of the diocese of Roermond, succeeded H. Schaezman as the political leader of the Catholic members of the Tweede Kamer, the lower chamber of the Dutch parliament (he was the parliamentary party leader from 15 February 1910 onwards).

35 KDC, ROSS, no. 19: [J. Drehmanns] to [W. Nolens], undated draft [1911/1912].

36 Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 214: at official receptions, cardinals took precedence "over the highest peers of the Realm, over the cabinet ministers, immediately after the Crown Prince, that is, before the other princes of the royal blood".

37 Poels, 'Henricus van de Wetering or Willem van Rossum?', 153.

38 KDC, ROSS, no. 19: W. Nolens to J. Drehmanns. The letter was mistakenly dated 6 Jan. 1911 instead of 1912.

39 Poels, 'Henricus van de Wetering or Willem van Rossum?', 150–154.

After consultations between Nolens, Kolkman and Prime Minister Theo Heemskerk, Kolkman was able to tell Van Rossum’s secretary confidentially on 15 March that “the Queen had nor has the slightest wish to disoblige H. Em. the Cardinal”. According to Kolkman, the whole affair was due to lack of precedent: Van Rossum should not have addressed his letter to the queen’s private secretary but to her official secretariat, the queen’s cabinet.⁴⁰ The minister had made sure that the letter was sent to his colleague in the ministry of justice so that the matter could be resolved satisfactorily. Incidentally, Her Majesty – upon reflection – had “*explicitly instructed* [Kolkman] to inform H. Em. the Cardinal (...) that it would be a distinct pleasure for Her to receive H. Em., if the Cardinal were to express the desire to do so, in private audience during His stay in the country.”⁴¹

And so the matter was settled. A letter to Rome was dispatched from The Hague on 31 March 1912, signed by Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands, and countersigned by the minister of Justice, Robert Regout, in which the queen declared that the news “that it had pleased His Holiness Pope Pius X to [elevate] You to Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church” had caused her much satisfaction, “as this can be regarded in every sense as a joyful occasion, also on account of My many Roman Catholic subjects. I thank Your Eminence for the wishes and prayers which You have offered to the Most High for Me and My House.” She added in her own hand: “I gladly take this opportunity to offer You My sincere congratulations, Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands.”⁴²

Van Rossum’s reply to Minister Regout testified to his relief that the problems caused by his first, somewhat shaky diplomatic demarche as a cardinal had now been amicably resolved.⁴³ According to Drehmanns, the secretary of state, Merry del Val, and the Holy Father, “Whose great esteem for Her Majesty would surely grow considerably due to this letter”, were certain to receive news of the Dutch queen’s letter with joy and satisfaction.⁴⁴

40 Not to be confused with the council of ministers, also called the ‘cabinet’, which, together with the monarch, constituted the government.

41 KDC, ROSS, no. 19: M. Kolkman to [J. Drehmanns], 15 March 1912. Italics in the original. The audience in question took place on 10 July 1913. See Chapter 11.3.

42 KDC, ROSS, 307: Queen Wilhelmina to W. van Rossum, 31 March 1912.

43 KDC, ROSS, no. 19: draft letter [from W. van Rossum, in J. Drehmanns’s handwriting] to ‘Excellency’ [E.R. Regout], undated [April 1912].

44 KDC, ROSS, no. 19: draft letter by J. Drehmanns to ‘Excellency’ [M. Kolkman], undated [April 1912].

2 A new lifestyle

The day after the creation, the newly minted Cardinal Van Rossum had to go the Holy Office to pick up his hat, because the same galero had been used for all the cardinals during the ceremony. “Of course [there were] reasons for this (...), particularly for the lesser officials of the Vatican”, according to one Redemptorist. He added with a smile that the honour of having a cardinal in their midst was great, but the financial sacrifice required for this was no less so: “The income from the Vatican is only 10,000 lire. You can’t do much with that if you are a religious and don’t have any personal capital! A cardinal can’t just walk in the street: he always has to have a carriage (even if in this case a rental carriage) with two horses at his disposal. And these black horses need to be fed. And then there is the household that a Prince of the Church must keep: his cardinal’s ring alone costs 3000 lire...”⁴⁵

Van Rossum’s anonymous fellow Redemptorist put his finger on the financial consequences of becoming a cardinal. But it was a misunderstanding that the cardinal’s ring cost 3000 lire: in fact, it was the *anello cardinalizio*, the so-called ring tax that every new cardinal was expected to pay, that came to 3225 lire. For centuries, the revenues from this tax had gone to Propaganda Fide, the curia’s department of missions and one of the most influential and wealthy dicasteries. An invoice kept in the Redemptorist general archives shows that the ring itself – 18-karat yellow gold with an amethyst – cost no more than 150 lire.⁴⁶

The financial files in the Redemptorist archive in Rome contain a beautifully bound document with a red cover marked “Fees and gratuities to be paid to the Papal Court on the occasion of the elevation to the Sacred Purple in the Consistory of 27 November 1911”. The total cost came to 11,766.65 lire, divided over five entries.⁴⁷ The bill, which ran to several pages, gives a precise picture of the costs of becoming a cardinal, and of the many people who had to be compensated financially for their services.

The most important entry was for fees for the ‘act of the creation’ itself, 7213.18 lire, almost half of which was the ring tax. The other costs were payments to officials and servants of the papal household who had had some role to play in the ceremonies. The *Cappella Pontificia*, made up entirely of clerics, assisted at the liturgy. Van Rossum had to pay each member a fee depending on his function: 161.25 lire for the

⁴⁵ *De Tijd*, 4 December 1911.

⁴⁶ AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*: invoice of 150 lire from Pietro Griggi for Marco Tomei, 21 January 1912. The gold, weighing 18 grams, was valued at 54 lire; the amethyst cost 15 lire.

⁴⁷ AGHR, *Uncatalogued papers*: Emolumenti e Mance spettanti alla Corte Pontificia per l’elevazione alla Sacra Porpora Cardinalizia dell’ Illmo Revmo P. Guglielmo van Rossum dei Sacerdoti del Ssmo Redentore nel Concistoro del 27 Novembre 1911. There is a separate receipt for the *anello cardinalizio*, dated 29 November 1911, for 3225 lire, from the S. Congregazione de Propaganda Fide. See also ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 507, f 31.

papal sacristan, a third of that sum for the assistant priest, deacon and subdeacon together, all three of whom were canons, while the secretary of the Sacred College was due 268.75 lire. The five *Maestri delle Cerimonie partecipanti* received 1075 lire, and the five *Maestri delle Cerimonie non partecipanti* less than half that sum.⁴⁸ The choir chaplains of the papal chapel each received 322.50 lire, the pope's secret chaplains less than half that sum. One of them was Adriano Zecchini, undersecretary of Propaganda Fide, who had served as crucifer. The pope's personal acolytes had to be paid, too, as did the six 'common' chaplains, the Mass servers and under-servers.

The second entry was for the *Famiglia Pontificia*, consisting of both clerics and laypeople, who assisted the pope in his secular activities. The five porter-bearers of the *Virga Rubea* (priests) and the fifteen *Mazzieri* or mace-bearers (laymen) each received 141.09 lire. Other recipients were the apostolic messengers or *cursores*, the *sediarii* or bearers of the papal throne, the papal grooms, the guards of the Bronze Gate and of the pope's private garden, the bookkeeper of the Sacred College and other honorary functionaries, up to and including the 'personal street sweepers'.

The secretary of state's *famiglia* also had to be remunerated for the expenses incurred for the "cardinal's biretta and skullcap". They received a total sum of 489.10 lire for their pains, 16.12 lire of which was for the kitchen.⁴⁹ Nor was use of the *anticamera*, the hall and the stables (*scuderia*) free.⁵⁰

The fourth entry listed costs related to the cardinal's hat, 3691.49 lire in total.⁵¹ Many officials who had received sums under the first two entries qualified for a second payment for services rendered during the collection of the cardinal's hat. The sums again varied widely. The largest amount, 2687.50 lire, was for eight secret chamberlains of the pope, the *Camerieri Segreti di S. Santità*. In addition, the papal physician's assistant, the personal steward of His Holiness, the cellarers and the Holy Father's personal cook received 8.06 lire each, and the coachman 3.22 lire. Dozens of items followed, such as the Sala of Mons. Guardaroba di S. Santità and the hall of the Computista del Santo Collegio, who received a meagre 1.61 lire, while the 'Poor of St. Peter's' were given 53.75 lire. The scouts of the Noble Guard, the Swiss Gard, the Palatine Guard, the corps of the 'Vigili' and the papal gendarmerie all shared in the new cardinal's largesse. The last item concerned fees for the cardinalial title and the Roman congregations, specifically the *famiglia* of four prefects and four secretaries of unidentified congregations, the four porters and messengers of the Secretariat of State, and the Confraternity of Saint Anne.⁵²

48 *Annuario Pontificio* 1913, 337 and 446. They belonged to the Congregation of Rites as consultors for liturgical matters.

49 AGHR, *Uncatalogued papers*: Emolumenti e Mance spettanti alla Corte Pontificia, "Emolumenti e mance alla Famiglia dell'Emo Segretario di Stato per la Berretta e Zucchetto Cardinalizio".

50 *Ibid.*, "Emolumenti e mance alla Famiglia del Parentado di S. Santita per il Cappello Cardinalizio".

51 *Ibid.*, "Emolumenti e mance per il Cappello Cardinalizio".

52 *Ibid.*, "Emolumenti e Mance per il Titolo Cardinalizio e Congregazioni Ecclesiastiche".

The creation of a new cardinal was, it may be concluded, a major event not only for the recipient of the red hat himself. Dozens of officials in the curia were financially remunerated for their ceremonial presence or other duties performed. It is striking that many ceremonial functionaries were simultaneously officials of the curia: it was not unusual for the same person to wear several hats: a position in the curia, in the papal household, an honorary or actual membership of the pope's or a cardinal's *famiglia*, as well as further ecclesiastical positions or benefices.⁵³

The creation itself was an expensive affair, but the outlay did not stop once it was over, as a new cardinal was expected to live in accordance with his station. Every cardinal of the curia received an income. The normal *piatto cardinalizio* (annual salary) at the time was 21,499.92 lire, that is, 1791.66 lire per month. There were further emoluments depending on posts occupied, but as Van Rossum did not hold a position as head of a dicastery until 1915, the *piatto* was initially his normal annual income.⁵⁴ Van Rossum's expenses during his first years as a cardinal show that this was nowhere near sufficient to cover the costs of his apartment, clothing, representation costs, transport costs, alms etc.⁵⁵ His expenses between 22 July 1912 and 1 January 1913 alone came to no less than 65,203.30 lire, although that was an exceptionally expensive period due to his attendance at the eucharistic congress in Vienna.⁵⁶

However, the amount of 1791.66 lire does not appear in the accounts that Van Rossum kept from October 1912 onwards; the 'salary' he received every month was considerably lower. It was 1000 lire in December 1912; and it was often even lower during the following years, especially during the war (700 or 800 lire). He supplemented his income by accepting Mass stipends to the tune of approximately 100 to 200 lire; sometimes the Redemptorists gave him the same amount again. His monthly 'salary' rose to 1200 lire immediately after the war, and it went up further afterwards: it was 2000 lire in 1921, a rise that possibly also reflects inflation.⁵⁷

53 Croce, 'Regards sur la Curie romaine', 59–64; Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 419–424.

54 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, Busta Separata 180, Concistori 1911: Secretary of State to the secretary of the Amministrazione dei Beni della S. Sede, 12 November 1911, mentions that seven cardinals of the curia, including Van Rossum, will receive "il consueto piatto cardinalizio" (P 54112). Information received from Alejandro Dieguez of the AAV, 22 October 2014. It is possible that Van Rossum additionally received a stipend as president of the Biblical Commission since 1914.

55 It was common to give alms and gifts. According to Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 90–91 Pius X too was "a great believer in charity".

56 AGHR, *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*: "Spese fatte per S. Em. il Card. van Rossum dal 22 Luglio 1912 al 1 genn. 1913". For the expenses related to the Eucharistic Congress see 'Per i camerieri andati al Congresso Eucaristico', including expenses for Drehmanns, the Brothers Egidius and Longino, and for himself, such as for clothes and medicines. Van Rossum had repaid 23,732.45 lire by 31 December 1912, leaving an outstanding balance of 41,470.85 lire.

57 KDC, ROSS, no. 411: cash book recording Van Rossum's income and expenditure, from October [1912] up to 1927 (at least partially in his own handwriting). This shows that a 'salary' arrived every twentieth of the month. Travel costs were a large expense throughout these years: initially for carriages, later for his car. Domestic expenses were also recorded.

The archives contain detailed information about Van Rossum's expenditure in the form of the original bills, and this is due to the fact that, as a Redemptorist, he did not initially have a personal bank account. Up to mid-1914, his bills were normally sent to Father Marco Tomei, the bursar of the Alphonsianum. Tomei advanced tens of thousands of lire for payment of some 150 invoices; Van Rossum paid him back over the years. The documents show that the last repayment was made almost ten years later, in 1920.⁵⁸

Van Rossum may well have been short of cash from time to time. On the other hand, many people looked to him for financial support, including fellow Redemptorists or congregations whose cardinal protector he was. He most likely had a network of donors, such as the Dutch Catholic entrepreneurs Anton Dreesmann – Van Rossum's contacts with him dated back to the 1870s – and his son Willem, as well as the Vroom family. According to Drehmanns, Van Rossum was well-known for his fundraising capabilities. The bursar of the Dutch Redemptorist province managed an account for him in Amsterdam, as is clear from 1905 when his sister's estate had to be distributed, and from his own will.⁵⁹

The new cardinals were assigned their titular churches on 30 November. The search for a titular church, an important status symbol in Roman clerical circles, began as soon as the appointments were made public. *De Tijd* reported on 8 November 1911 that Van Rossum would have liked to have had the church of Sant'Agata dei Goti as his titular church, in honour of Alphonsus Liguori who was once bishop of the diocese of that name. Moreover, this small church was linked to the Irish college, which was a homage to his superior general, the Irishman Patrick Murray. But to his regret, Gaetano Bisleti was assigned this church first.⁶⁰

Shortly afterwards, the same newspaper announced that Van Rossum had been assigned the church of San Cesareo in Turrim (also known as San Cesareo in Palatio or de Appia).⁶¹ This church lies some two and a half kilometres from the Redemptorist house, on Via di Porta San Sebastiano. Built in the eighth century, but rebuilt in the seventeenth, it is dedicated to the second-century martyr Saint Caesarius of Africa, and would, decades later, also serve as the titular church of Karol Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) from 1967–1978. A titular church was not free. Van Rossum received a bill of 225 lire for the 'titolo di S. Cesareo in Palatio' from the Sacra Congregazione Concistoriale.⁶²

58 AGHR, *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*. The last invoice was a summary statement for the period from 9 January to 30 June 1914. There was one further invoice, dated 20 May 1918, for 1380.74 lire in remuneration of the *Famiglia Pontificia* on the occasion of Van Rossum's episcopal consecration. The last, undated note (in pencil, 1920) indicates the repayment of the loan.

59 See Chapter 21.1; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 23.

60 *De Tijd*, 8 November 1911.

61 *De Tijd*, 14, 20 and 21 November 1911.

62 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*: invoice dated 7 February 1912.

San Cesareo in Turrin would be his titular church from 30 November 1911 to 6 December 1915, when he switched to the Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. He took ceremonial 'possession' of the edifice after his creation. It is not known whether Van Rossum was a frequent visitor. Having a titular church had few practical consequences, but the titular cardinal did have some say over discipline, the improvement of morals and liturgical services. He also had the right to use a throne and canopy in his titular church, but as a cardinal deacon he could not pontificate there, as that was a privilege reserved to cardinal priests and cardinal bishops.⁶³

A cardinal also needed a coat of arms. The Dutch regional newspaper *Tilburgsche Courant* soon reported that Van Rossum's coat of arms would consist of an escutcheon with an inescutcheon within it, bearing the image of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, to whom Van Rossum was greatly devoted. The left half of the main shield had the emblem of the Redemptorists, as was customary for cardinal-members of a religious institute: a trimount surmounted by a cross and the instruments of Christ's passion, under the gaze of the Eye of Providence. On the right there was a cross representing the arms of the archdiocese of Utrecht, and below that three parrots taken from the arms of the municipality of Rossum, in the absence of a Van Rossum family coat of arms. The shield was crowned with an image of the archangel Michael bearing a fiery sword, the patron of his parish and native town of Zwolle.⁶⁴



Cardinal Van Rossum's coat of arms

⁶³ CIC 1917, c. 240 par. 2; Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 1–10.

⁶⁴ *Tilburgsche Courant*, 25 November and 2 December 1911. See also J.F. van Heijningen, 'Wapenschilden van de Nederlandse kardinalen en de aartsbisschoppen van Utrecht', in: C.H. Staal et al., *De kleren van de kardinaal* (Zwolle/Utrecht 1992), 61–62.

Strangely, Van Rossum chose no heraldic motto. Instead, during the first years of his cardinalate, the name of his titular church appeared below his coat of arms. A motto was not required, but it was very common.⁶⁵ There are only very few examples of cardinals or archbishops without one. It was not that it never occurred to Van Rossum to pick one. He told Gisbert Brom, who interviewed him on 16 November 1911 for *De Tijd*, that if he “needed a motto”, he could not think of a better one than that of the former archbishop of Utrecht, Petrus Snickers: “*Laboris, non honoris*. I will bear the Purple for the work, not for the honour.”⁶⁶ The fact that it was not strictly required was apparently sufficient reason for him – perhaps out of humility – to forego one altogether.

One of Van Rossum’s tasks during the month preceding the secret consistory was to find the clothes his new position required. His simple black soutane would no longer suffice, and he would instead have to present himself to the outside world as a ‘prince of the church’. The garb that went with this new station was meticulously prescribed and came in three cardinalitial colours: *ponsò* (scarlet), *cremisi* (crimson) and *paonazzo* (purple). The cut of this attire was subject to detailed rules, but there was some scope for minute variation.⁶⁷ As cardinals still do a century later, Van Rossum went shopping at Gammarelli’s, ‘tailor for ecclesiastics’. With good results apparently, because *Het Centrum* reported that all were agreed that Van Rossum cut a fine figure in his cardinal’s robes.⁶⁸

The first garment on the three-page, 43-item invoice that Gammarelli sent was a cassock with *mozzetta* and *mantelletta* of very fine “*ponsò* with noble trimmings and decorations” to the tune of 340 lire.⁶⁹ The next items on the list were a douillette (*greca*) and a soutane of soft woollen *castorino* of the best quality, the former lined with satin and the second exquisitely decorated with fine silk and a pellegrina and short sleeves lined with scarlet silk. Van Rossum’s *cappa magna* was made of top-quality Tibetan purple, a fine twilled sheep’s wool, with decorative elements and a hood lined with crimson silk. His rochet was of lace in Renaissance style. His ermine *mozzetta* cost 850 lire. He purchased ferraiolos (wide prelate’s capes) in purple, *ponsò* and black. Other attributes that came with his new state were kerchiefs

65 Edouard Bouye, ‘Les cardinaux en armes: de l’*Orbis* à l’*Urbs*, et retour’, lecture at the Institut Catholique Paris, 19 June 2014.

66 *De Tijd*, 16 November 1911. Petrus Matthias Snickers (1816–1895), bishop of Haarlem from 1877–1883, was archbishop of Utrecht from 1883–1895.

67 Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 33–35; Staal, *De kleren van de kardinaal*, 10–35.

68 Sartorial compliments to cardinals were still *comme il faut* a little under a century later, as is shown by a 2001 blogpost by Sandro Magister, eloquently entitled ‘Eminenza, ma che bel ponsò’, <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/7339>.

69 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*. Annibale Gammarelli’s biggest bill, dated 30 January 1912, was for a total of 3689.90 lire.

with gold motifs, silver clasps for his shoes, *fascie* (sashes) and gold-and-red cords for his hat and pectoral cross, red silk stockings and, naturally, skullcaps or *zucchetti*.

This colourful cardinalial costume was obligatory mainly during liturgical ceremonies and on certain other official occasions. In daily life, cardinals normally wore a black cassock with red piping and red buttons, a red sash, red stockings and a red skullcap. Cardinals who belonged to an order could wear cardinal's robes in the colour of their institute's habit, but the red *zucchetto* was always worn by all cardinals.

A cardinal's headdress included the biretta, the skullcap and the (unwearable) galero, but also a black hat with red-and-gold cord and acorn-like tassels which the cardinal wore when outside and on visits, and a red hat bordered with gold, including red-gold cord and tassels, which went with the red cassock, rochet and mozzetta worn when riding out for ecclesiastical and ceremonial duties.⁷⁰

The type of fabric and frills chosen for the cardinal's attire were an important factor in determining the cost.⁷¹ As it is difficult to make contemporary comparisons, it is not easy to tell whether Van Rossum chose the cheaper or the more expensive versions. It is interesting that he ordered only a purple *cappa magna* at the time; he invested in a red one later. One item that is perhaps proof of thrift is the twelve lire he spent on having a gem-studded mitre taken apart, newly covered with fabric and the cardboard inside replaced.

Another important change in Van Rossum's life was that he was suddenly catapulted into the limelight. As a Redemptorist he had led a secluded life, but no sooner was the news of his appointment out than Dutch journalists appeared on his doorstep. As he was little known in the Catholic world when he became a cardinal, interest from the non-Dutch press was scarce. *De Tijd's* Gisbert Brom came to the door at Sant'Alfonso as early as Sunday 29 October 1911, while Van Rossum was still in Mülhausen and had not yet received the official announcement of his creation. Brom returned on 13 November and was then granted a lengthy interview. Of the Dutch newspapers, *Het Centrum* and the liberal *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* also sent reporters.

The journalist of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, obviously not a Catholic himself, was amazed at the religious life led in Sant'Alfonso. A friendly older brother brought him to a large, chilly and charmless room with copper engravings of the life of Alphonsus on the walls. It was dead quiet. After a while, he was brought to a small room with burgundy red tapestry wallpaper and chairs and a couch upholstered with purple damask, a room, he said, which reminded him strongly of well-known

⁷⁰ Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 34–35; Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 216.

⁷¹ See also the website of <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/inchieste-ed-interviste/dettaglio-articolo/articolo/concistoro-19971/> from 2012. This website gives a number of current-day prices. A red *fascia* now costs 200 euro, 105 lire for Van Rossum. A red *zucchetto* cost three lire in 1911, and 40 euro today.

scenes in the shops of Roman art dealers. But when Van Rossum entered, wearing his ordinary cassock and black biretta, the journalist was struck by the simplicity and open demeanour of the “youthful old man”, as he described him. With his “energetic yet soft countenance, his friendly clear eyes behind spectacles, a smile on his fine lips, his thin, tall form”, Van Rossum impressed him as an extraordinary man of great dignity. The fact that the priest showed him out personally afterwards similarly surprised him.⁷²

The reporters for *De Tijd* and *Het Centrum* also portrayed Van Rossum as a simple but impressive man, and they mentioned that he had shown them out himself as well. *De Tijd* regarded him as “a real Dutchman of the purest pedigree. Vain compliments mean nothing to him. The simple honesty of the thoroughly sincere Dutchman goes hand in hand in him with the meekness of the humble monk.”⁷³ Van Rossum made a somewhat less genial impression on the *Tilburgsche Courant*, which referred to his “sharp mind, his strictly orthodox principles” and “great, indestructible capacity for work”.⁷⁴

His new place in the public eye meant not just granting interviews to journalists. Before long, he had to pose for the papal photographer, *cavaliere* Giuseppe Felici. A few days after the announcement of Van Rossum’s elevation to the cardinalate, journalists were referred to Felici to order their copies of his portrait.⁷⁵ Hundreds of photographs were handed out, some signed by Van Rossum or bearing a short, handwritten message, and were distributed among relatives, acquaintances and relations. Painted portraits were also made; Heinrich Windhausen’s portrait was printed in polychrome and distributed among all readers of *De volksmissionaris*, a popular Dutch Redemptorist magazine.

In addition to photos, Van Rossum needed stamps and seals of his signature and coat of arms. Various stamps were manufactured in Micheletti Pasinati’s ‘Studio d’Incisioni’. He also ordered a thousand gummed seals and an embossing and debossing press with his coat of arms.⁷⁶ A thousand visiting cards completed the cardinal’s stationery.⁷⁷

72 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 27 November 1911.

73 *De Tijd*, 16 November 1911

74 *Tilburgsche Courant*, 31 October 1911.

75 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia* F VIII.7. Father Tomei received a bill for 520 lire for 36 dozen portraits on thick paper on 2 January 1912. There were also eighteen very large photographs of the *Famiglia Cardinalizia* and 108 copies of an even more exclusive, extra-large portrait in yellow tint. The bill was for a total of 1402 lire. More pictures were made on 27 January 1912. Some of these portraits have survived.

76 *Ibid.*: 23 March 1912, for a total of 258 lire, but there was a discount of 100 lire. For the stamps and seals, see KDC, ROSS, no. 390.

77 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia* F VIII.7: 28 September 1912.

3 The Famiglia Cardinalizia

Once a cardinal, Van Rossum was expected to move to quarters worthy of a prince of the church. The drawing rooms in particular had to reflect his station of a cardinal. A cardinal's private quarters, by contrast, could be very simply furnished, for instance to suit the "humble monk, unexpectedly torn from his monastery cell", as Jan Olav Smit wrote in his book *Het Vaticaan*, a clear reference to his former mentor and protector, whose train-bearer he had been during his years as a student in Rome.⁷⁸

Very soon after his elevation to the cardinalate, it was announced that Van Rossum would be moving into premises owned by the Redemptorists on Via dello Statuto.⁷⁹ This required extensive renovations to the building. In the meantime, two rooms were prepared for Van Rossum in Sant'Alfonso for use as his 'private quarters'. At the time, the monastery and the church of Saint Alphonsus with its icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour could be accessed from the corner of Via Merulana and Via di San Vito. The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant's* reporter describes the building as "half-hidden in a garden of high white-barked eucalyptuses, some oaks and other trees, together forming thick growth. There is a simple green door in the portal."⁸⁰

Gisbert Brom, who had clearly visited Van Rossum in the monastery more frequently, was, like his *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* colleague before him, received "on the first floor (...) just across from the wide stone stairs". The journalist was permitted to look around the two rooms with burgundy red wallpaper and purple damask chairs and couch, which were normally used to accommodate visiting bishops or high prelates. Van Rossum did not feel at home there, he told Brom, and in addition to these two rooms in 'cardinalitial style', he continued to use his old room with his own books and papers as a bedroom. "I can be fully Father Van Rossum there. All this here is for appearance's sake, and I have to be a Cardinal here whether I like it or not", a quote which gave Brom's Dutch readers the impression that Van Rossum had not sought the honour bestowed upon him.⁸¹

78 Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 214. Rules for the dwelling, staff, transport, clothing (including travel clothing) and precedence of cardinals of the curia were tightened in 1930. See Vatican City, Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato: Sezione per i rapporti con gli Stati e le Organizzazioni Internazionali (ASRS), [fondo] Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari (AAEES), *Stati Ecclesiastici*, IV, pos. 453, fasc. 435, f 26-27: 'Istruzioni per gli Eminentissimi Cardinali' dated 8 December 1930, published by the Congregazione Cerimoniale.

79 AGHR, PG *Bona Immobilia*, E. IV 2. An undated document provides some clues as to house prices in 1904, when five houses on Via dello Statuto and Via Pellegrino Rossi were sold. The asking price was set at 578,000 lire; included in this amount were 180,622.22 lire, which the property on the corner of Via dello Statuto and Pellegrino Rossi – where Van Rossum would live – was expected to fetch.

80 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 27 November 1911.

81 *De Tijd*, 16 November 1911.

As the crow flies, Via dello Statuto is four kilometres from the Vatican, and that was rather an inconvenience, because as one of the pope’s immediate collaborators, Van Rossum was expected to attend to him even more frequently than before. Apparently, there were plans at one stage to turn part of the relatively new and spacious Redemptorist house alongside San Gioacchino’s church in Prati into the cardinal’s residence, among other things because of its proximity to the Vatican.⁸² Many cardinals of the curia lived close to Saint Peter’s, but on the other hand there were quite a few like Van Rossum who lived further afield. Moreover, the Redemptorist house on Via Merulana was close to the pontifical basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, near to where Cardinal Francesco Cassetta had his residence.⁸³

The choice for an apartment on Via dello Statuto was undoubtedly inspired, apart from financial reasons – Van Rossum lived there for free – by the fact that it would permit him to keep in touch with his own congregation. This was reflected in his *Famiglia Cardinalizia*, which was made up exclusively of fellow Redemptorists: two lay brothers and a private secretary. Henri Schäfer fulfilled the latter position for some time, but Van Rossum had decided on Joseph Drehmanns. Two days after receiving news of his impending creation, he invited Drehmanns to come to Rome, where they would form a small community together with a number of lay brothers, “in one of our houses here adjoining our garden”. They were given the entire upstairs apartment. “They are building a staircase that will link up through our garden, so that we will always have free access to the monastery and the monastery to us. Your Rev. would not at all be isolated or outside the community.”⁸⁴ It also meant Van Rossum and the members of his *famiglia* would be able to attend services in the chapel and in Saint Alphonsus without having to leave the house.⁸⁵

After studies in canon and civil law at the Apollinare from 1909–1911, which he completed with distinction, Joseph Maria Drehmanns returned to the Netherlands in 1911, and was appointed professor in canon law at the major seminary in Wittem.⁸⁶ Van Rossum had seen enough of Drehmanns in Rome to know of his qualities, and he made frequent use of them: Drehmanns’s linguistic skills – including, long before it became an international lingua franca, English, which he had learned from an American confrere in Rome –, his knowledge of canon and civil law, his zeal, drive and work ethic, religious fervour and Marian devotion, and his self-confidence

82 *De Tijd*, 3 November 1911.

83 *Annuario Pontificio*, 1913, 747: ‘Indirizzi dei dignitari e primari ufficiali’.

84 KDC, ROSS, no. 122: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns (*solis*), 2 November 1911.

85 The ground floor of the properties on Via dello Statuto was let out to shopkeepers and bankers. AGHR, PG *Bona Immobilia E IV 2*.

86 ENK, ANPR, no. 7690 contains degree scrolls signed by Cardinal Respighi on 21 June 1911 awarding him the doctorate in canon and civil law. See also Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: ‘Genealogische kroniek van de familie Drehmanns’, vol. 2, [18–19].

when dealing with bishops and other high ecclesiastical dignitaries. Van Rossum wrote to Drehmanns that it would be “a true consolation” for him if he were to join his *famiglia* as his secretary and “partner in suffering”.⁸⁷ The ambitious Drehmanns needed little encouragement and arrived in Rome within the month.⁸⁸

The builders began work on no. 29, Via dello Statuto in March 1912. ‘Capo d’arte’ Cesare Papetti was responsible for the walls, plasterwork, doors and windows and the electricity that was to be installed in the apartment.⁸⁹ Giulio Savi Scarpone, who did the ordinary paintwork including varnishing, as well as the ornamentation and embellishment of the ceilings in the reception rooms and the chapel, sent a bill on 21 April. A further invoice, for religious ornaments and articles, followed in late May, and then a third, for papering and covering the walls of all the rooms. Crystal glass and the mirrors that covered the ceiling of the gallery took up a large part of the expenditure. Cesare Papetti sent another invoice in September 1912, for the *cappella* and construction of a roof terrace or *terrazzo* with small columns and a covered gallery of 6 by 2.5 metres. On the outside, on the corner of Via dello Statuto and Via Pellegrino Rossi, a large plaster ornament was affixed to the cardinal’s apartment showing Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, which is still there a century later.⁹⁰

The furnishings were also very carefully selected. Angelo Peyron, supplier of ‘carpets, upholstery fabrics, table linen, linen ware for bedrooms and toilets and passementerie’, billed the cardinal for the hefty sum of 5750 lire for supplies between February and May 1912. There was another invoice before the end of the year for nine velvety crimson carpets, and a woollen floor mat of 110 by 55 centimetres, possibly for Van Rossum’s bedside. The bed frames and the rods for the runners in the hall and the stairs were of yellow copper. The cardinal also purchased 25 velvety table runners and ditto carpet for the chapel, as well as yellow copper banisters.⁹¹

The furniture similarly had to be in style. A set worth nearly fifteen hundred lire was purchased in December 1911. It included a walnut couch with matching chairs and armchairs, bookcases, a desk, carved side tables, large chandeliers, a sideboard, walnut chairs, a desk chair, cabinets, lighting, columns, armchairs for the cardinal’s office, a walnut sideboard for the vestibule, a wash basin and an etagere for books, graced by a new edition of a series on ancient and modern history. The invoice was followed immediately by a second one for a large gilded clock (150 lire), an inlaid

87 KDC, ROSS, no. 122: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns (*solis*), 2 November 1911; ENK, ANPR, no. 18886: ‘Memorie van p. dr. B. Lijdsman’, opgetekend door p. dr. M. Mulders’.

88 Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 1, 509–510, mentions 7 November 1911 as the date he took up his position as secretary.

89 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*. The total sum of this 17-page invoice from Papetti was nearly 1400 lire.

90 *Ibid.*

91 *Ibid.* The Piedmontese entrepreneur Angelo Peyron, who opened a factory making mainly very high-quality carpets, was also a supplier to the Italian royal court.

side table, a second couch, carved walnut chairs, an armchair for reading and a silver visiting card holder. The wooden frame of an armchair to which Van Rossum was evidently attached was upholstered on 2 March 1912 with fine, sheeny gold. A settee arrived on 6 April together with another *poltrona* or armchair, both gilded.⁹² Gas pipes were installed in March 1912, and the apartment was fitted with an American fireplace, as well as a stove and a boiler for the bathtub.⁹³

Van Rossum probably moved to his new quarters around May 1912, although the works were not entirely finished yet. The apartment had ten rooms and a private chapel. Visitors entered through the hall (*Ingresso*) and were then brought to an ante-chamber (*Sala d'aspetto*), before being received in the 'yellow', 'red' or 'green' room, so named after the colour of the wallpaper or *tappezzeria*. Van Rossum, his secretary and Brother Egidius each had their own room, and there was also a dining room and a bathroom. Another room was later added for a second brother, as well as a garage.⁹⁴ Brother Martinus van Laarhoven arrived in Rome as Van Rossum's chauffeur on 3 July 1915.⁹⁵

Life as a cardinal of the curia in the early twentieth century was a far cry from life in a Redemptorist house, where equality among the Fathers was important, where no one had possessions of their own and where distinguishing oneself from others, other than through erudition or piety, was frowned upon. As has been seen, as a cardinal, Van Rossum had to have his own household or *Famiglia Cardinalizia*. But he was able to maintain his accustomed life as much as possible by forming a small group of Redemptorists and living a "quasi-communal" life with his secretary Joseph Drehmanns and the brothers of the household. The Dutch Brother Egidius Wedemeyer, who had come to Rome in 1909 as a cook for the students of the Schola Major, entered the cardinal's service in 1911.⁹⁶ Van Rossum also regarded the non-resident lay staff, for example the footman and the washerwoman, as "members of his household". All were welcome at the Masses that Van Rossum and Drehmanns said every day in the domestic chapel.⁹⁷

92 *Ibid.* Invoices of 410 lire (with a discount of 150 lire) from Benedetto Stramucci, Doratore e Verniciatore, 'Gilder and painter'. There is a handwritten note by Van Rossum, dated 11 April 1912, for 'Rev. Padri Liguorini di S. Alfonso Via Merulana' for a walnut dining table of 100 lire.

93 *Ibid.* The total cost came to 330 lire.

94 *Ibid.* The layout of the apartment can be reconstructed on the basis of Angelo Peyron's first invoice dated February 1912: Refettorio – Camera del Segretario – Camera di S. Eminenza – Sala Gialla – Sala Rossa – Sala Verde – Camera di fratello Egidio – Sala d'aspetto – Ingresso.

95 Brother Martinus van Laarhoven was Van Rossum's driver from 3 July 1915 to 5 August 1918, and his cook in Rome from 22 January 1923 to 21 February 1925. ENK, ANPR, no. 18886: Note on J. Drehmanns by Jan Vinkenburg, 20 September 2000.

96 ENK, ANPR, no. 12713: personal file of Brother Egidius (Herman) Wedemeyer (1871–1944), including an obituary by J. Drehmanns.

97 KDC, ROSS, no. 346: 'Huiselijk leven van Z.E. Kardinaal van Rossum te Rome, door Br. Martinus' (1953), 6–8. Van Rossum's papers (ROSS, no. 477) contain a beautiful edition, illustrated in colour by »

Religion was at the heart of life on Via dello Statuto. It was fitting that one of the first invoices for the new cardinal was for sacred vessels. As a cardinal, Van Rossum was entitled to say Mass wherever and whenever he wished. He purchased a chalice and lavabo, a paten and cruets for water and wine, all in silver-gilt, from Tanfani e Bertarelli, ‘Purveyors to His Holiness and the Sacred Apostolic Palaces’. Some of the vessels were inscribed with his coat of arms.⁹⁸ The altar, statues, canopies, door, paintings and chandeliers of the chapel were designed in Gothic style by the Bavarian Redemptorist Max Schmalzl, renowned for his religious art and Christian visual propaganda. Schmalzl designed two large stained-glass windows bearing Willem Marinus van Rossum’s two patron saints.⁹⁹

Van Rossum wrote to the Dutch provincial Augustus Beukers in August 1915 that the little community gathered daily for devotions: “morning and evening meditation – personal examen – spiritual reading – discipline, evening prayer etc. etc.”¹⁰⁰ The same impression is confirmed by Brother Martinus van Laarhoven, whose memoirs mention that Van Rossum rose, as before, at quarter past four every morning. He went to the chapel at half past four to say a decade of the rosary with his secretary and the two brothers. He began his 30-minute-long meditation at ten to five, followed immediately by Mass said by the cardinal and then Mass said by Drehmanns. Van Rossum subsequently prayed the stations of the cross. He spent the hours from seven to nine in “his studio” to read dossiers and prepare the meetings that often began at half past nine in the morning. Upon his return from the Vatican, he set aside ten minutes before dinner for an examination of conscience together with the brothers and his secretary, and returned to the chapel together with Drehmanns afterwards to say the ‘Te Deum’ and ‘De profundis’. There were further communal prayers in the evening, and spiritual exercises on Wednesday evenings and Friday evenings.¹⁰¹

Brother Egidius was in charge of meals. The apartment had a dining room and a kitchen. From his window, Van Rossum could see Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome’s largest square, which had been built immediately after Italian unification. He was probably not a frequent visitor: it was the site of a large vegetable and fish

» Max Schmalzl, C.Ss.R., of *Canon missae ad usum episcoporum ac praelatorum sollemniter vel privatim celebrantium*, Regensburg (Pustet) 1922. Bound in red leather with Cardinal Van Rossum’s coat of arms on the cover. Van Rossum also had lay staff, as is evident from AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*: Letter from a footman, 27 December 1911, and a bill for 9 January to 30 June 1914 from the washerwoman.

98 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*: Invoice from Tanfani e Bertarelli for Fr. Tomei of 600 lire, dated 29 November 1911.

99 The stained-glass windows can now be found in Sant’Alfonso in Rome.

100 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to Father Provincial [Augustus Beukers], 21 August 1915.

101 KDC, ROSS, no. 346. See also ROSS, no. 90: W. van Rossum to Dean N. van Balen, 27 May 1918.

market in his days, busy and foul-smelling. But Brother Egidius or one of the footmen must have gone there regularly to do shopping.

Van Rossum regarded this as a heavy burden and a great danger for the brothers’ religious state: he was sure that “their constant daily contact with the people: butcher, baker, greengrocers etc. etc. and having to stand among the people to await their turn, and the attendant unpleasantness of a rough and base kind and of often shameless hussies” would ultimately depress the brothers. When Brother Egidius hinted to the cardinal in 1921 – Van Rossum had moved with his *famiglia* to Piazza di Spagna after his appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide – that he would prefer to return to a community in the Netherlands, Van Rossum quickly agreed. He wrote to the Dutch provincial, at the time Jan Kronenburg, that life on Piazza di Spagna was proving disastrous for Egidius’s community life. The brothers were left to their own devices much more frequently than in Via dello Statuto and Brother Egidius had to eat and live in the company of two servants. He asked Kronenburg to send another brother, but one who would be able to withstand “the appallingly great dangers that come with it”.¹⁰²

According to the memories of Brother Martinus, who was part of Van Rossum’s household as his chauffeur from 1915 to 1918 and as cook from 1923 to 1925, the food was “good, but very simple”. Both dinner and supper consisted of three dishes: soup, meat and vegetables and potatoes – with a second portion of meat with compote or similar for dinner – and concluded with cheese and fruit as dessert. Cake or pudding were served on feast days or special days of recreation. Later, when Van Rossum developed diabetes, the doctor forbade sweet or starchy foods. They were replaced on feast days by an ‘antipasto’ or other starter and he had to drink a lot of vegetable broth.¹⁰³ Festive banquets were very rare, but when they happened, everything had to be perfect. Brother Martinus added that the perception of outsiders that cardinals dined lavishly and exquisitely did not apply to Van Rossum.¹⁰⁴

The invoices sent to Mario Tomei confirm that the cardinal kept a modest table. Yet there are a number of remarkable items, such as the great quantities of Puerto Rican coffee (the Redemptorists had a mission in Puerto Rico), sugar, potato starch, bouillon cubes (‘Dadi Maggis’) and ‘Franck’ (chicory) consumed by the *famiglia*. 16 kg of sugar was purchased in the festive month of December 1912, and chocolate from the internationally renowned factories of Moriondo & Gariglio appears in the

102 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to provincial [Jan Kronenburg], 1 October 1921. It is not clear whether Brother Egidius did indeed return to the Netherlands. According to his obituary, he was in Van Rossum’s service (as “factotum”) from 1911 until the cardinal’s death. Egidius later became curator of the Cardinal Van Rossum Museum in Wittem (ENK, ANPR, no. 12713).

103 ENK, ANPR, no. 8542: A. Thépénier, physician, to W. van Rossum, Paris 30 January 1926. Marcel Labbé, *Le traitement du diabète* (Paris 1925), 117 (in KDC, ROSS, no. 507).

104 KDC, ROSS, no. 346.

list for the following months. The bill for May also contains rice (*riso imperiale*) and tapioca by Knorr. In addition, the grocer and *panetteria* Attilio Lardi supplied risotto, semolina and cannellini beans. A draft invoice without the name of the supplier lists wine, bread, salt etc. for the period from 1 January to 1 June 1913: of the total amount of 485 lire, 325 was for wine, 145 for bread and fifteen for salt.¹⁰⁵

A cardinal in Rome did not walk in the street. Van Rossum initially relied on a closed carriage drawn by two black horses for transport within the walls of the Eternal City.¹⁰⁶ Judging from the accounts, he had the permanent use of a carriage with two horses and a driver, which must have been parked outside his apartment constantly. The bad state of Roman roads made transport rather an ordeal, as one accident reported in the *Tilburgsche Courant* on 29 December 1911 testifies. When Van Rossum wished to go very early in the morning to say Mass in a convent a few hundred metres down the road on Via Machiavelli, his carriage had an accident around the corner in Via di San Vito. One of the horses disappeared into a deep hole that had been dug for sewage works. The driver was catapulted off the box and ended up under the horse. While the assembled crowds – mistakenly – shouted that the driver was dead, Van Rossum escaped unscathed. Despite the strictures of etiquette, the cardinal had to continue his journey on foot.

The gift of a handsome automobile from the Netherlands in 1914 heralded the end of carriage journeys for Van Rossum. The car was the gift of a committee and a hundred Dutch Catholics “in memory of his visit to Amsterdam, 4–14 July 1913”.¹⁰⁷ His new possession made a curiosity of Van Rossum; the papal court did not switch to cars until 1926.¹⁰⁸

It had taken more than three months to build the stylish vehicle. The engine was by ‘Simplex’ and the carrosserie by H. and F. Kimman brothers in Haarlem. As *De Tijd* explained on 30 January 1914, the carrosserie was “a beautiful Landaulette Limousine Torpedo”, “with six seats, two of which are folding seats with armrests”. The chairs could be turned around so that the four passengers could sit facing each other, or even with the chairs turned towards the doors. The upholstery was “in mouse grey cloth” and gave the cabin a very atmospheric aspect. There was a hat net fixed to the ceiling, and on the side “a canteen containing an ashtray, arm hangers, a mouth-

105 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia* F VIII.7.

106 *Ibid.*, with a great number of invoices from Alfredo Fori’s livery stable ‘Vetture di Rimessa’ on Via del Boschetto. Five carriages for four persons were kept in readiness for the monastery of Sant’Alfonso on 30 November.

107 *De Tijd*, 31 March 1914; KDC, ROSS, no. 396: ‘Herinneringsboek, aangeboden op 10 augustus 1913’.

For the visit to the Netherlands in 1913, see Chapter 11.3.

108 Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 151. He quotes V. Moretti, *Le Auto dei Papi: settant’anni di automobilismo Vaticano* (Rome 1981), 7.

piece with whistle which permits the passengers to communicate instructions to the driver, and portfolio holders on the doors. The electrical lighting in the cabin consists of three flower-shaped ceiling lights." The doors were equipped with safety locks with keys. It was of course possible to open the roof, but the four side windows were always up so that the passengers were shielded from the dust. The body work was painted blue lined with black frames and red edges, and the two main doors bore the cardinal's coat of arms.

Before the car was shipped to Rome in an enormous crate, it was first put on display for a week in Amsterdam. The director of Simplex, Piet Leeuwenberg, then accompanied the machine to Rome, together with a mechanic "to train one of H. Em. Cardinal van Rossum's servants as a chauffeur".¹⁰⁹ After many unwelcome delays, it was finally delivered to the garden of Sant'Alfonso monastery on 28 March 1914. As the community admired the car, the cardinal "with his wonted affability" thanked the director and presented him with a badge of honour. A short tour in the garden was followed a few days later by a first sortie outside, under police escort. The automobile was also intended to alert the Romans' attention to the technical prowess of Dutch industry and prove to them the general respect in which the cardinal was held in the Netherlands.¹¹⁰

Van Rossum was unlucky with his first drivers. It proved difficult to train one of the brothers and he soon switched to lay chauffeurs. These were hard to find, particularly after the outbreak of the First World War, as men were being called up for army service. "We lost chauffeur after chauffeur (...). Sometimes we just have to take the first one who presents himself, which is very dangerous, particularly here. One hit a car on the first outing; another broke the machine, which cost us a lot in repairs, and I had to be driven home in another car." For a while they had the use of the driver of Countess Stolberg, who had left the country due to the war.¹¹¹

One of the reasons why Brother Martinus was sent from the Netherlands in 1915 was to solve the cardinal's transport problems, as Van Rossum told then-provincial Beukers. Martinus had to do his driving test again, and he passed. "He is currently practicing constantly, for here in Rome, where it is extremely busy in the streets, driving is exceedingly difficult." The cardinal reassured Beukers that Martinus was receiving good spiritual care. The brother always had religious books at hand and a rosary, so that "he does not waste his time and keeps well away from idle conversation" when waiting for him somewhere. Van Rossum added that "his confessor and spiritual director also help him. In addition, faults and character weaknesses come

¹⁰⁹ *De Tijd*, 31 March 1914.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* Van Rossum was gifted another car in 1924, on this occasion a Lancia from the firm Vroom en Dreesmann. KDC, ROSS, no. 124: W. van Rossum to B. H. Vroom [1924], draft letter.

¹¹¹ ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to Father Provincial [Augustus Beukers], 21 August 1915.

to light more quickly and abidingly in a small community as we have here, and can therefore be counteracted more easily and frequently. I therefore hope and pray to the good God, whose grace Your Rev. will also be willing to implore for him, that he will not lose anything spiritually, and Your Rev. will not rue the decision to send him.”¹¹²

His elevation to the cardinalate radically changed Van Rossum’s life in a matter of weeks. His position within the church shifted fundamentally: up to that point, he had dedicated his life to the Redemptorist congregation and through it, to the service of the church; now he was in the immediate personal service of the pope. Instead of being an instrument of Alphonsus, he became an instrument of the Holy See. The obedience he owed to his superior general was replaced by unlimited availability to Pius x and his successors. It meant the end of his ideal of poverty: from that point on, he had to present an image of splendour and grandeur to represent the power of the church and of the pope. Although he remained a Redemptorist, he had to leave most aspects of the secluded life of a religious behind and he became a public figure. However devoted to Pius x he was, this entailed great sacrifices for him.

Van Rossum’s creation was an honour which Pius x bestowed not only on him personally, but also on the Catholics of the Netherlands and on the Redemptorists. But although the Dutch government and bishops scrupulously followed etiquette when it came to offering congratulations, there was a lack of genuine enthusiasm. Royal congratulations came somewhat grudgingly. None of the bishops travelled to Rome for the ceremonies, possibly out of pique that the new cardinal was not the archbishop of Utrecht. And yet there was also sincere rejoicing in the Netherlands, as the meetings of Dutch priests and Catholic laity in Rome testified. Having a Dutch cardinal offered new opportunities.

The same was true for the Redemptorists, faithful to the pope as they were. Van Rossum’s appointment was an acknowledgement of their importance and meant that lines of communication with the pope and the Roman curia would be much shorter, an advantage which they were not slow to exploit over the years. Ever dutiful, Van Rossum called his position as cardinal an ordeal: a heavy, almost super-human task placed upon his shoulders, which he had to try and fulfil as conscientiously as possible. His congregation did not abandon him in his hour of need: the Redemptorists allowed Van Rossum to fall back on religious life in Sant’Alfonso, at least until 1918, provided financial support, a private secretary and a small community of Redemptorists in an apartment around the corner from the monastery, under the protection of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

A Dutch cardinal

1 Member of the College of Cardinals

As of 27 November 1911, Willem van Rossum was a member of the College of Cardinals, also known as the pope's senate, the first Dutchman to become a cardinal since the appointment of Willem van Enckevoirt by Pope Adrian VI in 1523. The cardinals were the pope's most prominent counsellors and assistants, and he personally chose men for this position who "are notably outstanding for their doctrine, piety, and prudence in conducting affairs", as the 1917 Code was to phrase it.¹ Every priest could in principle become a cardinal.² There were a number of impediments: the candidate could not be an illegitimate child, could not have children (even from a legitimate marriage, for instance if he had become a priest after the death of his legitimate spouse), and could not be a brother, uncle or nephew of a living cardinal.³ The church insisted on this to combat factionalism and nepotism, but the pope could dispense from all these impediments, as he did for the Vannutelli brothers and for Enrico Gasparri, Pietro Gasparri's nephew. Pietro Gasparri was sometimes accused of nepotism, including by Van Rossum. It was nothing exceptional that Van Rossum was not a bishop when he was made a cardinal; neither were Bisleti and Pompilj.

Membership of the College of Cardinals was capped at seventy at the time.⁴ Its most important privilege was to elect a new pope in conclave. All cardinals had one vote in this election, but otherwise not all cardinals were equal. There were cardinals of the curia and cardinals who were at the head of important dioceses (*loca cardinalitia* or 'cardinalitial sees'). The former played an important role in the church's administrative centre in the Vatican. They were the pope's immediate counsellors and governed a *dicastero* or curial department, such as a congregation or a tribunal, they were members of multiple curial organs and took part in special ad hoc com-

1 CIC 1917, c. 232, par. 1.

2 The last cardinal who was not a priest, Cardinal Mertel, was created by Leo XIII, but that had been a rarity even at the time. See: Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 217.

3 CIC 1917, c. 232; Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 23–27. The following passages are based mostly on Martin.

4 The College of Cardinals rarely consisted of the maximum number of seventy. It was not usual for vacancies to be filled immediately; it was regarded as wise to keep a number of empty places available.



FVNDATORI SVO
RDO·MIN·EREXIT
AN·V·MDCCKX

ANTIFEX· MAXIMVS
ICA· DIE· VIII· DECEMBERIS· AN· MDCCLIV·
AM· DEFINITIONEM
ONE· IMMACVLATA
VIRGINIS· MARIAE
OLEMNIA· PRONVNCIAVIT
ATE· DES· EXP





Pius XI amid the College of Cardinals. Van Rossum is second from the left

missions that the pope set up.⁵ They were required to reside in Rome and could leave the city only with the pope's express permission.⁶ The other cardinals were tied to their dioceses. They too were appointed members of multiple curial congregations after becoming a cardinal. But their contribution to the central government of the church was limited because they could only respond in writing and they attended the sessions of the congregations in question only during sporadic visits to Rome.⁷

There were three ranks (*ordines*) of cardinal. The highest rank was made up of the six cardinal bishops. Each of them governed a suburbicarian diocese in the vicinity of Rome. The most senior among them was bishop of Ostia and Velletri and dean of the college. By far the greatest group of cardinals were cardinal priests (the maximum number was fifty). The third group consisted of cardinal deacons, fourteen at most.⁸ The cardinal who had been created the last came last in precedence and had to let others pass before him, both literally and with respect to the right of option, a cardinal's right to ask the pope to promote him from one rank to another and to give him another titular church. Thus, a cardinal priest could opt to claim a vacant suburbicarian see if one of the six cardinal bishops died. The more senior the cardinal, the stronger his right to such a promotion.⁹ Someone who had been a cardinal deacon for ten years could, under certain circumstances, ask to be made a cardinal priest. A cardinal's ambitions could therefore to a certain extent be gauged from his career. Of the five cardinal deacons created on 27 November 1911 – Bisleti, Lugari, Pompilj, Billot and Van Rossum – Bisleti was immediately able to exercise his right of option by successfully requesting the church of Sant'Agatha dei Goti for himself, despite the fact that Van Rossum also coveted it as his titular church.¹⁰

Van Rossum used his right of option himself in 1915. After his appointment as major penitentiary on 1 October of that year, he had to transfer from the order of deacons to that of priests, and he opted for the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme as his titular church.¹¹ This title had become vacant on 15 September of that year by the death of the philosopher and Thomist Benedetto Lorenzelli, a longstanding friend of Van Rossum's. According to Drehmanns, a close bond of friendship had grown up between the two men, who could spend hours together conversing about all kinds of subjects.¹²

5 Alejandro Mario Dieguez, "Gli Eminentissimi Padri nella loro alta prudenza e saggezza vedranno cosa proporre." *Fonti vaticane per la ricostruzione dell'attività dei cardinali*, in: *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée*, 127-2(2015), 1-34.

6 CIC 1917, c. 238, par. 1.

7 Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 207.

8 See also: CIC 1917, c. 232, 1; Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 1.

9 CIC 1917, c. 236, par. 3

10 *De Tijd*, 8 November 1911.

11 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 58, Rome 18 January 1916.

12 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 73-74; Wilhelm Wühr (Hrsg.) *Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor 1854-1928. Tagebücher – Briefe – Erinnerungen* (Heidelberg 1950), 75.

The Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, one of the seven pilgrim churches of Rome, had once been part of the palace of Empress Helena, Emperor Constantine's mother. Van Rossum solemnly took possession of his church on 1 January 1916. He proudly wrote to his family that it was "the 1st church [in precedence] after the four main basilicas of Rome". Saint Helena had brought a great amount of earth from Calvary and a large part of the Holy Cross to the church, whose treasure of relics also contained "one of the nails, two thorns of the Crown and the [inscription] panel of the Holy Cross", as well as "the entire cross-beam of the good thief's cross".¹³ From that moment on, Van Rossum was the custodian of these sacred objects. He normally pontificated in the basilica on the feasts of the Invention of the Cross (3 May) and the Exaltation of the Cross (14 September), and presided over the liturgical ceremonies on Good Friday.¹⁴

As a cardinal, Van Rossum had many ecclesiastical privileges. He was permitted to hear confessions anywhere, including confessions of religious of both sexes, and he could absolve penitents of all sins, excepting only a few, such as violating the secret of the Holy Office – leaking information from the Suprema was clearly an exceptionally grave offence.¹⁵ He could also choose a confessor for himself and his household who had the right to absolve them even in the most difficult of cases. He could say Mass anywhere he wished, including in the imperial train that brought him to Vienna in September 1912 or at sea, which he surely did during his long boat journeys to Iceland in 1923 and 1929.¹⁶ After his episcopal consecration in 1918, he could consecrate churches, altars, bishops and abbots anywhere and perform other ordinations, and he could attach indulgences to consecrated objects. In addition, as a cardinal he could grant an indulgence of up to 200 days, for instance to institutes and persons subject to his jurisdiction or whose cardinal protector he was. These indulgences were *toties quoties* indulgences, which meant that the faithful could earn the indulgence every time they fulfilled the conditions, even more than once a day.

After his creation, Van Rossum had to be treated as a bishop by all, even though he was not actually consecrated a bishop until 1918. As a cardinal, he took precedence over all other prelates, including patriarchs. In 1912 and again in 1924, Van Rossum tasted the privilege of being the highest in rank after the pope, when he acted as legate *a latere* – the pope's personal representative – at the international eucharistic congresses of Vienna and Amsterdam. Despite being the lowest-ranking cardinal, Van Rossum on that occasion took precedence over all other cardinals and dignitaries that were present in Vienna.

13 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 58, Rome 18 January 1916.

14 *Ibid.*; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 73–74.

15 CIC 1917, c. 124.

16 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 50; W.M. van Rossum, *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, Rotterdam 1923.

As a Dutch Redemptorist, Van Rossum was somewhat of an exception within the College of Cardinals. First and foremost, because of his nationality. The Netherlands was still an unknown country to Italians in the early twentieth century, and signs of papal interest in the country were rare even under Pius X, despite the flourishing of religious life there.¹⁷

Of the 65 cardinals that formed the Sacred College on 27 November 1911 (including the seventeen newly created cardinals, but without the one created *in petto*), 34 were Italians.¹⁸ The six cardinal bishops were all Italians, 23 of the fifty cardinal priests were Italians and five of the eight cardinal deacons. Of the non-Italians, seven were French, six Spanish and four were from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁹ The proportion was even more asymmetrical for the 28 cardinals of the curia (including those of the six suburbicarian dioceses): 24 of these were Italians. The other four were the Spanish Capuchin Vives y Tutó, prefect of the Congregation of Religious, Secretary of State Rafael Merry del Val, a Spanish aristocrat who had grown up in Britain, and two former colleagues at the Holy Office: the Frenchman Louis Billot and Van Rossum.²⁰ The French had called for a more international college as early as the opening of the First Vatican Council, when the disproportionate number of Italian cardinals and curial officials compared to the many bishops of other nationalities had become painfully visible. It clashed with the cosmopolitan universalism that the church wished to exude.²¹ Pius X was complimented because he had chosen seven non-Italians among the seventeen new cardinals.²² But a real shift only happened after Van Rossum's death: of the 24 cardinals of the curia in 1932, still only five were not Italian.²³

Van Rossum also belonged to a minority because he was a member of a religious order. The great majority of the cardinals were secular priests. In a previous century, Pope Sixtus V had determined that of the seventy cardinals, four had to be members of 'the great mendicant orders'. The number of regulars was usually slightly higher, but not much. Apart from the Redemptorist Van Rossum and the Jesuit Billot, the college in 1911 also included three Franciscans, a Capuchin, a Benedictine, a Carmelite and an Augustinian.²⁴

17 Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*. Bd. 3, 111.

18 Popes can create a cardinal 'in their heart' (*in petto* or *in pectore*) for a number of reasons. The person in question becomes a cardinal, but their name is not or not yet announced.

19 *Annuario Pontificio* 1913, 33–54, 66–67. The others were two Americans, two Germans, two Poles, two Irishmen, a Briton, a Portuguese and a Belgian.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Galavotti, 'Sulle riforme della curia romana nel Novecento', 860.

22 *De Tijd*, 30 October 1911.

23 In addition to Van Rossum, they were the Frenchman A. Lépiciér, the German F. Ehrle, the Austrian A. Frühwirth and the Spaniard P. Segura y Sáenz. *Annuario Pontificio* 1932.

24 There were eleven regulars out of a total of 63 cardinals in 1929. Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 24–25.

The fact that Van Rossum hailed from a predominantly Protestant country also made him an exception, although he shared this experience with Merry del Val. In addition, his social background may sometimes have caused difficulties for him at the papal court, even though he was not the only one of humble origins – Pius X himself was the son of a postman – and despite the good education he had received from the Jesuits and in Wittem.

During his years as a cardinal of the curia, Van Rossum was therefore a stranger among his colleagues in various regards. This made his position difficult. A non-Italian remained a *straniero*. As Joseph Drehmanns complained much later, in 1929, when he was called a *straniero* himself, this was the worst that anyone in the curia could be.²⁵ It was not just that foreigners were in a numerical minority, but the curia's whole mentality, its methods and procedures were Italian through and through. The Italians regarded themselves as a *nazione sacerdotale* with a religious task and a civilising mission in the world, as Vincenzo Gioberti's famous work *Del primato morale e civile degli Italiani* taught. Many members of the curia regarded the government of the universal Catholic church as exclusively Italian by rights.

Dutchness in particular was not an advantage in the curia, where it engendered miscommunication, opposition and whispering campaigns, as the first and only Dutch Pope Adrian VI (1459–1523) had experienced in the sixteenth century. Adrian was born in Utrecht when this was still part of the Holy Roman Empire, and he had been tutor to the young Emperor Charles V. His pontificate lasted only a year. The cultural chasm between this Utrechter and unfamiliar Italian traditions thwarted his attempts to reform the curia.²⁶ A number of Adrian's character traits can also be found – as a 'Dutch archetype' – in Willem van Rossum. Adrian was characterised as rigid, stubborn, pious and sober. These were features that Van Rossum had too, as a northern Dutchman in his sober and unbending demeanour, and as a Redemptorist in his simple lifestyle. His simplicity and artlessness, commented on by the newspapers in 1911, were sometimes at odds with the external splendour that came with life as a cardinal. Even after he became a cardinal, his state as a religious continued to be important in his life, although he could no longer live simply in his community as before. But even on Via dello Statuto and Piazza di Spagna, where he moved in 1918, he remained faithful as much as possible to all the spiritual exercises of Redemptorist life.²⁷

25 KDC, *Archive of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Netherlands (PMW)*, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 27 November 1929.

26 Catrien Santing, 'The Formation of the Historiographical Image of the Dutch Pope', in: H. Cools, C. Santing, H. de Valk (ed.), *Adrian VI: A Dutch Pope in a Roman Context* (Turnhout 2012) [= *Fragmenta. Journal of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome*, 4(2010)], 161–172.

27 KDC, ROSS, no. 346; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 102–106.

But Van Rossum was much more familiar with the Roman curia in 1911 than his countryman Adrian VI had been in 1522. He was a member of the originally Italian Redemptorist congregation and had lived in the generalate in Rome since 1895. His membership of the congregation had been his ticket to joining the curia in 1896, not just because of his knowledge of the doctrine of Alphonsus Liguori, but also of the existing networks and ties of friendship that the congregation had built, particularly within the church's more conservative wing.²⁸ From 1896 onwards, Van Rossum built his own contacts within the curia, with likeminded antimodernist people, but also with others. Through his work, he was in touch with all the cardinals in Rome, with some more than others, but certainly with everyone who mattered. Many contacts between the cardinals occurred within the context of memberships of congregations, commissions and institutes, creating a continuously changing network in which information was passed on, coalitions were built or initiatives blocked. The connections between the various people were difficult for outsiders to unravel.

The status of a curial cardinal could to some extent be inferred from his function in or membership of the principal congregations (Holy Office, *Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari*, Consistory, *Propaganda Fide*) and the number of posts he had. Of course, multiple memberships could have a detrimental effect on a cardinal's ability to read the files, making him more dependent on the curial civil service. Immediately upon his creation, Van Rossum was appointed to a number of dicasteries of lesser importance: the Congregations of Religious, of the Council and of the Index. But this was followed in January 1912 by membership of the Congregation de *Propaganda Fide*, both for the Latin and the Oriental rites. In addition, he joined the Pontifical Biblical Commission under its president Rampolla del Tindaro (21 December 1911) and the Commission 'Praeservationis Fidei', the Work for the Preservation of the Faith in Rome (15 May 1912). Two days later, together with Cardinals Lugari and Pompilj, he was appointed to a commission that had to assess the functioning of the vicariate of Rome, which also oversaw the Work for the Preservation of the Faith. Van Rossum drafted the final report, which was strongly critical of the staffing and activities of the diocese of Rome, governed at the time by the cardinal vicar, Respighi. In January 1913 he became a member of a commission for the reorganisation of the *Seminario Romano*.²⁹ In the same year he was appointed to the Holy Office.³⁰

28 See Chapter 6.1.

29 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder F. 'Lettere private senza data': files on a 'commissione Cardinalizia incaricata dell'esame del nuovo organico del Vicariato', established by letter of the secretary of state dated 17 May 1912; Dieguez, 'Gli Eminentissimi Padri', 22–23.

30 AAS, 4(1912); *Annuario Pontificio* 1913.

But for Van Rossum, 1912 was marked primarily by his appointment as papal legate to the international eucharistic congress in Vienna.³¹ Pius X referred to the eucharistic congresses during the audience of the Dutch delegation on 28 November 1911, which was perhaps an indication that he already had Van Rossum in mind at the time.³² If this was indeed the case, then it may have been the immediate occasion for his elevation to the cardinalate.

2 The 23rd international eucharistic congress in Vienna

Van Rossum was *legatus a latere* during the 23rd international eucharistic congress in Vienna in 1912.³³ It was a momentous charge, because Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary was at the time the most important Catholic monarch, an authoritative pillar of support for the Vatican in international politics. The empire, ‘the last great Catholic power’, formed a buffer between Catholic Europe and the Russian Orthodox church and the Lutheran and Calvinist national churches of Germany.³⁴ This gave the emperor much influence in the Roman curia, as had become abundantly clear in 1903, when Franz Joseph vetoed the election as pope of Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, whom he regarded as too friendly to French interests. Giuseppe Sarto, Pius X, was chosen instead, and he immediately banned such interventions in future conclaves.³⁵

Maintaining warm relations with Austria-Hungary was nonetheless of the utmost importance for the Roman pontiff. The German historian and later Austrian diplomat Ludwig von Pastor, author of *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters* (‘History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages’) and a frequent visitor to the papal court, recounts that the matter of a legate for the Vienna eucharistic congress came up during an audience with Pius X on 24 February 1912. Archduke Franz Ferdinand had wanted Secretary of State Merry del Val to be sent. Pius X said that this was impossible as it would impinge on daily business and invite speculation, because it was not customary to send the secretary of state to such events. To respond as much as possible to the archduke’s desire, “Cardinal Van Rossum would

31 AAS, 4(1912), 579–581.

32 *Tilburgsche Courant*, 28 November 1911.

33 Marcel Chappin S.J., ‘Cardinal van Rossum and the International Eucharistic Congresses’, in: *Life with a Mission*, 97–107.

34 For the importance of the religious dimension on the eve of and during the First World War, see Jan Bank, ‘Culturele confrontaties. Godsdienst, kerken en oorlog’, in: Jan Bank, Vefie Poels, *Culturele confrontaties. Godsdienst, kerken en oorlog* (Nijmegen 2015), 11–44.

35 Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 521–527; J. Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism, 1914–1958* (Oxford 2014), 25–27.



Dignitaries at the International Eucharistic Congress in Vienna, 1912. First row, left to right from third from left: Cardinal Franz Xaver Nagl, Mayor Joseph Neumayer of Vienna, Cardinal-Legate Van Rossum, Nuncio Raffaele Scapinelli

be sent to Vienna, as he is entirely familiar with the situation in the monarchy and moreover speaks German". The pope asked Von Pastor to forward this message to Vienna.³⁶

The choice of Van Rossum for this important task is remarkable, because he was little known at the time. Nor did he have any diplomatic experience, a distinct handicap in these years before the First World War, when the international politi-

³⁶ Wühr (Hrsg.), *Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor*, 542. See also AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, 1914, rubr. 12, fasc. 2, 'Congresso Eucaristico in Vienna nel 1912', 1911–1914: R. Merry del Val to Nuncio R. Scapinelli, 27 October 1911, f 4–7; R. Scapinelli to R. Merry del Val, 6 November 1911, f 8, in which the nuncio points out that the great rivalries between the various nationalities had to be taken into account.

cal situation was tense and Italy was stressing its claims on certain territories that belonged to Austria-Hungary. It is testimony therefore to Pius X's great confidence in Van Rossum. One important argument in favour of sending the Dutch cardinal, whose grandfather was from North Rhine-Westphalia, was that he spoke German – given the composition of the group of cardinals in the curia he was probably the only one. This almost automatically earned him the reputation of being German-friendly, which worked against him on many occasions over the following years.³⁷ The fact that he hailed from a monarchy was also seen as a plus, although Van Rossum had up to that point never had any personal contacts with his country's Protestant royal house, except the awkward exchange of letters on the occasion of his creation as a cardinal.

But international eucharistic congresses, the first of which had been celebrated in Lille in 1881, were not meant first and foremost to strengthen bonds with the political powers that be, but with the ordinary faithful.³⁸ Mass religious meetings such as pilgrimages were no rarity in Catholic popular devotion. But as the church historian Marcel Chappin s.j. has shown, the objective of the eucharistic congresses was not simply to satisfy individual religious feeling.³⁹ The origins of the congresses must be linked to three developments that occurred in the last quarter of the nineteenth century: the emergence of widely disseminated devotions such as that to the Sacred Heart, the loss of the Holy See's secular power, and the rise of democracy.

Leo XIII realised that the era in which the Holy See could count on the European Catholic princes for support had passed. He used the eucharistic congresses to seek a new basis for a theocracy: the mass of the Catholic faithful, upon whom Christ's social kingdom – a Christian ideological alternative to liberalism, socialism and communism – would be founded.⁴⁰ Christ was king, of every individual human being and of society. His realm was not limited to the spiritual or religious dimension, but had to be established also in the secular fields of politics, culture and science. As there was nowhere else where Christ was present as directly as in the Holy Eucharist, this was propagated as the way par excellence to save the world through Christ the King.

37 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 8 May 1930.

38 R. Aubert, 'De eucharistische congressen vanaf Leo XIII tot Paulus VI', in: *Concilium. Internationaal tijdschrift voor theologie*, 1(1965), no. 1(Jan.), 125–135. The initiative came from the Frenchwoman Émilie Tamisier (1834–1910). She was inspired by Pierre-Julien Eymard (founder of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament in 1857). Congresses continue to be organised today.

39 Chappin, 'International Eucharistic Congresses', 97–107.

40 See also the concept of social action that Pius XI enunciated in his 1922 encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei*, which he hoped would realise a theocracy independent of national borders. This was the context in which the concordats that he signed with many countries must be interpreted. These treaties were intended to secure the Catholic church's freedom of action, for instance with regard to the appointment of bishops and the freedom of religious institutes. Chappin, 'International Eucharistic Congresses', 98–101.

Under Pius X, the congresses also acquired the objective of promoting eucharistic devotion. The pope's decrees on frequent communion (*Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, 1905) and on the admittance of children to communion (*Quam Singulari*, 1910) were important means to this end. It led to a flourishing devotion in Western Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. Van Rossum personally had a strong devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.⁴¹ It was no surprise that his demeanour when boarding the north-bound train on 8 September 1912 filled his retinue with "warmth, joy and deeply religious feeling", according to Drehmanns.⁴²

Emperor Franz Joseph had other objectives when it came to the congress. As the voluminous proceedings of the event indicate in the introduction, the congress united "the many peoples of Austria, so markedly distinct in language and custom, under the sign of the Eucharist into one great family, whose head, the Emperor-King Franz Joseph I, extended his special protection to the gathering".⁴³ The political importance of using the Catholic faith to underline the unity of his empire dictated that it would not be the prince-archbishop ('Fürsterzbischof') of Vienna, Cardinal Franz Xaver Nagl, who was the face of the congress, but Emperor Franz Joseph I himself, who assumed the role of protector of the congress on 26 October 1911.⁴⁴

Old and new papal power politics converged in Vienna in 1912. For the last time, as there would be nothing left of the once so powerful Habsburg empire by 1918, nor any other great Catholic princes to support the Holy See. But in 1912, all eyes were on Vienna. The date of 12 September had been chosen as the official opening day of the congress because it was the 229th anniversary of the Battle of Vienna in 1683, which had seen off the Ottoman army. For unknown reasons – perhaps the busy programme could not be squeezed into four days – the actual opening took place on Wednesday 11 September. On the previous day, Van Rossum had been received by Cardinal Nagl, the mayor of the city and the nuncio, Raffaele Scapinelli. After the addresses of welcome pronounced by these dignitaries, Van Rossum gave a speech to a large crowd, in Latin and German. Then the papal legate and Cardinal Nagl walked under a canopy from Kärtnerstrasse to Saint Stephen's Cathedral. The funeral of Clement Mary Hofbauer, founder of the Transalpine branch of the Redemptorists, had been held in 1820 in this church, which gave it a special significance for Van Rossum. He knelt down to adore the Blessed Sacrament when he entered the building.⁴⁵

41 See Chapter 8.5.

42 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 46–47.

43 K. Kammel (Hrsg.), *Bericht über den XXIII Internationalen Eucharistischen Kongress, Wien 12. Bis 15. September 1912* (Vienna 1913), xvii. The proceedings run to more than 800 pages.

44 *Ibid.*, 6–7.

45 *Ibid.*, 12–23; Chappin, 'International Eucharistic Congresses', 99–100; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 54–56; *Reichspost*, 11 September 1912, entirely dedicated to the eucharistic congress.

Later that day, Van Rossum was given the great honour of a ten-minute private audience with ‘His Imperial and Royal Apostolic Majesty’ Franz Joseph I at the Hofburg palace. He was awarded the highest imperial distinction of the Grand Cross in the Order of Saint Stephen, and his secretary Drehmanns received the Officer’s Cross in the Order of Franz Joseph. The cardinal legate stayed in the Radetzky rooms in the imperial palace, where the German emperor had been a guest before him. The following day, Franz Joseph came to return his visit, according to Drehmanns an extraordinary courtesy extended to the Holy See. Van Rossum also – privately – received the heir to the throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, his wife and children, whom he presented with rosaries. Drehmanns wrote that they were all very devout Catholics, and that the family attended Holy Mass every day in the palace chapel.⁴⁶

The Austrian daily newspaper *Reichspost* of 11 September introduced the cardinal to the Austrian people as a dignified man of benevolent countenance, whose eyes radiated a friendly charm. It was much appreciated that Van Rossum gave his speeches, during the opening session on 11 September and the closing session on 14 September, in German.⁴⁷ The texts of these speeches, written by himself and corrected by a German abbot in Rome, had passed back and forth several times between Rome and Vienna before they were approved.⁴⁸ On both occasions, Van Rossum spoke before an audience of 30,000 people, who, Drehmanns assured his readers, had no difficulty understanding him, despite the fact that there were no loudspeakers at the time. Drehmanns added that it was a true pleasure “to hear [his] somewhat high-pitched, yet masculine and attractive voice: he immediately controlled the masses through his voice”.⁴⁹

Attendees at the eucharistic congress were expected to participate both in religious services and in socio-educational activities: the former by attending Mass and going to confession, the latter by taking part in meetings. The churches of Vienna had each been assigned to a specific nationality or linguistic group, and one of the ten cardinals present or another high prelate would say Mass there in the morning. Meetings were scheduled later in the morning and afternoon with more than fifty lectures and papers, all on subjects related to the eucharist. While the sessions for priests were more theological in nature, other gatherings highlighted the significance of the eucharist for the daily lives of women, families and workers. Members

46 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 57, 62–63; KDC, ROSS, no. 90: ‘Wohnungsliste Sept. 1912’; *ibid.*: minister’s permission to J. Drehmanns, 11 July 1913, to accept the Officer’s Cross in the Order of Franz Joseph. See also Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: ‘Genealogische kroniek van de familie Drehmanns’, vol. 2, [22–32].

47 *Reichspost*, 11 September 1912, 13.

48 For Van Rossum’s opening speech (after the reading of the papal brief), see Kammel (Hrsg.), *Bericht über den XXIII Internationalen Eucharistischen Kongress*, 94–100.

49 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 60.

of the imperial family, including Archduke Franz Ferdinand, were active participants and attended sessions. The programme also featured musical performances and art exhibitions.⁵⁰

Van Rossum only attended a few meetings. His programme, in addition to presiding at a pontifical High Mass every morning, consisted of a daily morning audience, at which he distributed gifts to the visitors, among whom the Dutch Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering and a group of about a hundred Dutch participants, and such things as attending musical performances and performing other obligations. On the evening of 11 September, he attended a reception hosted by a Catholic women's organisation in the Augarten palace, the residence of Archduchess Maria Josepha (the mother of the later emperor, Blessed Charles I, 1916–1918). He found time to indulge a few personal interests: he visited the Redemptorists – he went to say early Mass in the church of Sankt Maria am Gestade, where the relics of Saint Clement are kept, on 11 September – and the Redemptoristines near Vienna.⁵¹

Van Rossum concluded his closing speech on 14 September with a reference to the national anthem: “God’s sun, in peace, pours out its rays – upon a happy Austria!” According to the proceedings of the congress, his words were greeted with a great cheer: Van Rossum “conquered the hearts of the Viennese and of all participants in the congress as if by storm”.⁵² An imperial reception attended by 1400 guests was held in the Hofburg that night in honour of the legate. Drehmanns reported that the emperor congratulated him in person with the ‘magnificent’ congress. During the concluding procession the next day, 15 September, the Blessed Sacrament was driven through the city in a gilded crystal float which also carried a kneeling cardinal legate and Cardinal Nagl, drawn by eight black horses. The carriage was followed by a second carriage, drawn by eight white horses, bearing Emperor Franz Joseph and his heir apparent, Archduke Franz Ferdinand. This triumphal procession symbolised the establishment of Christ’s social kingdom.⁵³ It was also an expression of loyalty to the emperor. Dozens of groups, mostly organised along national lines, filed through

50 Chappin, ‘International Eucharistic Congresses’, 100; Kammel (Hrsg.), *Bericht über den XXIII Internationalen Eucharistischen Kongress*, 12–23. There were dozens of speakers, including Th. Esser O. P., Bishop Faulhaber, Albert Weiss O. P. and J. Schmidlin; the lay speakers, both men and women, were remarkably often aristocrats.

51 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 61; *Reichspost*, 11 September 1912.

52 Kammel (Hrsg.), *Bericht über den XXIII Internationalen Eucharistischen Kongress*, 707–712. Incidentally, Van Rossum occupies only a minor role in this commemorative volume. He is not mentioned in the preface of the proceedings, which is focused entirely on Cardinal Nagl, the archbishop of Vienna, F.G. Piffl, his successor in 1913, and the emperor and heir apparent. Van Rossum is mentioned for the first time on page 12, when the programme records the name “of the papal legate Wilhelm Cardinal van Rossum”, without further details as to his nationality, age or functions.

53 Chappin, ‘International Eucharistic Congresses’, 97; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 45–71.

the streets of the Austrian capital, despite incessant rain.⁵⁴ The *Reichspost* of 16 September 1912 spoke of 150,000 participants in the procession, including some 40,000 women. The day was concluded with a splendid gala dinner.⁵⁵

No expense or effort was spared to make the congress a great international success.⁵⁶ The proceedings mention press and propaganda centres in Berlin, Breslau, Cologne, Zurich, Paris, London, Rome, Madrid, Warsaw and other cities. Public relations in the Netherlands were coordinated from the Crosier Fathers' monastery in Uden. According to press and eye witness accounts, Van Rossum made an excellent impression at the congress and the newspapers described him as an affable and friendly man.⁵⁷

After his return to Rome, Van Rossum reported back to Pius X, who was "very satisfied", as Joseph Drehmanns wrote to his uncle, the bishop of Roermond. He added that the pope gave him a beautiful silver medal as a souvenir, and Van Rossum an elegant gold ring with diamonds.⁵⁸ After consulting with Pius X, Van Rossum was able to assure Franz Ferdinand of papal support for his Hungarian policies, which he had requested during the congress.⁵⁹ Von Pastor also confided to his diary that the pope was very pleased: it was a great consolation to him that the congress had been a success. He was delighted with the dignified example set on the occasion by the emperor, the archduke-heir apparent and his wife, and by the entire imperial family. "It was very gratifying for him to hear what a good impression Cardinal Van Rossum had made to all, particularly the archduke-heir to the throne. 'Speaking the language helps a great deal', he said."⁶⁰

Drehmanns wrote that, after his meeting with the emperor, Van Rossum would always retain "a great sympathy for this Monarch, who was much-maligned in Italy".

54 K. Kammel, XXIII. *Internationaler Eucharistischer Kongress in Wien. Festalbum mit 73 Abbildungen*, Vienna 1912.

55 *Reichspost*, 16 September 1912.

56 Kammel (Hrsg.), *Bericht über den XXIII Internationalen Eucharistischen Kongress*, 9.

57 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 56, 70.

58 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: 'Genealogische kroniek van de familie Drehmanns', vol. 2, [29].

The pope reportedly greeted Drehmanns with "O ecco il cavaliere" (Here he is, the knight!). This possibly explains his nickname "das Ritterlein" (the little knight), which Van Rossum and the Sisters of Ingenbohl used for him. See Chapter 19.6.

59 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder E. 'Lettere principi e monarchi': W. van Rossum to Archduke Franz Ferdinand, 12 October 1912; Archduke Franz Ferdinand to W. van Rossum, 20 October 1912, on the "false and shameful drive" of the Hungarians against the Romanians and an appointment to a vacant see. Franz Ferdinand asked Van Rossum to present his letter to the pope, but *not* to the secretary of state; W. van Rossum to Archduke Franz Ferdinand, 28 October 1912, says that the pope will take his desires into account to the extent that he can. Van Rossum concluded the letter with the words, "May God give that the Balkan War will not see a victory of schism over the crescent moon [Turkey], as Russia will surely have a hand in that. That would be a bad thing for the Church and for Austria!"

60 Wühr (Hrsg.), *Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor*, 559 and 568 on the private audience of 10 December 1912.

See also AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, 1914, rubr. 12, fasc. 2, f 191–201: nuncio's final report.

The congress had made an indelible impression on him. And on Drehmanns, who devoted a quarter of his biography of Van Rossum to it.⁶¹ Large pictures from Kammel's commemorative volume decorated the walls of his brother Henri's house, whose children would grow up surrounded by images of the Vienna congress and the glories – then long past – of the Habsburg empire.⁶²

3 On his own 'Protestant' soil: visit to the Netherlands in 1913

After the congress of Vienna, it was Van Rossum's home country's turn to prepare its first cardinal a grand welcome in an "impressive triumphal march".⁶³ Van Rossum reserved nearly two months to visit the country and its Catholic population and to receive their homage. Protestants also took note of the event, so that the entire country adopted the attitude which "one may mutually expect in this free land of the Netherlands", in the words of Baron Antoine van Wijnbergen, a Catholic politician and member of parliament.⁶⁴ The national newspapers *De Tijd* and *De Maasbode* published extra editions, but even non-Catholic papers such as *Algemeen Handelsblad* and *Telegraaf* carried biographies and reports on the programme of the cardinal's visit.⁶⁵

The train from Cologne carrying Van Rossum pulled into Zevenaar, the first station across the border, on Friday 4 July, a wet day. The cardinal was in the company of Joseph Drehmanns and his brother Henri Drehmanns, who had been chosen as his gentleman. The latter would continue to fulfil this ceremonial function for the rest of his life whenever the cardinal was on Dutch soil. Van Rossum, in travel costume – black cassock with purple trimmings, red skullcap and red gloves – was welcomed by Antonius Schaeppman, president of the major seminary of the archdiocese of Utrecht, and his train-bearer Jan Smit, representing the archdiocese, and by the provincial of the Redemptorists, Augustus Beukers. The party then continued its journey to Utrecht, where Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering received them in the archiepiscopal palace on Maliebaan.⁶⁶

That same afternoon, Van Rossum travelled on to the capital, Amsterdam, where he was welcomed by Bishop Augustinus Callier of Haarlem, prominent clerics, the Catholic members of the city council and other dignitaries. Everywhere he went, loud cheers could be heard and the parish priests or mayors of the towns he passed at

61 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 45–70.

62 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: 'Genealogische kroniek van de familie Drehmanns', vol. 2, [31].

63 Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 556–557.

64 *Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal*, 23rd session, 12 February 1913, speech by A. van Wijnbergen, 483.

65 See for example *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 5 July 1913.

66 *De Maasbode*, 4 July 1913.

intermediate stations were in attendance to receive him, but the welcome prepared for him in Amsterdam overshadowed them all. Van Rossum stayed in the Redemptorist house on Keizersgracht. His younger brother Jan and his family also attended the Mass he said in the monastery church. On Sunday evening, Van Rossum was welcomed by thousands of members of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family, a Redemptorist-led religious sodality, in the church of Saint Willibrord buiten de Veste, then the largest Catholic church of the capital.⁶⁷

The following day, the cardinal visited the Haarlem major seminary of Warmond. His decision to choose this college for his first official visit was greatly appreciated by its president, Henri Taskin, who nervously awaited the guest. A seminarian who witnessed the event, one of the canopy bearers, wrote to his brother that they had had to keep the visit a secret “out of deference to the Queen”, because protocol dictated that a prince of the church should first be honoured by the court when visiting the Netherlands. The seminary had been a hive of activity for a week before the visit, to decorate the building and make it presentable. A bust of the pope was surrounded by metres-high palm trees and five hundred white and red roses; a statue of the queen was placed alongside it. An awning made of carpets was fixed above the



Van Rossum's brother Jan and his family, Amsterdam. A picture of the cardinal adorns the wall

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 and 5 July 1913.

main entrance and the surrounding area was decorated with three hundred metres of garlands.⁶⁸

A quarter of an hour before the cardinal's arrival, all the bells were rung continuously – as they were in the villages he passed through. When he arrived, all the seminarians and other bystanders knelt down to receive the blessing of “the Dutch Cardinal, on his own ‘Protestant’ soil”. “Some wept with emotion, or joy, or excitement, it was so strange all this, the cheering and the sumptuousness.” The seminarian “still [recognised] the Redemptorist” in Van Rossum’s speech, but he was struck mainly by his beautiful clear voice and his eloquence, and he found it easy to believe that the Viennese had been “enraptured”. He thought the cardinal had “a truly regal bearing and figure” and was very friendly. When Van Rossum congratulated the prefect with his students, the prefect burst out in tears, to the surprise of the letter writer who recorded it. Then the cardinal personally presented a medal to all three hundred students of Warmond and the students of the minor seminary of Hageveld, also present; he particularly enjoyed greeting the little boys. During the concluding dinner with the high prelates and professors, Van Rossum reportedly said that, of all seminaries in Christendom, Warmond had the best reputation in Rome, “also because it had no truck with modernism”. The excitement reached a high point at his departure, according to the seminarian, but he added that Bishop Callier “wore a sour smile” as he left half an hour later.⁶⁹

In fact, it was a strategic decision by Van Rossum to go first to the diocese of Haarlem, the Dutch axis of antimodernism, where Benigni’s methods of slander and malicious denunciations were in vogue. The principal instigator of this was M.A. Thompson, a priest of the diocese and editor-in-chief of *De Maasbode* up to 1912. He had to relinquish this post, in part due to Van Rossum’s intervention, and then began a journal of his own called *Rome*, which continued to lash out against Catholic priests and laypeople. Bishop Callier protected Thompson through thick and thin, possibly due to the influence of his vicar general, Mathias Möllmann, who was present in Warmond on 7 July.⁷⁰ Van Rossum probably reprimanded them on that occasion and warned them not to jeopardise the perception of unity among Dutch Catholics

68 KDC, A.A. van den Berg Papers, no. 49: Antoon van den Berg to his priest brother, 10 July 1913; *Herinnering aan de plechtige hulding van Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal van Rossum, door de kweekelingen der beide seminariën van het bisdom Haarlem, ter gelegenheid van het heugelijk bezoek door Zijne Eminentie gebracht aan het Groot Seminarie te Warmond, op den 7en juli 1913* (Haarlem 1913), 8.

69 *Ibid.*

70 De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 252–263: chapter 10: ‘De kardinaal en de ketterjager. Het duel tussen W.M. van Rossum en M.A. Thompson, 1912–1914’; Erik Sengers, *Roomsch socioloog – sociale bisschop. Joannes Aengenent als ideoloog en bestuurder van de katholieke sociale beweging 1873–1935* (Hilversum 2016), 48–60. Thompson had conducted an integralist campaign against the Warmond professors Van der Lans, Vlaming and G. van Noort the previous years; Van der Lans and Vlaming departed in 1906, Van Noort in 1908, followed by J. Beysens in 1910.



Visit to the major seminary of Warmond, 7 July 1913

and the festive character of his tour. Over the weeks that followed, he would meet many Dutch priests, some of whom he had supported against attacks by Thompson, such as the former editor-in-chief of the competing newspaper *De Tijd*, Piet Geurts.⁷¹

Back in Amsterdam, Van Rossum, accompanied by his confreres Augustus Beukers, Bishop Meeuwissen and Father Lohmeijer, visited the Begijnhof (the beguinage). Afterwards, they were guests at a festive meeting in the Concertgebouw concert hall, hosted by the R.K. Werkliedenvereniging, the Catholic workers' union, and the R.K. Volksbond, a Catholic organisation for the lower middle classes. The president of the Volksbond, Jan Smit, asked the cardinal to bless the development of "purely Catholic Organisations" of both men and women. On 9 July, Van Rossum granted audiences in the Redemptorist monastery in Amsterdam, where he received the Catholic ministers Robert Regout and Maximilien Kolkman together with the Catholic political leader, Father Willem Nolens. On 11 July he visited the Catholic boys' orphanage on Lauriergracht and on Sunday 13 July he attended a gathering in the hall of the St. Jozefsgezellen (Saint Joseph's Jour-

71 Others who were caught in Thompson's crosshairs were the leaders of the interconfessional trade unions, Alphons Ariëns and Henri Poels, and the exegete D. Sloet, president of Peter Canisius's Apologetic Society. De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 252–263.

neymen's Society), where he was addressed by Rector L. Beysens.⁷² During this visit, Van Rossum called on the young tradesmen not to strive “for the improvement of your position simply by calling for higher wages; but instead strive for it through increasing your expertise and ennobling your craftsmanship”. He also emphasised that they should regard religious education as “one of the most valuable goods”.⁷³

A few days earlier, on 10 July 1913, Queen Wilhelmina granted him the promised audience. Van Rossum travelled from the nunciature to the palace in The Hague in a court carriage. So little publicity was given to the visit in the surge of articles and publications accompanying the cardinal's visit that the impression could later arise that the queen and the cardinal only met for the first time in 1929.⁷⁴ During the audience, which was also attended by the prince consort, the cardinal – wearing the Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Stephen that he had been given by Emperor Franz Joseph I in Vienna the year before – received the highest royal distinction of Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Dutch Lion out of the hands of a “gracious” Queen Wilhelmina.⁷⁵ He was received by the queen-mother, Emma, in Soestdijk palace near Utrecht a few days later.

On 14 July, Van Rossum left Amsterdam and travelled to Rotterdam. He received the editors of *De Maasbode*, whom he praised for the good work they did. When this was interpreted as expressing a preference for this newspaper, he let it be known to *Het Centrum* that all newspapers were “equally dear” to his heart. But Thompson construed his praise for *De Maasbode* as support for himself and his poisonous journal *Rome*. This again caused annoyance and led to a public disavowal of this suggestion by Van Rossum.⁷⁶

Around this time, Thompson launched an attack on Dominicus Sloet, and, in doing so, also on Van Rossum. According to Thompson, Sloet's publication *Heeft Jezus het pausschap niet gesticht?* (‘Did Jesus not found the papacy?’), which was dedicated to Van Rossum, clearly contained modernist statements akin to those defended by Loisy. A cardinal who defended such a work could not himself be free of modernist stain.⁷⁷ This allegation was further specified in a letter by the Redemptorist Th.B. ten Have, a follower of Thompson's, to Cardinal Merry del Val, in which he accused

72 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 5 July 1913; *Gedenkboek ter gelegenheid van het eerste bezoek van Zijne Eminentie Kardinaal W. van Rossum aan Amsterdam, juli 1913*, Amsterdam 1913.

73 Amsterdam, City Archives, 511 *Archive of Sint Jozef Gezellenvereniging and related organisations*, no. 317. The five-page speech is in Van Rossum's handwriting.

74 See Chappin, ‘International Eucharistic Congresses’, 107.

75 *De Tijd*, 26 June and 11 July 1913.

76 *De Maasbode*, 21 August 1913, evening paper; *Het Centrum*, 6 September 1913.

77 Sloet had previously sought Van Rossum's support due to attacks by Thompson. See KDC, ROSS, no. 22: D. Sloet to W. van Rossum, 11 December 1912. A note at the front shows that the apologetic work *Heeft Jezus het pausschap niet gesticht?* (Utrecht / 's-Hertogenbosch 1913) was “dedicated as a humble »

Van Rossum of ‘semi-modernism’.⁷⁸ The denunciation does not appear to have had any consequences for Van Rossum, and it may be doubted that the secretary of state took it seriously. Nonetheless, Van Rossum now experienced that the antimodernist witch hunt could also turn against him.

The diocese of Breda was the scene at this time of a conflict between Bishop Petrus Leijten and the socially minded liberal Catholic solicitor Hendrik Albert van Dalsum from Zeelandic Flanders. The bishop believed that Van Dalsum’s views were contrary to ‘right doctrine’. The conflict was no doubt discussed when Van Rossum called on Leijten on 17 July. Van Dalsum had been barred from receiving the sacraments in 1910 on account of articles in his journal *De Volkswil* (‘The Will of the People’), until he recanted. Two years later, the bishop also refused to approve Van Dalsum’s pamphlet *Er is geene tegenstelling tusschen de beginselen van de Fransche Revolutie en die van het Evangelie* (‘There is no conflict between the principles of the French Revolution and those of the Gospel’). Van Dalsum published the pamphlet anyway, and the Redemptorist Christiaan Boomaars then delated the work to the Index on 12 February 1913. The case was naturally also seen by Van Rossum, who was a member of this congregation. Boomaars’s letter was discussed by the Congregation of the Index two days later, and the consultor Laurentius Janssens was charged with drafting a report or *votum*. Janssens’s verdict was devastating. Leijten had already censured the book, but Janssens suggested the pamphlet should also be condemned by the Index, to vindicate the bishop and his actions. On 16 June 1913, the secretary of the Index, Thomas Esser, brought the case before the general congregation of this dicastery, which condemned the work. Van Rossum was one of those who voted for condemnation. Van Dalsum was not aware of this, and vainly sought Van Rossum’s support when the latter visited the Netherlands. According to Van Dalsum, he wrote to Van Rossum on several occasions to defend himself, including on 13 August 1913. He received no reply.⁷⁹

On 20 July, Van Rossum travelled to ’s-Hertogenbosch, where he was received by Bishop Wilhelmus van de Ven. Pius X had congratulated Van de Ven in 1910 on the fiftieth anniversary of his priestly ordination, adding that he was most gratified that the bishop’s flourishing diocese, through his wise government and vigilance, had

» homage” to the cardinal as “the Promoter of the Work for the Preservation of the Faith in Rome”.

See also Rogier, De Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 556–557.

78 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1913, rubr. 2, f 21–34; Th. ten Have to R. Merry del Val, 22 September 1913.

See also De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 263–265. AGHR, PH VII H. *Personalialia Oomen*, P.: P. Oomen to P. Murray, Amsterdam 1 November 1909, in which Oomen writes that Van Rossum took a very dim view of Ten Have. So did Oomen: “indeed he has few attractive qualities”.

79 Jan de Kort, *De plaats van het geloof in het leven van Hendrik Albert van Dalsum (1868–1944)*. *De worsteling van een liberaal katholiek met geloof en moderniteit* (Tilburg 2009), 213–219, 295–306, 320–322.

The letters by Van Dalsum to Van Rossum mentioned here could not be located.

remained almost entirely free of the ‘modernistic pest’.⁸⁰ As in the other dioceses, the cardinal visited the major seminary. He was also received in the Norbertine abbey of Berne; an order whose cardinal protector he would become within the year.⁸¹

His official visit to the archdiocese of Utrecht started on 24 July 1913, at his own former minor seminary of Culemborg. After privately meeting his former fellow student, Archbishop Van de Wetering, he was addressed by the president, Joannes van Schaik: “Our life here was once yours, for six years, in the chapel and in recreation, in the lecture halls and study halls, and in the small sanctuary where you led your fellow sodality members in praises of the Immaculate Virgin-Mother. Your Eminence has never forgotten this, even though it is forty years ago that you left this place to join the training school for higher Evangelical perfection.”⁸² In his response, Van Rossum said he was touched – “My heart is full” –, particularly because of the students’ devotion “to our Holy Catholic Faith”. He told them to be respectful of their professors, to study zealously, to apply themselves to virtues such as obedience and chastity and to devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to Mary. He also gave them nine ‘cardinal’s days’ of holidays, a gift greeted with great jubilation, and again personally presented each student with a medal of the feasts of Constantine blessed by the pope, which came with an indulgence.⁸³

As he left Culemborg, the cardinal was accompanied by a great procession of local boys on carthorses while the local brass band played. As during his train journeys, the party stopped briefly in every place as the bells tolled, and the parish priest or mayor addressed a few words to the high visitor. The cardinal and his retinue eventually reached the archiepiscopal palace on Maliebaan in Utrecht, decorated for the occasion with many electric lights. Van Rossum received a “majestic” homage such as had not been seen in Utrecht for generations, *Het Centrum* reported. Eighty Catholic associations presented themselves, equipped with banners and lanterns, from shopkeepers’ associations to youth groups, teaching unions to soldiers’ associations, workers’ unions to sodalities, political associations to temperance societies, students to charitable organisations. They filed past the palace twice in their thousands to greet “their cardinal”, flanked on his right by Archbishop Van de Wetering, waving in acknowledgement of their homage. After the ‘Tu es Petrus’, the Dutch national anthem was played, and Van Rossum loudly roared “Long live Queen Wilhelmina!”, which was greeted with great enthusiasm. The next day there was another lengthy

80 Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Bd. 3, 111.

81 *De Maasbode*, 9 July 1913; *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 5 July 1913. In a short period of time, Van Rossum became cardinal protector of four other religious institutes in the diocese of ‘s-Hertogenbosch.

See Chapter 18.1.

82 HUA, *Utrecht Archdiocesan Archive, seminaries 1818–1975*, 2.1.2.1.3, no. 28: speech by J.A.S. van Schaik.

83 *Het Centrum*, 25 July 1913.

audience in the Maliebaan palace, attended by ecclesiastical and lay dignitaries. Van Rossum praised the editor-in-chief of *Het Centrum*, Petrus Steenhoff, also for the editors' commitment to the Work for the Preservation of the Faith in Rome.⁸⁴

On Saturday 26 July, Van Rossum visited his native town of Zwolle, which similarly was abundantly decorated with banners and flags. The crowds gazed with amazement at the car that drove the cardinal through the city. He was received by Dean Nicolaas van Balen and stayed in the presbytery on Nieuwstraat, a place he had often visited as a child when the former Saint Michael's church was still standing. One of his first activities was to visit his uncle Jaap, his father's brother, followed by a visit to his stepfather and half-brother Johan Janssen. It was an emotional moment for all.⁸⁵ In the evening, the local associations paraded, banners afloat, from Nieuwstraat to



Visit to Uncle Jaap, Zwolle, 1913

Badhuiswal, where Van Rossum visited the Van der Biesen-Schaepman family who had attended his creation as a cardinal in 1911.⁸⁶ One of the curates, Johannes Oosterbaan, pointed out in his ensuing speech that boys from poor families or boys who lived in difficult circumstances could go very far in the church through virtue and

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; see also *Het Centrum*, 6 September 1913 and 30 October 1911.

⁸⁵ Erdtsieck, *Zwolle in geel-wit*, 14. See also Chapter 1.4.

⁸⁶ CO, *Schaepman family archive*, no. 75.

by studying hard, as the cardinal's career testified. The following day, Van Rossum presided at a pontifical High Mass in the new Saint Michael's church, built by Van Balen in 1892. Despite the ban on processions that was in place in the northern provinces of the Netherlands, the celebrants and a choir walked to the church in procession. Afterwards, the cardinal granted audiences in the presbytery of Saint Michael's, receiving among others the mayor and the city councillors of Zwolle.⁸⁷ Then he was the guest of honour in the church and monastery of the Dominicans in the Zwolle neighbourhood of Assendorp, where he was presented with a painting of his parental home in Hagelsteeg, since destroyed in a fire. The provincial, Antoninus ter Maat, said in his address that the Dominicans were grateful to the pope for raising "a fellow religious" to the cardinalate, setting an example for all religious.⁸⁸

The next morning, Van Rossum said a low Mass in the convent on Gasthuisplein, attended by his sister, Sister Gerulpha, and his two nieces, Sisters Theodora and Josephine, all Sisters of Charity of Tilburg. Afterwards, he received all the orphans of Zwolle individually, no doubt reflecting on the fact that he had once been one of them.⁸⁹

He then departed by train for the south, and was welcomed in Roermond on 28 July 1913 under triumphal arches bearing the text, "We honour the Pope in his Cardinal". The familiar scenes of rapturous welcome were repeated and Van Rossum was acclaimed by dozens of deputations, associations bearing banners, a mounted guard of honour, the brass band, a long line of little girls in bridal dresses, and a great multitude of the people. The annals of the Roermond Redemptorist monastery recount that the students of the juvenate, their director Jan Kronenburg and the other members of the community were lined up to receive him. Van Rossum immediately said that, despite the high dignity to which Divine Providence had called him, he would always remain their confrere. During the festive banquet held the following day, the community asked him to urge the pope to grant the privilege of a special votive Mass for their chapel of Our Lady in the Sand. "Then the community spent a convivial time together, further enhanced by cigars of the 'Kardinaal van Rossum' brand." Given the bitter 'smoking question' in the Dutch province back in the 1890s, Kronenburg and Van Rossum must have realised the irony of this special "Fine 3-cent cigar – Amsterdam craftsmanship".⁹⁰ That night, there was a magnificent fireworks display, inter-

87 Erdtsieck, *Zwolle in geel-wit*, 14.

88 'Z.Em. Kardinaal van Rossum in het Dominikanenklooster te Zwolle', in: *De rozenkrans*, 35(1913), no. 9, 227–239; *Suolla catholica*, p. 1. The painting was by his former neighbour Jurriejan Nooter.

89 Erdtsieck, *Zwolle in geel-wit*, 14.

90 *Het Centrum*, 13 May 1913. J.B.J. Esselaar of Kloveniersburgwal in Amsterdam launched a 'Kardinaal van Rossum' cigar on the occasion of the cardinal's visit. See also Chapter 5.4.

laced with music and singing. The streets around the monastery garden had never been so busy.

Van Rossum was received by Bishop Joseph Drehmanns the following day. After Mass, the cardinal addressed the congregation in the church and visited Louisa House – run by the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg – and the major seminary. As Van Rossum departed for Valkenburg that evening, “his nephew L. Janssen, a student in the Juvenate, presented him with a bouquet of flowers to bid him farewell” as he reached the municipal boundary.⁹¹ This nephew, his half-brother’s son, later left the Redemptorist minor seminary after two and a half years.⁹² Van Rossum returned to Roermond a week later, this time to bury Bishop Drehmanns, who had died suddenly on 5 August 1913. Van Rossum presided over the Requiem Mass on 8 August, in the presence of internuncio Giovanni Tacci, Archbishop Van de Wetering and Bishop Martin-Hubert Rutten of Liège.⁹³

A few days later, the cardinal blessed the first stone of a social housing project undertaken by the mine workers’ association Ons Limburg (‘Our Limburg’) in Hoensbroek, in the heart of the Limburg mining area. It was an initiative of Henri Poels’s, whom Van Rossum now encountered in a wholly different context and function than before in Rome. Poels was no longer active as an exegete – although he retained his post as a consultor of the Biblical Commission – but had become a robust social leader who was fighting the cause of the mineworkers and of interconfessional unions.⁹⁴ They arrived together in Hoensbroek by car. The ceremony was attended by many members of the Limburg elite, including the Catholic politicians Nolens and Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, who would become the Netherlands’ first Catholic prime minister in 1918, and his father, the governor of Limburg, Gustave Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, Professor Geurts, Count Arthur de Marchant et d’Ansembourg, gentleman-in-waiting to the queen, and the architect Jan Stuyt. Three streets in the new estate were named after Van Rossum, Poels and Stuyt. A large slab with an inscription today still testifies to the ceremony, which took place after Mass, a dinner and a parade.⁹⁵

Van Rossum warmly recommended the Catholic unions to the mineworkers in attendance. But he also acknowledged that local circumstances might require joining an interconfessional Christian union in addition to the Catholic vocational organisations; the local bishop could dispense in such situations. But if the recently deceased Bishop Drehmanns’s successor were to prove reluctant to do this, Van Ros-

91 ENK, ANPR, no. 13003.

92 ENK, ANPR, no. 5081, f 114. Lambertus Antonius Janssen attended the juvenate from 19 October 1912 to 3 April 1915.

93 ENK, ANPR, no. 13003.

94 Colsen, *Poels*, 528–533.

95 *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 24 August 1913, carried a photo of the placing of the first stone.

sum added, the mineworkers would have to accept his decision.⁹⁶ The last of the official ceremonies was held a week later, on 17 August, when Van Rossum was received with great pomp in Maastricht. He spent a few more days in Wittem before traveling on to Belgium to visit the Redemptorists and Redemptoristines there.⁹⁷

Dutch Catholics could look back on the visit with satisfaction. His journey made Van Rossum an icon of Dutch Catholicism. Never before had the country welcomed a native cardinal, as *Het Centrum* mused. “In Cardinal Van Rossum, Dutch Catholicism was able for the first time to honour one of its own sons as a prince of the church. And it did this so generally, spontaneously and magnificently that the cardinal’s tour has been rightly called one great triumphal procession.”⁹⁸ During countless parades, Dutch Catholics showed that they had grown in self-confidence and organisation, as the many Catholic associations testified. Organisations like the Union of Catholic Students’ Unions in the Netherlands successfully asked Van Rossum to be their patron.⁹⁹

The significance of Van Rossum’s visit lay primarily in the fact that Dutch Catholics experienced more clearly than ever before that they formed one group. No longer were they just parishioners or members of a particular diocese, but they had discovered the common identity of being Catholic Dutch subjects, who simultaneously belonged to the universal Catholic church. There was now one national figure with whom they could identify. Advertisements in newspapers and journals for the cardinal’s portrait, which showed him wearing the insignia of his knighthood, the commemorative volumes, and the ‘Cardinal Van Rossum cigar’ all enhanced a sense of communality. Precisely because he was a cardinal of the curia, Van Rossum bound Dutch Catholics specifically to Rome.

Care was taken during the visit not to provoke Dutch Protestants. The visit had been strategically planned to take place just after the elections, so that it could not be used politically either to create an anti-Catholic atmosphere or recruit Catholic votes. And yet a liberal member of parliament, Liefstinck, regarded it as a form of

96 *Nieuwe Venlosche Courant*, 2 August 1913; *Het Centrum*, 12 August 1913.

97 Van Rossum probably also visited the Belgian cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier to discuss antimodernist accusations. See ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder F. ‘Lettre private senza data’: D. Mercier to W. van Rossum, ‘Immaculée Conception’ [8 September, no year, but probably 1913 or 1914]. In his letter, Mercier referred to an “entretien intime” (a private meeting) with Van Rossum. He sought Van Rossum’s support and defended himself against criticism of his Institut de St. Thomas and against antimodernist attacks on his person. He asked him whether it would be wise to send Cardinal De Lai an “explanatory memorandum for reasons of prudence”.

98 *Het Centrum*, 25 August 1913.

99 See *Het Roomsche studentenblad*, 4(1913/14), no. 1(18 Oct. 1913), 1. Cardinal Van Rossum featured on the title page as patron of the journal up to and including volume 16(1925/26).

political galvanisation which served Catholics well.¹⁰⁰ The audience granted by the queen and the awarding of a high distinction to Van Rossum strengthened Catholics in their belief that their religious identity did not mean they could not be sincere patriots. To obviate accusations of ultramontanism, the organisers and Van Rossum frequently mentioned the royal family whenever the cardinal's praises were sung. The cardinal was often heard shouting 'Long live Queen Wilhelmina', and every time the Dutch Catholic community's unofficial anthem 'Aan U o Koning der Eeuwen' ('To you, O King of the Ages') was sung, it was followed by 'Wilhelmus', the national anthem.¹⁰¹

1913 marked the centenary of the foundation of the Dutch kingdom. The two-volume publication *Het Katholiek Nederland 1813–1913. Ter blijde herinnering aan het eerste eeuwfeest onzer nationale onafhankelijkheid* ('Dutch Catholicism 1813–1913. In joyful commemoration of the first centenary of our national independence'), which saw the light on this occasion, was "respectfully dedicated to His Eminence Cardinal W.M. van Rossum and their Lordships the Bishops of the Netherlands". The frontispiece bore a photograph of the cardinal, followed by a preface by Van Rossum, dated Wittem, 15 August 1913. The cardinal, too, was greatly satisfied at how his visit had gone. He had observed that the position of Catholics in the Netherlands had greatly improved compared to fifty years previously – in his youth, this kind of homage would not have been possible. But he warned that Catholics needed to be vigilant of the dangers that threatened the faith: mixed marriages, neutral schools, liberal newspapers, the hostile press and liberal, semi-liberal or naturalist opinions. Through prayer and the frequent reception of the sacraments, strengthened by the invocation of Mary, "they will be true warriors for Christ".¹⁰² He expressed thanks for the honours that he had received, but said they belonged by rights to the pope in Rome: he would transmit the enthusiasm and homage received in the Netherlands to Pius X.

In six weeks' time, Van Rossum had visited all the dioceses and the most important cities of the country. His programme shows where his priorities lay: education in the diocesan seminaries and the social question, specifically the formation and interests of Catholic workers, although he remained diplomatic and praised both the Leiden and the Limburg schools. He silenced the antimodernist circle around Thompson, improving the atmosphere and unity among Dutch Catholics. For Van Rossum personally, his journey gave him an opportunity to visit the Dutch Redemptorist and Redemptoristine monasteries, but above all, to revisit places and people

¹⁰⁰ *Handelingen van de Tweede Kamer der Staten Generaal*, 28th session, 9 December 1913, speech by F. Liefstinck (Liberal Union), 662.

¹⁰¹ *Het Centrum*, 25 July 1913.

¹⁰² Den Haag 1913. The volumes were published by an editorial committee under J.A. Loeff.

from his past: his native town of Zwolle – he would never see it again –, Culemborg, and his relatives; the latter in Zwolle and Amsterdam, or carefully planned in some station waiting room.¹⁰³

It was a great surprise to many that Pius X chose the Dutchman Willem van Rossum in 1911 to make him a cardinal. But the Dutch bishops had already been trying to secure a cardinal's hat for some time, preferably for the incumbent of the see of Utrecht, Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering, to encourage the emancipation of Dutch Catholics. Pius X was amenable to their plan, but he chose Van Rossum instead, a decision that also allowed him to honour the Redemptorist congregation.

More important than this, however, was the trust the pope vested in this Dutch Redemptorist. He regarded him as a valuable addition to the College of Cardinals, as a fellow protagonist of his antimodernist policy, a devotionally minded religious and a hardworking scholar who was well-versed in church doctrine and canon law. The necessity of having a German-speaking cardinal for the politically important international eucharistic congress in Vienna in 1912 was probably the decisive factor in making up the pope's mind about appointing Van Rossum. The cardinal played his new role with verve, as a public figure whose task it was to strengthen the reputation and the prestige of the church.

For Dutch Catholics in their stride towards an equal place in Dutch society alongside the Protestant denominations, the appointment of a prince of the church of their own was a great boost to their self-confidence. During his journey through his home country in 1913, he became an icon that strengthened unity among Catholics. He did so also by standing up to antimodernist agitation within the Dutch clergy and by strengthening ties with Rome.

¹⁰³ *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 16 July 1913.

A cardinal of the curia (1911–1918)

Two years after his creation as a cardinal, in late 1913, Van Rossum had still not been appointed to any influential position at the head of a dicastery of the curia. He did become a member of the Holy Office that year, where he had worked as a consultant for fifteen years. When the prefect of the Congregation for Religious, Cardinal Vives y Tutó, died in 1913, Van Rossum seemed the obvious candidate to succeed him, given his membership of this body and long experience in the government of his own Redemptorist congregation. Moreover, many religious congregations and orders in short succession had asked him to be their cardinal protector.¹ According to Drehmanns, Pius x had indeed intended to appoint him to this position, but was dissuaded by unnamed officials of the curia. Drehmanns wrote that Van Rossum's career was purposely frustrated by "opposition", because he was a foreigner and a religious, and because he had a promising future ahead of him. This is why his every promotion was systematically blocked, and Pius x had been unable to circumvent this.² Not Van Rossum, but Ottavio Cagiano de Azevedo, a fellow member of the Congregation for Religious who had been created a cardinal in 1905, succeeded Vives in 1913.

1 President of the Pontifical Biblical Commission

But Van Rossum did ultimately receive an important post during Pius x's pontificate. He had been a member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission since 1912, under the presidency of Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro. When Rampolla died on 16 December 1913, Van Rossum was appointed his successor on 13 January 1914; his friend, the Thomist Lorenzelli, became a member of the commission on the same day.³ Van Rossum was studying the epistle to the Hebrews at the time. Given the dating of his notes, this was perhaps meant as a test of his competence – at his own behest or the

1 He would ultimately become the protector of 31 religious institutes. See Chapter 18.1.

2 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 42; Idem, 'Beschouwingen over de missieactie van Kardinaal van Rossum', in: *Missie-actie. Orgaan van de Priestermissiebond in Nederland*, 9(1954), no. 33(July), 377–382.

3 *AAS*, 6(1914), 22. The other members were Merry del Val and Lugari. Laurentius Janssens O.S.B. was the secretary. See also Chapter 20.2.

pope's – before being given the position of president.⁴ The commission had no fixed offices; meetings were held in one of the rooms of the Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano.⁵

The establishment of the Biblical Commission has been discussed above.⁶ The commission had the right to bestow academic degrees in exegesis. In addition, its task during Pius X's pontificate was to further and guide the study of the Bible and to guard against possible modernist influence, for instance through the historical-critical method. Apart from the Biblical Commission, there was the *Biblicum* or Biblical Institute, founded in Rome in 1909 and entrusted to the Jesuits. It was run by the conservative Father Leopold Fonck. He had been received in audience by Pius X on 14 February 1909 to discuss his proposal for the erection of this educational institute as part of the Gregorian University, and the pope approved this plan and promulgated it in the apostolic letter *Vinea Electa* of 7 May 1909. One of the stipulations was that the institute would depend on the Biblical Commission for the awarding of academic degrees.⁷

Van Rossum would be president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission for eighteen years. The exegete Marie-Joseph Lagrange, director of the *École biblique* in Jerusalem, suggested in 1934 that the commission did very little during this period, as Biblical research was stultified by the alleged threat of antimodernist suspicions.⁸ Unfortunately, I have not been able to verify this supposition as the archive of the Biblical Commission could not be consulted; it appears to be lost.⁹

One possible reason for this was the commission's lack, from the very beginning, of premises of its own. When a new secretary was appointed in 1925, Jean-Baptiste Frey, he asked Van Rossum for an office for the commission. Up to that point, the consultors had met in varying halls of the Apostolic Palace and the archives were kept by the secretary. But the archive had at that point become so voluminous that it no longer fitted into a single chest. Moreover, he felt it was not right that the archive should be in the keep of a private individual, given the risk that it might be lost if

4 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder 'Lettere Ufficiali varie e non datate': exegetical notes, December 1913 – January 1914.

5 *Annuario Pontificio* 1913, 547–549.

6 Chapter 7.3–4.

7 Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista*, 220; Gilbert, *L'Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 11–29. Jan Smit was among the first students in 1909. He was one of the first to obtain his doctorate from the Pontifical Biblical Commission, on 28 November 1912, on a dissertation entitled 'De daemoniacis in historia evangelica' (there is a copy in KDC, *Uncatalogued Papers (LARC)*, no. 6253). In 1934, when the *Biblicum* celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, he was asked to preside at the festive Mass as a canon of Saint Peter's. Gilbert, *L'Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 84.

8 Bernard Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie XI', in: Achille Ratti, *Pape Pie XI. Actes du colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome. 15–18 mars 1989* (Rome 1996), 255–276, at 263–264. See also Chapter 20.2.

9 Both the Holy Office and the AAV informed me that they do not have the archive of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, nor do they know where it is.

the secretary died.¹⁰ Incidentally, Van Rossum also kept papers relating to the commission in his own archive. They were transferred to the Biblical Commission by the secretary of Propaganda Fide after the cardinal's death.¹¹

The fact that the archive of the commission was growing does warrant the conclusion that this body was more active than Lagrange supposed. Other information confirms this. Francesco Turvasi consulted the archive in the 1960s, with the permission of the then president, Cardinal Eugène Tisserant.¹² Tisserant had asked the secretary of the commission, the Dominican Jacques-Marie Vosté, back in 1949 and 1950 to organise the archive. Vosté reported to him on 22 July 1950: "All files of the meetings of the Biblical Commission have been classified and catalogued. The card files – 201 cards – are at your disposal." Six days later, Vosté added that the classification of the correspondence and manuscripts was also progressing satisfactorily.¹³ It is clear from these passages that the archive was substantial, and it might have shed new light on Van Rossum's influence on exegetical studies during his presidency.

Although there is little to go on with regard to the precise nature of the commission's activities, it is clear from other sources that Van Rossum soon became embroiled in a power struggle between the Biblical Commission and the Biblicum on the right to award academic degrees.¹⁴ After his appointment as president in 1914, Van Rossum and Fonck discussed relations between the two institutes. Fonck, evaluating the Biblical Institute's first five years, was concerned primarily by the low number of students who completed the three-year course. He believed that numbers could be higher if the Biblicum were itself able to award degrees, which would also have a positive effect on the quality of its publications.¹⁵ Soon afterwards, student enrolment plummeted even further due to the outbreak of the world war. Moreover, all professors of German and Austro-Hungarian extraction had to leave the country in 1915, when Italy declared war on these states – Fonck himself went to Zurich.

In early 1916, Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, Franz Xaver Wernz's successor as superior general of the Jesuits, wrote from Switzerland to Secretary of State Gasparri, asking him to defer a decision on the final division of duties between the two institutes

10 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder J. 'Lettere private. 1920–1929': J.B. Frey to W. van Rossum, 29 November 1925, Memorandum.

11 KDC, ROSS, no. 72: Carlo Salotti to J. Drehmanns, 18 April 1934.

12 F. Turvasi thanked Cardinal Tisserant for this in the preface to his study *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversia modernista*, 11.

13 I thank Étienne Fouilloux who pointed me to this correspondence in Montferrer (France), *Archives de l'Association les Amis du Cardinal Tisserant (Tisserant Papers)*: J.M. Vosté O.P. to E. Tisserant, 22 and 28 July 1940.

14 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1916, rubr. 18, fasc. 8; ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder 'Lettere Ufficiali varie e non datate': pro-memoria by W. van Rossum, August 1916.

15 Gilbert, *L'Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 56–57.

until after the war. But at the same time, he asked Pope Benedict xv directly to grant the Biblicum the right to award degrees.¹⁶

Benedict xv discussed this letter with Van Rossum – who was not surprised that Ledóchowski had gone behind his back – and the matter was then debated within the Biblical Commission. Van Rossum agreed that closer cooperation was required: in the past, degrees had sometimes been awarded to candidates who had been insufficiently trained in right doctrine during their formation elsewhere. He proposed therefore that the lower degrees should be conferred by the Biblicum, which would have a consultor of the Biblical Commission on its board of examiners, and the doctoral degree by the Biblical Commission. Moreover, the Biblical Commission would retain overall control of policy and supervision.¹⁷ The pope approved this proposal.

The decision was announced to Ledóchowski and Fonck on 17 March, and received a strongly negative response from both men, who threatened to withdraw the Jesuits from the Biblicum altogether. Both Benedict xv – who told Van Rossum he was sorry that “*peace seems far away even in this matter*”¹⁸ – and the members of the Biblical Commission were dismayed at the Jesuit response. Benedict instructed Van Rossum to draft a letter to Ledóchowski, which he presented to the pope on 19 May. The pope gave his assent. The superior general was told that the reactions had vexed the pope and the commission. Ledóchowski replied on 27 May: he apologised to the Biblical Commission and expressed sorrow at the papal displeasure. After a further exchange of letters, Van Rossum drafted a papal document, *Cum Biblia Sacra*, which was published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* on 1 September 1916. This stipulated that the Biblical Commission retained the full right to set the conditions for admission to exegetical studies. In practice, this meant that only students who already held a doctorate in theology were admitted.¹⁹ Both Ledóchowski and Fonck submitted to the papal decision, on 12 September and 28 October 1916 respectively.²⁰

Van Rossum had succeeded, for the time being, in safeguarding the position of the Biblical Commission against Jesuit power politics, thanks to papal support. A report that Fonck sent in 1919 to the nuncio in Germany, Eugenio Pacelli, in which he cast doubt on the Biblical Commission’s effectiveness, did not change this. According

16 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder ‘Lettere Ufficiali varie e non datate’: pro-memoria by W. van Rossum, August 1916. See also Gilbert, *L’Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 100–104.

17 *Ibid.*: note ‘De componendis aliquibus difficultatibus circa collationem graduum in Scriptura Sacra academicorum et circa relationem inter Pontificiam Commissionem Biblicam et Institutum Biblicum’ dated 18 February 1916, ‘Pro congregatione diei 20 Febr. 1916 in casa Em.i Merry del Val’ (the handwriting and signature of this Biblical Commission document are Van Rossum’s).

18 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder C. ‘Chirografi pontifici’: Benedict xv to W. van Rossum, 11 February 1916.

19 AAS, 8(1916), 305–308.

20 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder ‘Lettere Ufficiali varie e non datate’: pro-memoria by W. van Rossum, August 1916. See also Gilbert, *L’Institut Biblique Pontifical*, 58–62.

to Fonck, the commission had failed to prevent all Catholic exegetes in Germany from subscribing to Lagrange's and Hummelauer's views.²¹ Pacelli asked for further information from Van Rossum. The latter confirmed the parlous state of orthodox exegesis in Germany and the lamentably feeble influence of the Biblical Commission. He added that he had warned Cardinal Von Hartmann of these things as early as 1914. But it was better not to look to the Jesuits for a solution: their publications would be regarded *a priori* as suspicious. Instead, suitable students should be sent to Rome for exegetical studies, where they would be safe from infection with the "virus of Biblical modernism".²²

2 The death of Pope Pius x and the 1914 conclave

1914 was in many ways an eventful year for Van Rossum. Not only was he appointed president of the Biblical Commission by the pope at the beginning of the year, but the pope also gave his approval to the Priests' Union of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, which had been set up as an elite group of priests inspired by the Alphonsian spirit. Van Rossum proposed the institution of a special liturgical feast of the 'Eucharistic Heart of Jesus', a proposal which was granted in 1921.²³ But the event that impressed Van Rossum the most this year was the death of Pope Pius x, with whom he felt a strong affinity.

The pope died on 20 August, less than a month after the outbreak of the First World War on 28 July 1914. According to Drehmanns, Pius x was so disturbed by the news of war that his heart failed him. Drehmanns recounts that Van Rossum came to pray at the pope's deathbed, and "with unfathomable sorrow saw [him] pass away, the Father to whom he owed so much".²⁴

During the ensuing conclave, Van Rossum was assigned a room on the Scala della Floreria, in the Ufficio Annuario (Cella 32), close to his antimodernist colleagues De Lai and Pompilj.²⁵ According to Drehmanns, his name was eagerly mentioned "by many" as the future pope, but in fact his chances were slim, if only because he was not an Italian.²⁶ Still, it was considered possible, including by the Dutch govern-

21 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder 'Lettere Ufficiali varie e non datate': E. Pacelli, nuncio in Munich, to Van Rossum, 25 March 1919; accompanied by a note by L. Fonck s.j., 'Le condizioni degli studi biblici specialmente nella Germania'.

22 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1919: W. van Rossum to E. Pacelli, 20 May 1919.

23 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, folder A. 'Cuore Eucharistico di Gesù'.

24 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 71. Van Rossum was given an edition of *Sancti Bernardi abbatis. De consideratione ad Eugenium Papam, Libri V*, Paris 1868, from Pius X's estate (KDC, ROSS, no. 464).

25 KDC, ROSS, no. 251: 'Nota delle Celle per gli Eminentissimi Signori Cardinali', 1914.

26 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 71.

ment, that if the Italian cardinals were deadlocked, the prize might go to him.²⁷ The Belgian Cardinal Mercier was also mentioned as a possible candidate alongside Van Rossum.²⁸

One indication of Van Rossum's position within the College of Cardinals during the 1914 conclave comes from Cardinal Friedrich Gustav Piffel of Vienna.²⁹ His notes show that the Austrian government had sent its ambassador to the Holy See a list of nine *papabili*, headed by Ferrata and Della Chiesa, with Van Rossum in third position, before Merry del Val, Agliardi, Vincenzo Vannutelli, Pompilj, Serafini and Giustini. Piffel described Van Rossum as a cardinal of papal allure: "naturally calm, serene. He would make a magnificent pope."³⁰

The German-Austrian group was regularly in touch with Van Rossum, but it does not appear that these cardinals ever truly backed him during the conclave. From the start, they all voted for Della Chiesa, whom they regarded as 'their pope', and they opposed the group around Merry del Val, which they held partially responsible for the *Gewerkschaftsstreit* because of its hostility to interconfessional trade unions.³¹ The choice in this hard-fought conclave was between Cardinals Pietro Maffi and Giacomo della Chiesa, and many votes also went to Rafael Merry del Val, Basilio Pompilj and Domenico Serafini – who began with only four votes but ended in second position. Van Rossum, who surely recalled the gruelling election of the Redemptorist superior general in 1909, only received a single vote, in the fifth round, which was held in the early morning of 2 September 1914.³²

27 The Hague, National Archives, 2.05.18, *Cabinet Archive etc. of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1871–1940*, A3.1, 74, no. 170: minister in Rome Van Weede to minister of foreign affairs, 18 April 1913: "The possibility is also considered that on this occasion a non-Italian pope might be elected, which happened last in 1522 with the Dutchman Pope Adrian VI. (...) If the Italians were to fail to reach agreement among each other, a foreigner might be chosen to take up the unenticing role of prisoner in the Vatican. In that case, it is said, our compatriot Cardinal van Rossum might be eligible."

28 Alberto Melloni, 'Il conclave di Benedetto XV', in: Alberto Melloni (dir.), Giovanni Cavagnini, Giulia Grossi (red.), *Benedetto XV. Papa Giacomo della Chiesa nel mondo dell' "inutile strage"* (Bologna 2017), vol. 1, 139–149. Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*. Bd. 3, 187 calls "the neutral foreigner" Van Rossum and the "anti-German" Mercier "compromise candidates". See also A. Simon, *Le cardinal Mercier* (Brussels 1960), 76: "In Rome, a current has become manifest that is favourable to the election of a foreign pope, of necessity to be chosen from a small country, and it is considered that the two most significant foreign figures in the Sacred College were Mercier and the Dutchman Van Rossum."

29 Notes by Piffel published by Max Liebmann, 'Les conclaves de Benoit XV et de Pie XI. Notes du Cardinal Piffel', in: *La revue nouvelle*, 19(1963), 34–52. Friedrich Gustav Piffel (1864–1932) was named on 1 April 1913 by Emperor Franz Joseph I to succeed Cardinal Nagl as archbishop of Vienna; he was created a cardinal on 25 May 1914.

30 Liebmann, 'Les conclaves de Benoit XV et de Pie XI', 38.

31 Caterina Ciriello, 'La prima enciclica: *Ad beatissimi*', in: *Benedetto XV*, vol. 1, 150–165, at 151–152. On the *Gewerkschaftsstreit*, see Chapter 8.5.

32 Liebmann, 'Les conclaves de Benoit XV et de Pie XI', 46; Mercier did not receive a single vote during the conclave. See also Melloni, 'Il conclave di Benedetto XV', 141.

Giuseppe Sarto's successor was elected in the tenth round on 3 September 1914, Van Rossum's sixtieth birthday: Giacomo della Chiesa (1854–1922), who had been created a cardinal three months previously. A Genoese by birth, the archbishop of Bologna was first and foremost a diplomat, and he belonged to the faction of Secretary of State Rampolla, who had been influential under Leo XIII. This put him in diametrical opposition to the primary figure of the other influential faction in the curia, Secretary of State Merry del Val. The choice for Della Chiesa was thus also a choice against the integralist climate surrounding the Sodalitium Pianum which had flourished under Pius X.³³ The new pope – Drehmanns characterised him as “a great mind in a small, unsightly body”³⁴ – chose the name Benedict XV. One of his first acts was to replace the secretary of state, itself a customary procedure. He appointed Cardinal Ferrata to this post, but Ferrata died in October and was succeeded by Pietro Gasparri.³⁵

3 Benedict XV's politics of peace

The election of Benedict XV heralded a new phase in Van Rossum's life. It was accompanied by a change of course, both within the church and with respect to external affairs. The pope knew Van Rossum from the years 1901–1907, when the two men had been consultors of the Holy Office, and his attitude to this cardinal appears to have been a little hesitant during the first years of his pontificate. Van Rossum had the reputation of being an antimodernist linked to the group around Umberto Benigni's ‘La Sapinière’, not much of a recommendation in Benedict's eyes. The pope wanted peace within the church, and had no use for Benigni's organisation, based as it was on suspicion, espionage and malicious rumour. But Benedict soon began to deploy the Dutch cardinal and his connections to further his own policies, and this caused a gradual rapprochement between the two contemporaries Della Chiesa and Van Rossum. Drehmanns expressed it as follows: “Even though (...) relations were never as intimate and cordial as they had been with Pope Pius X”, still Van Rossum “got along well with the Pope”, and vice versa.³⁶ The new Dutch minister to the Holy See from 1916 to 1925, Octaaf Van Nispen tot Sevenaer, similarly commented on the good relationship between Van Rossum and Pope Benedict XV.³⁷

33 Melloni, ‘Il conclave di Benedetto XV’, 141–149.

34 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 71.

35 Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 657–661.

36 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 71.

37 G. Puchinger, *Colijn en het einde van de coalitie*. Vol. 2: *De geschiedenis van de kabinetsformaties 1925–1929* (Kampen 1980), 118–127.



Benedict xv (1914-1922)

The First World War was only a few weeks old when Benedict xv was elected, and from the start, the new pope worked actively to restore peace: he published his encyclical *Ad Beatissimi* on 1 November 1914.³⁸ In his pursuit of peace, Benedict attempted to leverage the good relations that Van Rossum had developed with the House of Habsburg in 1912.³⁹ On 8 January 1915, Secretary of State Gasparri asked Van Rossum on behalf of the pope to travel to Vienna “incognito, as a simple Redemptorist”. Italy was mulling over a declaration of war against its former ally Austria-Hungary. Van Rossum’s mission was to persuade the aged Emperor Franz Joseph to hand over

³⁸ Ciriello, ‘La prima enciclica: *Ad beatissimi*’, 150–165.

³⁹ See Chapter 11.2.

the regions of Trent (Trentino) and South Tyrol (Alto Adige), the areas Italy coveted, thus removing Italy's cause for war.⁴⁰ This was particularly important for the Vatican, which was keen to avoid the unenviable position of having to pursue a policy of neutrality in a host country that was itself at war with the Habsburgs, one of the most important political mainstays of the Catholic church.⁴¹

But Van Rossum believed the proposal was ill-advised. It would have a demoralising effect on the citizens of the empire, possibly even to the extent of precipitating a revolt against the Habsburg monarchy. Moreover, it cast doubt upon the Holy See's impartiality, revealing it to be beholden to Italy and working against Austria-Hungary. Van Rossum would nonetheless have obediently fulfilled this mission – which “was contrary to his most deeply held feelings” – had he not been too ill to travel.⁴² He wrote to his half-brother on 10 January, “I have been in bed for several days with a stomach infection, high fever and headache.”⁴³ Gasparri came to visit the patient personally to check that the ailment was real. The secret mission was then given to the curia's rising star Eugenio Pacelli, though it was ultimately unsuccessful.⁴⁴ Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary in May 1915.

Around the same time that Gasparri was in touch with this request, Van Rossum received a letter from the archbishop of Cologne, Felix von Hartmann, dated 5 January 1915, also seeking his good offices. Von Hartmann was indignant at a strikingly anti-German pastoral letter written by Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier, the archbishop of Mechelen in Belgium. The German cardinal could not understand that Mercier should have written such a letter and ascribed it to British influence, seeking to stoke up rebellion in Belgium. He emphasised that he had obtained a few privileges for Mercier and the Belgian bishops from the German occupying forces, including uncensored correspondence with the Holy See. Mercier's letter put an end to this benevolent attitude. The Germans regarded his pastoral letter as incitement pure and simple. At first, they considered arresting him and imprisoning him in Germany, but eventually they decided to await the Holy See's response first. Von Hartmann proposed that the pope should summon Mercier to Rome immediately.

40 It can be inferred from Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 67, that Archduke Karl Franz Joseph had more far-reaching plans: he told Van Rossum at his departure in 1912 that he hoped to come to Rome once, “but as conqueror”. Van Rossum wisely greeted this comment with silence.

41 Maurizio Cau, “‘In pro della pace’. L'azione diplomatica di Benedetto XV per scongiurare l'intervento italiano”, in: *Benedetto XV*, vol. 1, 241–253; Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 44–51.

42 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 72.

43 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, Rome, 55–56, 10 January 1915. Van Rossum wrote this letter on the occasion of the anniversary of the death of his stepfather Lambertus Janssen on 7 January 1914. Van Rossum wrote on 28 January 1915 (56) that he felt better: the pain and fever had subsided, but he was still suffering from “great weakness and thinness”.

44 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder H. ‘Lettere private, 1911–1919’: memorandum by W. van Rossum, 28 January 1915, on the diplomatic mission to Vienna.

This might of course be viewed by outsiders as taking Germany's side, but on the other hand the Holy See could spread the word that it had done so to protect the cardinal's safety. It would be even better if Mercier were to go to Rome of his own accord. The German cardinal ended his letter by asking Van Rossum to transmit his message to Gasparri, and wrote that if papal intervention was unavailing, the arrest of Mercier was inevitable.⁴⁵

The letter to which Von Hartmann took exception was the Christmas pastoral *Patriotisme et Endurance* of 1914, which made Mercier a national and international icon of resistance against the German occupation. The letter was a catalogue and indictment of the violence and random executions perpetrated by the German invading forces in Belgium. Von Hartmann was not alone in deploring it; its content and tone jarred with the Roman policy pursued by Benedict xv to maintain neutrality above all. The Holy See desired a negotiated peace, whereas Mercier's letter escalated tensions.⁴⁶

Van Rossum no doubt informed the secretary of state, as Von Hartmann had asked. But Mercier was not arrested. The Germans contemplated doing so on a number of occasions, but hesitated, probably due to his position. The nuncio in Brussels, Giovanni Tacci, was instructed by Rome to exhort the cardinal to prudence and to avoid jeopardising Vatican policy. Mercier took little notice of this and continued his fiery expressions of Belgian patriotism throughout the war, to the detriment also of the Flemish movement.⁴⁷

Van Rossum's Dutch background proved a useful asset in Benedict xv's peace policy. The Netherlands, which untiringly emphasised its neutral status, had ambitions to become an important player in the quest for world peace. There had been peace conferences in The Hague in 1899 and 1907, and the Peace Palace had been opened in the same city just before the war, in 1913 – coincidentally during Van Rossum's visit to the Netherlands. After the outbreak of war, the country sought international support for its plan to host peace negotiations in The Hague.⁴⁸ The pope had not been invited to previous peace conferences in The Hague – Italy refused to participate if the pope was invited – but Benedict xv hoped that he would be included in any new initiatives.

The Dutch government had realised during the previous The Hague conferences that its lack of a diplomatic mission to the Holy See was the cause of miscommunications and that the pope as a sovereign was still a factor to be reckoned with in inter-

45 *Ibid.*: F. von Hartmann to W. van Rossum, 5 January 1915. The two cardinals had previously corresponded about the so-called *Gewerkschaftsfrage*. See Chapter 8.5.

46 Jan De Volder, *Cardinal Mercier in the First World War. Belgium, Germany and the Catholic Church* (Leuven 2018), 115–116.

47 *Ibid.*, 96–100; Simon, *Le cardinal Mercier*, 128–144.

48 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 42, 58.

national diplomacy. The government therefore kept a close eye on the pope's peace activities and considered future cooperation. It soon became clear that Benedict xv was prepared to support the campaign for a conference in The Hague if the Dutch government were to open a legation to the Vatican.⁴⁹

The initiative for reopening a Dutch mission to the Holy See – a previous one had been withdrawn in 1871⁵⁰ – appears to have come from the pope, who surely consulted Van Rossum about it. At the end of Pius x's pontificate, the Holy See maintained diplomatic relations with a mere fourteen states.⁵¹ Gisbert Brom, director of the Dutch Historical Institute in Rome, recorded that Benedict xv personally told him on 15 October 1914 that it would be helpful if the Catholic press in the Netherlands were from time to time to rehearse arguments in favour of "restoring the legation to the Holy See". The pope suggested that the advantages would be greater for the Dutch government than for the Holy See, for example because it could benefit the missions in the colonies. It would also heighten the Dutch government's international prestige, "which had been so weak after the first peace conference etc. Its attitude at the time was 'a slap in the face for the Holy See', even though Italy had been the main culprit. Pius x has honoured the Netherlands in Card. van Rossum. In return, the Government should be courteous and delicate with regard to the Holy See."⁵²

Benedict xv's request found its way back to the Netherlands, where the leader of the Catholic party, Willem Nolens, suggested in parliament in December 1914 that it would be opportune to restore the legation to further Dutch ambitions with regard to peace negotiations. This proposal was received favourably by the prime minister, Cort van der Linden, and the influential minister of foreign affairs, Herman van Karnebeek. As the issue was highly sensitive given the particular make-up of Dutch politics and society, the government operated very cautiously, on the basis of its experience that "anti-Catholicism (...) in the Netherlands never sleeps, but at most slumbers".⁵³ The minister for foreign affairs contacted the Catholic parliamentary leader on 13 April 1915 to ask him if he was willing to go to Rome to sound out the chances of a Dutch contribution to peace negotiations and the organisation of a peace conference in The Hague.⁵⁴ Nolens agreed, on the condition that he would have clear, written instructions from the government to establish at least a tempo-

49 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 104–113 and 119–120.

50 The legation was removed from the foreign affairs budget in 1871. At the Dutch bishops' request, the pope maintained a diplomatic mission of internuncios in The Hague. De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 38–40.

51 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 24–27. In Europe: Austria-Hungary, Bavaria, Belgium, Prussia, Russia, Serbia and Spain; also seven countries in Latin America.

52 Nijmegen, KDC, *Gisbert Brom Papers*, no. 186.

53 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 103, 256, note 205.

54 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 42, 58.

rary legation. Cort van der Linden agreed to this and when asked, assured Nolens orally that a temporary legation would eventually be made permanent.⁵⁵

Nolens went to Rome, where, as his notes show, he spoke first with Cardinal Van Rossum and then with Cardinal Gasparri.⁵⁶ The visit was a success. A bill was introduced the following month to send an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the Holy See on a temporary and special mission.⁵⁷ This bill was signed into law on 18 June. Van Rossum wrote to Nolens on 28 June to say that the pope had said that morning that he wanted the envoy to come as soon as possible.⁵⁸

The Catholic former minister Louis Regout was appointed legate on 10 July 1915.⁵⁹ In the few months before his death in Rome on 27 October 1915, Regout was in close touch with Van Rossum, who often visited him during his illness. In a letter to P.A. van der Biesen and his wife, Van Rossum greatly regretted Regout's death: he would have been the right person to propose a remedy for "the Holy See's impossible position" at the future peace conference, and to work for "its full freedom and independence. There is no doubt that the position of the Holy See, also known as the Rom[an] question, will be discussed at a future peace conference."⁶⁰

Regout was succeeded by Octaaf van Nispen tot Sevenaer (1867–1956), who had been a Catholic member of parliament since 1902, had had foreign affairs in his portfolio and had been the speaker of the Dutch lower house since 1912. The appointment of this scion of a noble family was reported in the press on 26 November 1915. He would remain the Dutch minister to the Holy See for ten years. Van Nispen's reports were highly valued by the Dutch government, particularly during the war years, because of the rich information on the international political situation that they conveyed.⁶¹ Van Nispen frequently consulted with Van Rossum, as well as having regular official contacts with Gasparri, with whom he developed an excellent bond. Van Rossum was involved whenever the government wished to make informal approaches.

55 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 258, note 212.

56 Nijmegen, KDC, *W.H. Nolens Papers*, no. 136: 14 April, after Nolens's meeting with Van der Linden, he listed the following names: 'Van Rossum – Gasparri – Lorenzelli – [Remualski] – Vannuttelli – [Rocchi] – Dutch minister – Eras – Willems – Merry del Val – Van den Heuvel – Howard' (the two last names were the Belgian and British ministers respectively).

57 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 119–127.

58 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to W. Nolens, 28 June 1915. He expressed the hope that Nolens had returned safely to the fatherland – Italy had in the meantime declared war on Austria-Hungary. "Here, everything so far is quiet and entirely as if there were no war. The subjects of friendly or neutral powers have nothing to fear whatsoever."

59 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 129–130.

60 *Ibid.*; KDC, ROSS, no. 352: W. van Rossum to A. and P. van der Biesen-Schaepman, 28 October 1915. Regout was buried on the Camposanto Teutonico; Van Rossum, Gasparri and Pacelli attended the funeral.

61 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 262, note 244. Some Calvinists were strongly opposed to a legation to the Holy See, as this "would be an acknowledgement that the pope is the head of Christendom". It was closed in 1925, according to Van Nispen due in part to Van Rossum's actions. See Chapter 16.3.

The Dutch historian George Puchinger has contended that Van Rossum's role in the establishment of the Dutch mission to the Holy See was minor and not decisive. But he did attribute to the cardinal "an influence all his own behind the scenes".⁶² Van Nispen tot Sevenaer confirmed that Van Rossum and Pope Benedict xv had a good relationship, and also reported that the cardinal had a certain influence over the pope. Puchinger's extensive history of the legation in Rome shows that Van Rossum's influence during Benedict's pontificate was great, particularly after 1918, although he did not always use it to further the causes that Van Nispen and Dutch politicians favoured.⁶³

Van Rossum's support was sought once again in the period immediately after the First World War, when an annexationist movement in Belgium – supported by certain circles in the Netherlands – pushed for annexation of parts of Dutch territory by Belgium. The regions in question were Zeelandic Flanders and Dutch Limburg, which, many Belgians felt, had been wrongly ceded to the Netherlands in 1839.⁶⁴ Belgium, which basked in the sympathy of the world at the time because of the many depredations it had suffered during the war, demanded compensation from the Netherlands for its failure to protest the violation of Belgian neutrality in 1914, for allowing the German army to retreat unhindered through Limburg in November 1918, and for giving asylum to the German Emperor William II. The Netherlands had a questionable reputation at the end of the war because of its 'neutrality' – but how neutral had the country actually been?⁶⁵

To frustrate these plans for annexation, the Dutch government sought the support of other powers, including the Vatican. Van Nispen wrote to the minister for foreign affairs, Van Karnebeek, on 20 January 1919: "You are asking me, in relation to the attitude of the Belgian government, whether certain instructions might be given from the Vatican against the proliferation of annexationism in Catholic circles in Belgium, without having to make an official request to this end." Van Nispen replied that he had raised the subject almost at each of his weekly audiences with Gasparri and had also mentioned it to the pope. "On every occasion during these consultations, I was able to observe a favourable attitude to the Netherlands on the part of the Pope and of both Cardinals (Gasparri and Van Rossum)." This diplomatic 'massage' was so successful that, as Gasparri told him in strict confidence, the pope

62 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 118–127.

63 For instance, with regard to moving the papal chargé d'affaires G. Vallega from The Hague to Smyrna. Dutch Catholic politicians preferred, on opportunistic grounds, to keep him as chargé d'affaires and Vallega himself was not eager to go to Smyrna. When he raised the issue with the pope, Van Nispen was told: "It is the Dutch cardinal who is taking him away from you." Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 315–316, note 373.

64 P.J.H. Ubachs, *Handboek voor de geschiedenis van Limburg* (Hilversum 2000), 353.

65 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 181, note 291: O.F.A.M. van Nispen to H. van Karnebeek, 2 April 1919.

“had expressly recommended to Mr. Wilson [the president of the United States] the freedom of the small nations to decide on their own interests.”⁶⁶

One demarche by the bishop of Roermond, Laurentius Schrijnen, nearly caused a diplomatic incident. After consulting with the prime minister, Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, Schrijnen wrote to Cardinal Van Rossum in the name of the Dutch bishops to set out the great interests that were served by keeping Limburg Dutch.⁶⁷ He asked the cardinal to raise these points in the Vatican, and Van Rossum did so. But Schrijnen’s letter only mentioned Limburg, which was coterminous with his diocese, and that is how Van Rossum transmitted the message to the pope. This created the impression that the possible loss of Zeelandic Flanders, also known as States Flanders, was a matter of indifference to the Netherlands. Van Nispen asked Van Rossum to correct the mistake in the Vatican. The cardinal promised on 3 March 1919 to “send a letter to the Vatican immediately to point out that he was not only advocating for the interests of Limburg but also of those of States Flanders”.⁶⁸ This was all the more necessary, as Van Nispen believed that Giovanni Tacci, former internuncio in The Hague, “felt that the Netherlands should yield to the Belgian demands with regard to States Flanders. My purpose is to marshal Cardinal Van Rossum’s influence in the Vatican against his – [Tacci] is currently the Pope’s major-domo.”⁶⁹

After some prompting, Cardinal Mercier also publicly spoke out against the annexation plans. Although Van Rossum thought the chances that Mercier could be persuaded to support the Dutch were slim because this might place him in a difficult position in his own country, Mercier did as he was asked, as a letter by Van Nispen to Van Karnebeek of 2 April 1919 shows. Mercier advised King Albert of the Belgians against an annexationist policy, for his own country’s sake, specifically to protect national dignity and to prevent deterioration of the relations between Flemings and Walloons. The whole issue was ultimately resolved in favour of the Netherlands, whose territory remained intact. Van Nispen reported to Van Karnebeek on 18 June 1919 that the Vatican was pleased with this outcome.⁷⁰

66 *Bescheiden betreffende de buitenlandse politiek van Nederland, 1848–1919*, Third Period, Fifth Volume, Second Part (The Hague 1964; Rijks Geschiedkundige Publicatiën 117), 894–895.

67 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder G. ‘Lettere private’: L. Schrijnen, bishop of Roermond, to W. van Rossum, 2 February 1919. The bishop called a possible annexation “a disaster (...) for the Catholic cause” and feared for the future of the many “foreign monasteries” (monasteries that had fled to Limburg to escape the German *Kulturkampf* and the French anticlerical laws) now safe on Dutch soil. *Ibid.* H. ‘Lettere private, 1911–1919’: W. van Rossum to Benedict xv (copy), 1 March 1919. Van Rossum pointed among other things to the economic significance of the coalmines; moreover, it would mean chances of a “conservative government” would become slim, because the Limburgers were “eminently Catholic”. He asked the pope to take steps to prevent this and the “further bloodshed” that was likely to result from it.

68 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 279, note 287: O.F.A.M. van Nispen to Ch. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, 1 March 1919, and note 288: O.F.A.M. van Nispen to H. van Karnebeek, 3 March 1919.

69 *Ibid.*, 138–139, 279, note 288: O.F.A.M. van Nispen to H. van Karnebeek, 3 March 1919.

70 *Ibid.*, 139–140.

We do not know how the war affected Van Rossum personally. He wrote to his family and acquaintances in mid-1915 that there was little sign of the war in Rome.⁷¹ One consequence was that German, Austrian and Hungarian religious became *personae non gratae*.⁷² A number of Dutch clerics also left Rome, among them Bernard Eras, procurator of the Dutch bishops, and Joseph Nouwens, procurator general of the Norbertines, who, for unclear reasons, both settled in neutral Switzerland.⁷³

Although Rome witnessed no hostilities, food soon became extremely expensive. Ordinary citizens could no longer afford meat, and nor could many others: “It is a mystery to me how people survive”, Van Rossum wrote to his half-brother on 19 July 1915.⁷⁴ He regarded the war as a punishment from “the good God”. “And when He punishes, He does so in order that they may repent; and truly there is little sign of repentance among the peoples so far.” Van Rossum was greatly upset by the death of his youngest brother Jan on 27 August 1915 after “long and painful suffering”. “Death comes and robs us of one person after another, and as the years advance, so do the empty spaces around us. Yes, well you may ask: what is the world? Nothing! Nothing! (...) except to love God and serve Him alone.” He concluded his letter by saying he himself was well, thank God, although he could feel he was no longer forty. “I have worked a lot and hard, even though it is intellectual work.”⁷⁵

4 Guardian of conscience and indulgences: major penitentiary (1915–1918)

Van Rossum was appointed major penitentiary – *Penitenziere Maggiore* – on 1 October 1915, as successor to Serafino Vannutelli, who had died in August that year. He was now finally the head of a dicastery of the curia, specifically the Apostolic Penitentiary, one of the three tribunals of the curia (the other ones being the Sacra Rota Romana and the Apostolic Signatura) and the Vatican’s oldest court (early thirteenth

71 See for example 's-Hertogenbosch Diocesan Archives (HDA), *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to A. F. Diepen, 1 July 1915.

72 Van Rossum was a go-to contact for religious of various orders and congregations who were in trouble due to the war. See Chapter 18.1.

73 KDC, ROSS, no. 110: J. Nouwens to W. van Rossum, Zürich 27 December 1915. During Eras’s absence from Rome in the years 1915–1919, Van Rossum’s secretary Drehmanns assumed various tasks associated with Eras’s procuratorship, as is evident from J. P. de Valk, *Beschrijving van een aantal stukken afkomstig van mgr. dr. B. J. Eras (1876–1952), procurator van het Nederlands episcopaat te Rome (1908–1949) en rector van het Pontificio Collegio Olandese (1931–1952)* (Rome 1994), no. 81.

74 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle’s grooten kardinaal*, 56–58, Rome 20 June, 19 July and 14 September 1915.

75 *Ibid.*, 57–58, Rome 14 September 1915. Van Rossum’s oldest brother Kobus had died in 1904, his youngest sister Hendrika in 1905. His sister Gerulpha was the only sibling to survive him; she died in 1937.

century).⁷⁶ A corollary to this appointment was his promotion from the order of cardinal deacons to that of cardinal priests.⁷⁷

The solemn ceremony in which the new major penitentiary was presented with the *ferula* or penitential rod by the *reggente* or highest official of the tribunal was described in detail by the then archivist of the Penitentiary. Although Van Rossum was appointed on 1 October, he decided to postpone the ceremony until 7 November 1915, when all members and officials had returned from holidays. On this Sunday, the prelates arrived at the Vatican palace in their carriages to await Van Rossum, who came by car. The party then processed into Saint Peter's, preceded by four canons of the basilica, and Van Rossum donned the *cappa magna*. The confessors of Saint Peter's then joined the cortege, which continued to the penitentiary's special throne. After the reading of the *motu proprio* containing the appointment, Van Rossum solemnly received the penitential rod. He then touched all those present with this rod in a carefully fixed order, automatically granting each one an indulgence of a hundred days. The cardinal was then escorted back out, and he returned to Via dello Statuto after having said polite goodbyes and taking off his *cappa*. On Tuesday 9 November 1915, his apartment was the setting for his first weekly *Segnatura*: it was the custom that the major penitentiary received visitors at home, although he had offices in the palazzo of the Holy Office.⁷⁸ From this point on, Van Rossum frequently began to receive important visitors in his carefully decorated apartment on the Esquiline Hill.

It was a high and honourable appointment, and according to Drehmanns, Van Rossum, who "desired nothing else than to do the will of God and of the Holy Father, gratefully accepted this appointment", thinking that this would be his role for the rest of his life. The major penitentiary was one of the few officials of the curia appointed *ad vitam* and who retained their faculties even during a *sede vacante*. Drehmanns – himself a consultor of the Penitentiary from 1915 onwards – wrote that Van Rossum's enemies in the curia had lobbied for the appointment to restrict his influence on church policy. As the penitentiary's work mainly involved cases of conscience, he was bound by strict secrecy and could "do nothing externally".⁷⁹

But the historian Johan Ickx has judged Van Rossum's appointment as major penitentiary more positively, in the context of the completion of the new code of canon law. Under Gasparri's leadership, this project was nearing its end during Benedict xv's pontificate, and Van Rossum's carefully considered appointment to this post was

76 Del Re, *La Curia Romana*, 199–211; Ickx, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum as Penitenziere Maggiore', 109–110.

77 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 58, Rome 18 January 1916.

78 Ickx, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum as Penitenziere Maggiore', 111–113.

79 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 73.

intended to contribute to successful conclusion of the whole process.⁸⁰ One of the Penitentiary's tasks was to judge the practicability of canon law. But the tribunal was primarily a 'tribunal of mercy' for cases of conscience (*forum internum*) that were so grave that the guilt and sanctions could not be removed in ordinary confession. In addition to these issues concerning the absolution of sins, the tribunal also dealt with dispensations from ecclesiastical laws (for example the law of fasting) and from hidden matrimonial impediments.

Moreover, in March 1917, all matters relating to the use and granting of indulgences, hitherto within the remit of the Holy Office, were transferred to the Penitentiary. From that point on, this dicastery had two divisions: the tribunal and indulgences. As a member of the Holy Office, Van Rossum was one of the instigators of this change. It was also the task of the Penitentiary to ensure that the Roman basilicas were adequately staffed with competent confessors, a responsibility that had Van Rossum's particular solicitude.⁸¹

All these cases were treated confidentially and were surrounded by absolute secrecy. Although certain parts of the archive of the Penitentiary are now open for research, this is not yet the case for the 1915-1918 period. It is difficult, therefore, to know exactly what Van Rossum did during these years. Certain letters he signed as major penitentiary that are currently in the Vatican Apostolic Archives deal with consultations with Pietro Gasparri about the code of canon law.⁸² The archives also show that Van Rossum was involved in a matrimonial case that attracted international attention, the Boni de Castellane-Gould case. For years, the press wrote about the marriage between the French politician Count Boniface de Castellane and the American millionaire's daughter Anna Gould, their separation in 1906, and their – unsuccessful – demand for an ecclesiastical decree of nullity. On no fewer than three occasions, in 1915, 1922 and 1924, a Vatican commission was set up to investigate the case, comprising three, five, and nine cardinals respectively, on each occasion including Van Rossum.⁸³ And at the pope's instructions, a special commission consisting of the Cardinals Van Rossum, Donato Sbarreti and Oreste Giorgi was established to deal with the French matrimonial case Collier-De Preux.⁸⁴

80 Ickx, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum as Penitenziere Maggiore', 109-110. The fact that Van Rossum was given a new appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide after the completion of the code in 1917 confirms this assumption. He was also made a member of the Commissione Pontificia per l'interpretazione del Codice di Diritto Canonico in 1917. AAS, 9(1917), 553.

81 Ickx, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum as Penitenziere Maggiore', 113-115.

82 Casiraghi, 'The proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 94.

83 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1916: W. van Rossum to Benedict XV, 25 May 1916; Dieguez, 'Gli Eminentissimi Padri', 25-26.

84 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, with files on the French matrimonial case Collier-De Preux: M. Lega, prefect of the Tribunal Supremum Signaturae Apostolicae, to W. van Rossum, 17 December 1917. The file contains a lengthy opinion by Van Rossum in his own hand dated 19 March 1918.

During Van Rossum's term as major penitentiary, the Holy See published fifteen documents in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* which bore his signature. Twelve of these dealt with indulgences, such as the extension of the indulgence gained by the touch of the *ferula*.⁸⁵ In 1917, Van Rossum treated the matter of indulgences in Eastern-rite churches, which had been transferred from Propaganda to the Orientale.⁸⁶ And on several occasions, he attached indulgences of three hundred days to special prayers. The last document he signed as major penitentiary was on indulgences attached to prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the occasion of the enthronement of a statue of the Sacred Heart (1 March 1918).⁸⁷ Particularly striking was a decree of 17 March 1916 on the obligation of saying Mass in situations of war, such as in the trenches.⁸⁸ Similarly poignant was the query from a chaplain from Milan, answered on 22 October 1917, whether people who could no longer kneel because of disfigurements sustained during the war, and who were therefore ineligible to earn certain indulgences, might receive these anyway by simply bowing their heads.⁸⁹ The Penitentiary's main preoccupation during the war appears to have been to grant indulgences to shorten the time souls had to spend in purgatory before being admitted to heaven.

The staff of the Penitentiary underwent a number of changes under Van Rossum's leadership. The personnel he encountered when he arrived had mostly been appointed in 1908 after the reform of the curia. They were all Italians and all priests, with the sole exception of the Belgian Jesuit Willem Arendt, a Leuven native, who was the theologian of the Penitentiary up to 1934 and was also a consultor of the Holy Office. Under Van Rossum, the Penitentiary became a rewarding launch pad for the careers of ambitious officials. He recruited competent officials – all of them Italian –, some of whom started in junior positions but ended up bishops or cardinals. The *reggente* Oreste Giorgi became a cardinal in 1916 and would become Van Rossum's successor on 12 March 1918. Francesco Borgongini Duca was promoted to secretary under Van Rossum and later became the secretary of Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, playing a role in the preparations for the Lateran Treaty of 1929. Afterwards, he became the first nuncio to Italy and was eventually created a cardinal.⁹⁰

85 AAS, 9(1917), 191.

86 *Ibid.*, 339.

87 AAS, 10(1918), 154–157.

88 AAS, 8(1916), 108.

89 AAS, 9(1917), 539.

90 Ickx, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum as Penitenziere Maggiore', 116–119, gives a prosopographical survey of the staff.

In his new role as cardinal of the curia and personal counsellor to the pope, Van Rossum proved to be less rigid than he had been as a consultor of the Holy Office. But the Italian bulwark that was the Roman curia nevertheless looked with some reserve at this Dutch outsider. His steely and unbending orthodoxy and ascetical religious lifestyle were not understood or accepted by everyone. His career as a cardinal was off to a slow start. His first appointments, as president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission by Pius x (1914) and as major penitentiary by Benedict xv (1915), were important, but they were not prime positions within the curia. But after the death of the father-figure Pius x, he succeeded in building a good working relationship with his contemporary Benedict xv. The fact that the pope's drive for peace found favour with the Dutch government was an advantage for Van Rossum. But it was not until his appointment as prefect of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide in 1918 that he was to join the highest echelons of the Vatican.

Prefect of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide

1 Van Rossum becomes the ‘red pope’

The first *congregazione generale* or general congregation of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, the Holy See’s department of missions, in 1918 took place on Monday 4 March. The sick prefect, Domenico Serafini, who had held this post for only two years, was absent; he died the following day. A week later, on 11 March 1918, Cardinal Van Rossum was summoned to the Vatican, to be told that Pope Benedict xv was going to appoint him Serafini’s successor the following day. If we are to believe Joseph Drehmanns’s biographical sketch, “everyone in Rome” had already thought back in 1916 that Van Rossum would be Serafini’s predecessor Girolamo Gotti’s successor, “but it was blocked in good faith by persons who were unfavourable to him”. Drehmanns did not elaborate on who these persons were.¹

His appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide on 12 March 1918, more than six months before the end of the First World War, landed Van Rossum one of the most influential positions within the curia.² From that moment on, he belonged to the very top of the church’s hierarchy, a status underlined by the sobriquet of ‘red pope’ that was colloquially attached to the head of the department of missions. Van Rossum would occupy this post for more than fourteen years, during the internationally turbulent time between the two world wars. The greatest care was usually given to the choice of a prefect, and the pope will have looked both at the internal balance within the curia and at the Vatican’s main policy priorities in making his selection. Benedict xv’s first objective was to broker peace, but promoting the missions was a very important additional focus.³

It is interesting to ask why Van Rossum was appointed. As a former member of Pius x’s inner circle, he was not a natural ally of Benedict xv’s, even though he loyally

1 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 74. Girolamo Maria Gotti died on 19 March 1916. Serafini was appointed his successor on 24 March 1916.

2 On Propaganda, see J. Metzler (ed.), *Storia della Chiesa. Dalle missioni all chiese locali (1846–1965)* (Milan 1995), 21–119; Del Re, *La Curia Romana*, 147–160; Claude Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire du Saint-Siège sous Léon XIII (1878–1903). Centralisation romaine et défis culturels* (Rome 1994), 25–53. The title was changed to Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples in 1982 and to Dicastery for Evangelisation in 2022.

3 John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope. Benedict xv (1914–1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London 1999), 201–204; Claude Prudhomme, ‘Maximum illud, una svolta missionaria?’, in: *Benedetto xv*, vol. 1, 407–422.



The palazzo of Propaganda Fide on Piazza di Spagna, c. 1860

submitted to the new pope. But Van Rossum's doctrinal and canonical expertise was useful to Benedict. And his resolute management style and organisational talents were well-known. But he had not suddenly ditched his antimodernism upon the election of the new pope, and like Cardinals Merry del Val, De Lai and Pompilj, he was still associated with the old 'integralists' and the clique around Benigni.⁴ Although his linguistic skills were excellent – he was one of the few cardinals of the curia who spoke German – he had little experience with foreign countries. And furthermore, he was regarded as friendly to the Germans and, even more so, to the Austrians,

⁴ See Chapters 8.5 and 18.3.

a nation with which Italy, the Vatican's host country, was at war at the time. Nor was his stubborn rigidity much of an advantage, given that this position required a diplomat and a tactician. And lastly, as a Dutch Redemptorist, he was twice an outsider in the curia.

And yet, this outsider status to a certain extent is the key to understanding his appointment. As a Dutchman, he was from a neutral country during the First World War, one of the few curial cardinals from a neutral power.⁵ Moreover, the Dutch government had openly supported Benedict xv's peace policies, for example by establishing a legation to the Vatican. As almost all European states were at war with each other, the appointment of a cardinal from any of these countries might give the appearance of partiality. Also, the missionary movement in the Netherlands was experiencing a great boom at the time. While missionary activity in neighbouring countries was hampered by the war, Dutch Catholics seized the opportunity to develop their own missions.⁶

Second, the fact that he was a religious was an advantage rather than a disadvantage for this post. His two predecessors – the Carmelite Girolamo Gotti (1902–1916) and the Benedictine Domenico Serafini (1916–1918) – had also been religious priests. Work in the missions was primarily done by religious, even though Propaganda had its own training institute for secular missionaries, the Collegio Urbano. Van Rossum had no missionary experience himself, but neither had any of the other cardinals. However, as a former *consultor generalis* of the Redemptorists, he did have a clear view of the problems that religious faced in the missions. Moreover, in the seven years that he had been a cardinal, many congregations and orders, including missionary congregations, had asked him to be their protector.

Third, Van Rossum had been a member of Propaganda Fide since January 1912. In the ensuing six years, he had familiarised himself thoroughly with the congregation and gained a clear insight into the problems that this dicastery faced. As shall be seen in section 6, he had distinguished himself by his hard work and by not shying away from difficult cases, particularly conflicts between religious in the missions. And he had formed a view of the way in which Propaganda might be made to work more efficiently, both internally and externally. His ideas were clearly persuasive enough to convince Benedict xv that Van Rossum was the right man for this post.

5 The Spaniard Merry del Val, secretary of the Holy Office and secretary of state under Pius x, was the other curial cardinal from a neutral country.

6 Roes, *Het groote missieuur*, 16–17; Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 27–35.

2 A bird's-eye view of Propaganda Fide since 1622

The Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide was founded on 6 January 1622 by Pope Gregory xv (1621–1623) as the church's official body entrusted with oversight of the missions. Propaganda was established to help Rome reassert greater control over religious developments at the time. The Reformation had gained a foothold in much of Northern and Western Europe, and the threat of the Ottoman Empire was being felt on Europe's opposite fringe, including in those areas of the Holy Land that were of such significance to the Catholic church, particularly Jerusalem. Moreover, the pope had to operate cautiously in these lands due to the Orthodox churches, with whom Rome had had a fraught relationship ever since the schism of 1054. In the meantime, Spain and Portugal had come to regard the missions as an extension of their own colonial aspirations, and the Iberian princes exercised paramount influence over missionaries and the appointment of ecclesiastical superiors in their colonial empires by virtue of their *patronato/padroado* rights.⁷

Gregory xv endowed Propaganda with greater powers and privileges than any other organ of the curia, perhaps with the exception of the Holy Office. It was based in a stately palazzo on Piazza di Spagna in the centre of Rome, which also housed the prefect's residence. The congregation was furnished with a solid basis both in terms of governance and funding. From the start, it was governed by a senior and large body of cardinals. The *Constitutio* of 22 June 1622, the congregation's bull of erection, stipulated that the pope would attend the *congregazione generale* (the general congregation or meeting) of Propaganda every month. It also determined that Propaganda would have the right to levy a substantial tax, the so-called 'ring tax', on the *anelli cardinalizi*, the rings of newly created cardinals. In addition, it was in receipt of many donations, foundations and inheritances from popes, cardinals, prelates and the 'ordinary' faithful. The funds thus acquired were used to pay the salaries of its employees, as well as the education, travel costs and upkeep of missionaries. Propaganda was also given its own seminary, the Collegio Urbano, founded by and named after Pope Urban VIII (1623–1644), an institution re-established after the Napoleonic wars in 1818. The college trained European priests specifically for missionary work; candidates for the priesthood from the missions could also study there.⁸

Photo next page: List of cardinals and consultors of Propaganda Fide, c. 1925 »

7 J. Metzler, 'Foundation of the Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" by Gregory xv', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. I/1: 1622–1700, 79–111; Vefie Poels, 'Pontifex Missionum. Missiepausen in de periode van de Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (1622–1967)', in: Frans Willem Lantink, Jeroen Koch (ed.), *De paus en de wereld. Geschiedenis van een instituut* (Amsterdam 2012), 297–317.

8 Metzler, 'Foundation of the Congregation "de Propaganda Fide"', 79–85.

EMI CARDINALE REVM CONSULTORI
DELLA
S. C. DI PROPAGANDA FIDE

Eminentissimi Signori Cardinali

+ Van Rossum Guglielmo

+ Vannutelli Vincenzo

+ Vico Antonio

+ Lucidi Evasio

+ Segue Michele

Seja Michele

+ Taccier Desiderato

+ Andieu Taolino Pietro

Bicini Ludovico Vazazio

Scapinelli Di Segungio Raffaele

+ Waurin Luigi Giuseppe

Karkowski Alessandro

Donchizety Dionisio

Schulte Carlo Giuseppe

Bonifichy Duò Giacomo

Giochi Oreste

Lauranti Camillo

Mundekin Giove

+ Giovanni Monzino

+ Dillet Ludovico

Wajso Lazzaro

+ Casquel Aidano

Caglioso Giovanni

+ Terzi Del Valle Raffaele

Reverendissimi Consulori

S. Toval Giuseppe

Salamo Salvatore

S. Maroto Filippo

S. Schroder Edoardo

S. Corneliore Doroteo

S. Basien Pietro S. M.

Solizi Francesco

De Hoffmann Casimiro

S. Leonado Gioacchino Maria

S. Waczalkiewicz Ladislao

S. Smolikowski Paolo

S. Sencier Alessio Maria

S. Buonpensiere Enrico

Al. Serafini M. Carlo

S. Selli Benedetto

S. De Marchi Giannangelo

S. Kaufmann Giuseppe

S. Skutjes Michele

S. Quasimodo di Alberto S.

S. Le Sloch Enrico

S. Opere Luigi

S. Tabari Sigmond S.

Sig. Fontaine Carlo

S. Mudecek Giovanni

During the first centuries of its existence, Propaganda failed to live up to the high expectations that surrounded its establishment. As long as the Catholic missions were dominated by the Catholic powers of Spain and Portugal, it had little room for manoeuvre. Their right of patronage – not fully abolished until the twentieth century – and Propaganda were more or less mutually exclusive systems. The congregation's limited range of action meant that, well into the nineteenth century, Propaganda Fide focussed primarily on work among the Christians of the Eastern churches, Catholic emigrants in North America, and the non-Catholic territories in Europe.⁹

In the meantime, a new important player was emerging in the missionary field. France developed into a colonial superpower and the country's missionary activities soon followed suit. Rome initially looked on from the sidelines at France's avant-garde role in establishing missionary congregations and missionary funding organisations, which turned it into a missionary model country. Roman interest in the missions was revived only during the pontificate of Gregory XVI (1831–1846), the only prefect of Propaganda Fide ever to be elected pope. The Holy See seized the opportunity to expand its missionary activities in parts of India, Ceylon, South-East Asia, China, Korea, Mongolia and Africa. From 1836 onwards, Gregory XVI entrusted seventy missions in these areas to various orders and congregations, and appointed their members as ecclesiastical authorities in the roles of prefect apostolic or vicar apostolic (missionary bishop).

The missions became an important policy focus of the Holy See in the second half of the nineteenth century. The pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903) can be regarded as a turning point.¹⁰ While the church lost its secular power with the disappearance of the Papal States in 1870, Leo XIII dreamed of making the church into a worldwide spiritual power. The European powers were striving at the time for separation of church and state, and countries such as France and Germany (the *Kulturkampf*) were curbing the influence of the church. In this political constellation, Leo XIII wished to remake the worldwide Catholic church as a supranational moral institution that stood above the political or colonial powers. In order to achieve this, a cult of the pope was encouraged, for instance by often carefully orchestrated professions of adherence on papal anniversaries and other occasions. Another expedient was

9 Jakob Baumgartner, 'Die Ausweitung der katholischen Missionen von Leo XIII. bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg', in: H. Jedin (ed.), *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*. Band VI: Die Kirche in der Gegenwart. Zweiter Halbband: *Die Kirche zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand (1878 bis 1914)* (Freiburg 1973), 549–597, at 549–551.

10 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 375–518; Idem, 'Stratégie missionnaire et grande politique sous Léon XIII. Le heurt des logiques', in: Vincent Viaene (ed.), *The Papacy and the New World Order. Vatican Diplomacy, Catholic Opinion and International Politics at the Time of Leo XIII 1878–1903* (Leuven 2005), 351–379.

the promotion of the missions, supported by papal diplomacy from the centre of the church, as the means par excellence of spreading Christian moral supremacy throughout the world.¹¹

In the meantime, the territory of missionary activity was expanding as colonial territory expanded. The Western powers improved accessibility and infrastructure in their colonies to make them more amenable to colonial control. The missions made good use of this to spread the faith, but this was work that required many hands. Existing orders and congregations engaged in missionary work, while new congregations were founded in Western countries, often to staff the missions in their home countries' colonies. The missions also needed a lot of money. Although Propaganda Fide was reputed to be one of the wealthiest dicasteries, funding the missionary project as a whole was well beyond its means. Appeals for the missions were organised in Western countries, but here too, charity began at home, and the funds raised usually went to the countries' 'own' missionaries.

Officially, the Holy See operated independently of the colonial powers in the missions, but in practice the Catholic church was highly dependent on the support and protection that these colonial governments could offer. Although Leo XIII refused to undertake in principle that the Catholic church would only appoint citizens of the colonial power in question as missionary bishops in its colonies, in fact that is precisely what happened, as the examples of Belgian Congo or the Dutch East Indies show.

Leo XIII presented the Catholic church not only as the sole guardian of the salvation of all humankind, but also as the foundation of worldwide civilisation. This made it possible to view the missions as the heart and conscience of the colonial powers, but it also meant that the church had to accept the risk that political and economic interests would be justified as noble humanitarian causes. Moreover, the fact that many missionaries – whether consciously or not – spread the idea of white authority and European cultural supremacy served colonial interests. Thus, the French government required missionaries to promote French culture in its colonies.¹² In fact, missionaries functioned as a soft power that served to undermine opposition through non-coercive strategies of allurements and influence such as education and healthcare.¹³

11 Prudhomme, 'Stratégie missionnaire et grande politique sous Léon XIII', 372.

12 Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 201; Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 295–325. See also *I Documenti diplomatici italiani*. Settima serie: 1922–1935, vol. 2 (Rome 1955), 281–283; R. Avezza, Italian ambassador in Paris to B. Mussolini, first minister and minister of foreign affairs, 10 October 1923, which calls French missionaries a "means to political-religious penetration" for the French government.

13 Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power in the Global Information Age: From Realism to Globalization*, Hoboken 2004; Steven Lukes, 'Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds: On the Bluntness of Soft Power', in: Felix Berenskoetter, Michael J. Williams (eds.), *Power in World Politics* (London 2007), 83–97.

But colonial interests and national sensitivities also formed an obstacle for the Vatican's centralisation policy in the early twentieth century. The Holy See could not afford to distance its missionary policies all too clearly from the Catholic nations' colonial policies if it wished to avoid conflict with the governments. For example, it could not simply refuse the help of French and Italian congregations or lay missionary organisations, even if this might have been the wiser policy to foster good relations with local, indigenous authorities. Italian and French Catholics, who had great admiration for and loyalty to the pope, would have regarded it as a snub. The church had to tread cautiously so as not to estrange its most dedicated adherents.¹⁴

3 Prefect on Piazza di Spagna

When Van Rossum became prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1918, the internal procedures of this dicastery were essentially the same as they had been for centuries. The congregation was still led by the *congregazione generale* of cardinals, chaired by the prefect, who was supported by a general secretary. The pope no longer attended these meetings, but the business of Propaganda still had his very close attention: all important decisions had to be submitted to him for approval. And it was still a wealthy congregation, housed in the palace of Propaganda Fide on Piazza di Spagna. Missionaries continued to be trained in the Collegio Urbano located just behind the palace of Propaganda, and the congregation liaised as before with orders and congregations about their activities in mission territories.

However, whereas at the beginning of its existence, the congregation had only a small geographical sphere of effective influence, over the course of the nineteenth century, almost the entire world came within its purview. Most of Latin America still fell outside its competence, while North America and European countries such as Great Britain and the Netherlands (but not Scandinavia) were withdrawn from its jurisdiction in the constitution *Sapienti Consilio* of 1908 as part of the reform of the curia.¹⁵ But large swathes of Asia, Africa and Oceania had in the meantime taken

14 Prudhomme, 'Stratégie missionnaire et grande politique sous Léon XIII', 360–367, 377, has pointed in this context to the situation in China, not a colony in the strict sense of the term, but an area that had been brought under the Western imperial powers' sphere of influence. When Rome attempted to establish direct diplomatic relations with the Chinese emperor, this provoked strong opposition from the French government and the French population, and Leo XIII backed down. Negotiations about diplomatic ties were only resumed in 1942–43. The curia also had to operate cautiously in the 'Roman question': it had to be careful not to take its struggle with the new Italian state to the point of alienating Italian Catholics, who normally supported the state on the basis of nationalist convictions, but were also loyal to the pope.

15 This curial reform was partially intended precisely to curb the power of Propaganda Fide, which could in its territories decide on matters that belonged to the competency of other dicasteries. This »

their place. The expansion of the congregation's field of work and the growing place that the missions came to occupy in the Holy See's policies enhanced the stature of the prefect of Propaganda Fide.

The challenges that Van Rossum would encounter as prefect were already clearly visible in 1918. The papal strategy, begun by Leo XIII, of centralising and standardising the Catholic church also meant decolonising the missions and bringing them under the central authority of Propaganda Fide. This meant uncoupling the missions from colonial interests – especially by establishing indigenous churches – and presenting the missionary project as a supranational commission that was incumbent on all believers. Control over the missions, over missionary staff and over finances had to be vested in Propaganda Fide in Rome. To make this possible, it was essential that Propaganda should have a well-functioning head office.¹⁶

For Van Rossum (and his secretary) personally, his appointment meant first and foremost that he had to move – reluctantly, according to Drehmanns – from Via della Statuto, where he had lived for six years and had participated to some extent in the religious life of the Redemptorists, to Piazza di Spagna.¹⁷ “On Saturday 16 March, H. Em. Cardinal van Rossum took possession of the Prefecture. After all the officials of Propaganda had been introduced to him and he had inspected the rooms, the Secretary presented H. Em. with two documents that required his signature.” The documents in question were decrees erecting the vicariate of Dutch Borneo and appointing the new vicar apostolic, Pacificus van Uden O.F.M.Cap. (Joannus Bos). “Thus, the first act of the new Cardinal-Prefect was one that concerned our Dutch Missions.”¹⁸

The Palazzo di Propaganda was both an office and a residence. The historic building was an example of Italian baroque architecture; Bernini had been one of its designers. The private living quarters and office that Van Rossum encountered when he arrived had been decorated in the 1830s. His coat of arms was placed under a red canopy in the great entrance lobby. Footmen would take visitors' coats and hats there, and escort them to an anteroom. Next came his private secretary's reception room and the meeting hall where meetings were held that Van Rossum attended in

» was a reason for withdrawing these Western countries from its jurisdiction. See AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1908, rubr. 1, fasc. 1A, f 18–23; G. De Lai to Pius X, 4 February 1907, with appendix ‘Studio sull'ordinamento delle S. Congregazioni ed uffici della S. Sede’ (De Lai's handwriting).

16 Metzler, ‘Präfekten’, 309–310.

17 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 74.

18 Twee brieven van Z. Em. Kardinaal van Rossum’, in: *Apostolische priesterbond*, 1(1917/18), no. 10 (July), 78–80. In fact, they are letters that J. Drehmanns wrote on Van Rossum's instruction, one to A. Hermus, 27 March 1918 and one to M. Claessens, 25 March 1918. The Borneo dossier had been discussed at the general congregation of 4 March 1918, where it was presented by Van Rossum. ASPF, Acta, 1917–1918, vol. 289, f 122–128: Ponzona 1. Relazione Circa la erezione in Vicariato Apostolico della Prefettura del Borneo Olandese e circa la nomina del Vicario Apostolico.

person. This hall gave onto the throne room, with walls covered in red damask and gilt chairs upholstered in red silk. A portrait of Pope Benedict xv under another canopy adorned this room, and a gilt throne upon which only the pope might sit. A little further was Van Rossum's own reception room. Every afternoon from five to seven thirty, he received a long line of visitors who awaited their turn in the anterooms: "bishops, mission superiors, mission procurators, ordinary missionaries who had to be cheered up or encouraged, envoys with complaints and requests, religious sisters who came to their protector for good counsel or some request, and many others, including countrymen on pilgrimage in Rome".¹⁹

Behind and above this room were the cardinal's private quarters, his office and library, dining room and bedroom, private chapel and the rooms of his secretary and domestic staff.²⁰ In addition to Drehmanns, several Redemptorist lay brothers also moved to the palace of Propaganda. A perk for Van Rossum was that he now had the use of a country residence in Castel Gandolfo, the Villa Barberini, which belonged to Propaganda Fide. He often went there to escape the Roman heat and find peace and quiet.

The furnishings of the palace were rather antiquated.²¹ Willem Dreesmann, a prosperous Dutch businessman and friend of Van Rossum's, noticed this and offered to pay for a renovation of the entire residential part, which was carried out in the late 1920s. New stairs were added and a lift for the cardinal's private use, which ran from the roof terrace down to the garage. This meant he could leave the palace shielded from the prying eyes of the crowds on Piazza di Spagna.²² Van Rossum was very pleased with the renovation, which gave him a much larger, bright and airy office and study, with free access to the offices and the safe. His bedroom and bathroom were also substantially renovated. He was less pleased with the fact that many items were stolen during the renovation, "as usual by those wretched workmen": pens, lamps, lampshades, "all the penholders including the American one, all gone. All the pencils, even that nice golden one from Miss Bödiker, gone", he wrote to Drehmanns. The cardinal had complained to the contractors, making "an unholy fuss", but to little avail.²³

As prefect of Propaganda, Van Rossum outranked all missionary bishops, and he therefore had to be consecrated a bishop himself. He was greatly moved by the ceremony, over which Benedict xv presided in person. The pope sent him a pectoral cross on the eve of his consecration. In the accompanying letter, Benedict expressed the

19 Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 20.

20 Post, Smit, *Het Vaticaan*, 214–215.

21 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 100.

22 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: B. Lijdsman to J. Drehmanns, 9 May 1930; W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 15 June 1930.

23 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 22 October and 5 November 1930.

hope that the Holy Spirit would descend upon Van Rossum so that he might be an “ornament to the Sacred College” for many years to come.²⁴

His ordination as titular archbishop of Caesarea in Mauretania took place in the Sistine Chapel on the morning of Pentecost, 19 May 1918, at 8 o'clock – the very day that the new code of canon law entered into force – in the presence of Cardinals Vincenzo Vannutelli and Gasparri and others. After Van Rossum had taken the canonical oath, the pope examined him concerning the foundations of the faith and reminded him of the tasks of a bishop: to judge, explain, consecrate, ordain, offer, baptise and confirm. Then Benedict xv consecrated the new bishop's mitre and crozier, and Van Rossum gave his first episcopal blessing. The ceremony took two hours.²⁵ Sometime later, the new bishop was sent the invoice.²⁶

Van Rossum could now himself ordain priests and consecrate bishops. He would be the principal consecrator of 31 archbishops and bishops in total, among whom the later Cardinals Alexis Lépicier and Carlo Salotti, eight apostolic delegates, including Bernhard Gijlswijk, Costantino Aiuti and Edward Mooney, the Chinese Bishop Zhang Zhiliang, and Eduardo Tonna, bishop of Izmir in Turkey. The last missionary bishop he ordained was the Dutch Scheut Father Franciscus Joosten on 28 August 1932.²⁷

4 The office of Propaganda Fide

To carry out the business of the congregation, the prefect had the use of the office of Propaganda Fide, also located on Piazza di Spagna. It was made up of three divisions in 1918: the secretariat, the archive, and economic and financial affairs. The office was directed by the general secretary and his deputy, the undersecretary. The approximately twenty staff members of the first two divisions were all Italian clerics; the higher-ranking officials were called *minutanti*, who were supported by clerks or *scrittori*, and an archivist. The circa thirteen people who worked for economic and financial affairs were Italian laymen, led by a cleric. The *anello cardinalizio*, the tax on cardinal's rings, was still an important source of income for Propaganda Fide at the time.

24 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4: Benedict xv to W. van Rossum, 18 May 1918.

25 E. Rinkes, 'Uit de eeuwige stad. De bisschopswijding van Kardinaal van Rossum door een ooggetuige voor de Lezers van 'De Vriend' verteld', in: *De vriend der H. Harten van Jezus en Maria*, 9(1918), no. 6 (1 Aug. 1918).

26 AGHR, PG *Bona Mobilia F VIII.7*, folder '1909–1920, Roma, *Apochae pecuniae solutae, acta diversa et documenta relate ad expensas in favorem card. Gulielmi Van Rossum*: statement by the esattore della Famiglia Pontificia Ed. Pezzolli that he had received the amount of 1380.74 lire for the episcopal consecration on 20 May 1918.

27 KDC, ROSS, no. 296: Register of episcopal consecrations performed by Cardinal Van Rossum in the years 1919 to 1932, with places of consecration; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 77; <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bvros.html>.

*Episcopal consecration in the Sistine Chapel
by Pope Benedict XV, 19 May 1918*



The office's day-to-day business was discussed in weekly *congressi*, where the prefect, secretary, undersecretary and *minutanti* set priorities and divided the work.²⁸ The highest officials of the congregation were appointed by the pope. The rules governing this were laid down in the 1908 'Regolamento per le Sacre Congregazioni, Tribunali, Uffici della Curia Romana', an appendix to Pius X's constitution *Sapientis Consilio*. This stipulated that the higher officials, such as the general secretary (*ufficiali maggiori*), were appointed by the pope; their letter of appointment was handled by the secretary of state. Lower officials (*ufficiali minori*), listed by name every year in the *Annuario Pontificio*, were appointed by the prefect and hired through a competitive examination, a *concorso*. The rules prohibited recommendations and banned any consideration of these in the recruitment process. The prefect hired junior and housekeeping staff (*inservienti*) himself, on the advice of the higher officials.

These rules had been further elaborated in Propaganda's internal regulations, which show that the prefect's nominations for officials such as *minutanti* and the rector and professors of the Collegio Urbano were debated in the general congregations. Other human resources issues (such as the promotion of officials) were also discussed in these plenary meetings at the prefect's behest.²⁹ Despite the rules, family ties still counted for much when it came to obtaining posts, as the surnames of the staff in economic affairs suggest (Fumasoni-Biondi, Pacelli, Pecorari, Giobbe).³⁰ Moreover, *minutanti* frequently relied on connections to obtain their jobs, and the pope could dispense them from sitting the exam. Sometimes professors were appointed with papal approval without any discussion in the general congregation.³¹

According to Drehmanns, the office of Propaganda Fide was in a deplorable state in 1918. Van Rossum's predecessor, the sickly Serafini, had invested little energy in it, and his predecessor Gotti, of very advanced years in 1916, had been a feeble manager in the later years of his prefectship. Van Rossum restored vigour to the office, took charge of governance himself and checked everyone else's work.³² He signed nothing without having read the whole document; according to his biographer Smit, he had two full boxes of letters to sign every day.³³

28 N. Kowalsky, J. Metzler, *Inventory of the Historical Archives of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples or 'De Propaganda Fide'* (Rome 1983), 16–18.

29 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 446–458: Nota d'archivio circa la provvista degli uffici nei sacri dicasteri e, in particolare, nella S.C. di Propaganda, 29 October 1928.

30 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 77–79; *Annuario pontificio* 1931, 526–527.

31 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 446–458: Nota d'archivio circa la provvista degli uffici, 29 October 1928. See also ASPF, *Acta*, 1914–1915, vol. 287, f 124–129: Relazione con sommario sull'istanza presentata dagli impiegati ecclesiastici delle due Segreterie della S.C. di Propaganda per alcune modificazioni da introdursi nel Regolamento riguardante il loro onorario, 1 July 1914; f 199: Relazione con Sommario sopra un nuovo Regolamento riguardante gli onorari degli addetti ecclesiastici alle due Segreterie di questa S.C., 11 January 1915.

32 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 76; Metzler, 'Präfekten', 304.

33 Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 20.

Van Rossum believed the secretariat was overstaffed and that the employees did not work hard enough. During the first general congregation after his appointment, on 29 July 1918, he proposed reducing the clerical staff from twelve *impiegati inferiori* (junior officials) and three *uscieri* (factotums) to eight and two respectively. The core staff – the secretary, undersecretary, the four or five *minutanti* and the archivist – remained as it was. He also proposed adjusting entry-level salaries and introducing a cost-of-living allowance for those whose salaries elsewhere were insufficient (most of the staff had other jobs on the side). Van Rossum noted that the Holy Father had approved all of these proposals during an audience on 1 August, as long as they complied strictly with the rules of 1908, and that they were to enter into force on 1 January 1919.³⁴

At the general congregation of 11 November 1918, Van Rossum presented a memorandum proposing a number of changes in the rules and organisation of the economic affairs division of Propaganda Fide, on the basis of a review he had conducted of the working hours, working conditions and finances. The new rules were that everyone had to be in the office from eight thirty in the morning until twelve thirty in the afternoon, every day except holidays. Absence would not be tolerated without the head of office's permission, and this functionary was also charged with ensuring strict enforcement of office hours. Under Leo XIII, practice had been slacker, with office hours from nine thirty to twelve thirty.³⁵ By way of compensation, the entry-level salary for the chief bookkeeper went up by eight percent and wages were to be raised every three years rather than every five years, as had been the case in the past. The new rules also stipulated an establishment plan of thirteen staff members for the financial affairs division. The total annual salary costs would be slightly higher at 47,760 lire instead of 46,587 lire.³⁶

The rules for the secretariat and the archive were also changed. A list of regulations was to be displayed in the office, stipulating the working hours from nine a.m. to one p.m. To ensure compliance, there was to be a 'libro di frequenza' which had to be signed by every staff member upon arrival; the book was removed and signed by the general secretary at 9.15 a.m. Minor infractions were tolerated, but absence or late arrivals would be sanctioned after two warnings by an incremental fine that

34 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 709, f 172–177; *Acta*, 1917–1918, vol. 289, f 184–193: Relazione con sommario circa un nuovo Regolamento per gli stipendi degli impiegati presso la Segreteria della s.c. di Propaganda Fide, 29 July 1918. Cost-of-living allowances were awarded again in later years. See *ibid.*, f 194 and f 346–348.

35 See Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 76–77 on the rules of 1887 and 1908, which also stipulated that every staff member had the right to a week's retreat at least once every two years.

36 ASPF, *Acta*, 1917–1918, vol. 289, f 249–253: Relazione intorno ad alcune modificazioni al Regolamento ed all' Organico degli impiegati degli uffici dell'Economia della S.C. de Propaganda Fide, 11 November 1918. In practice the staff numbers were higher. Propaganda Fide employed more people in the early 1920s than in the early 1930s: 19 vs. 14 for the secretariat and the archive, and 26 consultants vs. 23. The economic division remained stable at 17 staff members. *Annuario Pontificio* 1923 and 1931.

would be deducted from the salary. Fines were to be deposited in the fund for the missions. Staff members had 45 days of holidays in the summer months – instead of the 50 they expected – but a skeleton crew of “one *minutante*, one *scrittore*, one staff member of the register, one of the archive, and one of the post room” had to be present every day during the summer holidays from 20 August to 10 October. In addition, everyone had two days of leave per month, although days not taken were forfeit.

Employees were not allowed to receive persons unrelated to business during office hours, nor to receive personal mail. Outsiders were admitted to the office only with the general secretary’s permission, except the consultants of Propaganda and the directors of the Collegio Urbano. Van Rossum submitted these rules to Benedict XV on 15 November 1921, who approved them but relaxed them a little by stipulating that the staff should work at least three hours a day.³⁷

Van Rossum appears to have been a discerning head-hunter. The *minutanti* in particular were important for the proper functioning of the secretariat; Prudhomme has called them the linchpins of the dicastery.³⁸ Van Rossum actively involved himself in their recruitment and took a great interest in their exam results, which had to be evaluated by the consultants.³⁹ A number of *minutanti* who occupied this position in 1918 remained in their posts throughout Van Rossum’s prefectship, such as Giulio Chiavoni and Luigi Haver, while one of them, Cesare Pecorari, became undersecretary of Propaganda Fide in 1922, a post he fulfilled until 1935. For others, this position became a stepping stone to a successful career, such as Alfredo Ottaviani, who joined Propaganda Fide as a *minutante* in 1920 and continued his career in the Secretariat of State after 1922; he was created a cardinal in 1953. Van Rossum appointed Giuseppe Stanghetti, *minutante* since 1922, ‘professor of Cosmology and the History of Philosophy’ at the Collegio Urbano in 1926.⁴⁰

A detailed new protocol for the processing of incoming and outgoing documents in Propaganda Fide was introduced in 1922, to enhance the efficiency of business, enable the proper cataloguing of documents, make it easier to find documents and facilitate file creation. It described the exact activities expected of every employee step by step. Thus, four *minutanti* were each assigned a continent or part thereof, while a fifth additional *minutante* was put in charge of religious institutes and missionary societies, mission colleges, the Collegio Urbano, the annual *Lettere di stato*

37 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 851, f 10: rules for the staff of the secretariat, 9 November 1921; vol. 709, f 187: Rescript ex audientia, 15 November 1919.

38 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 84.

39 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 851, f 12: memo by Van Rossum on the appointment of a *minutante*, Leonardo Cercone, on 7 January 1923, approved during an audience with the pope on 4 January 1923; KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 19 December 1930, on the succession of the *minutante* L. Traglia.

40 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 855–857: appointments in 1926.

from past pupils of the Collegio Urbano, and cases that did not concern any specific mission territory. To expedite their work, Van Rossum asked all apostolic delegates, vicars and prefects henceforth to address only one subject per letter, so that each letter was destined for a specific *minutante* alone and could be easily archived. He also asked them to write in Latin, or failing that, in Italian or French, in a clear hand, on good paper and with black ink, preferably using a typewriter.⁴¹

The archive, too, was totally reorganised. No doubt Van Rossum's experience as archivist of the Holy Office under Pope Leo XIII played a role here.⁴² Documents were still filed under protocol numbers and rubrics, but the system was made more user-friendly. A total of 95 rubrics were subdivided into sub-rubrics on the basis of territorial and thematic keywords.⁴³ A division was made into regions and subregions, religious institutes that fell under Propaganda Fide and those that did not but did have missions, and mission seminaries. Requests for access for historical research were granted upon approval by the prefect. The overhaul and opening up of the archive were too much work for one man, and the archivist – this was Giuseppe Monticone from 1924 onwards⁴⁴ – was given two new archival assistants, apparently not clerics.

The day-to-day management of the office was in the hands of the general secretary, who had the assistance of an undersecretary.⁴⁵ The general secretary had the rank of a titular archbishop and was, like the prefect, received in audience by the pope twice a month. He was also responsible for the finances of Propaganda.⁴⁶ Van Rossum met the general secretary every workday at 9 o'clock in the morning to discuss urgent business.⁴⁷ Although the general secretaries were not members of Propaganda Fide, they attended all general congregations, deputised for the prefect in his absence, knew all the business of the congregation and were a little more approachable than their boss. During the time that Van Rossum was prefect, as had been the case throughout Leo XIII's pontificate, the general secretaries were competent men who had impressive track records both within and outside the curia.⁴⁸ As was the

41 Metzler, 'Präfekten', 309.

42 See Chapter 7.2.

43 Metzler, 'Präfekten', 309. Metzler also mentions that Van Rossum succeeded in having 74 archival volumes returned from Vienna in 1925 (Austrian troops had taken these after the capture of Paris in 1814) with the help of the Austrian minister to the Holy See, Ludwig von Pastor.

44 He later published an atlas of the territories that fell under Propaganda Fide: G. Monticone, *Atlante delle missioni cattoliche dipendenti dalla Sacra congregazione 'de propaganda fide'*, Rome 1947.

45 Adriano Zecchini had been undersecretary of Propaganda Fide since 1911. Cesare Pecorari held this position from 1922–1935.

46 Benedict XV determined that "la rappresentanza legale, piena ed esclusiva" would reside in the general secretary. See ASPF, *Acta*, 1916, vol. 288, f 224–230. This arrangement was in place until 1973 when it was abolished by Paul VI. *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 620–621.

47 Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 20.

48 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 148–149.

custom, all the general secretaries who served under Van Rossum later became cardinals, then becoming members of Propaganda Fide themselves.

Camillo Laurenti (1861–1938) was the general secretary when Van Rossum became prefect in 1918. He had held this post since 1911, having served as a professor of philosophy at the Collegio Urbano from 1884 and a *minutante* at Propaganda from 1887. He was the official who presented the cardinal with the first two documents to sign on 16 March 1918. Van Rossum and Laurenti got along well, and Van Rossum was discommoded when Laurenti became a cardinal in 1921. The prefect wrote to his brother in the Netherlands that replacing his right-hand man would “of course give me an overload of work”, because a new secretary would have to be trained from scratch, which meant



Cardinal Camillo Laurenti

Van Rossum would have to stay on longer in Rome during the summer.⁴⁹ Laurenti was appointed prefect of the Congregation for Religious on 5 July 1922, which made it easier for Van Rossum to extend control over the missionary congregations, as we shall see. Laurenti, who went on to become prefect of the Congregation of Rites in 1929, nominated Van Rossum for membership of this congregation in 1931 because of his knowledge of German.⁵⁰

Despite Van Rossum's complaints, Laurenti's successor Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi (1872–1960) cannot have required too much training, as he had been a *minutante* at Propaganda Fide from 1904 to 1916. His language skills (he spoke Italian, Greek, French and English – particularly this latter skill was unusual at the time) and other qualities had secured him a position in the diplomatic service as apostolic delegate to British India, and in 1919, under Van Rossum, he became the first apostolic delegate to Japan. He was general secretary of Propaganda Fide for only a year and a half, before being appointed apostolic delegate to the United States on 12 December 1922.⁵¹

49 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 61, Rome 4 June 1921.

50 Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, 840–841; see also Chapter 17.3.

51 Metzler, 'Präfekten', 313–315; see also *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 622–623. Fumasoni-Biondi remained in the United States until he became a cardinal and was appointed Van Rossum's successor on 16 March 1933. Remarkably, no pro-prefect was appointed after Van Rossum's death, and the post of prefect remained vacant for more than six months.

Fumasoni-Biondi's apparently sudden departure caused Van Rossum to return from the Netherlands – where he had been to prepare the Dutch Redemptorist Cornelis Damen's appointment as professor in the Collegio Urbano – earlier than planned in September 1922 to consult with Pope Pius XI. There was a great deal of interest in the position of general secretary and he wished to discuss the issue with the pope before having to deal with curial officials who might importune him.⁵²

Fumasoni-Biondi's successor was Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani (1871–1951), a childhood friend of Eugenio Pacelli's. He had begun his career in the curia in 1904 in the Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari and then joined the diplomatic service, successively serving in Washington, Berlin, Switzerland (as the Holy See's confidential representative during the war), Venezuela and Vienna; a CV that made him a strong candidate for Propaganda Fide. Van Rossum appears to have had a somewhat strained relationship with Marchetti-Selvaggiani, not a man known for his charm. Van Rossum's private secretary Joseph Drehmanns certainly fell foul of him, as we will see.⁵³



Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani,
secretary of Propaganda Fide

After Marchetti-Selvaggiani was made a cardinal on 30 June 1930, undersecretary Cesare Pecorari – and Van Rossum – hoped that he would succeed him, but as the cardinal soon found out, Pius XI had already decided on Carlo Salotti (1870–1947). The prefect clearly had no say in the matter, which illustrates the cooling of relations between the pope and Van Rossum in the last years of his life. Nonetheless, the prefect developed a good working relationship with this secretary, whom he consecrated archbishop. However, to Pecorari's dismay, Salotti was not in a rush to organise a fitting Requiem Mass for the prefect after his death on 30 August 1932.⁵⁴

52 AGHR, LIX 1a2: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, Ingenbohl 5 September 1922. On the appointment of Damen, see *ibid.*: W. van Rossum to P. Murray, Wittem 24 August 1922.

53 Metzler, 'Präfekten'. Marchetti-Selvaggiani succeeded Pompilj as cardinal vicar of Rome in 1931. He was made secretary of the Holy Office in 1939. See also Chapter 19.

54 *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 622–623. Salotti was succeeded by Celso Costantini (1935–1953). AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1932, rubrica 256, fasc. 2, f 72–114: 'Card. Guglielmo van Rossum. Malattia, morte, funerali, condoglianze. Necrologia': C. Pecorari to 'Eccellenza', 28 September 1932, 'personale'. See also Chapter 20.3 and 21.4.

5 The general congregations of Propaganda Fide

The general congregation of the cardinal members of Propaganda Fide, chaired by the prefect, was the forum where the policies of the congregation were prepared and where all important business was discussed. Van Rossum apprised the pope of the outcome of these meetings during his fortnightly audience and submitted any proposed decisions that required papal approval. The prefect normally discussed the agenda of the meetings with the pope in advance. Although the prefect chaired the meetings, this did not mean he could set policy by himself. Most important curial cardinals were members of Propaganda and they were well able to defend their own interests at the meeting table.

The prefect had a certain degree of influence over the membership of the general congregation. Thus the then-prefect, Girolamo Gotti, had successfully nominated Van Rossum to the pope for membership of Propaganda immediately after Van Rossum's creation as a cardinal in 1911.⁵⁵ He attended his first general congregation on Piazza di Spagna on 29 January 1912, together with Cardinals Gotti, Vives y Tutó, Vincenzo Vannutelli, Antonio Agliardi, Francesco di Paola Cassetta, Sebastiano Martinelli, Casimiro Gennari, Benedetto Lorenzelli and his newly created colleagues Billot and Falconio.⁵⁶ He knew most of them from his time as consultor of the Holy Office and in the codification commission, or as acquaintances of the Redemptorists. Doctrinal allies were not ipso facto allies when it came to the business of Propaganda, where church political interests weighed more heavily. Doctrinal problems appeared much less frequently on the agenda of Propaganda than they did in the Holy Office, the codification commission and the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

The cardinals of Propaganda Fide met on average five to eight times a year between 1912 and 1922, at least according to the *Acta*, the acts of the congregation. Under Van Rossum, general congregations were usually held on a monthly basis; on one or two occasions even twice a month.⁵⁷ They always took place on Mondays and the members who lived in Rome were expected to attend, with numbers present fluctuating between five and thirteen cardinals during these years. Metzler has pointed out that the composition of Propaganda Fide became much more international under Van Rossum's prefectship, starting with the appointment of the Polish

55 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 507, f 5–11: request by G.M. Gotti, 4 January 1912. More specifically for the Latin and Oriental division of Propaganda Fide, which was then still in existence (*Sacra Congregazione per gli affari di Rito Latino e Orientale*). Gotti's request also included Cardinals Billot and – for the Oriental division of Propaganda only – Falconio.

56 *Annuario Pontificio* 1913, 325–326, lists the following names as members of Propaganda Fide (for the Latin division) in addition to the eleven cardinals mentioned: Luigi Oreglia di Santo Stefano, José Sebastião Neto, James Gibbons, former Secretary of State Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, Michael Logue, Georg Kopp, Désiré-Joseph Mercier, Pierre Andrieu, John Murphy Farley and Francesco Salesio Della Volpe.

57 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 and 24 January 1932.

Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski in 1919.⁵⁸ It may be asked whether this made much of a difference to decision making, as cardinals who resided outside Rome seldom or never attended and possibly did not even have access to the documentation.

Most general congregations dealt with some five or six issues, but sometimes there was only a single item or two items on the agenda. Like in the Holy Office, each topic was introduced by one of the cardinals on the basis of a written memorandum called a *ponenza* or *relazione*, which was normally printed on Propaganda Fide's own press. Cases that did not concern any specific mission territory (*affari comuni*) were often introduced by the prefect himself, sometimes in the form of a verbal statement, a *relazione verbale*. Such cases were usually of an organisational nature, or concerned the appointment of new officials or financial affairs. The cardinals had the assistance of several consultors or experts when preparing their memorandums. Difficult issues were sometimes treated at greater length in a file (*sommario*) that was added to the memorandum: such files consisted of the history of the issue, an in-depth study by one of the consultors of Propaganda Fide (a *votum*), or correspondence, for example concerning candidates for a particular post. The memorandum culminated in one or more questions, and the general congregation took its decisions in the form of responses to these questions. The prefect then submitted them to the pope.

Van Rossum and the cardinals of Propaganda could draw on the expertise of a relatively large number of consultors (29 in 1918).⁵⁹ These acted as both experts and counsellors, but were not salaried staff members of Propaganda, although some of them had previously been *minutanti*. The consultors sometimes worked for more than one dicastery. All were clerics, and some of them were titular archbishops and bishops, such as Archbishop Ladislaus Michael Zaleski, the Latin patriarch of Antioch and a former apostolic delegate in British India. Some consultors were renowned theologians and lawyers, others had had some other relationship with Propaganda Fide, for instance as a professor in the Collegio Urbano.⁶⁰

Most consultors were members of an order or congregation, where they frequently occupied some high position such as abbot, superior general or procurator general. Throughout these years, there were always Dominicans, Jesuits and Franciscans among the consultors, and often also Benedictines, Servites (*Ordo Servorum Mariae*) and members of various missionary congregations, particularly the Lazarists (Congregation of the Mission) and Spiritans. It is striking that most consultors lacked any

⁵⁸ Metzler, 'Präfekten', 312.

⁵⁹ There is a wooden panel in the study room of the archive of Propaganda Fide in Rome which, given the 24 names of cardinals and ditto consultors listed, dates from 1925 and probably hung in the offices of the secretariat (see p. 274).

⁶⁰ Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 103–130.

practical missionary experience. Van Rossum had some influence over the appointment of consultors, as is evident from the fact that Propaganda Fide had two Redemptorist consultors in the early 1930s (there had been none in 1918): Jan Hudeček, *consultor generalis* since 1909 and also consultor of the Holy Office, and Cornelis Damen, dean and professor of moral theology at the Collegio Urbano. He also secured an appointment for his protégé Jan Olav Smit after the latter had to leave Norway.⁶¹

6 Van Rossum's work as a member of Propaganda Fide, 1912–1918

Van Rossum developed a clear profile over the six years that he was a cardinal member of Propaganda Fide. His work ethic was visible as early as the second general congregation that he attended, on 26 February 1912, when he presented a memorandum on the appointment of a new vicar apostolic in Benin. It was a simple affair, and as was the custom, the first of the three candidates (the *terna*) was appointed, in this case a priest of the Society for African Missions of Lyon (S.M.A.).⁶²

Appointments of new vicars apostolic (missionary bishops) or prefects to replace deceased or departing ordinaries or to lead newly created mission territories, were among the most frequently recurring topics for discussion during the general congregations. Another was the elevation of mission districts or prefectures to the status of a vicariate or, less frequently, of a diocese. The number of districts had been on the increase for years. Existing mission territories were often split into two, with the separated part assigned to another order or congregation, thus intensifying missionary activity in the area. But the creation of a new mission district could lead to conflicts of interests, for instance if an ordinary objected to the partition of 'his' territory. Such objections could rarely count on favourable reception by Van Rossum, as we shall see in the next chapter.⁶³

A second memorandum by Van Rossum was discussed at his fourth general congregation, on 20 May 1912, while his fellow new Cardinals Billot and Falconio were only

61 See Chapter 16.2. On Damen, see Boland, *Dictionary*, 101. See also ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 875, f 731–746. According to the *Annuario Pontificio*, the following consultors were appointed under Van Rossum: J. Hudeček C.Ss.R. and G. Noval O.P. (1921), E. Schröder S.J., D. Cornelisse O.F.M., F. Maroto F.C.I.M. (1922), F. Borgongini-Duca, C. Paban-Segond O.P., L. Marszalkiewicz Resurr., P. Bastien O.S.B., C. Carlo C.S.SP. (1923), G. di S. Alberto (1924), P. Robinson O.F.M. and P. Vidal S.J. (1926), G. Tosto and G. le Rohellec (1927), Leone C.P. (1928), J.O. Smit, F. d'Ambrosio O.F.M.CONV., I. Calvani O.S.M., C. Damen C.Ss.R. (1929).

62 ASPF, *Açta*, 1912, vol. 285, f 68–71.

63 Appointments of ecclesiastical superiors were the most frequent item on the agenda of the general congregations in the 1878–1903 years, followed by the creation of mission territories. Together, they comprised 58% of all business in this period. Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 131–134. Similarly, in 1912, twenty of the 43 cases concerned appointments of a prefect or vicar apostolic or a bishop, and ten the erection of a new church district, new boundaries or the elevation of a district to a higher rank.

presenting their first. Whereas Billot's and Falconio's memorandums dealt with relatively simple appointments, Van Rossum's examined the issue of drawing up rules to govern relations between ecclesiastical and religious superiors in the missions – the so-called 'Modus vivendi'. This specific case concerned mission territories assigned to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O. M. I.).⁶⁴ Van Rossum would continue to take an interest in conflicts of competence in the mission territories, both within orders or congregations and between them. Given his theological and canonical expertise on religious orders and congregations and the fact that he was a religious himself, such matters were often assigned to him.⁶⁵ Moreover, he was familiar with such problems from his time as *consultor generalis* with the Redemptorists. They were often about the division of competence, but financial or policy issues were sometimes also at stake.

Van Rossum presented three more cases in 1912, when the general congregation met eight times. His proposal for the appointment of a coadjutor in Unianiembè (Central Africa)⁶⁶ on 24 June was followed on 29 July by discussion of a memorandum he had written on various changes in and problems with the rules of the White Fathers. The difficulties in question concerned the nomination of candidates for the general chapter, the taking of the oath, community life and the consumption of tobacco.⁶⁷ On 9 December, he tabled a proposal on rules governing the missions of the Discalced Carmelites.⁶⁸ It is clear from appended documents that he involved himself personally in these issues, as they bear notes in his hand. Such business was normally dealt with as *affari comuni* by the prefect, Gotti.⁶⁹ The fact that all three cases on the rules and constitutions of orders and congregations were presented by Van Rossum demonstrates that he had established a reputation as an expert in this field in the first year of his membership.

His memorandums did not always favour the great historic orders, as a case he dealt with on 20 January 1913 shows. A bitter dispute had arisen between the De la Salle Brothers and the Franciscans about jurisdiction over a school in Alexandria in Egypt. Van Rossum concluded that the Franciscans' claims on Saint Catharine's school, which had been built by the Brothers and was managed by them, were spurious.⁷⁰

64 ASPF, *Acta*, 1912, vol. 285, f 156–189: Relazione con voto e sommario Circa il progetto di uno statuto per regolare le relazioni tra gli Ordinari ed i Superiori religiosi nelle Missioni confidate alla Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria Immacolata.

65 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 141–144, points out that this was also customary under Leo XIII.

66 ASPF, *Acta*, 1912, vol. 285, f 209–213: Pendenza 22. Guglielmo van Rossum, Circa la nomina di un Coadiutore a Monsignor Francesco Gerboin Vicario Apostolico dell'Unianiembè (Africa Centrale).

67 *Ibid.*, f 230–235: Relazione circa alcune modificazioni ed interpretazioni delle Costituzioni dei Missionari d'Africa (Padri Bianchi).

68 *Ibid.*, f 307–331: Pendenza 38. Guglielmo van Rossum, Relazione con voto Sulla domanda di approvazione definitiva delle Istruzioni per le Missioni dell'Ordine dei Carmelitani Scalzi.

69 *Ibid.*, Indice delle Pendenze e relazioni verbali Anno 1912.

70 ASPF, *Acta*, 1913, vol. 286, f 29–88: Relazione con sommario e indice Intorno alla vertenza tra i Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane e i Padri Francescani di Terra Santa in Alessandria di Egitto.

In the same year, he prepared a progress report on the merger between the 'Pontificio Istituto ss. Pietro e Paolo per le Missioni Estere' for secular priests, founded in Rome in 1871, and a similar institute founded in Milan in 1850.⁷¹ The more than fifty-page *votum* that formed the basis for his report had been drafted by the French Marist Louis Copéré, one of Van Rossum's preferred consultants for complicated missionary affairs in which personal interests were involved.⁷² Progress was applauded, but discussion of the required new rule, a 'delicate' affair, was deferred to a later date. Ultimately, the merger only happened in 1926 after further involvement by Van Rossum, resulting in the formation of the Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere, which stood under Paolo Manna's leadership during its first decade.⁷³

Van Rossum's interventions became less frequent in 1914 and 1915, possibly because he had in the meantime also become president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. The composition of the membership of Propaganda Fide had changed substantially due to the deaths of cardinals such as Benedetto Lorenzelli and Mariano Rampolla del Tindaro, and new appointments. In early 1915, Benedict xv appointed Antonio Vico, Domenico Serafini and Michele Lega as members of Propaganda Fide, followed in early 1916 by Giovanni Cagliero and Rafael Merry del Val. The latter, the still-influential former secretary of state who was then secretary of the Holy Office, presented memorandums at the second, third and fourth general congregation he attended.⁷⁴

In 1916, Van Rossum again dealt with three cases that involved internal relations within missionary orders and congregations. The 'Modus vivendi' was discussed once more, in this instance in reference to relations between the ordinary and the religious superior of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, an issue apparently so thorny that it had to be discussed twice, in meetings held in short succession, on 17 and 24 January 1916. The underlying *votum* was once again drafted by Copéré. The proposal of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart was approved for a probationary period of seven years.⁷⁵ As shall be seen, the issue of the 'Modus vivendi' would be discussed on countless occasions before Pius xi approved an amended version of a

71 *Ibid.*, f 272–307: Relazione con voto. Circa la progettata unione del Pontificio Seminario dei Ss. Apostoli Pietro e Paolo per le Missioni Estere ed il Seminario Lombardo per le Missioni Estere, e circa l'approvazione delle Regole per l'erigendo Istituto.

72 Louis Copéré (1867–1940) had been vice procurator of the Marists in Rome since 1903 and was procurator general of his order from 1905–1928. He was a consultant of Propaganda Fide, the Congregations of Religious, Sacraments and the Council. He had to step down from his posts in 1928 for reasons that have never been clarified. Information provided by Antoine Forissier, Marist Archive, Lyon. See also *Annuario pontificio* 1921; Jan Snijders S.M. to Vefie Poels, 10 January 2018.

73 See Chapter 17.3.

74 ASPF, Acta, 1916, vol. 288; *Annuario Pontificio* 1915–1916.

75 ASPF, Acta, 1916, vol. 288, f 1–23: Ponente Guglielmo van Rossum. Relazione con voto. Circa l'approvazione di un 'Modus Vivendi' fra la Società dei Missionari del S. Cuore e i Superiori delle Missioni alla medesima Società confidate o da confidarsi in avvenire.

general solution proposed by Van Rossum in 1929: the so-called *ius commissionis*.⁷⁶ Van Rossum presented only a single memorandum in 1917, on the appointment of a vicar apostolic in Ho-nan in China, a mission territory of the Institute for Foreign Missions of Milan.⁷⁷

7 The prefect's power

Van Rossum's role within Propaganda Fide changed radically on 12 March 1918. Instead of preparing memorandums away from the limelight and then presenting them in the general congregation, he now had to lead one of the most important organs of the Roman curia as the 'red pope'. In his study of Propaganda Fide under Pope Leo XIII, Claude Prudhomme has contended that the term 'red pope' as a moniker for the prefect of Propaganda Fide is a little hyperbolic: the prefect did have the highest authority within his congregation, but important and extraordinary affairs could not be discussed without notifying the pope beforehand. And the pope had to approve all decisions.⁷⁸

Not only was Van Rossum dependent on the pope who had appointed him and his successor on the See of Peter, but he was surrounded by fellow cardinals who were all involved in decision making. On occasion this resulted in lively debate, as we will see in Chapter 15. Propaganda had to consider the wishes of the pope, the diplomatic requirements of the Secretariat of State, and the concerns of other dicasteries whose remit touched on the business of Propaganda, such as the Congregation for Religious and the Holy Office. Moreover, Propaganda had lost some of its importance in 1917, when a significant section of the congregation's area of responsibility was removed from it.

Propaganda Fide's division for the Eastern rite – *s.c. de Propaganda Fide pro negotiis ritus orientalis* – had been a relatively autonomous part of the congregation since 1862. However, the *motu proprio Dei Providentis* split it off from Propaganda and turned it into an independent dicastery called the Sacra Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali ('the Orientale') on 1 May 1917. Separation between the Oriental and Latin churches had become possible that year with the impending publication of the new code of canon law.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 780–784; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 643, f 386. See also Chapter 17.3.

⁷⁷ ASPF, *Acta*, 1917, vol. 289, f 65–75: Guglielmo van Rossum. *Relazione con Sommario. Sulla nomina del Vicario Apostolico dell'Ho-nan meridionale*.

⁷⁸ Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 150–155. See also CIC 1917, can. 244, par. 1. The pope could establish a special commission of cardinals to solve controversies (can. 245).

⁷⁹ Del Re, *La Curia Romana*, 108–118.

The establishment of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches was one of the most important curial reforms of Pope Benedict xv, who took a lively interest in the Oriental churches. Some even regarded it as an obsession, fed by fears that Russia might take advantage of the demise of the existing political balance between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires due to the First World War. A 'second Rome', an 'Orthodox Vatican' on the Bosphorus might be set up in Constantinople under the aegis of the Russian Orthodox church. The importance that Benedict xv attached to the new congregation is reflected in the fact that he governed the Orientale himself as its prefect, with Cardinal Secretary Niccolò Marini (1843–1923) as its executive head.⁸⁰

The detachment of the Oriental division of Propaganda Fide was never discussed during any of the general congregations of Propaganda.⁸¹ This dicastery was obviously not consulted about the papal decision, although Van Rossum was appointed a member of the Orientale on 22 March 1918.⁸² The separation caused several practical and financial problems, as part of the staff moved to the Orientale. As would become evident later, the new congregation believed it had been unfairly treated by Propaganda Fide, and specifically by Van Rossum, with regard to the division of competences and the allocation of funds.⁸³

Because Van Rossum was also a member of other organs of the curia, he had the chance to promote his interests in various curial bodies. Not only was he the president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (since 1914), he was also a member of the Index (up to 1917), of the Congregation for Religious, of that of the Council, of the Holy Office, the Orientale and the Congregation of Seminaries and Universities (since 1919). In addition, he was a member, together with six other cardinals, including Pietro Gasparri and Gaetano De Lai, of the Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Codex Iuris Canonici. Finally, he served on the 'Commissione cardinalizia per l'opera "Praeservationis Fidei" in Roma', the Work for the Preservation of the Faith in Rome, under the chairmanship of Basilio Pompilj.⁸⁴

As prefect of Propaganda, Van Rossum was president ex officio of the Pontificio Seminario dei ss. AA. Pietro e Paulo per le Missioni Estere. But the long list of orders and congregations whose cardinal protector he was is particularly striking. Beginning with the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg in 1912, by 1921, he had become protector of no fewer than 24 institutes (the number would later rise to 31). Prudhomme's

80 Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 195–200; Id., *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 108–112; Laura Pettinaroli, 'La diplomazia umanitaria della S. Sede nei confronti del mondo russo (1914–1922)', in: *Benedetto xv*, vol. 2, 739–751; Id., *La politique russe du Saint-Siège (1905–1939)*, Rome 2015.

81 ASPF, Acta, 1917, vol. 289.

82 AAS, 10(1918), 173.

83 See Chapter 15.4.

84 *Annuario Pontificio*, 1921, 373–409, 685–691.

comment on Vincenzo Vannutelli also applies to Van Rossum: the list of congregations who chose him as their protector testifies to his influence and prestige.⁸⁵

If the number of memberships of dicasteries can serve as a gauge of the cardinal's power, then Van Rossum was in the middle range with six in 1921. Cardinals Vico, Pompilj, Frühwirth, Sbarretti and Billot were similarly members of six dicasteries, Vincenzo Vannutelli, De Lai, Scapinelli di Léguigno and Lega of seven, and Bisleti of eight. Cardinals Gasparri and Merry del Val were in the lead with nine memberships each. It may be asked how closely cardinals with so many secondary functions could be involved in the business of the congregations of which they were members.⁸⁶

Van Rossum had his hands full with the various meetings, as he told his former secretary in early 1932 after having been appointed to the Congregation of Rites in 1931. That week, he had a meeting every morning after his daily consultation with the secretary of Propaganda Fide. On Monday there was the meeting of Propaganda Fide, on Tuesday Rites, on Wednesday the Holy Office, on Thursday his fortnightly audience with the pope and on Friday the *congresso*, the meeting with Propaganda staff. The meetings of the Congregations of Religious and of Universities and of the Pontifical Biblical Commission had to be planned in between. As he told Drehmanns, his intention was never to miss any meeting of Propaganda Fide, the Holy Office, the Orientale and Universities.⁸⁷

Remarkably, Van Rossum was never appointed a member of the influential Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari (AAEES), led by the secretary of state; Merry del Val in 1912, Pietro Gasparri from 1914 to 1930, and then Eugenio Pacelli, the later Pius XII. This influential dicastery dealt with the most important political issues that concerned the Holy See, and its members were usually regarded as heavyweights. Its links with the Secretariat of State meant that the congregation regularly addressed issues that were within the purview of Propaganda Fide. At the pope's instigation, joint sessions of the two congregations were sometimes held, the so-called *congregazioni miste*. Incidentally, Merry del Val only became a member of Propaganda when he was no longer secretary of state, and Gasparri only in 1927, together with his nephew Enrico Gasparri.⁸⁸

It is all the more striking that Van Rossum was not a member of Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari because his predecessor and successor as prefect of Propaganda both were. By withholding this appointment, the pope restricted Van Rossum's power in the very field in which he daily operated. Although he championed a conception of the missions as a supranational cause, in practice he had to deal with the

85 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 139. V. Vannutelli came top of the list in 1924 with more than fifty protectorates. Vico and Gennari also had more than Van Rossum, who at the time had approximately the same number as Bisleti, Billot, Pompilj and Giorgi. *Annuario Pontificio*, 1924. See also Chapter 18.1.

86 For a critical assessment, see Chapter 21.3.

87 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 24 January 1932; Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 20.

88 *Annuario Pontificio*, 1927. This means Pietro Gasparri was a member of ten dicasteries at the time.

national-political constellation in the colonial powers and their colonies, and this sometimes gave rise to conflicts of competence with Secretary of State Gasparri. It is significant for example that a number of apostolic delegates were moved from the remit of Propaganda Fide to the AAESS under his prefectship.⁸⁹

Van Rossum's lack of diplomatic skills was possibly a reason to keep him out of the AAESS, but perhaps Drehmanns was right in suggesting in his biography that the highest echelons of the Vatican were keen to limit his power because he was a *straniero*, a foreigner given his Dutch background. He was also an outsider because he was a religious. In itself that was an advantage in his position, but as a Redemptorist, he did not measure up to his predecessors who had been members of respectable, centuries-old orders such as the Benedictines and the Carmelites. Another possibility is that his appointment was blocked by Gasparri: they were not friends, as we shall see. They held doctrinal and church political views that were often diametrically opposed.

Benedict xv's appointment of Willem van Rossum as prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in March 1918 must be seen in the political context of the First World War. Apart from Merry del Val, Van Rossum was the only cardinal in the curia who hailed from a non-belligerent country. Moreover, he had given ample proof of his qualities as a member of Propaganda Fide in the preceding six years. He had concentrated particularly on resolving conflicts of authority among religious, Propaganda's most important missionary collaborators on the ground. The fact that Benedict was willing to take the risk of placing this *straniero* in one of the curia's most important posts shows the trust he had in the new 'red pope', and is also testimony to the strong position that Van Rossum had by then acquired within the College of Cardinals.

Propaganda Fide had existed for almost three centuries and its structure had not changed substantially during this period. Van Rossum made no essential structural changes either. But from his first day as prefect, he brought new elan to the office, promoted a reorganisation of office culture, introducing clear new rules about work fields and competencies and longer working hours. He also recruited promising new staff members and consultants. They were hired to help realise Van Rossum's plan of turning Propaganda Fide from a primarily operational agency into a department of missions that would initiate policy and focus on results – an important step towards the goal of converting the whole world to Catholicism.

⁸⁹ See Chapter 14.7.

A new missionary era

1 Rediscovering old principles

Willem van Rossum's appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the missions. Together with Pope Benedict xv, Van Rossum turned missionary activity into one of the most important priorities of this pontificate. Their missionary policy was so successful, that the pope's successor Pius xi kept Van Rossum on as prefect, continued the policy formulated under his predecessor, and presented himself as 'the pope of the missions'.¹

It was not at all inevitable that the missions should have become one of the Holy See's most characteristic activities during these years. The war years had badly affected the Catholic missions, which by 1918 suffered from a decline in the number of missionaries and of missionary activity. Moreover, nationalism was at its height in the Western states during the First World War and the subsequent inter-war years. The powers' main focus was on exploiting and, wherever possible, expanding their colonial territories. Although the separation of church and state had been enacted in most countries, the Catholic and Protestant missions were still being used as an auxiliary soft power to pacify colonial territories where necessary and to Westernise them through education and healthcare.²

While European powers concentrated in this period on exploiting and retaining their colonies, the idea of national self-determination was gaining ground as an explicit critique of this policy. The underlying principle was that a people should have the right to decide for itself whose sovereignty it recognised. The American President Woodrow Wilson enunciated this principle in a speech to the American Congress on 8 January 1918, in which he made proposals to bring peace to the war-torn world. His so-called Fourteen Points emphasised the right of national self-determination and called for the foundation of a League of Nations. Although many of Wilson's proposals were not implemented, such as his call for decolonisation, they formed the basis for the peace conference held in Paris from January 1919 to January 1920.

1 Poels, 'Pontifex missionum', 310–313. Pilgrims to Rome received a commemorative medal bearing the image of Pius xi and the legend *Pontifex missionum*.

2 Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford 2002), 12–17; Lukes, 'Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds', 83–97.

Van Rossum understood the signs of the times. He concluded that it was only a matter of time before decolonisation would happen, and that the Catholic church had to prepare for this by breaking the bonds that tied the missions to colonial politics. This was not a wholly new concept. As prefect of Propaganda Fide, he could fall back on this congregation's old, original principles to establish Roman control over the missions and reorganise them completely. The two papal documents that were published during his prefectship are testimony to this. Pope Benedict xv's apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* appeared on 30 November 1919, a year and a half after Van Rossum's appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide. It was a groundbreaking document, that was interpreted as heralding a change of direction by Rome. And yet its core message was not new. In many ways it resembled old guidelines and objectives that had been formulated by Francesco Ingoli (1578–1649), the first secretary of Propaganda Fide, and that could also be found in Pope Alexander VII's 1659 *Instructio*. This instruction, often called the Magna Carta of Propaganda Fide, advocated the founding of indigenous churches with an indigenous clergy that would be independent of the political power, whether colonial or local. Missionaries were to work under the immediate authority of Rome and be respectful of non-Western cultures. The same guidelines can be found in *Maximum Illud*. Pius XI's encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae*, which appeared on 28 February 1926, contained a similar message.

The resemblances between these missionary documents and the old instructions are so great that the French historian Prudhomme has said of *Maximum Illud* that it was “new without being innovative”.³ And yet there certainly was innovation, not so much at the level of ideas, but of context and implementation. The publication of the letter stressed the Holy See's sense of urgency about the reorganisation of the missions, to end the existing situation in which they had a strongly nationalist hue and were intertwined with political-colonial interests. Rome wished to regain control over the missions and foreground their religious objective. This led to unrest in countries that used missionary activity to further nationalist ends. The Catholic press in France even suppressed *Maximum Illud*'s passages on nationalism.⁴

But the real innovation of *Maximum Illud* was that it gave old principles a new, urgent place on the agenda, and that it came with a plan of action, which was, moreover, successfully implemented, despite the strong opposition that the Holy See would repeatedly face. Josef Metzler, archivist of Propaganda Fide and chief editor

3 Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud, una svolta missionaria?*’, p. 412. In addition to the 1659 *Instructio*, addressed to the vicars apostolic of Indochina, Prudhomme has also pointed to Ingoli's *memoriali* of 1625, 1628 and 1644, the instruction *Neminem Profecto* (1845), the encyclical *Ad Extremas Orientis* (1893) and the Propaganda Fide instruction *Cum Postremis* (1893).

4 *Ibid.*, 408; Andrzej Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel. Am Beispiel der Enzyklika ‘Maximum Illud’* (Nettetal 1999), 145–162. Miotk focuses primarily on the innovative ecclesiological-theological aspects of *Maximum Illud* and their influence on practical missiology.

of a wide-ranging standard work on this congregation published to mark its 350th anniversary, has emphasised that Van Rossum put into practice the essential proposals that Ingoli had drawn up three centuries before and had tried in vain to accomplish.⁵ *Maximum Illud* (1919) was followed in short succession by the transfer to Rome in 1922 of the headquarters of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the French-based central missionary fundraising organisation, the World Mission Exposition during the Holy Year of 1925, the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* in 1926, the consecration of the first Chinese bishops in 1926 (and a Japanese bishop in 1927), the institution of World Mission Sunday in 1926, the proclamation of the popular Saint Therese of Lisieux as patron saint of missions in 1927, the founding of the missionary press agency *Agentia Fides*, the construction of a new building for the Collegio Urbano, Propaganda Fide's training institute (1931), and the founding of an institute for missiology at the Ateneo Urbaniano (1932).

In almost fifteen years, from March 1918 to August 1932, the Dutch prefect succeeded in re-establishing Roman control over the missions. He not only organised the office of Propaganda Fide more efficiently, as has been seen in the previous chapter, but also did this for the missions themselves. Propaganda no longer focused exclusively on work in the missionary territories as such, but orchestrated and coordinated all aspects of the missions, their objectives, organisation, public relations, finances, staffing and training. This papal policy was the fruit of close collaboration between Propaganda Fide and the Secretariat of State, in a drive to break the French hegemony over the missions, streamline national initiatives and minimise the influence of the Spanish and Portuguese right of patronage.⁶

All this helped to give the missions the tremendous appeal that they acquired in the Catholic parts of the West. Missionary activity became a central focus of attention and played an important part in people's religious life. The number of missionary territories expanded, new missionaries joined in droves, and fundraising was increasingly successful. Van Rossum was the driving force behind all these activities, which were formally carried out at the pope's instigation. Officially, his role was to carry out papal decisions, but in practice he initiated and guided these. Drehmanns went so far as to call Van Rossum the 'second founder' of Propaganda Fide.⁷

5 Metzler, 'Präfekten', 303: Van Rossum "realised the essential programmatic points of the Congregation, which Ingoli had drawn up 300 years previously and unsuccessfully attempted to put into practice".

6 Prudhomme, 'Maximum illud, una svolta missionaria?', 407–422; Idem, 'Pie XI Pape des missions, nouvelles archives, nouveaux regards', in: C. Semeraro, *La sollecitudine ecclesiale di Pio XI alla luce delle nuove fonti archivistiche* (Vatican City 2010), 78–95; Metzler, 'Präfekten', 303–312; Idem, 'Tätigkeit der Kongregation im Dienste der Glaubensverbreitung 1922–1972. Ein Überblick', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 464–577, at 464–467.

7 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 86.

2 *Maximum Illud* (1919) and *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926)

Crucial steps in the papal legitimisation of policy and strategy in the new missionary era were the publication of the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*, on 30 November 1919, by Pope Benedict XV, followed by the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* by Pius XI, on 28 February 1926. These two documents spelled out the main contours of missionary policy. On the one hand, they heralded the centralisation of missionary work in Rome under the leadership of Propaganda Fide, depurated of any national-political considerations. On the other, their focus was on the building up of local churches, with their own hierarchy and indigenous clergy.

The following chapters will each address one of these aspects that were crucial to Van Rossum's policy: the 'de-Frenchification' of the Propagation of the Faith and the expansion of the Society of Saint Peter Apostle for the formation of indigenous priests (Chapters 15 and 19), as well as the deployment of great numbers of missionaries, including women religious, who were indispensable in realising the missionary objectives (Chapters 17 and 18).

The current chapter will look more closely at a number of other strategical aspects that appear in these papal missionary documents and that had Van Rossum's close and immediate attention: the mobilisation of the clergy to lead missionary activity through the promotion of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, the combating of nationalism in the missions, the formation and assignment of missionaries and missionary sisters, the training of missionaries, the reorganisation of, and construction of new buildings for, the Collegio Urbano and the Ateneo Urbano, and the erection of an institute for missiology in Rome. Lastly, we will look at relations between Propaganda and the Secretariat of State. But first we must address the important question of the authorship of the two papal missionary documents.

I have not been able to find indisputable proof of the authorship of *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae*. Officially, of course, all papal documents are written by the pope. I have found a draft version of *Maximum Illud* in the Vatican archives, but it does not give the name of its author and bears corrections and additions that are not in Van Rossum's handwriting. It is an Italian typescript under the Latin title 'De fide catholica per orbem propaganda' (The worldwide propagation of the Catholic faith). Certain passages of this draft are more extensive, others more concise than the final text, and other passages appear literally in *Maximum Illud*. Van Rossum handed this document to the archivist of Propaganda as he was clearing his desk in 1931.⁸ Of

8 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1073, f 915–933: 'De fide catholica per orbem propaganda', 1919. Italian draft of the encyclical *Maximum Illud*, in a folder bearing the inscription "Abbozzo per l'Enciclica *Maximum* »

course, this does not prove that Van Rossum was the main author of the apostolic letter, but there are sufficient other reasons to ascribe authorship of the two documents to him.⁹

First, Van Rossum's two first biographers both claim that he wrote these texts. Drehmanns, who was Van Rossum's private secretary from 1911 to 1930, said in 1935 that Van Rossum wrote many documents for Propaganda Fide, "the two Mission encyclicals *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae*" and many decrees published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.¹⁰ In a response, Jan Olav Smit, consultor of Propaganda Fide, corrected Drehmanns's contention about the authorship of the two documents: "the two Mission encyclicals are in the Pope's name".¹¹ But in the biography of Van Rossum that Smit himself wrote twenty years later, he said that the archive of Propaganda "has the draft of these letters in the cardinal's own hand".¹²

Second, according to both Drehmanns and Smit, Van Rossum was not only the author, but also the initiator of these letters. Celso Costantini, apostolic delegate in China and secretary of Propaganda from 1935 onwards, similarly called Van Rossum the wise inspirer of *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae* and praised him for "his review and fundamental overhaul of missionary strategy".¹³ According to Drehmanns, the cardinal had barely taken up his position in the palace of Propaganda Fide before launching the idea of a missionary encyclical.¹⁴ The objective was to provide all missions with a single guideline and to direct and encourage each individual missionary

» *Illud* di papa Benedetto xv di v.m. Allegati: 2 ritagli del giornale 'De Tijd' 10 e 11 dic. 1919 con la traduzione della predetta enciclica in olandese. Provvista: 19 feb. 1931. Documento passato oggi all'Archivio dall'Emo Prefetto." The document has the protocol no. 2473. The same typed Italian draft (the original) can be found in AAV, *Epistulae ad Principes*, Posizioni e Minute, busta 164, Benedictus xv, 1918–1920. This draft text contains a number of corrections and additions in the handwriting of Propaganda secretary Camillo Laurenti and of Pope Benedict xv, but not of Cardinal Van Rossum. The file also contains two Latin manuscripts, translations of the Italian version, drafted by the Secretariat of Latin Letters. It was not uncommon for drafts of encyclicals to be written in Italian first and then be translated into Latin. Manuscript 1 (numbered p. 1–19, 19bis–22) is the printer's copy: the first page bears the following comment in red pencil: "Da stamparsi con caratteri da Enciclica" and in pencil "30-11-1919". See Vefie Poels, 'Pioneering Prefect: Willem van Rossum's Role in the Drafting of the Apostolic Letter *Maximum illud* (1919)', in: Bernard Ardura, Leonardo Sileo, Flavio Belluomini (eds.), *Euntes in mundum universum. IV centenario dell'istituzione della Congregazione di Propaganda Fide 1622-2022* (Rome 2023), 127–150.

9 See also Vernooij, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum, c.ss.r.', 347–400; Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 79–83; C. Soetens, 'Pie xi et les missions. Influences et circonstances majeures 1922–1926', in: Achille Rati, *Pape Pie xi*, 721–734; J. Schmidlin, 'Propagandapräfekt van Rossum', in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 22 (1932), 352–354.

10 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 81.

11 ENK, ANPR, no. 7696: J.O. Smit to J. Drehmanns, 30 December 1935.

12 Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 25.

13 Celso Costantini, *Ultime foglie. Ricordi e pensieri* (Rome 1953), 417–418.

14 J.M. Drehmanns, 'Le Cardinal van Rossum et l'Encyclique *Rerum Ecclesiae*', in: *Le Bulletin des Missions*, 52 (1951), 227–230, at 228.

region.¹⁵ Van Rossum developed his ideas further in the letter *Maximum Illud*. An apostolic letter was less prestigious than an encyclical, but the drafting process was shorter, which further underlined the urgency of the subject. According to Drehmanns, Van Rossum returned to the idea of a real encyclical after a new pope was elected in 1922. He then wrote the text himself “with his excellent team of specialists”. The draft encyclical made such an impression on Pius XI that he immediately approved it and made it his own by adding some finishing touches and publishing it under his name.¹⁶

It was customary that multiple people were involved in the drafting of such documents. The popes read and edited the texts before they approved them. And Van Rossum took encouragement and inspiration from others, including Paolo Manna (1872–1952) of the Institute for Foreign Missions in Milan, the German missiologist Joseph Schmidlin, and several missionaries in China, especially the Lazarists Antoine Cotta and Vincent Lebbe, both strong protagonists of the creation of an indigenous clergy.¹⁷ The ‘team’ that Drehmanns mentions no doubt also included the secretary of Propaganda Fide and the private secretary himself.

Third, the clear continuity in programme, topics, style and tone between the two documents is strong indication that they were written by the same main author. While the period between 1919 and 1926 saw the election of a new pope and the appointment of a new general secretary of Propaganda Fide, Van Rossum was prefect when both documents were published. *Maximum Illud* unusually contains no references to documents issued by previous popes. It does contain fourteen quotations from the Bible, familiar terrain for Van Rossum, who was president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Its subject matter closely resembled that of an encyclical and some observers in fact mistook it for one.¹⁸ *Rerum Ecclesiae* similarly contains many quotations from the Bible and does not refer to any previous papal documents, except *Maximum Illud*, from which it quotes liberally.

15 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 77; see also Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud*, una svolta missionaria?’, 412–413.

16 Drehmanns, ‘Le Cardinal van Rossum et l’Encyclique *Rerum Ecclesiae*’, 230.

17 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1918: Paolo Manna to W. van Rossum, 22 December 1918. Manna advised Van Rossum to hire staff members who were practical, energetic and well-informed about modern methods of organisation and propaganda, who would be able to lead and coordinate international missionary activity from Propaganda Fide. Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 79–81, points to contacts with Schmidlin from 1911 onwards. C. Soetens, *Recueil des Archives Vincent Lebbe. Pour L’Église chinoise. III. L’Encyclique Maximum Illud* (Louvain-la-Neuve 1983), i–xxiv, points to similarities between the documents that Cotta and Lebbe sent to Propaganda Fide in 1916–1918 and which Van Rossum, as Serafini’s successor, would of course have seen, on the one hand, and the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* on the other.

18 Both Celso Costantini and Joseph Drehmanns call *Maximum Illud* an encyclical. Costantini, *Ultime foglie*, 417–418; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 81.

Van Rossum himself stressed that the two documents form a single whole. In his introduction to an edition for Catholic students in 1927, he described them as “links in the glorious chain of the doctrine of Propaganda Fide”. They marked the beginning of a new phase, one which focused on expediting the indigenisation of the churches and promoting the mobilisation of Catholics through a uniform approach and an appeal to all the faithful, both in the missionary territories and in the countries from which the missionaries came.¹⁹ He then gave a thorough step-by-step explanation of how the texts should be read, and defined *Rerum Ecclesiae* as the successor document of *Maximum Illud*, which he called the “sacred morning star” of Benedict xv’s programme to promote the unity and methodology of the modern apostolate.²⁰

A fourth argument for ascribing authorship of these two documents to Van Rossum is programmatic. The apostolic delegate in British India, Pietro Pisani, congratulated Van Rossum with *Maximum Illud* because it signalled papal confirmation of the prefect’s plans and gave criteria for resolving the most serious and urgent problems that the propagation of the faith faced.²¹ Van Rossum’s role as initiator can be proved beyond doubt with respect to a number of programmatic points in the two documents, for instance the new organisation of the missions under the moral leadership of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, the transfer of the Propagation of the Faith to Rome, and the expansion of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle. A month before the publication of *Maximum Illud*, the cardinal wrote to the coadjutor of ‘s-Hertogenbosch that he had been working for more than a year on a great reorganisation plan, which would concentrate control over the missionary support campaign in Rome and give the missions new impetus under clerical leadership. He added that his plan had been greeted with enthusiasm everywhere, except among the directors of the Propagation of the Faith in France. “But the Holy Father has approved my plan entirely and supports it.”²²

It does seem that Benedict xv gave Van Rossum a free hand in drafting *Maximum Illud*, although the pope added several comments to the letter before signing it.²³ But after the letter was published, the Congregation for the Oriental Churches pointed out to him that the new missionary course threatened to side-line this congregation, which played such an important role in the pope’s policies. *Maximum Illud* defined the missions exclusively in terms of territories that fell under Propaganda Fide, thus excluding the lands of the Eastern rite. Benedict xv was reportedly surprised and

19 Prudhomme, ‘Pie XI Pape des missions, nouvelles archives, nouveaux regards’, 82. The file is in ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 949, f 485–520 and is dated 1 July 1927.

20 Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud*, una svolta missionaria?’, 413–414; Idem, ‘Pie XI Pape des missions, nouvelles archives, nouveaux regards’, 82–83.

21 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 620, f 416–417: Pietro Pisani to W. van Rossum, 6 December 1919.

22 HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to A.F. Diepen, 22 October 1919.

23 Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 83–87, 145–146. See also note 8 of this chapter.

dismayed at hearing this; perhaps an indication that he had not read the text very thoroughly before signing off on it.²⁴

And then there is another little detail: the introduction to *Maximum Illud* contains a covert reference to Van Rossum's fatherland, in a passage that lists the results of centuries of missionary work. It explicitly refers to "Clement Willibrord, the first bishop of Utrecht", who "brought the radiance of the Gospel to Holland".²⁵ The survey ends with the stark observation that there were nonetheless still a billion people who live in darkness, the same number mentioned in *Rerum Ecclesiae*.

3 Concentrating control in clerical hands

Both *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae* strongly recommended the establishment of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in every diocese. The impetus for the idea of uniting priests in a missionary organisation came from the Italian priest Paolo Manna and his 1908 work *Operarii autem pauci*.²⁶ The concept was first put into practice in Germany in the 'Missionsvereinigung des Münsterschen Diozesanklerus' (Missionary Union of Münster Diocesan Clergy) erected by Friedrich Schwager s.v.d. and Josef Schmidlin in 1912, but this organisation still had a regional orientation. In 1915, the Jesuit Giuseppe Petazzi founded the *Lega Apostolica* priests' union in Italy, which was approved by Benedict xv in 1916 (28 June) and also spread to other countries, including the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Manna had founded his own organisation in Italy called *Unione Missionaria per il Clero* (*Unio Cleri pro Missionibus* or Missionary Union of the Clergy), which also received papal approbation in 1916 (31 October).²⁷ By late 1917, Manna's union had 1254 members.

Van Rossum took a great interest in the concept of a universal missionary union of the clergy, which would promote zeal for the missions and missionary activity among the faithful. A few weeks after his appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide, he advised the Dutch priest Adrianus Hermus, director of the Dutch branch of the Propagation of the Faith and the Association of the Holy Childhood, to found diocesan missionary committees, in cooperation with the Dutch division of the *Lega*

24 AAEISS, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 315, fasc. 74, f 19–22: Isaia Papadopoulos, assessor of the Orientale, to P. Gasparri (confidential), 4 May 1922.

25 *Maximum Illud*. Benedictus xv, *Epistula Apostolica ad patriarchas, primates, archiepiscopos, episcopos orbis catholici: De fide catholica per orbem terrarum propaganda, die xxx Novembris MCMXIX*, in: *Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS)*, 11(1919), 440–455, at 441.

26 Paolo Manna, *Operarii autem pauci*, Milan 1908. Manna was beatified by John Paul II in 2001.

27 Giovanni Zampetti, 'Le Pontificie Opere Missionarie', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 413–449, at 427–428.

Apostolica.²⁸ This organisation was less successful in Italy than Manna's because it was associated there specifically with the Jesuit missions. But the *Lega* did very well in the Netherlands, where the local branch had been established by the Jesuit Aloysius Slijpen (1884–1940). The Dutch branch focused on the missions in general. It had more than two thousand priest members in early 1918, from both the secular and the regular clergy, including three bishops.

Van Rossum was alive to the potential of this flourishing organisation in the Netherlands. But the drawback was that it was a Jesuit movement and as such fell outside the remit of Propaganda Fide. Not so Manna's Missionary Union of the Clergy. In the summer of 1918, Van Rossum told Manna that his organisation (rather than the *Lega*) had the support of Propaganda Fide. At the end of the following month, Archbishop Guido Maria Conforti of Parma was appointed president of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in Italy. Conforti established a central council of which Manna became the first secretary.²⁹ To set an example for all priests, Benedict xv personally enrolled as a member on 21 November, and a month later, on 19 December 1918, the pope said during an audience with Van Rossum that it was his desire that Manna's Missionary Union of the Clergy should be established in every diocese of the world. This would be a powerful means of forming the missionary conscience of priests and an opportunity to clarify the doctrinal grounds for the universal missionary duty of all priests, for example at national and international conferences.³⁰

In late 1918, when the pope began to promote the Missionary Union of the Clergy as the only international organisation that all priests should join, it existed only in Italy. As has been seen, there was the flourishing *Lega* of the Jesuit Slijpen in the Netherlands, with more priest members than the Missionary Union had in Italy. The two organisations served the same purpose and it seemed judicious that they should join forces, which would moreover justify the supranational label. As Van Rossum expected that Slijpen would not give up his life's work without a fight, he opted for a more dubious construction, making optimal use in the process of the "healthy desire for expansion" which was widespread among Dutch Catholics.³¹

28 KDC, ROSS, 82: A. Hermus to W. van Rossum, 20 February 1918; W. van Rossum (by J. Drehmanns) to A. Hermus, 27 March 1918, in: 'Twee brieven van Z. Em. Kardinaal van Rossum'.

29 J.O. Smit, 'Annotationes: Conspectus historicus, Statuta Unionis Cleri pro Missionibus', in: *Periodica de re morali, canonica, liturgica*, 27(1938), 56–69. Smit says that Van Rossum informed Manna on 19 July 1918; Secretary of State Gasparri told Conforti of his appointment as president of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in Italy on 31 August 1918. Conforti was beatified in 2010 by Benedict XVI.

30 AAS, 11(1919), 20–21. This also sealed the fate of the German priests' union. Karl Müller, *Josef Schmidlin (1876–1944), Papsthistoriker und Begründer der katholischen Missionswissenschaft* (Nettetal 1989), 128–129 discusses Schmidlin's unsuccessful protests.

31 KDC, ROSS, no. 34: Jan Smit, mission secretary of the archdiocese of Utrecht, to W. van Rossum, 25 June 1918; Vefie Poels, 'Een Jezuïetenstreek. Vrije concurrentie in de missie, 1916–1919', in: »

Shortly after Conforti's appointment, Van Rossum instructed his private secretary to write a letter to Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering of Utrecht, casting aspersions on both Slijpen and the Lega. Another letter was dispatched to the president of the Dutch branch of the Propagation of the Faith, Adrianus Hermus, telling him to put pressure on both Van de Wetering and Slijpen to suppress the Lega "on the grounds of invalid privileges". Slijpen was unpleasantly surprised and displeased because the organisation and its privileges had been approved by the pope. He turned for advice to his confrere Everardus Schröder in Rome, vice procurator of the general bursar of the Society and consultor of Propaganda Fide. After consulting with Van Rossum, Schröder told Slijpen that his league would have to be integrated into the Missionary Union of the Clergy. Van Rossum would make sure that *sanatio* (a kind of retrospective authorisation) was granted for any privileges that might have been used illegitimately. Slijpen could do little else but submit. What upset him the most was that it had been suggested behind his back that his league had been granting invalid privileges. "If I weren't a Jesuit myself", he concluded a letter to Drehmanns, "I would call this a typical Jesuit trick(!)"³²

Prompted by Van Rossum, Hermus then convoked a founding meeting of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in the Netherlands, in 's-Hertogenbosch on 29 January 1919. The diocesan missionary committees became branches of this federative priests' union. The statutes, which Hermus drafted together with Jan Smit, Van Rossum's protégé and secretary of the Utrecht diocesan missionary committee, were approved by the cardinal on 11 April 1919, marking the official foundation of the Dutch branch of the Missionary Union of the Clergy by the Dutch bishops.³³ At the stroke of a pen, the more than two thousand members of the Jesuit Lega tacitly became members of Manna's organisation. The archbishop of Utrecht became the president of the Dutch branch, Hermus became secretary and Smit treasurer. The board further consisted of the five chairmen of the diocesan missionary committees and five representatives of missionary orders and congregations, the board members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood Association and a representative of the Indische Missievereniging (Indian Missionary Society), a society for the support of the Catholic missions in the Dutch colonies.

» P.J.J. van Geest, M.J.H.M. Poorthuis, T. Wagenaar, A. Warringa (ed.), *Vrienden met de Mammon. De levensbeschouwelijke dimensie in de economie* (Almere 2013), 166–184, at 175–181.

³² KDC, ROSS, no. 82: Louis [Slijpen] to J. Drehmanns, 9 December 1918. Drehmanns and Slijpen knew each other from their days at the Roermond diocesan college of Rolduc. They had apparently discussed their dreams for the future in 1903, when Slijpen concluded his studies. Both of their dreams came true: Slijpen wanted to become a Jesuit and a teacher, Drehmanns a Redemptorist and live in Rome as 'the place where it is easy to become a saint'. *Ibid.*: A. Slijpen to J. Drehmanns, 28 December 1911. The dubious role played by Van Rossum is not mentioned in the correspondence between these two men.

³³ *Apostolische priesterbond*, 2(1918/19), no. 6 (March 1919), 41–42; Smit, 'Annotations', 66.

The Dutch branch was the second national branch of the Missionary Union of the Clergy after the Italian one, and was also the most numerous branch: in late 1918 the Italian branch still only had 1905 members. *Maximum Illud* could therefore truthfully claim six months later that the movement was rapidly taking root outside Italy – even though the only country for which this was true at the time was the Netherlands – and “through Our support is now flourishing”.³⁴

The first issue of *Het missiewerk. Tijdschrift voor missiekennis en missieactie* (‘Missionary work. Journal for missionary expertise and missionary action’) was published on 1 August 1919. It was the organ of the Dutch branch of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, and its first issue carried “a well-deserved homage” to Slijpen, “the founder of the Apostolic Priests’ Union, who, when Rome spoke, did not hesitate an instant to offer up his love child and join the Union which Rome desired.”³⁵

The Missionary Union of the Clergy then spread to Canada, Switzerland, Germany (Cologne) and Bavaria (Munich-Freising) in 1920, to Belgium, Austria and Spain in 1921 and subsequently to most other countries, especially after it was more or less made compulsory for all bishops in *Rerum Ecclesiae* to establish a local branch. And yet the Missionary Union of the Clergy never became the organ of leadership that Van Rossum had dreamed of. The cardinal had envisaged that leadership of all three mission societies should be entrusted to the Union, but Benedict xv decided in late 1920 that, although the Union should offer valuable assistance to the Propagation of the Faith and other mission societies, these should remain separate bodies.³⁶

These conflicting views led to confusion in some countries as to who should take the lead over the new missionary movement: the national directors of the Missionary Union of the Clergy or those of the Propagation of the Faith? Both organisations generated a stream of promotional material for the missions, from 1927 onwards with the aid of Propaganda Fide’s press agency *Agentia Fides*.³⁷ It was inevitable that different interests sometimes clashed. Van Rossum had to explain repeatedly that the Missionary Union was there to instil enthusiasm for the missions in the clergy, for instance through activities in seminaries, so that priests in turn would pass this on to the faithful. Its purpose was to motivate, spread ideas and encourage prayer,

34 *Maximum Illud*, 454.

35 ‘Eerste vergadering van den Priester-Missiebond’, in: *Het missiewerk. Tijdschrift voor missiekennis en missieactie*, 1(1919), 135–138.

36 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 584–585: pro-memoria of a papal audience granted to Van Rossum concerning the proposals for an *Unione Missionaria per il Clero* and the central council of the *Propagazione della Fede* in Italy, 18 November 1920.

37 *Agentia Fides* was set up as a division of Propaganda Fide by the American priest J. Considine, a protégé of the secretary of Propaganda, Marchetti-Selvaggiani. B. Hurteau, *A Worldwide Heart. The Life of Maryknoll Father John J. Considine* (New York 2013), 43–60.

not to raise funds. That was the task of the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood and the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, with the Propagation of the Faith being the primary organisation given its more general objective, and the latter two fulfilling an auxiliary role.³⁸

This message was not always received very clearly, also because competition soon emerged between the mission societies, with one of them taking the lead over the missionary support campaign in one country and another elsewhere. Often enough, a single person held the leading position in multiple organisations.

In the new statutes of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, which Van Rossum personally edited before they were enacted in 1926, he tried to define as clearly as possible what place the Union occupied within the wider context of the mission societies. Its purpose was to inform the clergy and thus raise awareness among the faithful. The members were to pursue this goal through “knowledge of the missions and their needs”. They were to support the apostolic work of missionaries in various parts of the world, even those that were not very successful, and support any activities that might spread the kingdom of God among the pagans. The Union was to organise meetings and conferences to apprise its allies of the needs of the missions and give mutual encouragement in providing for them. The original text said that the national directors were to be appointed by the local bishops, but Van Rossum changed this: Propaganda would appoint them upon nomination by the bishops. The statutes also contained a list of spiritual benefits which the members of the Missionary Union enjoyed, drafted entirely by Van Rossum.³⁹

4 Combating nationalism in the missions and building up indigenous churches

One of the most important objectives of *Maximum Illud* was to break the nationalist tendency in missionary work. The predominance of nationalism was persistent. The great colonial powers Portugal and Spain had used the missions for their own interests in previous centuries, and other Western powers had since similarly tried to control the missions in their colonies. This was certainly the case for France, not only in its own colonies but also in China, which it regarded as a protectorate. France acted there as the protector of the Catholic church, while keeping any involvement

38 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 868, f 916–917: W. van Rossum to Luigi Drago, president of the Propagation of the Faith in Italy, 19 December 1925.

39 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 307–311: draft statutes of the Unio Cleri pro Missionibus, revised by Van Rossum with corrections/additions in his own hand, 17 March 1926; f 320–323: definitive statutes, 4 April 1926; f 352–354: list of spiritual benefits.

of the Holy See firmly at bay. When the Vatican attempted to establish its own diplomatic relations with the Chinese government, France foiled this, most recently in 1919 when it prevented the appointment of a nuncio.

The French government's deep involvement in church affairs earned it a great deal of criticism from missionaries in China. Two Lazarists in particular, the Frenchman Antoine Cotta (1872–1957) and the Belgian Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940), sent their findings to Propaganda Fide and strongly argued that the local Catholic church should have a Chinese instead of a Western identity, for instance by training an indigenous Chinese clergy. That would have a beneficial effect on the spread of the church, which was currently still very Western in outlook.⁴⁰ According to the Belgian historian Claude Soetens, *Maximum Illud* was an answer to this situation.⁴¹

It was an ancient desire of the Catholic church to build up indigenous churches with an indigenous clergy, but this had only been achieved to a very limited degree. However, the need for this was now greater than ever. The inevitable process whereby colonies and protectorates would achieve independence in the future – on the basis of national self-determination as enunciated by the American president – would see the departure of the Western powers, and very likely of the Catholic church and its foreign missionaries in their train. The Catholic church only stood a chance of survival if it was inculturated, with an indigenous hierarchy and clergy.

Many of the measures Wilson had proposed to secure an enduring peace were rejected during the peace negotiations in Versailles. The Peace of Versailles, signed by Germany and the four allied powers France, Britain, Italy and the United States on 28 June 1919, shows that the main concern of the first three of these countries was to safeguard their own interests. Their objectives were to expand national territory and retain, or add to, the number of their colonies. France and Britain in particular were eager to dismantle Germany as a great power and to strengthen their own position. They preyed on the territories that had been taken from Germany. Ultimately, the League of Nations, which was founded on 25 January 1919 – one of Wilson's initiatives that was implemented – decided that the former German colonies would be assigned to the victors in the form of mandates.⁴²

This had significant consequences for the Catholic church in these territories. It had become abundantly clear during the war how heavily the churches in Africa

40 Soetens, *Vincent Lebbe. Pour L'Église chinoise*, i–xxiv. Van Rossum informed himself about the situation in China in July 1918 through a questionnaire sent out to the six most zealous vicars apostolic. Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 71–72.

41 Soetens, 'Pie XI et les missions', 721–734.

42 Mandates were granted to Britain, France and Belgium and to the British autonomous dominions of Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

and Asia relied on foreign missionaries. German missionaries were prevented from doing their work once the German colonies came under allied occupation. German Catholics and the Vatican feared that the expulsion of German missionaries would leave the populations that had converted to Catholicism in these territories without pastoral care – 1.5 million new Christians, catechists and schoolchildren, the result of more than two centuries of work and sacrifices. This important issue was raised during the preparatory talks at Versailles, but the solution failed to satisfy German Catholics and the Vatican.

After the League of Nations had transferred the former German colonial territories to the victors as mandates, both Britain and France began to expel German missionaries from them. By early 1919, expulsions had taken place not only in Togo, Cameroon, East Africa and the Caroline Islands, but also in other areas that belonged to the British crown in Africa and India. German missionaries in the Philippines were interned in the United States. Rumours were spread from Britain that large expeditions of Protestant missionary societies were preparing to take over the German missions. In the meantime, France pressured the Chinese government to expel German missionaries from Shantung.⁴³

Appeals were made to the Vatican from various sides. Van Rossum was informed in early 1919 by the superior general of the originally German Society of the Divine Word (s.v.D.), Nicolaus Blum, that the German missionaries had been told they had to leave Shantung before 20 February.⁴⁴ In mid-February, Benedict xv sent a telegram to the president of the Chinese Republic, asking him to revoke the measure or at least defer it. In late March, this was followed by papal letters to Cardinals Bourne (archbishop of Westminster) and Amette (Paris), asking them to make representations to their respective governments. The apostolic delegate Bonzano in Washington secured the support of the United States, and the French Lazarists, too, came out in defence of the German missionaries.⁴⁵

The topic of the missions was mentioned in articles 122 and 438 of the draft treaty of the Paris peace conference. The first article stated that German missionaries were

43 Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 46–50. The German missiologist J. Schmidlin spoke of ‘the English policy of destroying the German missions’.

44 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 617, f 223–245: N. Blum to W. van Rossum, 24 October and 5 November 1918, 19 January and 11 May 1919; W. van Rossum to N. Blum, 26 November and 6 December 1918. Blum told Van Rossum in late 1918 about the difficult situation in which the Divine Word Missionaries found themselves. They had been expelled from various places and he asked Van Rossum’s help in finding new mission territories. The cardinal raised the subject with Benedict xv who concluded in early 1919 that they had to await the right moment, “tenebitur ratio tempore opportuno” (note by Van Rossum on letter of 19 January 1919). Van Rossum proposed Japan, China, Scandinavia, South America, the Dutch East Indies and other places. Propaganda Fide directed various requests to the Dutch government regarding the Dutch East Indies, as a note on Blum’s letter of 11 May 1919 shows.

45 Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 51–52.



German missionaries who had to leave the Caroline Islands (previously part of German New Guinea) in 1919

to be banished from all missions and stripped of all rights.⁴⁶ Article 438 stipulated that the possessions of the German missions were forfeit, and proposed the setting up of an allied commission of 'Christians' to determine to whom the possessions were to be allocated. Beneficiaries could be either Catholics or Protestants.

These draft articles elicited sharp protests. Throughout Germany, Catholics protested in great numbers against this flagrant breach of the rights of the Catholic church, and their message reached Catholics in allied and neutral states by radio. Superiors of orders and congregations, through their generalates, asserted the freedom of the missions. The predicament in which the German missions now found themselves aroused little sympathy from French, Belgian and British Catholics and orders and congregations. But Spanish, Swiss and particularly Dutch Catholics came to their defence. During a meeting of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in Utrecht on 23 May 1919, a telegram was sent to Versailles on behalf of its two thousand members, demanding that no missionary should be kept from working in any mission territory because of his nationality. Other displays of solidarity with the German missionaries were forthcoming from the United States and Italy.

⁴⁶ The Netherlands made separate arrangements with respect to the Dutch East Indies. Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 57 note 171. See also ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder H. 'Lettere private, 1911-1919': W. Nolens to W. van Rossum, 20 June 1919.

German Catholics found it difficult to accept the lack of empathy that the expelled and maltreated missionaries and missionary sisters encountered in France. During the war itself, the French central councils of the Propagation of the Faith and its journal *Missions Catholiques* had taken little interest in the German missions and had struck a strongly nationalist tone.⁴⁷

The Vatican responded to article 438 in the *Osservatore Romano* of 1 June 1919, arguing that all missionary property belonged to the Holy See, and more specifically to Propaganda Fide. The British and the French did not recognise this claim. The senior Vatican diplomat Bonaventura Cerretti (1872–1933) was sent to Paris to defend the interests of the missions during the peace conference. His mission was not a complete failure: President Wilson proposed on 12 July that the German missionary possessions should be transferred to non-German missionaries, who would take over the missions. It meant that Catholic property would remain in Catholic hands. Psychologically, at least, this was a victory for the church and the Holy See.⁴⁸

But in practice it did little to lessen the blow. The signing of the treaty finalised the transfer of Germany's colonies. Great Britain continued its policy of expelling all German missionaries and missionary sisters from India, without reference to the Vatican. About a thousand German priests, sisters and brothers were expelled from Africa, Asia and Oceania, a third of the total number of German missionaries.

Van Rossum, who – according to the Bavarian minister to the Holy See – regarded German missionaries as the best in the world, tried hard to assign them to other posts. He succeeded in finding another place in South Africa for the German Benedictines of Sankt Ottilien, who were banned from returning to East Africa. The Benedictine mission in Tanganyika was assigned to Swiss Benedictines through a legal construction, so that the mission could continue.⁴⁹ But he was usually powerless to prevent the expulsion of missionaries.⁵⁰ The Australian government, which took over the island that had been New Pomerania (Papua New Guinea), decided that all German Mission-

47 Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 54–55.

48 *Ibid.*, 61–62; Marialuisa Lucia Sergio, 'Bonaventura Cerretti e le missioni impossibili', in: *Benedetto* xv, vol. 2, 987–1000.

49 Christine Egger, *Transnationale Biographien: Die Missionsbenediktiner von St. Ottilien in Tanganjika 1922–1965* (Cologne etc. 2016), 81. Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 93 recounts that when the British government refused permission, Van Rossum contacted the South African prime minister, General Jan Christian Smuts, and obtained permission from him for the Benedictines to settle among the Zulus. On Van Rossum's activities on behalf of the German missionaries, see also Sergio, 'Bonaventura Cerretti e le missioni impossibili', 989–994.

50 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 113–115; Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 46–66. On the events that befell the German missions and missionaries as a result of the First World War, see Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Bd. 3, 248–251. Schmidlin blamed Van Rossum for not having compensated the German missionary congregations sufficiently or at all for the flourishing missions that were taken from them during the war. Schmidlin, 'Propaganda-präfekt van Rossum'.

aries of the Sacred Heart (M.S.C.) there had to be replaced within two years.⁵¹ When a successor for the vicar apostolic, Louis Couppé, was due to be appointed in 1923, Van Rossum asked the Sacred Heart Missionaries for a *terna*. In drafting this list of three names, they had to consider the wishes of the local missionaries, but most importantly, the candidates had to be British citizens, or be otherwise acceptable to the British government.⁵² Eventually, the Dutchman Gerard Vesters, who had been prefect apostolic in Celebes since 1919, was appointed the new vicar apostolic of Rabaul.⁵³

Most impediments that hindered the work of German missionaries had been lifted by 1924. Germany counted more missionaries and religious sisters than before the war, but their most important field of work was no longer Africa but East Asia.⁵⁴

The situation caused by the First World War not only painfully revealed that national and missionary interests were undesirably interlaced, but also that orders and congregations were far from immune to nationalist feelings. To put a stop to this, the instruction *De abiiciendis a missionariis rerum secularium curis*, drawn up by Van Rossum, was issued on 6 January 1920. The prefect left it in no doubt that missionaries were to steer clear of all political and colonial affairs. Becoming involved in such affairs was akin to sinning against their vocation. Missionaries had to leave everything behind when they went into the missions, including their fatherland. They went not as Italians or Frenchmen; the true missionary had no father[land] or mother[land], but broke off all ties. Politicians and diplomats would try to use their 'national' missionaries for their own purposes, including by lavishing funds on them. But freedom and independence were of the essence for the missions if they were to achieve their goal.⁵⁵ Local populations would see straightaway that the Catholic faith was the religion of the coloniser, and as a result, they would reject it. "The only work that God has sent [the missionary] to do, is preach the Gospel" to the peoples who were still ignorant of the good news.⁵⁶

51 The problems which these missionaries encountered were one of the reasons that Van Rossum became cardinal protector of the German branch of this congregation on 19 January 1921. KDC, ROSS, no. 43; G. Genocchi to W. van Rossum, Vienna 24 February 1921.

52 Rome, General Archive of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (GAMSC; Correspondence between the generalate and Propaganda Fide): C. Laurenti to A. Brocken, superior general, 9 March 1921.

53 Rome, GAMSC: F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani to A. Brocken, 7 February 1923. In 1929, the German Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were able to recover their missions in the Marshall Islands, with whose language, people and customs they were closely familiar; the apostolic delegate of Japan, Giardini, judged the time opportune after the return of a German Protestant minister. *Ibid.*: F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani to [A. Brocken], 16 May 1929.

54 Miotk, *Das Missionsverständnis im historischen Wandel*, 62–66.

55 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 649, f 375–376; ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2, folder 'Lettere ufficiali varie e non datate': preparatory text of the instruction of Propaganda Fide of 6 January 1920 in Van Rossum's handwriting. For the final text, see *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 770–772.

56 *Maximum Illud*, 449.

Moreover, international missionary congregations were enjoined to pursue a supra-national internal culture. Van Rossum wrote to Salomé Roudant (1847–1930), superior general of the White Sisters, in 1925 that he had received complaints of preferential treatment of French sisters and the imposition of excessively sober diets. Only French sisters were purportedly appointed to governing positions, even in countries such as Canada and the Netherlands, even though there were enough local sisters there who were capable of occupying positions of responsibility. Roudant replied that it was their policy to appoint local superiors in these countries if there were sufficiently qualified sisters. In the missions, such appointments took place in consultation with the ecclesiastical superiors; there was a Dutch regional superior in Sudan and a Belgian one in Congo. The fact that the general government of the congregation was entirely French was due to the secrecy of the vote: there were 527 perpetually professed sisters in total, almost half of whom were French. But she promised to stress once again during the upcoming chapter that all sisters should be given enough to eat, despite the high prices.⁵⁷ Van Rossum apparently felt that things had subsequently improved, because he praised the congregation at length after reading its 1932 five-yearly report.⁵⁸

Maximum Illud and *Rerum Ecclesiae* called for the building up of indigenous churches with their own clergy, religious and bishops. The former emphasised the urgency of this issue, and about a quarter of the text of the latter was fully dedicated to it. Missionary superiors were urged to begin training indigenous priests and to give them as thorough a formation as they themselves had had. Racist counterarguments to the effect that they might be unable to achieve the level of Westerners were resolutely rejected – perhaps Van Rossum’s own experience with students from Suriname in Wittem played a role in this.⁵⁹ Propaganda Fide assumed the important task of pushing for the establishment of excellent seminaries that taught orthodox church teaching and were at the same time adapted to regional circumstances.⁶⁰

Another aim was to promote the use of the vernacular in local houses of orders and congregations. The apostolic delegate in China, Costantini, submitted a report in late 1928 about an area in China where there were French Vincentian Sisters.

57 Rome, General Archive of the Société des Religieuses Missionnaires d’Afrique (White Sisters) (GASRMA), *Archives de la Maison Mère*, A 231, no. 29: W. van Rossum to Salomé Roudant, 14 February 1925, in Italian, with French translation. *Ibid.*, A 231, no. 30: Salomé Roudant to W. van Rossum, 17 March 1925: ‘Sujet: Nationalité des Supérieures – Plaintes sur l’alimentation’.

58 *Ibid.*, B 234: W. van Rossum to superior general Maria di S. Giovanni, 20 May 1932.

59 See Chapter 3.3. Drehmanns was still criticising the Redemptorists in Suriname for this reason in 1930: according to him, Vicar Apostolic Van Roosmalen had no ambition and was not interested in indigenous priests. “They have now gathered a few boys, but only to teach them, they *don’t* train them for the priesthood.” Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 18 May 1930.

60 *Maximum Illud*, 442–446; Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud*, una svolta missionaria?’, 409.



With two Javanese Jesuits in Amsterdam, 1924

Chinese sisters had joined this congregation, but they were forced to speak French among themselves and were not allowed to say the office or go on retreats in Chinese. Van Rossum told François Verdier, the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission (to which the sisters were subject), that the French sisters had to learn Chinese and the Chinese sisters should be permitted to speak their own language without restriction; their devotions and prayers should also be in Chinese. In houses where the Chinese sisters were in the majority, the superiors should be Chinese.⁶¹

⁶¹ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 900b, f 618–622: C. Costantini to W. van Rossum, 29 November 1928, W. van Rossum to F. Verdier, 22 December 1928. Similar complaints were received about the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary: ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: Missionary, apparently from China [‘Flor. de Prêtes’ is possibly a pseudonym] to W. van Rossum, 4 March 1926.

5 The formation and deployment of missionaries

Van Rossum prioritised the efficiency of missionary action above the individual interests of dioceses, congregations and nations. The missionaries, mainly religious, played a crucial role in this project.⁶² According to *Maximum Illud*, they had to be models of virtue, humility, obedience and chastity, and above all devotion. Dioceses and congregations had to be noble-minded and send their best men and women to free the people from the chains of “blind and violent desires” and the “arrogant domination of Satan”.⁶³ *Maximum Illud* reprimanded bishops who refused to send their priests to the missions, and Van Rossum personally quoted this to the archbishop of Utrecht, whose zeal for the missions was feeble. The archbishop had previously told some of his priests that he would never consent to their departure as missionaries, but after Van Rossum’s visit to the Netherlands in 1924, during which he promoted the mission to Norway, they were given permission after all.⁶⁴

The “officers in the mission army” had to be of impeccable conduct so as to set a good example for their missionaries.⁶⁵ Poorly functioning and unambitious missionary superiors were a regular source of frustration for Van Rossum. As far back as 1894 – when he was still rector in Wittem – he had written a letter to the superior general in Rome strongly criticising the functioning of Vicar Apostolic Wilhelmus Wulfingh (1839–1906) in Suriname. Wulfingh made insufficient use of the capabilities of his missionaries, of whom there were too many anyway, while there was an acute shortage of people in Brazil. According to Van Rossum, the vicar was too eager to accommodate his missionaries, who preferred a comfortable life, instead of prioritising the expansion of the church in areas where this was needed.⁶⁶

Nor did Van Rossum turn a blind eye to improper behaviour. When the superior general of the Marists nominated the German Father Maurice Boch for appointment as vicar apostolic of Bougainville in the northern Solomon Islands in the mid-1920s, Boch, who had been prefect apostolic of the territory since 1920, wrote a personal letter to Van Rossum to explain his predicament: he had at certain times engaged in homosexual contacts with the local population. Van Rossum did not hesitate an instant but replied that Boch would have to resign and give some reason or other

62 Metzler, ‘Präfekten’, 311.

63 *Maximum Illud*, 451, 453.

64 Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 175–176.

65 *Rerum Ecclesiae*. Pius XI, *Litterae Encyclicae ad venerabiles fratres patriarchas, primates, archiepiscopos, episcopos, aliosque locorum ordinarios pacem et communionem cum apostolica sede habentes: de sacris missionibus provehendis, die XXVIII Februarii MDCCCXXVI*, in: AAS, 18(1926), 65–83, at 67.

66 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and the generalate, 1886–1895*: W. van Rossum to M. Raus, 30 June 1894. For similar criticism, see ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: Jac Mols C.Ss.R., missionary in Coronie, to W. van Rossum, 4 March 1926. See also Vernooij, ‘Seven Redemptorist Bishops’, 241–248.

why it would be impossible for him to accept this post. The cardinal then informed Superior General Ernest Rieu of the case. Rieu replied in mid-1928 that Father Boch had grossly exaggerated, that he was very popular but too scrupulous, and was just having cold feet about becoming a bishop. Rieu insisted that the appointment should go ahead. Van Rossum did not budge, however, and a young American was appointed instead.⁶⁷

Van Rossum's zeal for keeping missionaries and religious on the straight and narrow went quite a bit further in some cases.⁶⁸ Around the same time, in Sumatra (Dutch East Indies), it transpired that a Dutch priest of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart and a Sister of Charity of Tilburg were having an affair. On Van Rossum's instructions, the sister was sent back to the Netherlands and the 'neurotic' priest was sent to a clinic designated by Propaganda Fide, in Switzerland. Van Rossum demanded that he would not return to the Netherlands for at least two years. But the congregation sent him back earlier, keeping his presence in the Netherlands a secret. The priest in question was not allowed to write or speak in public. The superior general, Joseph Philippe, feared the Sisters of Charity's – real or imagined – 'network of spies'. There were Sisters of Tilburg everywhere in the country, and Philippe suggested that if one of them were to find out, Van Rossum, as their cardinal protector, would be immediately informed; then "all hell will break loose."⁶⁹

Propaganda Fide repeatedly issued guidelines to orders and congregations to emphasise the importance of giving missionaries a thorough formation and of building up indigenous churches. Many points made in a circular letter on this subject sent on 20 May 1923 later appeared in *Rerum Ecclesiae*.⁷⁰ In addition, relations between missionary bishops and the orders and congregations were the object of Van Rossum's constant attention; the matter was eventually settled in the so-called *ius commissionis* in late 1929. These and other issues will be addressed extensively in Chapters 17 and 18, which look at Van Rossum's influence on the missionary activities of religious institutes in his roles as prefect of Propaganda Fide, member of the Congregation of Religious and of the commission for the interpretation of the code of canon law, and as cardinal protector of dozens of orders and congregations.

67 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: M. Boch to W. van Rossum, 27 October 1927 and 19 March 1928, with a note by Van Rossum on the letter; E. Rieu to W. van Rossum, 6 June 1928. See also Hugh Laracy, *Marists and Melanesians. A History of Catholic Missions in the Solomon Islands* (Canberra 1976), 57–64; Jan Sniijders to Vefie Poels, 29 September and 16 October 2010 (author's private collection).

68 See also Vefie Poels, Erik Sengers, 'Power Play in the Norbertine Order and the Roman Curia. J. Nouwens O.Praem., Cardinal van Rossum, and the Modernization of Vatican Bureaucracy 1910–1922', in: *Trajecta*, 27(2018), 195–216.

69 ENK, *Archive of the Dutch Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart*, no. 409: J. Philippe to J. Schulte, provincial superior, 20 August, 7 October, 6 and 15 December 1927, 28 July 1928.

70 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 875, f 826–827: circular letter of Propaganda Fide to the superiors of all male orders and congregations that worked in the missions.

One new aspect of *Maximum Illud* was that it was the first official papal document ever to call on women religious to participate in missionary work. The pope explicitly praised them for their work in the missions, where they dedicated themselves to education and founded healthcare and charitable institutions, which “with God’s help contribute [remarkably] to the spread of the Faith”.⁷¹ Various congregations of women religious that were involved in missionary work had been founded in the nineteenth century. Some had been established specifically for the missions, such as the French White Sisters in 1869 and the German Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit in 1889, who were closely associated with the White Fathers and the Divine Word Missionaries (s.v.d.) respectively. They were often led by active, determined and passionate women who were perhaps inspired by, or conversely set an example for, the rising secular feminist movement, which motivated women to take initiatives themselves.

Van Rossum had many contacts with women religious but rarely with other women. Non-religious women were simply absent from his life, as was the case for most religious priests. His household was normally run by brothers of his congregation. But he was fully convinced of the importance of women religious in education and healthcare, and in the missions. His sister Hendrina van Rossum, who took the name of Sister Gerulpha after she joined the Sisters of Tilburg, would have gone to the mission in Suriname if her doctor had not advised against it. Van Rossum regularly visited convents of women religious to celebrate Mass – in Rome, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth on Via Macchiavelli or the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary on Via Giusti – or to spend holidays there. He occasionally also presided over general chapters, and corresponded intensively with superiors or scrutinised the constitutions of congregations of women religious. He had a somewhat exalted and distant view of women. This is the context of *Rerum Ecclesiae*’s insistence on asking children and “consecrated virgins” in particular to pray for the missions, because God could not refuse anything to those who live as virgins.⁷²

The great importance that Van Rossum attached to the role of women in the missions became evident shortly after his creation as cardinal, when he approved the foundation of the Dutch congregation of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of Saint Anthony. The authority to do this rested with Cardinal Vives y Tutó, who, as prefect of the Congregation for Religious, had denied the request in 1910, as had Gotti,

71 *Maximum Illud*, 444, 451. Metzler, ‘Präfekten’, 309, mentions that Van Rossum spoke out against trafficking of women. All missionary superiors were instructed in 1930 to support the International Commission for the Prevention of Trafficking of Women. According to Van Rossum, the Protestants were ahead in this field and the impression had to be avoided that Catholic missionaries were not concerned about this topic.

72 *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 69–70.

prefect of Propaganda Fide, before him in 1907. But Van Rossum's influence over Vives was such that Vives, after repeated requests and some subterfuge, left the decision about the foundation to Van Rossum. After consultations with Bernard Eras, the Roman procurator of the Dutch bishops, Van Rossum eventually approved the foundation on 17 February 1913.⁷³

As cardinal protector of a great number of congregations of women religious – including many missionary congregations – he was aware of their missionary potential and of the problems they faced. He became protector of the Swiss congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Ingenbohl in December 1913, at the suggestion of his predecessor as protector, Vives y Tutó. This congregation numbered more than six thousand sisters in 1916, was divided into ten European provinces, worked in 951 institutions and owned 76 houses. Its assets in real estate and capital, minus debts, were worth more than 23 million Swiss francs. The Sisters worked in India (since 1894) and the United States (1912), where they began a novitiate in consultation with Van Rossum.⁷⁴ Van Rossum and his private secretary Drehmanns were in close contact with the superior general, Aniceta Regli.

Additionally, Van Rossum became cardinal protector of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (Congregatio Pretiosi Sanguinis, C.P.S.) in mid-December 1913.⁷⁵ This congregation had been split off from the Mariannahill Missionaries in 1906 and worked primarily in Africa. Because of the *Kulturkampf*, their motherhouse was not in Germany but in Aarle-Rixtel in the Dutch province of Noord-Brabant, even though most sisters were German. Most of the institute's approximately five hundred sisters worked in dozens of mission stations in the vicariates of Natal, Port Elizabeth, Kilimanjaro, Bagamoyo, Zanzibar and Leopoldville.⁷⁶

In practice, this congregation's links with the Mariannahillers remained very close. In intensive correspondence with the superior general, Paula Emunds C.P.S. (1865–1948; superior general from 1907–1931), Van Rossum encouraged her to ensure that the sisters would be independent, control their own finances and organise their own work. In order to establish some control over this, he had the congregation placed directly under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide as a 'missionary institute' in 1918 (instead of under the Congregation for Religious).⁷⁷ The following year, he organised an apostolic visitation in the African regions where they worked.

73 Vefie Poels, *Vrouwen van het grote missieuroor. Geschiedenis van de Missiezusters van Asten vanaf 1913* (Nijmegen 1997), 40–53.

74 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli to W. van Rossum, 11 May 1917, with appendix 'Jahres-Bericht über die Kongregation der Schwestern vom hl. Kreuze in Ingenbohl'.

75 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, 14 August 1913, with appendix 'Kurzer Bericht über die gegenwärtige Situation der Genossenschaft', 16 August 1913.

76 *Ibid.*

77 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 680, f 2–5: Paula Emunds to Benedict xv; see also Chapter 17.3.

He entrusted this task to the Dutch Jesuit Everardus Schröder, who made several changes to safeguard the independence of the sisters. One measure was the introduction of enclosure: the best instrument, according to Van Rossum, to protect women religious against undesired external contacts, including with priests and brothers. He also appointed new superiors who were not, like the older generation, accustomed to “slavish dependence on the Fathers”.⁷⁸

Notably, and importantly for female congregations, Van Rossum promoted the thorough training of missionary sisters. In various letters to Paula Emunds, he stressed the significance of “thorough religious and societal formation”. Some regarded this as unimportant because sisters worked with “uncivilised pagans”. But Van Rossum believed that this was entirely wrong. Missionary sisters were also called to bring civilisation to the poor pagan peoples. Like Westerners, these peoples had been created by God to know, love and serve Him and, in the afterlife, see Him, but they were on earth to find a certain happiness there through civilisation by serving God.⁷⁹

6 The training of missionaries at Propaganda

Maximum Illud similarly refuted the view that proper formation was not necessary in mission countries, although it spoke only of the training of priests. Thorough academic formation, as well as knowledge of the vernacular, were required, not just because this would enable the missionaries to debate the “teachers of error” in the “civilised” territories, but it was necessary also in non-civilised countries. In order to meet the demand for broad academic training of missionaries, the papal letter instructed the Collegio Urbano at Propaganda Fide to establish a special chair in missiology.⁸⁰

The Collegio Urbano was essentially a major seminary for future Western missionaries and future priests from mission territories; the overwhelming majority of them were studying to be secular priests. When Van Rossum became prefect, the number of students was rather low, due to some extent to the war: there were 96 ‘Propagandisti’ in 1919, sixteen of whom belonged to the Eastern rite; the number had increased to 126 by 1924. The Collegio had a country residence in Castel Gandolfo, where Van Rossum was a frequent visitor – during certain periods he came every weekend when he was not in Ariccia or Albano – and where he felt very much at home. The Collegio probably reminded him of the college of Wittem and the years

78 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 646, f 41–42: E. Schröder to W. van Rossum, Mariannhill, 12 April 1920.

79 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: W. van Rossum to the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, undated copy, probably early 1914. See the similarities with his letter (*Ibid.*) to Paula Emunds of 2 February 1918.

80 *Maximum Illud*, 448.



Van Rossum and students of the Collegio Urbano

he spent there as prefect of students and rector, surrounded by the seminarians. Photographs of his visits show a relaxed cardinal, who enjoyed watching the students as they played tennis and tug-of-war.⁸¹ The three hundredth anniversary of the institute was celebrated with great festivity in 1927.⁸²

The students of the Collegio normally hailed from the territories that fell under Propaganda Fide. In the first half of the nineteenth century, many students came from the Balkans and the Near East. However, in the second half of the century, students began to arrive in greater numbers from Western regions such as the Netherlands, Ireland, Scandinavia, Britain – the college's most famous student was John Henry Newman –, Canada and the United States, including the later Cardinal George Mundelein.

81 KDC, ROSS, no. 389: photos by G. Felici, presented as a souvenir of the silver jubilee of the acquisition of the villa by the Collegio Urbano, 18 July 1925.

82 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 953, f 679–740: Programma per la celebrazione del IIIo centenario del Collegio Urbano.

After the 1908 reform of the curia and the foundation of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches in 1917,⁸³ the admission of students from territories that no longer fell under Propaganda Fide became a matter of dispute. Van Rossum wanted the college's universal appeal to continue and advocated a non-restrictive admissions policy. It was decided during the general congregation of 9 May 1919 that the Collegio would admit students from any geographical background. Financial problems were to be resolved through scholarships from the students' home dioceses.⁸⁴

The publication of *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae* had a great impact on the composition of the student population. The number particularly of students from the Far East grew, especially after the consecration of Chinese and Japanese bishops. Some historians have even called this a transformation.⁸⁵ African students also became an increasingly common sight. Van Rossum wrote with satisfaction to his former secretary on 30 November 1931: "There are now 170 students, 36 of whom are Chinese. There is also a pitch black one like Vidal, from Honduras."⁸⁶

It was important for Propaganda Fide to build and foster a good relationship with the students of the Collegio. Once they had been ordained priests and were stationed somewhere in the missions, it was customary that every alumnus wrote an annual letter – the *lettere di stato* – to the prefect to inform him of his life and work as a missionary.⁸⁷ This gave Propaganda Fide direct information from the ground in the missions. One consequence was that other priests sometimes treated their Propaganda Fide-trained colleagues with caution, as they were aware that everything might be reported back to 'Rome'.⁸⁸

Van Rossum was eager to ordain the students to the priesthood himself, possibly with a view to nurturing this relationship, and his consecration as bishop by Benedict XV on 19 May 1918 meant that he was able to do so. The new code of canon law, which entered into force on that same day, afforded the possibility in canon 959. Van Rossum submitted his request to the commission for the interpretation of the code as soon as 2 June, and the commission supported his claims.

But the prefect's plans soon floundered on strong opposition from the cardinal vicar, Basilio Pompilj, normally one of his allies, who proved to have an "extreme sensibility" regarding this point. Because the students studied in the diocese of Rome,

83 The Armenian priest G. P. Agagianian (1895–1970) from Georgia completed his studies in 1917. He would become prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1960 after a career as a professor at the Collegio Urbano.

84 Maksimilijan Jezernik, 'Il Pontificio Collegio Urbano de Propaganda Fide', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/1: 1815–1972, 99–122, at 115–117.

85 *Ibid.*, 103–105.

86 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 30 November 1931.

87 See for example ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 600, f 156–515: letters from past pupils of the Collegio, some including photographs and/or publications.

88 J. Jak, 'Finland 1907–1957', in: *Annalen SCJ*, 1957, no. 124(7 Sept.), 114–123.

he insisted on his right as vicar of the bishop of Rome to ordain them, and the pope supported this claim. Pompilj wrote to Gasparri that he regarded Van Rossum's claim as unfounded, and Van Rossum then defended his point of view in a long letter. A special commission of cardinals was set up to deal with the matter in early 1919, and on 17 January this found in favour of Pompilj. Van Rossum acquiesced grudgingly. He asked Gasparri if he could ordain any students who happened to be on holidays in Castel Gandolfo.⁸⁹ This was possibly conceded – at least for the minor orders – because Van Rossum mentioned to Drehmanns in June 1932 that he could not leave Rome until after “17 July, when I have to ordain our students subdeacons in Castello”.⁹⁰

The general secretary of Propaganda Fide was the head ('prefect of studies') of the Collegio Urbano, and in addition had several competencies in the college as immediate superior in the field of education. Up to 1922, the general secretary was Camillo Laurenti, who appears to have left the management of the major seminary entirely to Van Rossum. The prefect concerned himself in detail with the minutiae of life in the college. Paolo Giobbe (1880–1972), a former *minutante* of Propaganda Fide and professor of practical liturgy, became rector of the Collegio in 1918, but he had to ask Van Rossum's permission for the smallest things. In August 1918, for example, he asked if he could permit a student of the Syro-Malabar rite to recite the office in Latin, because he was not yet conversant with the oriental language. The prefect replied that the student in question had another year, on condition that he learned the language.⁹¹ And in October, Giobbe asked Van Rossum for thirty lire to purchase breviaries for eighteen students.⁹²

Van Rossum also involved himself with the curriculum. During his first general congregation as prefect, he proposed a change to the schedule of classes in the Collegio Urbano, which was adopted.⁹³ In a number of presentations or *relazioni verbali* in 1920, Van Rossum explained his further plans for the lectures, lecture hours, professors and their remuneration according to whether they belonged to the first or the second degree and the number of hours they taught, the competencies of the rector

89 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1919: file on the priestly ordination of Collegio Urbano students. Pro-memoria on can. 959, with information about the meeting of the commission for the interpretation of the code on 2 June 1918; W. van Rossum to P. Gasparri (original), 24 January 1919, in which he asks upon “what legal basis of the new code this consideration is founded”.

90 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 5 June 1932. See also KDC, ROSS, no. 228: Photo album ‘La Ordinazione dei Sacerdoti nel nuovo Collegio di Propaganda Fide’, Epifania 1927, where Van Rossum is the ordaining prelate.

91 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 600, f 91: Paolo Giobbe to W. van Rossum, 27 August 1918, with note by Van Rossum, 29 August 1918.

92 *Ibid.*, f 101–102: Paolo Giobbe to W. van Rossum, 5 October 1918. Van Rossum wrote underneath: “Granted”.

93 ASPF, *Acta*, 1917–1918, vol. 289, f 239–250: Relazione verbale Van Rossum, sul sopprimere nelle Scuole del Pontificio Collegio Urbano le tre classi (...) esistenti di grammatica, umanistica e rettorica, 29 July 1918.

and his salary, and that of the college doctor.⁹⁴ In addition to the ordinary seminary curriculum of philosophy and theology, the Ateneo Urbano – the school attached to the Collegio – offered ‘second-degree’ lectures to students who lacked the required proficiency in subjects such as Latin, Greek, mathematics, history, sociology, physics and chemistry. Classes in plainchant, Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Syrian and missiology (*Scienza delle Missioni*) were also on offer. Van Rossum’s proposals were approved by the general congregation, although it awarded the prefect of studies a higher salary than Van Rossum had proposed.⁹⁵ In 1922, Van Rossum brought his fellow Redemptorist Cornelis Damen from the Netherlands to become dean of the faculty of theology.

Laurenti’s successor, Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani, took a much greater interest in the Collegio Urbano. This led to difficulties with Giobbe’s successor, Torquato Dini (1893–1934), who was appointed in this post by Van Rossum in 1925.⁹⁶ To Dini’s dismay, Marchetti-Selvaggiani increasingly took the initiative, particularly with regard to teaching. Dini, still a young man, complained about this to the prefect. Although Van Rossum assured him that he, and not Marchetti-Selvaggiani, was the boss – “I am the true Superior of the Collegio” – the general secretary insisted on exercising his powers fully. To create clarity concerning the various competencies, Dini asked the general congregation at Van Rossum’s behest in December 1927 to grant him several faculties “on the basis of the old situation”, such as the right to sign the scrolls of academic degrees, to preside over final examinations and to take charge of the management of the schools.⁹⁷

The matter was discussed at the general congregation of Propaganda Fide on 21 May 1928 on the basis of a report by Camillo Laurenti, and again on 4 June 1928.⁹⁸ It was decided to set up a commission of cardinals to deal with the issue. Dini tried to influence the decision-making process by writing to Van Rossum and appealing to the prefect’s own experiences as former rector in Wittem: surely, the cardinal knew how important it was to be able to lead the institute in all serenity. He proposed a new system for relations between Propaganda Fide and the Collegio, clearly with a view to keeping Marchetti-Selvaggiani at arm’s length.⁹⁹

94 ASPF, *Acta*, 1920, vol. 291, f 64–65: Relazione verbale Van Rossum, Scuole del Collegio Urbano, 1 March 1920.

95 *Ibid.*, f 168–169: Relazione verbale Van Rossum. Progetto di un nuovo organico per i Professori delle Scuole del Pontificio Collegio Urbano di Propaganda Fide, 7 June 1920.

96 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 852, f 1104–1109: Van Rossum. Nomina di Don Torquato Dini Pro-Rettore del Pontificio Collegio Urbano. For papal approval, see ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1208, f 3–8.

97 Jezernik, ‘Il Pontificio Collegio Urbano’, 113 quotes a letter by Dini dated 15 December 1927. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 960–964: T. Dini to W. van Rossum, 13 May 1928.

98 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 666–676: ‘On the government of the Collegio Urbano and its degree courses’.

99 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat 2: T. Dini to W. van Rossum, 5 June 1928.

But the commission of cardinals decided differently: the general secretary of Propaganda would no longer be prefect of studies – a new official was to be appointed who would be there permanently – but Marchetti-Selvaggiani continued to be the direct superior of the Collegio Urbano, although he was instructed not to involve himself with matters of detail. The position of rector was restricted to the Collegio itself (the boarding school) and the rector was excluded from any interference in the government and curriculum of the Ateneo Urbano.¹⁰⁰

Just as when Van Rossum had been prefect of students and rector in Wittem, his focus now was not only on the curriculum, but also on the environment in which the seminarians lived and studied. Again, he invested in building something new: magnificent new premises for the Collegio Urbano and the Ateneo Urbano were constructed in a beautiful location in Rome, and the country residence in Castel Gandolfo was thoroughly renovated.¹⁰¹

In March 1924, the general congregation met to discuss Van Rossum's confidential proposal to build a new complex for Propaganda Fide, not on Piazza di Spagna, but beside Saint Peter's, on the Gianicolo hill. The prefect explained that the building that housed Propaganda had for a long time been less than satisfactory. Although it boasted several beautiful rooms, the spaces for the secretariat and the administrative offices were cramped, unpleasant and impractical. Moreover, the building was unsuited for keeping the valuable archive of Propaganda, particularly now that it was being consulted more frequently by researchers.

The disadvantages were even more clearly in evidence with respect to the adjoining Collegio Urbano. The college buildings were much too small to house the 126 students the Collegio had at the time. Moreover, its location had become unfavourable due to the growth of the city. The surrounding dense urban development with its many windows entailed moral dangers and discomfort for the students, as well as a lot of noise. A new, more spacious and calmer location would have to be found, a place where the prefect would be able to keep a close watch on everything.¹⁰² A new location would furthermore permit the creation of a good missionary library:

¹⁰⁰ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 698–701, 923, 939: recommendations of 9 July 1928 by a commission of cardinals, established during the general congregation of 4 June 1928. Complaints about Marchetti-Selvaggiani continued to be received. See ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: Alberto Canestri, 'direttore spirituale' of the Collegio Urbano, to W. van Rossum, 6 November 1929, 'Personale'. He wrote that Marchetti-Selvaggiani was trying to set him up against the rector and had asked him to spy on the staff.

¹⁰¹ KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 7 November 1931. Propaganda Fide had in the meantime run short of cash due to the many renovations and new construction plans, so that Pius XI's gift of part of his land in Castel Gandolfo was a welcome gesture.

¹⁰² ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 852, f 843–846: Relazione verbale, 24 March 1924, 'Sistemazione della Propaganda'; vol. 1077, f 747: memorandum by secretary of Propaganda, 30 June 1930, in which Marchetti- »

the rise of missiology had seen an increase of publications that were useful for the students as well as for the officials of Propaganda Fide. In addition, a suitable space was needed to accommodate the Propagation of the Faith.

Negotiations for a new building had been ongoing for years. A complex near the Villa Borghese seemed particularly promising, but its Protestant owners refused to sell to Propaganda. The plans shifted therefore to the terrain of the “ex-Manicomio”, a former insane asylum near Saint Peter’s on the Gianicolo. This would also serve to shield the Vatican from curious glances, because it was possible from this spot to look almost straight into the papal apartments. Of course it would be sad to leave the old historical premises, but such changes were inevitable “and would ever remain so after human-kind was driven out of paradise”.¹⁰³ The advantages were great: there was ample space on the Gianicolo for the Collegio and its schools, the offices of Propaganda Fide, a missionary library and the archive. For Van Rossum, now as when the Wittem monastery had to be renovated, efficiency trumped esthetical and historical sensitivities.

The decision to purchase the terrain was made in March 1926.¹⁰⁴ The congregation possibly lacked sufficient funds for construction, because Van Rossum convoked the ‘Congresso Economico’ of Propaganda Fide for a meeting in his apartment in mid-1926.¹⁰⁵ On the agenda was the sale of part of the terrain to the Jesuits, who required it for the building of their own general curia, for the sum of more than 3.5 million lire.¹⁰⁶ Giving up this part meant there would be no space for a new office of Propaganda Fide, and it was decided that this would stay on Piazza di Spagna.¹⁰⁷ The general superior of the Jesuits, Włodzimierz Ledóchowski, thanked Van Rossum that same month for the expeditious manner in which the sale had been arranged. He hoped, “like Van Rossum”, that relations between the new neighbours would always be cordial and would inspire both organisations to become the most zealous labourers in the Lord’s vineyard.¹⁰⁸

The students and professors moved to the Gianicolo after the summer of 1926, and were housed provisionally in the old buildings of the hospital.¹⁰⁹ Van Rossum

» Selvaggiani reports on the general congregation’s positive decision on moving the Collegio Urbano. See also <http://www.collegiourbano.org/en/storia>.

103 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 852, f 843–846: Relazione verbale, 24 March 1924.

104 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, f 176–177: Francesco Pacelli to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 31 March 1926. Jezernik, ‘Il Pontificio Collegio Urbano’, 101, 117. According to Jezernik, the terrain had been purchased by Pius IX in 1869 and acquired by Propaganda Fide in 1925.

105 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, f 180–183: memorandum by Van Rossum, 9 July 1926, for an extraordinary meeting on 14 July 1926, at 5.30 pm; invited were Merry del Val, Lega, Cerretti, Lucidi and Sincero.

106 *Ibid.*, f 185–189: Treaty of sale, July 1926. The precise sum was 3,656,239.55 (= c. \$ 145,000). It was decided that the Jesuits in the United States would pay this sum to the apostolic delegate there.

107 The archive of Propaganda Fide is now kept on the Gianicolo beside the Collegio Urbano.

108 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, f 197: W. Ledóchowski to W. van Rossum, 17 July 1926. NB most folders that once contained the financial documentation for the new building on the Gianicolo in *Nova Series*, vol. 948, are empty. The files have probably been transferred to the economic archive of Propaganda.

109 Jezernik, ‘Il Pontificio Collegio Urbano’, 101, 117.

asked the professors for their patience amid the temporary inconveniences and hoped that they would bear these cheerfully. He then stressed that they were to adhere punctually to the lecture hours, that they must not let discipline sag and were to give due attention and care to the quality of their teaching. The students were to be sufficiently trained by participating in quizzes or debates. The books used should be approved titles, unless dispensation had been granted.¹¹⁰

Pope Pius XI blessed the first stone of the new Collegio during a ceremony held in the Vatican Gardens on 12 May 1928. The ceremony was attended by Van Rossum, Gasparri, a number of other prelates and the students of Propaganda Fide.¹¹¹ The pope addressed a special prayer to Therese of Lisieux, who had become the patron saint of missions the previous year. The *New World* of 20 July 1928 carried a report of the event and called Pius XI, Rector Dini and Cardinal Mundelein leaders in the building of Propaganda College; Mundelein had raised a substantial sum for the project.¹¹² The fact that Van Rossum was not mentioned was perhaps due to a clash that had occurred between him and the American bishops over the American Mission Board a few years previously.¹¹³

Meanwhile, the new building for the Propaganda Fide schools began to take shape. The new aula of the Ateneo Urbano was blessed by Van Rossum on 11 April 1929.¹¹⁴ Two weeks later, the new lecture halls were ready.¹¹⁵ Up to that point, the students had attended lectures in the old lecture halls near Piazza di Spagna. The new Atheneum of Propaganda Fide was ready before the new buildings of the Gregorian University, the Angelicum and the Ateneo Lateranense were, and they apparently attracted great admiration in Rome at the time.¹¹⁶

Pius XI had been able to follow the daily progress of the construction work on the Gianicolo from his window. The chapel was consecrated by Van Rossum on Sunday 19 April 1931 and a bust of the pope was solemnly unveiled in the aula magna after a speech by the secretary of Propaganda, Salotti, in the presence of twelve cardinals the following Wednesday. During an audience with the pope on Thursday, Van Ros-

110 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 950, f 830–831: W. van Rossum (original in own hand) to professors of the Collegio Urbano, 16 October 1926.

111 Jezernik, 'Il Pontificio Collegio Urbano', 101–102.

112 There was mention of one million dollars. See Edward R. Kantowicz, *Corporation Sole: Cardinal Mundelein and Chicago Catholicism* (Notre Dame 1983), 47; ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: newspaper article 1928.

113 See Chapter 15.

114 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1078a, f 69–215, contains a file from 1928 on the building of the schools of the Collegio Urbano, or most likely part of them, for a sum of more than 1.3 million lire.

115 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 25 April 1929. "This morning we had the solemn blessing of the schools, which lasted from 9 – almost 10. At 10 o'clock the awarding of prizes up to a quarter past 11; lunch at 12.30. Everything went very well."

116 Jezernik, 'Il Pontificio Collegio Urbano', 102.

*Blessing of the first stone of the Collegio Urbano
in front of a statue of Therese of Lisieux in the
Vatican Gardens. Pius XI is flanked by Van Rossum
(on his left) and Pietro Gasparri (on his right)*







Inauguration of the new Ateneo Urbano buildings, 1929

sum attempted once again to convince Pius to come and personally bless the new Collegio Urbano the next day, Friday. The pope again turned this down, adding that he would send Secretary of State Pacelli to represent him. But on Friday, after a solemn pontifical Mass celebrated by Mundelein, the word came at half past ten that Pius XI would come in person after all. This news was greeted with great excitement and suspense. “And yes! It was not eleven o’clock when His Holiness’s car pulled up and the Holy Father stood in our midst. Indescribable the enthusiasm, the rejoicing, the applause of our 140 students, of some twenty cardin. and countless bishops (...). As Prefect of Prop. I had to step forward and thank H. H. humbly and sincerely in the name of all Cardin., of all the College and all those present, for [his] great goodness and the election of the College of Prop.” After visiting the building, the pope took more than half an hour to enjoy the beautiful views of Rome from the loggia. Then he proceeded to the new Ateneo where he “stood behind Fr. Damen’s lectern, surrounded at all times by a swarm of young men, to address them once again”.¹¹⁷

Van Rossum’s description contains not a trace of criticism of Pius XI for having put him on the spot in this way. But outside observers interpreted Achille Ratti’s decision to surprise the prefect as a sign of disrespect.¹¹⁸ Despite Van Rossum’s neu-

¹¹⁷ KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 27 April 1931.

¹¹⁸ Carlo Confalonieri, *Pio XI visto da vicino* (Milan 1993), 156–157.

tral description, the events did not fail to leave their mark on him: “These have been unforgettable days, which, I hope, will have a beneficial, indelible influence on the alumni. As for me, they caused great fatigue.”¹¹⁹

As has been seen, *Maximum Illud* advocated the establishment of a special chair for missiology at the Collegio Urbano.¹²⁰ The existing curriculum at the Collegio did not adequately cover this discipline. There were lectures in ‘mission science’ – at least since 1920 – but this was a secondary course. The curriculum in any case could not compete with the – primarily theoretical and historical – courses offered in Münster, where Josef Schmidlin had occupied the chair of Catholic missiology since 1911.¹²¹

Missiology, particularly its more practical aspects, had also seen considerable development in Belgium. The journal of the Benedictines of Loppem, *Bulletin des Missions*, was read with great interest in Propaganda Fide. This journal had a progressive reputation and it supported the Lazarist Lebbe in his attempts to create an indigenous clergy in China. It was viewed with suspicion in some quarters, especially in France and among the Jesuits, but Van Rossum supported it.¹²² Propaganda also took a lively interest in the competing initiative of the ‘missiology weeks’ organised in Leuven from 1923 onwards by the Scheut Missionaries (CICM) and later by the impassioned Jesuit Pierre Charles.¹²³ Van Rossum’s objective was to create a high-standard academic institute of missiology in Rome, which would make missiology and its associated disciplines a fixed part of priestly formation.¹²⁴

Pius XI was clearly keen to look beyond the possibilities that Propaganda Fide could offer. In 1922, shortly after his election as pope, he asked the Jesuit general superior Ledóchowski for advice on the establishment of a “Superior Institute for

119 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 27 April 1931.

120 *Maximum Illud*, 448.

121 Müller, *Josef Schmidlin*, 128–129. Schmidlin, ‘Propagandapräfekt van Rossum’, 352–354, points out that Van Rossum had shown an interest in his missionary journal in 1911 and had asked him for advice on the establishment of an academic chair in 1919. Relations between Schmidlin and Van Rossum were difficult. Schmidlin’s nominees for professorships were turned down as being either not academic enough or too academic. According to Schmidlin, the prefect felt German missiology was too critical and theoretical. He also expressed frustration at the ban on publishing documents from the archive, although he did praise the fact that Van Rossum had had the archive and library organised (“albeit not very professionally”) and had made them available for research.

122 An Vandenberghe, ‘Beyond Pierre Charles. The Emergence of Belgian Missiology Refined’, in: C. Dujardin, C. Prudhomme (eds.), *Mission & Science. Missiology Revised/Missologie revisitée 1850–1940* (Leuven 2015), 151–169, at 157–161.

123 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 974, f 58–61: Pierre Charles S.J., secretary of the permanent committee for the Leuven missiological weeks, to W. van Rossum, 6 October 1926. Report of the course on the theme of “the problem of adaptation”; see also Dries Vanysacker, ‘Une page oubliée dans l’histoire des Semaines de Missiologie de Louvain. Les origines et les débuts au Théologat des Pères de Scheut en 1923 et 1924’, in: M. Lamberigts, W. De Pril (eds.), *Louvain, Belgium, and Beyond. Studies in Religious History in Honour of Leo Kenis* (Leuven 2018), 183–195.

124 Prudhomme, ‘Pie XI Pape des missions, nouvelles archives, nouveaux regards’, 83–84.

the missionary disciplines". Ledóchowski responded eagerly: such a plan was fully consistent with the image of Pius XI as a man of science. A missiological institute would not only result in many conversions in the missions, but also focus the eyes of the world on papal Rome, which would thus increase its "worldwide influence". He stressed, however, that the organisation should not be left to Propaganda Fide, which was already overburdened with its managerial and administrative duties and should not be given a scientific role on top of these. The institute would have to fall directly under the Holy See, although Propaganda could be given the job of managing it. The best solution was to entrust it to a new legal entity or a religious order, with the assistance of other orders and congregations. If Pius XI were to consider the Jesuits, he would have to realise that such a choice would lead to angry reactions and obstruction by other institutes. After discussing the plan further during an audience, Ledóchowski wrote a letter on 4 March 1923 in which he was more favourable to the idea of entrusting the leadership of the institute to the Jesuits. He added that cooperation with the existing institutes (Gregorian University, Biblicum, Orientale) could be useful. He also proposed a location nearby where the new institute could be built.¹²⁵

In an extensive memorandum entitled 'Progetto di un Istituto Superiore di scienza delle missioni in Roma' (Proposal for a Superior Missiological Institute in Rome), Ledóchowski added several further proposals. First, it was necessary to act swiftly, also because of competition from Protestant missionary societies. Catholics certainly had an enthusiastic missionary movement, but lacked adequate technical and scientific formation. Their knowledge of languages was insufficient, as was their expertise in the fields of culture, history, technology, medicine, agriculture, engineering, and the mentality and psychology of foreign peoples. It was necessary to have a body of excellent professors to properly train a new generation of young, indigenous missionaries and priests so that they could pass on their knowledge rationally and efficiently in their own countries. In addition, Ledóchowski wrote, auditors from other Roman educational institutes could attend some of the lectures: this would help to train priests to become promoters and supporters of the missions. This was also important for the Missionary Union of the Clergy. Missiological research at the new institute would have to be carried out at a high level and would have to achieve a prominent place in the academic world through its publications.

Accepting these recommendations with thanks, Pius IX told Ledóchowski that Van Rossum, as prefect of Propaganda Fide, also had plans for a missiological institute. Ledóchowski replied on 12 March that, in that case, it was not wise to entrust the institute to the Jesuits, as this might antagonise Propaganda. Moreover, he believed that Marchetti-Selvaggiani possessed the capacities required to assist the prefect in

¹²⁵ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 850, f 557–584: W. Ledóchowski to Pius XI, 3 December 1922 and 4 March 1923.

the foundation of the institute. The missionary exhibition of which Pius XI had spoken could be of great use for this and could form the basis for the museum collection that was required. The pope would have to closely monitor the set-up and progress, Ledóchowski added a little maliciously, because if it was left to Propaganda alone the objective might never be realised.¹²⁶

It is unclear whether Van Rossum knew that Pius XI had approached the Jesuits. Interestingly, the correspondence between the pope and the general ended up in a file of occasional correspondence (*auguri*) addressed to Van Rossum. The pope possibly wished to put pressure on him; in any case, on 15 March 1923 Van Rossum suddenly took important steps to found a missiological institute at Propaganda Fide. The prefect invited the procurators of all missionary orders and congregations to Rome on that day to discuss the missiological training of missionaries. He told them it was no longer possible to make do with heroism and generosity in the missions in the contemporary age, and particularly now that they had a scientifically minded pope. Instead, they needed a scientific approach, which would include geography, ethnography, medicine and letters.¹²⁷

A month later, the pope asked Van Rossum to organise the World Mission Exposition that Ledóchowski had mentioned, in time for the Holy Year of 1925.¹²⁸ The exhibition became a great event that appealed greatly to the imagination.¹²⁹ It took place in the Vatican Gardens, spread across a surface of 17,000 square metres, and displayed more than a hundred thousand objects and documents in many pavilions and galleries. The continents each had their own division, and the exhibition strongly focused on science: missiology, ethnology, geography, tropical medicine and healthcare. Whereas the great nineteenth-century secular world exhibitions, such as those of London and Paris, had showcased economic and technical progress to as wide an audience as possible, the Vatican exhibition sought to advertise the

126 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 850, f 557–584: W. Ledóchowski to Pius XI, 12 March 1923.

127 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 876b, f 374: invitation to the procurators by W. van Rossum, 15 March 1923.

128 *Ibid.*, f 380–381: Pius XI to W. van Rossum, 24 April 1923; f 386–387: circular letter by W. van Rossum, 3 May 1923, in which he asks the bishops of the world to contribute to the exhibition.

In August 1923, Van Rossum visited the world exposition in Gothenburg in Sweden. He appointed Marchetti-Selvaggiani chairman of the preparatory committee. Complaints were received about the latter's authoritarian style and carelessness with regard to the pieces sent to Rome (some of which he had allegedly sold for personal gain). See ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1: Calliste de Geispolsheim OFM Cap, président du sous-comité pour l'Océanie, to W. van Rossum, 5 January 1925. Roncalli suggested that the initiative for the exposition came from Van Rossum. KDC, ROSS, no. 65: A. Roncalli to W. van Rossum, 18 June 1927.

129 Laurick Zerbini, 'De l'exposition Vaticane au Musée Missionnaire Ethnologique du Latran', in: Claude Prudhomme (ed.), *Une appropriation du monde. Mission et missions XIX^{ème}-XX^{ème} siècles* (Lyon 2004), 225–248.

results of missionary work.¹³⁰ The renowned ethnologist Wilhelm Schmidt s.v.D. was an important advisor to the exhibition.¹³¹

Orders and congregations were asked to present their activities in education and healthcare. By highlighting developments in the mission territories before and after the arrival of the missionaries, the exhibition aimed to demonstrate that the advent of Catholic priests, sisters and brothers had brought about huge progress in civilisation. *Rerum Ecclesiae* spoke of the energising effects of the exhibition: both the “officers in charge of the missions” and “the privates” (that is, the missionaries) had drawn inspiration from it, and from the resulting missionary museum in the Lateran.¹³²

The objects brought together for the exhibition formed the nucleus of a valuable museum collection that was put to good educational use. Furthermore, a missionary library was founded under the leadership of Robert Streit O.M.I. And the building plans for the Collegio Urbano and the Ateneo gave Van Rossum strong credentials to press for the establishment of a higher institute for learning. More and more students from other institutes were attending the Ateneo as auditors, particularly students of the adjacent North American College, but also from orders and congregations. In the academic year 1928/29, 93 of the 451 students at the Ateneo were from the Collegio Urbano and 162 from the North American College.¹³³

A number of professorial chairs were established at the Ateneo to promote its development into an academic institute. A chair of Mariology, the theological study of Mary, was established in 1925, to which Hubert-Marie Gebhard, procurator general of the Montfort Missionaries, was appointed.¹³⁴ In the same year, Van Rossum tried to appoint Vincent Lebbe, the great champion of an indigenous clergy, as professor of Chinese.¹³⁵ He consulted François Verdier about this, the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission in Paris, who told him he did not expect any problems but suggested that the prefect should ask the vicars apostolic of China first.¹³⁶ Lebbe himself was not keen; he was happy to return to his beloved China

130 The Catholics of the Netherlands compiled a commemorative volume on the occasion, *Nederland en de missiën* ('s-Hertogenbosch 1925), which was dedicated to Cardinal W. van Rossum.

131 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 876b, f 397: W. van Rossum to W. Schmidt s.v.D., 9 May 1923. See also An Vandenberghe, 'Entre mission et science. La recherche ethnologique du Père Wilhelm Schmidt SVD et le Vatican (1900–1939)', in: *LFM Missions et sciences sociales*, 19(2006), Dec., 15–36.

132 *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 67.

133 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1078a, f 31 and f 516: overview of the 'auditores Scholarum Pont. Athenaei Urbani'. There were 460 students in total in 1929/30, 94 of whom were from the Collegio Urbano and 186 from the North American College.

134 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 855b, f 156–158.

135 Soetens, *Vincent Lebbe. Pour L'Église chinoise*, i–xxiv.

136 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 855b, f 175–183: W. van Rossum to F. Verdier, 14 and 23 October 1925; F. Verdier to W. van Rossum, 19 and 26 October 1925.

in 1927, in the company of the newly ordained Chinese bishops – who had toured Europe, including the Netherlands, after their consecration.¹³⁷ Eventually, Paolo Jupin (Yu-pin) was appointed to the chair of Chinese in 1930.¹³⁸

The chair of missiology was filled in 1930 by the Franciscan Vitale Lange.¹³⁹ This was rather a disappointment for Josef Schmidlin, who had set his sights on this chair for himself, and who had plans of his own for a missiological institute in Rome. He requested a papal audience to discuss these, but it is not clear whether this was granted. Although no one doubted his missiological competencies, there were certain misgivings about his person: he was regarded as unstable and unsuited to lead such an institute.¹⁴⁰ It is not known whether the clash he had with Van Rossum the year before had anything to do with this; the prefect twice banned him from publishing documents from the archive of Propaganda Fide.¹⁴¹

The plans for an 'Istituto missionario scientifico' (scientific missiological institute) were finally complete in 1932. A memorandum dated 12 July 1932 set out the programme for this institute. It was to offer a three-year degree course and be affiliated with the 'Ateneo Urbaniano di Propaganda Fide'. The objective was to form missionaries in accordance with the requirements of the modern age, and additionally to train professors of missiology for Catholic universities and seminaries.¹⁴² The range of courses on offer was wide and consisted of languages, the fundamental disciplines of theology and canon law, the historical disciplines, the auxiliary sciences and 'missionary practice', which covered the Holy See's instructions on missions and missionary cooperation, problems of the modern apostolate, missionary pedagogy and 'missionary press'.¹⁴³ The curriculum thus encompassed both the more

137 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 974, f 291–293: O. Ulbrich (White Father), president of the permanent committee for the Leuven missiological weeks, to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 8 April 1927. Ulbrich wrote that Father Lebbe, a member of the committee, was resigning so that he could fulfil his fondest wish: to return to China with the first Chinese bishops.

138 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1078a, f 224–225, cf. 36–43 and 242–245: appointments to the 'Ateneo Urbano', 1930.

139 *Ibid.*

140 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1076, f 682: Luigi Drago, secretary general of Propagazione della Fede, to C. Salotti, 6 October 1930, with a negative advice on Schmidlin's proposal.

141 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1075, f 425–427: W. van Rossum to J. Schmidlin, 6 May and 12 June 1929. It is unclear whether Schmidlin respected the ban.

142 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1234, f 218–225: Progetti e tentativi per la fondazione in Roma di un istituto per la formazione dei Rettori e Professori dei Seminari in missione. According to a note on the folder, the documents – partially intended to be read or left at papal audiences, all in Van Rossum's handwriting (the oldest document is dated 3 January 1929) – were found among Van Rossum's papers after his death and included in the archive on 28 October 1932.

143 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1207, f 82–84: Istituto missionario scientifico. Schema di programma, 12 July 1932. The historical disciplines included general mission history, the history of the missionary orders and congregations, of Propaganda, of papal documents and of the individual mission territories, and also of philosophical and theological ideas, art and literature, Islam and colonisation, all on the basis of the original texts. The auxiliary sciences consisted of missionary geography, ethnology, »

theological disciplines taught in Münster and the more practical approach for which Leuven had acquired a reputation.

Van Rossum did not live to see the foundation of this scientific institute. A day after his death on 30 August 1932, Cardinal Bisleti, prefect of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities, granted preliminary approval of the institute on the basis of the proposed programme, followed in October by approval *ad experimentum*.¹⁴⁴ Under Van Rossum, the Ateneo had grown gradually into a fully-fledged academic institute: the Università Urbaniana with a missiological institute. The Gregorian University incidentally set up its own missiological faculty in the same year.¹⁴⁵

7 Propaganda Fide and the Secretariat of State

The missionary policies of Propaganda Fide, with their emphasis on independence for the missions and the building up of indigenous churches, also affected the Secretariat of State. Van Rossum was able to unfold his policy as prefect of Propaganda Fide across two pontificates, but the same was true for the secretary of state, Cardinal Gasparri, who occupied this post from 1914 to 1930. It was highly unusual for a new pope to reappoint his predecessor's secretary of state, and the fact that Pius XI did so shows that he wanted continuity in the two most important dicasteries for 'foreign affairs'. Pietro Gasparri and Van Rossum were far from being kindred spirits, but they had worked together for many years on the codification of canon law. Gasparri respected and acknowledged his colleague by frequently consulting him during the final editing stages of the code. Their correspondence between 1915 to 1918 was cordial and attentive.¹⁴⁶ But the two men clearly belonged to opposing camps in the struggle against modernism and during the 1922 conclave.¹⁴⁷

Despite their personal differences, Van Rossum and Gasparri worked together closely to strengthen the supranational character of Catholicism as defined in *Maximum Illud* and expedite the *plantatio ecclesiae* in all parts of the world, through missionary work and diplomacy. The result of their collaboration was an impressive list

» comparative religious studies, statistics, archival studies, Christian art in the missions and the general principles of tropical medicine.

144 *Ibid.*, f 98: C. Salotti to G. Bisleti, 13 July 1932; f 138: G. Bisleti to C. Salotti, 31 August 1932; f 154: preliminary approval *ad experimentum*, 18 October 1932.

145 Metzler, 'Präfekten', 306; see also Vandenberghe, 'Beyond Pierre Charles', 164–169. J. Schmidlin, 'Zwei neue Missionsfakultäten in Rom', in: *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 22(1932), 354–358, pointed out, while "shaking his head in disbelief", that there were now two fully-fledged faculties of missiology in Rome.

146 KDC, ROSS, no. 17 and no. 65. See also Casiraghi, 'The Proceedings of the Codification of Canon Law', 94.

147 See Chapter 20.1.

of documents, decrees, diplomatic decisions and innovations and the enormous growth of missionary activity. Van Rossum was dependent on the Vatican's foreign policy, but conversely, Gasparri depended on Propaganda Fide to carry out an ambitious missionary policy. This meant that the two cardinals often operated in the same field, and inevitably this led to conflicts about competencies.¹⁴⁸ Neither cardinal was a member of the other's dicastery (although Gasparri eventually became a member of Propaganda Fide in 1927), but whenever the pope judged it useful, a *congregazione mista* of the two bodies was organised.¹⁴⁹

Compromise and cautious diplomacy did not come naturally to the rigid Van Rossum, who was interested primarily in the religious and organisational interests of the missions, which he regarded as far removed from the wheeling and dealing of worldly politics. According to Prudhomme, the choice for Van Rossum as prefect of Propaganda was an explicit part of papal strategy (as it had been under Leo XIII): the expectation was that Van Rossum would first make irreconcilable demands to safeguard the independence of the missions and missionaries, and that Gasparri, with his diplomatic talents, would then calm tempers and suggest a compromise. Gasparri supposedly determined together with the pope how accommodating the final compromise would be.¹⁵⁰

It may be doubted whether this latter conclusion is justified in all cases (see the following chapter), but it is certainly a recognisable pattern with regard to British India, where the Portuguese *padroado* or right of patronage restricted the autonomy of Propaganda Fide.¹⁵¹ Gasparri's interest in keeping on good terms with this still-influential colonial and missionary power was great. Although Portugal had

148 It was possibly with a view to this that Van Rossum was appointed member of a commission of cardinals on conflicts of competency between dicasteries of the curia, on 7 January 1922, just before Benedict XV's death. AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, Protocolli, P 30069, 30082. There is a reference to rubrica 2, busta separata 'Commissioni card[inalizie]', and to 'AE' [= Affari Straordinari] for this commission's treatment of several cases in late 1922.

149 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 850, f 305: announcement of a *congregazione mista* of Affari Straordinari and Propaganda Fide on 23 January 1923, with the Cardinals Merry del Val, Van Rossum, Scapinelli, Giorgi, Laurenti and Gasparri in attendance, on problems relating to the right of patronage. Ditto on 4 February 1924 on the attitude of ecclesiastical authority with regard to the French protectorate in China and other forms of protection exercised by foreign nations: vol. 850, f 317 with Cardinals De Lai, Vico, Merry del Val, Van Rossum, Tacci and Gasparri in attendance. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 991a, f 662-694: *congregazione mista*, 18 December 1930, on Bombay and the division of the diocese. A new division in Colombia/Brazil was on the agenda in 1932: ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1188, f 4-5: E. Pacelli to W. van Rossum, 14 April 1932, in which Pacelli informed Van Rossum that the pope desired the issue to be placed before an "Adunanza Mista". See also Hans de Valk, 'Le relazioni tra Propaganda Fide e Segreteria di Stato attraverso i casi della Cina e dell'India (1922-1934)', in: Laura Pettinaroli (ed.), *Le gouvernement pontifical sous Pie XI. Pratiques romaines et gestion de l'universel* (Rome 2013), 323-342, 337 and passim; R. Regoli, 'Il ruolo della Sacra Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari durante il pontificato di Pio XI', in: Semeraro, *La sollecitudine ecclesiale di Pio XI*, 183-229.

150 Prudhomme, 'Maximum illud, una svolta missionaria?', 416-418.

151 De Valk, 'Le relazioni tra Propaganda Fide e Segreteria di Stato', 335-342.

enacted the separation of church and state, the government continued to claim the right to appoint ecclesiastical superiors in certain parts of India, even in territories that, according to canon law, fell under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide. When the appointment of a new vicar apostolic was due in the early 1920s, Propaganda Fide forwarded the file to the Secretariat of State: Van Rossum clearly hesitated to directly defy the *padroado*, and he asked Gasparri to resolve the issue first. After some procrastination, Gasparri took the matter up with Portugal, and the Secretariat of State gradually began to claim the right to decide for itself. The outcome was a compromise in which a Portuguese archbishop was appointed – not Propaganda’s candidate – but which also ended the *padroado* in this area.¹⁵²

The appointment of apostolic delegates could be a useful instrument in the grey area between official diplomatic relations and the representation of missionary interests. An apostolic delegate was appointed to China by Propaganda Fide in the person of Celso Costantini. Previously, apostolic delegates had been appointed to India (1884) and the United States (1895). They had no official diplomatic status, but in practice operated more or less as diplomats. These Rome-trained delegates played an important coordinating role in the mission territories and kept Rome abreast of local events and needs. Given the resistance that Costantini’s appointment to China was expected to encounter – ecclesiastical superiors and missionaries resented the intrusion and the European powers did not accept any external influence in their area of interest – Van Rossum sent him there without any prior warning. He suddenly turned up in Shanghai, taking the missionary bishops by surprise.¹⁵³

The ambitions of *Maximum Illud* reached much farther than China. The letter also dealt with the great challenges the missions faced in Japan, British India, Indochina, Oceania, Africa – where Protestantism was making great advances –, the Philippines, the Dutch East Indies – relations with Islam – and Scandinavia (Lutheranism), although some observers were dismissive of Van Rossum’s activities in the latter area.¹⁵⁴ What was at stake everywhere was the drive, initiated by Pope Leo XIII, to establish a global Catholicism led by the universal church of Rome.¹⁵⁵ The appointment of apostolic delegates became increasingly common under Van Rossum’s pre-

152 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 850, f 320–321: P. Gasparri to W. van Rossum, 16 August 1924. Forwarding of documents that fall within the competency of Propaganda Fide. The folder bears the following note: “28 August. As the *Padroado* falls under the Secretariat of State, wrote privately to Msgr. Borgongini that this does not fall within the remit of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.” According to Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud*, una svolta missionaria?’, 418, Gasparri also reserved the political-diplomatic files to himself.

153 Costantini, *Ultime foglie*, 25; Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 30–31.

154 P. Christophe (éd.), *Les carnets du cardinal Baudrillart*, vol. 5: 1928–1932 (Paris 2003), 256–263; Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 21–35.

155 Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud*, una svolta missionaria?’, 414–418.

fectship. He also frequently used apostolic visitations, which had been a staple during the early days of Propaganda Fide.¹⁵⁶

Van Rossum was sharply opposed to prioritising political interests over religious arguments in the formulation of policy. He consistently resisted giving national governments any say in the appointment of missionary bishops or Vatican diplomatic envoys. His response to French protests against the appointment of Costantino Aiuti (a former *minutante* in Propaganda Fide) as apostolic delegate to Indochina in 1925 is characteristic. The French government argued that the pope's choice should have been submitted to it for approval first, but Van Rossum regarded this as going against every 'theological-legal' concept of what an apostolic delegate was: someone who represented the pope in *puris spiritualibus* and was therefore not subject to any secular authority.¹⁵⁷ The Secretariat of State received the same reaction from Propaganda Fide in 1931 when it argued that the nuncios should be consulted before appointments of missionary bishops in South America were finalised.¹⁵⁸

The pope's chance of establishing diplomatic relations with the colonial powers was greatly enhanced by the Lateran Treaty signed in 1929 with Benito Mussolini's Fascist Italy. From that moment on, the pope was once again the sovereign of a territory, albeit one of diminutive proportions in the form of Vatican City. This also enabled the church of Rome to distance itself more easily from the interests of the colonial powers, to accommodate the growing tendency towards nationalism and the demand for decolonisation. The Catholic church hoped that this would safeguard its position in the colonies even if the protection of the colonial powers were to disappear.¹⁵⁹ Opportunistic motives dictated that this policy of depoliticisation could not always be implemented: when Ethiopia was conquered by Mussolini's troops in the 1930s, missionaries there were replaced by Italian missionaries.¹⁶⁰

Both Van Rossum and Gasparri attempted to bolster their own dicastery's position. And both had to face an uncomfortable reality: the growing missionary movement in the West often went hand in hand with nationalist sentiment. The showdown

156 Metzler, 'Präfekten', 310–311.

157 Prudhomme, 'Maximum illud, una svolta missionaria?', 416–418, especially note 29, which refers to Van Rossum's response to protests by the French government at the appointment of C. Aiuti. See also Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 91.

158 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1074, f 353–355: C. Salotti, secretary of Propaganda Fide to G. Pizzardo, secretary of the Affari Straordinari, 8 July 1931, on the appointments of missionary bishops in South America.

159 Tiziano Scalzotto, 'I Papi e la Sacra Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o "de Propaganda Fide" da Benedetto XV a Paolo VI', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 253–302.

160 J. Bruls, 'De missiearbeid van 1850 tot Vaticanum II', in: R. Aubert, *De kerk in de Angelsaksische wereld, Noord- en Zuid-Amerika; de missie (Geschiedenis van de Kerk, vol 9; Bussum 1973)*, 201–260, at 234.

between the two curial organs is key to understanding not only the history of the missions, but also that of the Roman curia.

While the organisation of the missions was being concentrated ever more strongly in the hands of Propaganda Fide, the focus of church political relations with the secular authorities in mission territories shifted increasingly towards the Secretariat of State. Relations between Propaganda Fide and the Secretariat of State had been changing even in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as their respective fields of work began to overlap more and more due to the globalisation of political and economic interests in the age of new imperialism.¹⁶¹ The archives of the Congregation for Affari Straordinari, which was to all intents and purposes a strategic division of the Secretariat of State, testify to this body's growing interest in Asian and African mission territories.¹⁶² The fact that the Secretariat of State involved itself in negotiations concerning India, and soon also China, and even began to claim powers over these territories, entailed a certain weakening of the position of Propaganda Fide.

The objective of the papal policy of decolonisation and indigenisation of the missions was to secure the church's future position in countries that were likely to break with Western control and seek independence. But decolonialisation necessarily resulted in the emergence of new countries, which might not fully respect the freedom of the Catholic church – that is, Roman control of the church. This was another factor that contributed to the exclusion of Propaganda Fide from the political-religious field.¹⁶³ But 'giving up' territories as soon as they had reached independence in the ecclesiastical sense was Propaganda Fide's ultimate goal. The ideal outcome of its activities was a church that was no longer Western, but indigenous and yet global and supranational. Ultimately, the success of the missions paradoxically entailed the dwindling influence of Propaganda Fide. Countries where an indigenous hierarchy was in place and where Western missionaries had therefore made themselves superfluous were theoretically no longer subject to its jurisdiction.

The red pope's influence over Vatican policy was therefore smaller in 1932 than it had been in 1918. On the other hand, ecclesiastical authority in the areas that continued to fall under Propaganda Fide was still exercised from Piazza di Spagna, where the organisation and funding of the missions were also firmly concentrated.

Although the first manuscript drafts of the groundbreaking apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* (1919) and the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926) are missing in the archive of Propaganda Fide and the Vatican Apostolic Archive, there are sufficient reasons to identify Willem van Rossum as the main author of these texts. The ideas that they

161 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 131–133.

162 De Valk, 'Le relazioni tra Propaganda Fide e Segreteria di Stato', 323–324.

163 Prudhomme, 'Pie XI Pape des missions, nouvelles archives, nouveaux regards', 91–95.

contain were derived in great part from centuries-old views and plans that constituted the heritage of the founders of Propaganda Fide as Rome's department of missions. Van Rossum succeeded in giving practical effect to many of these theoretical insights. Particularly the notion that the bonds between the missions and colonial politics had to be broken if independent indigenous churches were to be formed – churches which would of course continue to fall under the immediate control of the Holy See – proved fruitful for the formulation of a new policy.

This policy was wonderfully compatible with the concept of national self-determination propagated in early 1918 by the American president, anticipating the wave of decolonisation that materialised a few decades later. It is no wonder, then, that Smit could describe the cardinal as “a clear-eyed and powerful director”. He “oversaw the whole world and regarded all of Christendom as his field of action, not just Rome, not just the missionary territories, but also the Christian lands of Europe and America.” His “sharp insight, Dutch entrepreneurial spirit, organisational managerial talents and indefatigable energy” allowed him to break new ground.¹⁶⁴

The credit for the exceptional, intensive and successful missionary policy that resulted from this between 1918 and 1932 has gone to Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI. Van Rossum is unlikely to have been resentful of this, on the contrary: it was proof of the success of his activities as prefect. Moreover, work behind the scenes was his trademark. The fact that the two popes confirmed the importance of the missions gave Van Rossum the opportunity to take full advantage of his prefectship.

¹⁶⁴ Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 21.

Bitter struggle over missionary funding (1919–1924)

1 Missionary fundraising

Propaganda Fide was one of few Roman dicasteries that had its own income and it was reputed to be a wealthy congregation. But this does not mean that it could finance the entire missionary project across the world. Van Rossum's conviction was that, in the future, the funds required for this would have to be raised from all Catholics through a tightly organised missionary support system, as a moral obligation, like Saint Peter's Pence. He set out his plans for this in a personal memorandum which he discussed with Benedict XV during his fortnightly audience on 20 January 1919. A crucial plank in his programme was the reorganisation of the French Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi – the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (as it will be called from now on) – which was to be brought under the control of Propaganda Fide in Rome and acquire a 'truly universal' character.¹

The transfer of the headquarters of the Propagation of the Faith from France to Rome became one of the most sensational and most fiercely contested reorganisations of missionary fundraising. The struggle that it triggered raged for five years in the highest echelons of the church. Van Rossum's plans were hotly contested by the Propagation of the Faith, which felt under threat and had the support of both the French hierarchy and the French government. But the bishops of the United States also strongly opposed the move, driven like the French by national pride. They refused to accept the Propagation of the Faith when Rome tried to impose it upon them, not only because they felt that their own American fundraising methods were much more effective than the obsolete system used by the French, but particularly because they regarded Propaganda Fide's instructions as an unjustified intrusion in internal episcopal affairs.

The conflict was not just about control over missionary funds. The affair also showed that France's days in the vanguard of the missions were numbered. In post-war Europe with its many nationalist sensitivities, the defeated nations Austria and

¹ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 13–14: notes by W. van Rossum, 'Propagazione della Fede. Il lato finanziario', 16 January 1919. According to Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 96–97, Van Rossum had anticipated the massive opposition and therefore first secured Benedict XV's support. See also Vefie Poels, Hans de Valk, 'Il cardinale Willem van Rossum, Benedetto XV e la centralizzazione delle Pontificie opere missionarie a Roma (1918–1922)', in: *Benedetto XV*, vol. 1, 381–391.

Germany were no longer prepared to accept France's leadership in the Catholic missions, but neither were other countries, including the Netherlands, Spain and Italy. Moreover, the position of the 'oldest daughter of the church' was under threat from the growing influence of the American Catholic church with its deep pockets. In an attempt to escape the logic of 'he who pays the piper calls the tune', Van Rossum used his considerable power to vest financial control over the missions in the centre of Catholicity: in Propaganda Fide in Rome.

But the cardinal also encountered opposition to his plans within the curia. For Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri, it was very important not to antagonise the French any more than was strictly necessary, and to keep on friendly terms with the Americans. In addition, a full-blown power struggle was emerging between the established Congregation of Propaganda Fide and the young Sacra Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, which had been split off from Propaganda in 1917. The Orientale faced an unequal struggle against the power of Propaganda Fide, but it had the advantage of having the pope as its prefect, and Benedict XV was a strong supporter of closer relations with the Oriental churches. At stake was not only control over mission funds, but also the position and power of the Orientale.

2 The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

The Propagation of the Faith was one of the oldest and most famous mission societies; it had been founded in Lyon in 1822 by the Frenchwoman Pauline Jaricot, recently beatified to mark the bicentenary of the society. Similar organisations had been established in various places from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards to give financial and moral support to the growing group of missionaries who were departing for non-Catholic parts of the world. Comparable initiatives were the Leopoldinen-Stiftung (1828) in Austria, the Ludwig Missions-Verein (Bavaria, 1838) and the Franz-Xaverius-Verein (1841, Aachen).² But most of these initiatives happened in France: Jaricot's society was followed by the Sainte-Enfance (the Holy Childhood Association) for the redemption of, and provision of aid to, orphans in China in 1843, the Œuvre de Saint-Pierre Apôtre (Society of Saint Peter the Apostle) for the training of indigenous priests (1889) and the Œuvre Anti-esclavagiste (Anti-Slavery Society, 1890) founded by the later Cardinal Charles Lavignerie.

France's position at the forefront of the missions was also underlined by the fact that it hosted the Missions Etrangères de Paris (M. E. P.), founded as early as 1663, the first society of priests to focus exclusively on the missions, which, as such, fell under

² Zampetti, 'Le Pontificie Opere Missionarie', 420.

The Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith received in audience by Pope Pius XI, 20 March 1923. To the left of the pope stands the president, Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani; vice-president Auguste Boudinhon stands on the right. Behind Van Rossum, in the shadow, Angelo Roncalli, and behind him on the left Bernard Eras.





Propaganda Fide. In the nineteenth century, new and influential missionary congregations and institutes were added to the list, such as the Society of African Missions (1856) and Cardinal Lavigerie's White Fathers (1868) and White Sisters (1869). In a country that introduced full separation of church and state in 1905, both church and state were nonetheless very proud of their missionary achievements.

Propaganda Fide had long accepted French primacy in the missions and in fact benefited from it. Pius X had supported the Propagation of the Faith by recommending the society to all Catholics as a charitable institution in an apostolic letter of 25 March 1904.³ The Propagation of the Faith did not limit its support to French missionaries, but aspired to be a universal missionary organisation. It had spread soon after its foundation to many countries, including Belgium, the Netherlands and the United States, where general, national and diocesan directors raised funds and sent these back to France.

The board of the Propagation of the Faith consisted of two *Conseils Centraux* or central councils, in Lyon and subsequently also in Paris, in which French lay members had the decisive voice. The board determined, on the basis of letters and reports from missionaries across the world, how the funds raised should be distributed across the mission territories. The *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* (Annals of the Propagation of the Faith) – the society's periodical, which was published in multiple languages – confirm that at least until the First World War most of the money came from France. In 1903, for example, 3,508,358 francs were collected in France, followed at great distance by Alsace-Lorraine (then under German control), Germany, Italy and Belgium, which each gave only a tenth of this sum. Donors from the United States already occupied second place, with more than 460,000 francs. The total amount that year was 6,237,105 francs.⁴

The situation in the missions changed dramatically during and after the First World War. Revenues received by the Propagation of the Faith slumped disastrously, not just as a result of the war, but also because many parties involved began to advocate organising the missions along national lines, so that each nation would support its own missions, often located in its own colonies. The war had emphasised the interests the Western powers had in investing in these territories. These voices went hand in hand with criticism of the Propagation of the Faith, which was accused – perhaps wrongly⁵ – of favouritism towards the French missions. The organisation

³ ASS, 36(1903/04), 580–582.

⁴ *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 76(1904), 187–188.

⁵ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 730, f 74–91: Relazione della visita di studio fatta ai centri dell'Opera della Propagazione della Fede in Francia ed in Germania, 14 February 1922, in which Angelo Roncalli and Joseph Drehmanns concluded that the distribution was fair. But see also *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 399–400: J.M. Chabert, superior general of the Missions Africaines de Lyon, to W. van Rossum, 29 October 1920, in which he complained bitterly of the partisan, arbitrary and unprofessional way in which the »

strongly rejected these accusations and stressed that it distributed the funds equally, without taking account of national or political (and colonial) interests. As proof of its impartiality and transparency, it pointed to the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, which contained an annual ‘Compte rendu’, a worldwide overview of the take per diocese, and a ‘Détail des aumônes’ which accounted for the disbursement of the funds.

Nevertheless, more and more countries were refusing to send money to the Propagation of the Faith in France. The funds raised in Spain were sent immediately to Propaganda Fide in Rome in 1918, from where they were clumsily forwarded to Lyon. Austria and Germany refused to send missionary funds to any French organisation during and after the war.⁶ Italy,⁷ the Netherlands⁸ and the United States were similarly reluctant to send money to France, preferring to send it immediately to Rome.⁹ Hostility to France and nationalist feeling were causing Catholic revenue for the universal missions to fall noticeably behind the rising income of the competing Protestant missionary societies.¹⁰

When Van Rossum went to see Benedict XV on 20 January 1919 to discuss the worrying financial state of the missions, he had a plan to turn the tide. It was clear that nationalist feeling in the post-war international political situation was causing religious and political interests to become ever more intertwined. Van Rossum

» central councils in Paris/Lyon distributed the funds among the various mission territories (which was strongly to his congregation’s disadvantage).

6 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 13–14: notes by W. van Rossum ‘Propagazione della Fede. Il lato finanziario’, 16 January 1919.

7 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 46–47: Paolo Manna to J. Drehmanns, 14 October 1919. Manna wrote that the director in Piedmont had suggested in 1917, and again in 1918, that the funds should no longer be sent to Lyon. Manna called for a radical reorganisation of the Propagation, with new headquarters in Rome: the ‘hysteria of nationalism’ had to be kept at arm’s length from missionary work.

8 KDC, ROSS, no. 82: A. Hermus to W. van Rossum, 20 February 1918. Hermus, the national director of the Propagation of the Faith in the Netherlands, asked for Van Rossum’s support – even before his appointment as prefect – to remedy the strongly declining revenue, and in response to an impassioned debate at the 1917 Dutch *Katholiekendag* (a nationwide Catholic congress) in Nijmegen on whether the missionary support campaign was intended primarily to fund the Indische Missievereniging (that is, the missions in the Dutch colonies), or the central mission societies. Among the international group of c. 150 clergy present on that occasion were the German Divine Word Missionary Friedrich Schwager and Josef Schmidlin. *Verslag van den negenden Diocesanen Katholiekendag in het bisdom 's-Hertogenbosch op zondag 23 september 1917 te Nijmegen* (Nijmegen 1917), 36–37.

9 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 22–23: Bruno Hagspiller s.v.d. to Paolo Manna, 23 May 1919. Hagspiller worked in the United States and argued that the Propagation of the Faith should be internationalised to prevent ‘missionary bankruptcy’. Hagspiller had strong links with the German missionary support campaign, particularly with F. Schwager and J. Schmidlin.

10 The argument that Protestants were more generous benefactors of the missions than Catholics was often used for propagandistic purposes, for example in the Netherlands, where reliable figures on total revenue are in fact unavailable. Both the Protestant and Catholic missionary support campaigns were much too fragmented for clear figures; there were national, regional and local campaigns and every order or congregation had its own sources of revenue.

therefore proposed that the Propagation of the Faith should be given a new, international board, to be established in Rome and appointed directly by Propaganda Fide rather than by the central councils in Lyon and Paris. A high-placed cleric was to be appointed national director in the countries where funds were raised for the missions. The moneys received would no longer be sent to Lyon or Paris, or even to Rome, but administered within the countries themselves. This was more efficient and avoided foreign exchange losses. Moreover, Van Rossum was opposed to what he regarded as a pernicious 'laicism': the laity had to be mobilised, but under the clergy's leadership. The priests who were the national directors would report to Rome about the funds collected, and the new board would then draw up a distribution plan and inform the national organisations how much to send to what country. This centralised the work in Rome while sparing nationalist sensitivities by having an international board, and it clericalised the lay organisations. Van Rossum expected that it would also increase revenue.¹¹

Van Rossum noted that Benedict XV was very pleased with this plan.¹² Ten days later, the cardinal wrote to the central councils in Lyon and Paris. First, he lavished praise on them for their zeal and impartiality over the past century in raising funds for the missions. Then he outlined the problems that had resulted from the changing international political and ecclesiastical situation. These difficulties were one of the reasons why the revenue for Catholic missionary activity was much behind that of Protestant missionary societies. He then asked the board to propose ways to improve the situation.¹³

The central councils of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon and Paris were shocked. They were used to receiving compliments from Rome. The board sensed that the society was under threat, and the councils leapt to its defence. Unity and universality had always been their guiding principles, they argued. Moreover, the Propagation belonged in France, not just for historical and legal reasons, but also because this country was traditionally the largest contributor of both funds and missionaries. Ninety percent of all missionaries came from France at the beginning of

11 See also HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to A. F. Diepen, 22 October 1919, in which he says that he had been contemplating this reorganisation for more than a year: "In 100 years' time, the Society of Paris and Lyon collected half a billion fr. In the past year, the Methodists alone raised a billion fr. Our missions cannot advance. One of the greatest obstacles to helping them are Paris and Lyon." For his view of laypeople, see also Yvonne Maria Werner, *Världsvid men främmande. Den katolska kyrkan i Sverige 1873-1929* (Uppsala: 1996), 235-237.

12 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 13-14: notes by W. van Rossum, 'Propagazione della Fede. Il lato finanziario', 16 January 1919.

13 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, draft f 2-8, copy f 15-16: W. van Rossum to Conseils Centraux, 30 January 1919.

the twentieth century and two thirds of the money, the board contended.¹⁴ In his reply, Van Rossum increased the pressure by pointing again to the danger of fragmentation due to the rise of nationally organised and specialised new societies. The global missionary support campaign needed a centre that could give it the desired unity and universality, although he did not say explicitly that it should be based in Rome.¹⁵

Van Rossum's "enigmatic letters" moved the board to dispatch a delegation to Rome to consult with Propaganda Fide about these matters, which were "too complicated and too delicate to be dealt with in writing".¹⁶ A visit to Rome also gave the delegates the opportunity to defend the board's point of view and French interests – given that one of French Catholicism's most important national icons was under threat – in meetings with the pope and with Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri.

A meeting with Van Rossum took place on 29 May 1919. According to one participant who left an account, the prefect was very direct – a style the French were unaccustomed to. "He did not ask us to reform, but bluntly asked us to move the headquarters to Rome."¹⁷ The board's objections that this would severely affect French collections as well as the pope's prestige in France were dismissed by Van Rossum, who said the interests of the worldwide missions must trump national interests or French pride. Because the current revenue of the Propagation of the Faith was insufficient, Catholic efforts in the field of education were worryingly falling behind competing Protestant initiatives. Thus, Protestant missionary societies had already founded seventeen universities in China whereas the Catholics did not even have a single university. And good education was a precondition for conversion.¹⁸

The French delegates left the palace of Propaganda Fide in dejection after an hour. How could they return to France and tell French missionaries that what had been

14 *Ibid.*, f 30–31: Conseils Centraux to W. van Rossum, 12 March 1919. Van Rossum doubted this: f 39, *Notae* by W. van Rossum; *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 76(1904), 187–188. In 1903, France raised 56% of the total sum.

15 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731 f 26–27: W. van Rossum to Conseils Centraux, 29 March 1919.

16 *Ibid.*, f 33–34: Conseils Centraux to W. van Rossum, 15 April 1919; AAV, *Archivio della Nunziatura di Parigi (ANP)*, busta 386, fasc. 271 (Opera di S. Pietro Apostolo e Propagazione della Fede): G. Letourneau, parish priest of Saint-Sulpice, Paris, to "Excellence" [Bonaventura Cerretti, apostolic nuncio in Paris], 27 November 1922, with a 'Memorandum' on the negotiations between the central councils of the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy See in the years 1919–1922. G. Letourneau was a member of the central council of Paris. See also Edward John Hickey, *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Its Foundation, Organization and Success (1822–1922)*, [Washington] 1922, 12. Hickey obtained permission to consult the archive of Propaganda in Rome for this dissertation after an audience with Van Rossum; see ix–x.

17 AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 'Memorandum', 27 November 1922.

18 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 39: *Notae* by W. van Rossum; f 40–45: report of the conversation between Van Rossum and representatives of the board of the Propagation de la Foi, 29 May 1919. See also f 9–10: report of a conversation between W. van Rossum and Cardinal L.-J. Maurin of Lyon, 26 October 1919.

their proud heirloom for 97 years would be taken from them? But “the Cardinal was inflexible”, and remained so in follow-up conversations the next day. A few days later, the French delegation received a friendlier welcome from Benedict xv, and this gave them a glimmer of hope. Although the pope had let himself be influenced by Van Rossum’s arguments, he received the French delegates with benevolence. He stressed the seriousness of the situation, but promised that the issue would be studied thoroughly, and asked the French board to assist reflection by submitting a memorandum.¹⁹

In the note that the central councils sent to Benedict on 12 August 1919, they once again expressed their “pain and surprise” at their conversation with Van Rossum in May and at the disastrous measures he was planning to take. The society had been functioning very well for almost a century and they did not expect any good to come from innovation. Why would other countries be prepared to send their money to Rome but not to France? It would be “a bitter humiliation” for the French government and the French people if the society were to be brusquely removed from France and placed under Propaganda. Moreover, the board continued, by no means all mission territories fell under Propaganda Fide – a sensitive point on Piazza di Spagna. What about the Eastern churches: would they now be robbed of further mission funds?²⁰ France had a special relationship with the Eastern churches in the Near and Middle East, for instance in Lebanon, and the Propagation of the Faith substantially bankrolled these churches.²¹ In summary, the board saw no grounds for reform.

In late August 1919, Secretary of State Gasparri told the central councils on behalf of Pope Benedict xv that the Holy Father had been touched by the board’s arguments. The headquarters of the society were to remain in France and no further reforms were required. Van Rossum had been outmanoeuvred. The central councils breathed a sigh of relief: it seemed they had nothing to fear from the Dutch cardinal after all.²²

19 AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], ‘Memorandum’, 27 November 1922.

20 ASPF, Nova Series, vol. 731, f 48–58: *Mémoire* by the board of the Propagation de la Foi for Benedict xv, 12 August 1919.

21 Joseph Hajjar, *Le Vatican, la France et la Catholicisme Oriental (1878–1914)*, Paris 1979. See also AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 315, fasc. 74, f 39–40: L. Maglione to P. Gasparri, 10 July 1929.

22 AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, ‘Memorandum’, 3; ASPF, Nova Series, vol. 731, f 233–240: memorandum by the central councils of the Propagation de la Foi for W. van Rossum, 24 October 1919.

3 American support for the missions

The Catholic church in the United States was growing strongly at the beginning of the twentieth century, due among other things to nineteenth-century immigration from Ireland and Germany. Catholics of German origins were often mistrustful of the state, a legacy of the *Kulturkampf*, and were mainly ultramontane in outlook. Irish-American Catholics, by contrast, espoused a somewhat more liberal form of Catholicism, with democracy and freedom as 'quintessentially American' traits that they applied also to the church. This 'Americanism' raised suspicions of modernism and it was condemned by Leo XIII in 1899 in his apostolic letter *Testem Benevolentiae*. This condemnation resulted in greater Vatican control over the appointment of bishops and the increased influence of the apostolic delegate in the United States.²³

But none of this prevented American Catholics from gaining in self-confidence. They strove to become a significant factor in their church, and their nation's growing influence in international politics further encouraged them in this endeavour. Having themselves been a mission territory until recently (the United States fell under Propaganda Fide until the 1908 reform of the curia) and the recipients of generous support from missionary organisations such as the Propagation of the Faith, American Catholics now felt they had a task to fulfil when it came to the missions. The burgeoning wealth of their country fulfilled one of the preconditions. Cardinal James Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore and the virtual primate of the American Catholic church, took the lead in this drive.²⁴

Preparations were underway in the early twentieth century for the foundation of a special American seminary to train secular priests for the foreign missions. Following the example of the French Missions Étrangères de Paris and the British Mill Hill Missionaries, Gibbons promoted the Catholic Foreign Mission Seminary of America, which was established in Maryknoll.²⁵ Competition with Protestant Americans was an important motive, as it was in other countries at the time. At a meeting in

23 Herman H. Schwedt, 'Alte Welt gegen Neue Welt. Der Papst und der katholische Amerikanismus (1899)', in: *Antimodernismus und Modernismus in der katholischen Kirche*, 143–161; Gerald P. Fogarty, *The Vatican and the American Hierarchy from 1870 to 1965* (Stuttgart 1982; *Päpste und Papsttum*, Bd 21), 143, 193–194.

24 Willi Henkel, 'The final stage of USA Church's Development under Propaganda Fide', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/1: 1815–1972, 705–728; Hickey, *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith*, 183–184; Vefie Poels, 'Cardinal van Rossum and the American Board of Catholic Missions (1919–1924)', in: Christopher Denny, Patrick Hayes, Nicholas Rademacher (eds.), *A Realist's Church. Essays in Honor of Joseph A. Komonchak* (Maryknoll 2015), 41–60.

25 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 601, f 183–458: Erezione di un seminario negli St. Un. d'Amer. per le missioni degli infedeli. Approvazione regole; for the statutes (derived from the Missions Etrangères de Paris) see f 254–259: report by J. Walsh and Th. Price, founders of Maryknoll, 8 December 1914, for G. Gotti, prefect of Propaganda Fide.

Washington on 27 April 1912, Gibbons emphasised that only Protestants had so far benefited from the growing prestige of their country. Even well-educated Chinese people allegedly thought that the church of Rome was an insignificant denomination in the United States, and this was due to the almost complete absence of American Catholic missionaries. Gibbons believed that the United States should take an example of “little Holland”, which had sent out hundreds of missionaries. There were apparently 17,000 American priests in 1911, but only sixteen of them worked in the foreign missions.²⁶ Maryknoll was set up to change this.²⁷

At the same meeting, Gibbons decried the fact that revenue for the foreign missions was falling far behind the millions that Protestant societies were collecting for their missions. The success of individual Catholic missionaries who toured the United States for months or even a year to collect money proved that there was great fundraising potential for the Catholic church in this increasingly wealthy country. It was clear that the Propagation of the Faith was failing to tap into this optimally, even though its purpose was to allow missionaries to do their own job by relieving them of the burden of fundraising.²⁸

The Propagation of the Faith had existed in the United States since 1840, but many dioceses did not have a branch, nor were all the bishops warm supporters. It existed in the archdioceses of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, but not in Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis and San Francisco.²⁹ The national bureau of the Propagation was in New York and was led by the French priest Joseph Freri (1864–1927). Although more than one million dollars were collected in 1918,³⁰ Freri fully accepted that reorganisation was necessary to increase the take. But he claimed that the meagre results of the Propagation of the Faith’s endeavours were also due to strong internal opposition, not least from Francis Clement Kelley’s Catholic Church Extension Society.³¹

26 *Ibid.*, f 203–205: J. Gibbons to G. Gotti: Letter of Commendation for the Catholic Foreign Mission Seminary of America issued by the Most Reverend Archbishops of the United States in Council assembled, April 27, 1912.

27 *Ibid.*, f 419–425: J. Walsh to W. van Rossum, 4 and 8 June 1918. Van Rossum also supported Walsh’s endeavours to obtain permission to found the Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic; f 417–418: J. Walsh to C. Laurenti, 27 May 1918; f 426: W. van Rossum to J. Walsh, 29 July 1918 (copy); f 429: C. Laurenti to the secretary of the Congregation of Religious, 28 November 1918.

28 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 39: *Notae* by W. van Rossum, belonging to f 40–45: report of a conversation between Van Rossum and representatives of the board of the Propagation of the Faith, 29 May 1919.

29 Hickey, *The Society for the Propagation of the Faith*, 125; Archive of the Archdiocese of New York (AANY), *Personal papers of Cardinal Patrick Hayes*, 006, box Q-39, f 4: P. Hayes to W. van Rossum [12 February 1921, copy], appendix ‘The Plan of the American Board of Catholic Missions’, 25 p. including a rebuttal of all objections (documents received from Patrick Hayes, archivist of the Redemptorists in New York, 30 April 2013).

30 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 2–5: Circa il progetto del cosiddetto *American Board* per le missioni (reorganisation of the pontifical mission societies in the US, 1919–1922). Overview of funds received at the national bureau of the Propagation of the Faith in New York in 1918.

31 *Ibid.*, f 6–10: J. Freri to W. van Rossum, 2 April 1919; W. van Rossum to J. Freri, 31 May 1919.

The energetic Father Francis Kelley had founded the Extension Society in 1905 to support the home missions, strengthen the Catholic faith, help it flourish and spread it among the black and Native American communities. Kelley had the support of the archbishop of Chicago, James Edward Quigley. He established his headquarters in Chicago in 1907 and Pope Pius X recognised the society in that same year; three years later, it was elevated by papal decree to the status of a recognised institute under papal protection.³²

In August 1918, a priest called Giorgio Kalavasis, who was on a fundraising tour for the Constantinople mission, reported to the Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali that he had had a conversation with Francis Kelley in Chicago. The United States was home to a relatively large community of Eastern-rite Roman Catholics, mainly Ruthenian and Ukrainian Christians, who used to receive financial support from a range of sources, including the emperor of Austria, before the First World War.³³ Now that this source of income had fallen away, the Eastern-rite Christians were compelled to appeal to the American Catholics. The funds raised were intended both for Eastern-rite communities in the United States and in their home countries, as well as for the newly founded Orientale. Kelley told Kalavasis that three times as much could be raised in the United States for the missions than the Propagation of the Faith was collecting. But the organisation and format of the work would have to be drastically improved and the funds would have to be sent immediately to Rome instead of France. Kelley told him that his Extension Society could take on this task, but that it was encountering opposition from the Propagation of the Faith.³⁴

Kalavasis's comments were forwarded to Propaganda Fide by Enrico Benedetti, *minutante* of the Orientale. It is not known whether Van Rossum was personally apprised of the letter and of the report that Kelley sent to Pope Benedict XV two months later. In this report, Kelley gave an account of the first twelve years of the Catholic Church Extension Society's existence and announced his intention to expand its work to include the foreign missions, particularly in the American "colonies" (the Philippines and Puerto Rico).³⁵

32 Francis C. Kelley, *The Story of Extension*, Chicago 1922; James P. Gaffey, 'Bishops on the Fringe: Patrick W. Riordan of San Francisco and Francis Clement Kelley of Oklahoma City', in: G.P. Fogarty (ed.), *Patterns of Episcopal Leadership* (New York/London 1989), 185–201.

33 Fogarty (ed.), *Patterns of Episcopal Leadership*, 'Introduction', xxi–xivi.

34 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 11–12: Enrico Benedetti to Camillo Laurenti, 30 August 1918.

35 AAESS, *America III*, pos. 258, fasc. 119, f 25–31: F. Kelley to Benedict XV, 24 October 1918; report by the Extension Society, 8. The Spanish-American War had ended for Spain with the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898. Members of the curia, and particularly Spaniards – like Merry del Val – regarded the American victory over Spain as a defeat, and this made them even more hostile to 'Americanist' and liberal Catholics. See Schwedt, 'Alte Welt gegen Neue Welt', 160.

More than six months later, Kelley received a reply in the form of a letter by Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri to Archbishop George Mundelein (1872–1939) of Chicago, a past pupil of the Collegio Urbano, who had succeeded Quigley in 1915. Gasparri told Mundelein that the pope was very pleased with the Extension Society's report and encouraged the organisation to continue along the chosen path. Furthermore, the pope expressly asked whether the society might not also cast its "eyes of mercy" on the wretched Eastern churches and give them material support.³⁶

This request was further proof of Benedict xv's special interest in the Eastern churches.³⁷ The situation in the Near East had been difficult during the First World War, and trouble was only increasing due to developments in Russia. The end of support from the Habsburg empire and the removal of the tsar in Russia had fanned a great fear of Communism in the Vatican. The pope also worried about the fate of the Greek Catholic church (which was in communion with Rome) in countries such as Ukraine, Romania, Croatia, Hungary and Slovakia, where it had to continue without the protection it had traditionally received from the Habsburgs. The establishment of the Orientale, which was split off from Propaganda Fide in 1917, created a new dicastery that had the distinction of falling immediately under the pope. It permitted the Vatican to focus more effectively on its relations with the Eastern churches – both those in communion with Rome (the Eastern-rite Catholic churches) and those who were not – and their communities, who were suffering greatly as a result of the war.

The staff members of Propaganda Fide who had the Eastern churches in their portfolio were transferred to the new congregation in 1917. Its first secretary was Niccolò Marini, who had been made a cardinal the year before. One of Marini's great concerns was the young Orientale's perilous financial situation. The Eastern churches had long received support from the Propagation of the Faith and other societies, but more funds were needed for the development and work of the new congregation. It is understandable therefore that the pope especially asked the Extension Society to raise funds for the Eastern churches, even though these contravened the description of its tasks in the 1910 papal letter of recognition. The organisation was also given permission to use the papal coat of arms (the tiara with the two keys).³⁸

36 AAESS, *America III*, pos. 258, fasc. 119, f 32–33: P. Gasparri to G. Mundelein, 12 April 1919. The Vatican often asked the American bishops for funds in these years. Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 118–119 mentions that the delegate, G. Bonzano, tried to moderate the Vatican's demands: "Italians think that the American Catholic [bishops] are made of money." According to Pollard, 124–125, 136–138, the Vatican was just about able to make ends meet during the war, but was subsequently in dire straits due to the collapse of Austria-Hungary and Germany.

37 Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 195–200. See also Chapter 12.3.

38 AAESS, *America III*, pos. 258, fasc. 119, f 32–33: P. Gasparri to G. Mundelein, 12 April 1919.

Gasparri wrote to the papal chargé d'affaires in Washington, Luigi Cossio, in June 1919, asking him to remind the Extension Society through Mundelein of the collection for the Eastern churches. Gasparri emphasised that the sum raised could be sent directly to the Holy See through the apostolic delegate.³⁹ It may be doubted whether Van Rossum was aware of this correspondence, even though he was a member of the *Orientale*; subsequent developments suggest that he knew nothing about it.

In the meantime, Kelley had devised a plan for a missionary organisation in the United States for both the home and foreign missions. His proposals for an American Board of Catholic Missions were discussed by an executive committee in July 1919. The main point was that missionary fundraising activities in the United States would from then on be organised and controlled by a single committee, to be appointed by the bishops. This would end the constant appeals for funds being made to Catholics, and it would reach all Catholics, not just those along the routes of the usual fundraising tours. American Catholics were not perturbed by the amount of money requested, but by the fact that so many different organisations were all simultaneously raising funds for their own missionary purposes. The resulting inefficiencies – each organisation had its own overhead costs – was a particular source of irritation to the Americans, who prided themselves on their economic acumen and business methods.⁴⁰

Joseph Donovan, a representative of the Sodality of Saint Peter Claver for African missions, sent a report of this committee meeting to a certain 'Countess', probably Maria-Theresa Ledóchowska, the foundress of the sodality.⁴¹ Objections had been raised during the meeting against Kelley's plan to stop sending money to the Propagation of the Faith, but he had replied that there was no reason why America should behave like a French colony: the Propagation was a foreign body, used obsolete methods and was inefficient.

Kelley was not alone in criticising the way the Propagation of the Faith operated in the United States: Freri similarly believed it was too independent of the bishops, that it was lethargic, too French and too lay. He was happy, if required, to yield his position as director general of the Propagation of the Faith in the United States to an American. But he strongly opposed assimilating the organisation into the proposed American Board, which would give missionary action a national rather than a uni-

39 *Ibid.*, f 34–35: P. Gasparri to L. Cossio, 13 June 1919; L. Cossio to P. Gasparri, 5 July 1919.

40 AANY, *Personal papers of Cardinal Patrick Hayes*, 006, box Q-39, f 4: P. Hayes to W. van Rossum [12 February 1921; copy], appendix 'The Plan of the American Board of Catholic Missions', 1–4.

41 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 19–21: [J. Donovan] to 'Dear Countess' (copy), 30 July 1919. The Polish Countess Maria-Theresa Ledóchowska (1863–Rome 1922) was a sister of W. Ledóchowski, the general of the Jesuits; the prefect of Propaganda Fide, M. Ledóchowski (1896–1902), was her uncle. She was beatified in 1975.

versal character and would make it difficult to check whether the home missions were being favoured over the foreign missions.⁴²

Despite the criticism, the plan was unanimously accepted, even by Donovan, who was reluctant to go against the majority. Donovan believed that the funds which the new organisation would be able to raise for the missions might grow to as much as 20 million dollars.⁴³ Encouraged by this support, Kelley sent the plan to Van Rossum that same month, informing him that it would be discussed during the American bishops' meeting the following September.⁴⁴

Instead of replying to Kelley, Van Rossum wrote to Cardinal James Gibbons in early August to say he had been pleased to hear that the bishops would be addressing the expansion of the campaign for the foreign missions at their meeting in September 1919. He had high expectations of the extension and improved organisation of the Propagation of the Faith and explicitly asked for Gibbons's help for this. He also recommended introducing the Missionary Union of the Clergy in the United States, an organisation that had proven a great success in the Netherlands, where almost all secular and regular priests had joined.⁴⁵

But this veiled criticism of the American bishops' plans fell on deaf ears. At the instigation of Gibbons and other bishops, the American episcopal conference on 24 September 1919 established the National Catholic Welfare Council (NCWC). This Council was an advisory body, but its foundation highlighted what the historian Fogarty has called the American bishops' "theology of collegiality". At the same meeting, they set up five committees within the NCWC: for education, social action, the laity, the press and the missions.⁴⁶ The missionary committee was made up of five American bishops, including Archbishop Henry Moeller (1849–1935) of Cincinnati, a past pupil of the North American College in Rome, as the chair, and Archbishops Patrick Hayes (New York) and Dennis J. Dougherty (Philadelphia). The committee set up an executive commission of missionary experts, including both Kelley of the Extension Society and Freri of the Propagation of the Faith.

The missionary committee wrote to Giovanni Bonzano, the apostolic delegate in Washington, on 11 November 1919, proposing to establish an American Board of Catholic Missions. The new organisation's goal was to streamline and coordinate missionary support work both for the home and the foreign missions. This would make the campaign more efficient and would help to rouse enthusiasm for the

42 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 11–12: J. Freri to W. van Rossum, 9 September 1919; f 562–572: F. Kelley to W. van Rossum, 9 and 10 September 1919.

43 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 19–21: [J. Donovan] to 'Dear Countess' (copy), 30 July 1919.

44 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 24–36: F. Kelley to W. van Rossum, 28 July 1919.

45 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 62: W. van Rossum to J. Gibbons, 3 August 1919. For the Missionary Union of the Clergy, see Chapter 14.3.

46 Gerald P. Fogarty, 'Pius XI and the episcopate in the United States', in: *Achille Ratti, Pape Pie XI*, 549–550.

missions among Catholics.⁴⁷ Two days later, Bonzano forwarded the letter to Van Rossum, who had mixed feelings about the bishops' proposal.⁴⁸ He welcomed the plan to raise awareness and generosity for the missions among American Catholics, but the missionary committee's proposal was at cross purposes with his own plans. According to the proposal, the American branch of the Propagation of the Faith would be incorporated into the American Board's foreign missions section, including all its possessions and revenues.⁴⁹ The proposal would effectively put an end to the Propagation of the Faith in the United States.

Even before the curia in Rome was informed of the American bishops' proposal by Bonzano in November 1919, Van Rossum had been warned about it by the central council of the Propagation of the Faith. According to a memorandum dated 24 October 1919, the council had heard that Cardinal Gibbons had declared, partly in response to its own official Freri's criticisms of the Propagation, that Van Rossum had given the American bishops a *mandate* to arrange everything as they saw fit.⁵⁰

After consultations with Propaganda Fide in Rome, Francis Kelley had returned to the United States in the summer of 1919, and led the American bishops to believe that Van Rossum agreed with his plans.⁵¹ This is also the impression he gave in his autobiographical sketch, *The Bishop Jots It Down*. According to Kelley, the plans for the Mission Board had begun to take shape as early as 1916, when Cardinal Van Rossum asked him to promote missionary support work in America. He claimed that Van Rossum supported his plans at the time, and that he had the documents to prove it. The cardinal's volte-face in 1919, when he withdrew his support, came as a shock to the American bishops: "What had happened to cause such a change in a man whose honesty was beyond question?"⁵²

But Kelley's version of events is disputable, to say the least. Van Rossum was only appointed prefect in 1918. It is most unlikely that he would have consulted with Kelley as a member of Propaganda in 1916, if only because the United States was not in his portfolio at the time. Kelley's contention that the Vatican had given him carte

47 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 61-62: H. Moeller to G. Bonzano, 11 November 1919.

48 *Ibid.*, f 58, 64: G. Bonzano to W. van Rossum, 2 and 13 November 1919.

49 *Ibid.*, f 14-15: unsigned document, [late September 1919] on the founding of the American Board of Catholic Missions on 24 September 1919.

50 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 233-240: memorandum of the central councils of the Propagation of the Faith for W. van Rossum, 24 October 1919. See also AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, 'Memorandum', 4, which mentions the founding of the Board with the approval of "Cardinal Gibbons, authorised by Cardinal van Rossum".

51 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 19-21: [J. Donovan] to 'Dear Countess' (copy), 30 July 1919.

52 Francis Clement Kelley, *The Bishop Jots It Down. An Autobiographical Strain on Memories* (New York / London 1939), 219. Kelley conjectured that Van Rossum's presumed volte-face was due to criticism by the French.

blanche to follow through with the American plans was probably based on Gasparri's letter to Gibbons of April 1919.

Van Rossum was unpleasantly surprised by the American bishops' rapid action. Moeller's letter of 11 November 1919, which is now in the archive of Propaganda, has a marginal note in Van Rossum's hand denying that he had given any such mandate. This is also evident from his letter to Gibbons of 3 August 1919, in which he promoted the Propagation of the Faith. In a letter to Kelley in late 1919, the cardinal contested that he had ever agreed to the American bishops' plans. He had assumed that, after his letter to Gibbons, the hierarchy would not act without his approval with regard to the missions.⁵³

The French board of the Propagation of the Faith was also extremely concerned. In its letter to Van Rossum of 24 October, it pointed out the danger of precedent. The universal character of the support campaign for the missions would be in peril if various bishops' conferences were to start establishing their own organisations. And it was to be feared that they would prefer their own American missions and ignore the Roman curia. The developments in the United States did force the French councils to make one concession in their memorandum: for the first time, they proposed to set up a number of more or less independently operating 'provinces' or 'succursales' – the United States, Germany, Austria and Italy – which would report to the central councils, Propaganda Fide and the Orientale.⁵⁴

Van Rossum discussed this note a few days later with Cardinal Louis-Joseph Maurin of Lyon, who again defended the view that the Propagation of the Faith should not be transferred to Rome. This would be interpreted by the enemies of the Holy See as a hostile move against France, and it would be a slap in the face for the French, certainly given that the society's centenary was upcoming: a very bad time to rob the organisation of its crown.⁵⁵

In addition to the central councils and Maurin, Freri, too, expressed his concern at the American bishops' plans, in a confidential letter to Van Rossum. He believed everything had been prearranged by Kelley, who had been trying to gain control over the Propagation of the Faith for a long time. According to Freri – who blamed the bishops' Irish-American mentality for the events – it would be a disaster if the American branch were to fall into the hands of those unable even to provide for the home missions. Unlike the board and Maurin, Freri was in favour of internationalising the

53 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 39–40: W. van Rossum to F. Kelley, 4 December 1919 with appended memorandum by Van Rossum.

54 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 233–240: memorandum by the central councils of the Propagation of the Faith for W. van Rossum, 24 October 1919.

55 *Ibid.*, f 9–10: report of a conversation between W. van Rossum and Cardinal L.-J. Maurin of Lyon, 26 October 1919; f 262–263: L.-J. Maurin to an unknown cardinal, 18 December 1919 (copy).

board of the Propagation of the Faith and of moving it to Rome. He set out his ideas in a pamphlet published in New York in the same month, under the title *Un œuvre à réformer* ('A Society to be Reformed').⁵⁶

Van Rossum told both Freri and the central councils that he disagreed with the American plans for a merger or take-over of the Propagation of the Faith and that he would never approve them. But he reiterated that it was necessary to create a better and more efficient organisation, in "the centre of Catholicity", where, after all, the expertise and final responsibility resided.⁵⁷

4 The Propagation of the Faith's rocky road to Rome

As we have seen in a previous chapter, Van Rossum was in the meantime working on the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*, which was published in late November 1919. In this letter, the pope once again appealed to all the faithful "to be generous according to their means" by supporting the missionary organisations financially:

"The first of these is the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, an organization that has repeatedly earned the commendation of Our predecessors. In the hope that its work will be even more fruitful in the future, We recommend it to the particular attention of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. For this organization has to supply a goodly proportion of the funds needed for the missions, both the missions already established and those that will be organized in the future. We are confident that in times like these when spokesmen for erroneous doctrines are numerous and affluent, the Catholic world will not permit its own missionaries, the sowers of the seeds of truth, to go without resources."⁵⁸

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, f 369-379, 381-382: J. Freri to W. van Rossum, 20 November 1919; f 230-231, 242-254: board of the Propagation of the Faith to W. van Rossum, 6 and 24 December 1919. The shocked French board published a counter-pamphlet in response.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, f 230-231: W. van Rossum to board, 8 January 1920; f 9-10: report of a conversation between W. van Rossum and Cardinal L.-J. Maurin of Lyon, 26 October 1919; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 66-68: J. Freri to W. van Rossum, 7 January 1920.

⁵⁸ *Maximum Illud*, 453. The other auxiliary mission societies mentioned in *Maximum Illud* are the Holy Childhood Association, the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle and the Anti-Slavery Society. The Anti-Slavery Society, which worked specifically for the African missions, generated a considerable sum every year, which was distributed by Propaganda Fide among a number of male congregations that worked in Africa. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 605, f 613-622. HUA, *Archive of the Archdiocese of Utrecht*, no. 550: 'Files on the liberation of slaves, 1911-1939', shows that between 6,000 and 14,000 guilders were collected annually in the archdiocese of Utrecht during these years.

This papal appeal to all Catholics for financial support for the missions was an important step in Van Rossum's plans. The explicit reference to the Propagation of the Faith and to the task of Propaganda Fide in the reorganisation of this society was a second crucial step. But none of this had moved the society an inch closer to Rome. It was not the first time that attempts had been made to move it to Rome. Pope Gregory XVI (1831–1846) had concluded that transfer was perhaps legitimate, but not opportune: *licet, sed non expedit*, as the central councils told the pope in their memorandum.⁵⁹

The proposal to move the Propagation of the Faith to Rome appeared on the agenda of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide on 12 January 1920, a year after Van Rossum's first conversation with Benedict XV about reorganising the missionary support campaign. Appended to the dossier was almost the entire prior correspondence, both with the French board of the Propagation of the Faith and with the American bishops, as well as an overview of the number of new vicariates and prefectures apostolic since 1900, to underline the urgency. The importance of the issue was reflected in the fact that all Roman members of Propaganda attended, a rare occurrence, and that Pietro Gasparri was there too, whose task it was as secretary of state to protect good relations with France and the United States.⁶⁰

The topic was presented by Cardinal Merry del Val on the basis of a lengthy memorandum which once again listed all the arguments in favour – Van Rossum had surely had a hand in drafting this. The bottom line was that the missions needed more money if they were to expand, and various examples were given to prove this. The existing organisational structure was a hindrance to expansion because Catholics were increasingly inclined to favour their 'own' colonies and missionaries. Moreover, there was growing resistance to the role of France, particularly in countries that had lost the war. This had a detrimental effect on the organisation: only 112 of Italy's 286 dioceses had branches of the Propagation of the Faith, there were separatist tendencies and conflicts between national and diocesan representatives in the United States, and calls to move the board to Rome had been received even from a 'neutral' country like the Netherlands – where the yield of the collection was

59 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 48–58: *Mémoire* of the board of the Propagation of the Faith for Benedict XV, 12 August 1919.

60 ASPF, *Acta*, 1919, vol. 290, f 378–521: Ponzetta 20. Rafaele Merry del Val: *Relazione con sommario e nota d'archivio*, circa un progetto di riorganizzazione delle Pia Opera della Propagazione delle Fede, 12 January 1920. The discussion had originally been planned for late 1919, but was postponed until after the publication of *Maximum Illud*. The meeting was attended by Cardinals V. Vannutelli, Vico, Merry del Val, Gasparri, Van Rossum Praef., Cagliero, Camassei, Billot, Giustini, Lega, Gasquet, Marini and Giorgi.

incidentally very encouraging.⁶¹ The sums raised by the Propagation of the Faith in a century were currently being collected in a single year by Protestant missionary organisations.

Drastic measures were required to boost fundraising. The board and headquarters of the Propagation of the Faith were to be moved to Rome: that was the universal centre of Christendom and the city where the pope lived, the place where missionary expertise was concentrated. The fact that this universal missionary organisation currently operated without reference to Propaganda Fide could, in a certain sense, even be regarded as a snub to the Holy See. The Propagation of the Faith opposed and resisted the transfer. Of course, the memorandum admitted, the society had a certain say in the matter, but on the other hand it showed no signs of willingness to adopt serious reforms, not even after the pope had given them more time, during an audience with board members. Lastly, the promotion of the Missionary Union of the Clergy (*Unio Cleri pro Missionibus*) was a vital part of the plan to centralise the missionary support campaign and place it under the leadership of the clergy. This Italian initiative was ready to be rolled out worldwide and had already been launched successfully in several places outside Italy, for example in the Netherlands.⁶²

Although Van Rossum was aware that there was some opposition to his proposals, he had not expected that they would be almost unanimously rejected during the meeting on 12 January 1920. Only Merry del Val supported him;⁶³ all other cardinals voted against. According to Drehmanns, members of the central councils of Paris and Lyon – “mainly laymen, and the manner in which they operated was by no means consistent with the customary French courtesy” – had travelled to Rome to lobby the other cardinals behind Van Rossum’s back, and clearly did so very successfully.⁶⁴ “The Congregation almost unanimously decided against Cardinal Van Rossum; it requested only a few reforms. The Centre in France was kept as it was.”⁶⁵

The general congregation also determined that the faithful should be free to send their contributions for the missions to Paris/Lyon or directly to the Holy See. There had evidently been considerable debate on this subject, because Merry del Val noted that the attendees had conflicting views on the precise extent of this freedom.⁶⁶ A few days later, Gasparri revisited the issue in a memorandum to the secretary of Propaganda, Laurenti: the faithful should be free to give their contributions to whomever they wished, whether the Propagation of the Faith in France, Propaganda

61 *Ibid.*, f 525: confidential letter by A. Hermus to W. van Rossum, 21 October 1919 (in Italian translation).

62 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, printed version f 71–103, original 352–362. See Chapter 14.3.

63 On Van Rossum’s position within the College of Cardinals, see Chapter 20.3.

64 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 96–97.

65 AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922.

66 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 367–368: decisions of the general congregation, 12 January 1920.

Fide, or any other Holy See-approved society for the conversion of infidels.⁶⁷ This was a second defeat for Van Rossum, because it thwarted his plans to centralise the missionary support campaign. It also meant he could not compel the American bishops to support the Propagation of the Faith – their plan of 11 November 1919 was also discussed at the meeting.⁶⁸

The opposition that became manifest during the meeting was a huge blow for Van Rossum. Drehmanns recounted that the cardinal was so despondent afterwards that “he suggested to Msgr. Laurenti that he should resign as Prefect of Propaganda”. The decision not to move the Propagation of the Faith was approved by the pope that same day, although Drehmanns said that Benedict continued to support Van Rossum’s plan.⁶⁹

Van Rossum informed the board of the Propagation of the Faith on 21 January 1920 that the plenary meeting had judged it inopportune to move the headquarters to Rome at that point. He added that the central councils should expect that certain regions would continue as independent bodies due to national sentiment, and that some revenues would no longer go to Lyon or Paris, but directly to Rome. Van Rossum also emphasised that the Propagation of the Faith should promote the Missionary Union of the Clergy, as the pope had expressed the wish in *Maximum Illud* that this organisation should be established in every diocese in the world.⁷⁰

The central councils in France were greatly relieved. They told Van Rossum they would once again study *Maximum Illud* closely, and then they leaned back. Although Paris was willing to adopt the proposed reforms – internationalisation of the board and the appointment of high-ranking clerics as presidents –, Lyon dragged its feet. The board did not believe that Rome would forcibly impose any changes just before the centenary of the society.⁷¹

But in October 1920, when the central councils received the alarming news of the foundation of the American Board, they suddenly jolted into action to implement the reforms. An American was appointed to the board, many lay board members were replaced by clerics and two French prelates who had the confidence of the cardinals of Lyon and Paris were made presidents. The Propagation of the Faith also

67 *Ibid.*, f 340–343: P. Gasparri to C. Laurenti, 14 January 1920.

68 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 69–74: handwritten copy by Van Rossum of a letter by Propaganda Fide to the American bishops’ missionary committee, 14 February 1920.

69 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 367–368: decisions of the general congregation 12 January 1920; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 96–97. See also J. Drehmanns, ‘Herinneringen aan mgr. Roncalli nu Johannes XXIII’, in: *Familieblad voor het katholieke gezin*, 90(1958/59), 139 and 147.

70 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 68–69: W. van Rossum to the board of the Propagation of the Faith. They had already received confidential confirmation of the decisions from Cardinal V. Vannutelli. AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, ‘Memorandum’.

71 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 254: board of the Propagation of the Faith to W. van Rossum, 10 March 1920; AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, ‘Memorandum’, 5.

asked Propaganda Fide to call the Americans to order when the latter decided to appropriate the Propagation's American assets, contrary to the decisions of the general congregation of 12 January 1920.⁷²

Van Rossum had lost an important battle, but he had not lost the war. Although the headquarters of the Propagation of the Faith would remain where they were, the congregation now permitted the faithful to send contributions for the missions directly to Rome. Van Rossum began to encourage local branches of the Propagation of the Faith who were critical of the French to send their money directly to Propaganda Fide, first and foremost the American branch. A letter he received at the beginning of the new year from Cardinal William O'Connell, the archbishop of Boston, emboldened him in this strategy.⁷³ O'Connell said he was opposed to the Moeller committee's plans, which he judged "immature and too little considered". He also provided a letter of introduction for his diocesan director of the Propagation of the Faith, Joseph McGlinchey, "who has full and reliable information", which he was to convey to Van Rossum in person.⁷⁴

After his conversation with McGlinchey, Van Rossum wrote confidentially to the apostolic delegate in Washington, Giovanni Bonzano, instructing him to inform the American bishops that they could henceforth send contributions for the Propagation of the Faith immediately to Rome instead of France. He also proposed, in strict secrecy, that they should publicly endorse the transfer of the Propagation of the Faith to Rome. At the same time, he emphasised that the American bishops should act very cautiously when implementing their own plans. Propaganda Fide continued to insist on the separation between home and foreign missions and on the expansion of the Propagation of the Faith in the United States.⁷⁵

But on 31 August 1920, shortly before their next meeting in late September, the American bishops received great encouragement for their position in a letter from Cardinal Niccolò Marini, secretary of the Orientale, sent without Van Rossum's

72 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 257: board of the Propagation of the Faith to W. van Rossum, 2 December 1920; vol. 729, f 243-246: board of the Propagation of the Faith to W. van Rossum, 14 January 1921.

73 James O'Toole, 'The name that stood for Rome: William O'Connell and the Modern Episcopal Style', in: *Patterns of Episcopal Leadership*, 171-184. O'Connell is described as a spanner in the works of the American principle of collegiality. He had purportedly obtained his position through his good relations in Rome and his friendship with Merry del Val.

74 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 77-79: W. O'Connell to W. van Rossum, 5 January 1920; vol. 731, f 17: Letter of introduction by W. O'Connell to W. van Rossum, 7 January 1920.

75 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 69-76: W. van Rossum (copy) to the American bishops and to G. Bonzano with elucidations on the letter to the American bishops, both 14 February 1920; f 114: handwritten note by Van Rossum, 27 May 1920. Incidentally, Bonzano had doubts about the wisdom of Van Rossum's position vis-à-vis the American bishops, see f 141-142: G. Bonzano to W. van Rossum, 14 July 1920, and f 143-144: W. van Rossum to G. Bonzano, 17 August 1920.

knowledge. In his letter, Marini confirmed that Kelley had informed the Orientale about the proposed establishment of the American Board of Missions to concentrate and coordinate missionary support activities in the United States. Although the Orientale was as yet unaware of the Board's precise structure (and wished to be informed about this in due course), it strongly welcomed and fully supported this "inspired and providential initiative". Marini added that Archbishop Moeller could tell the other bishops that the pope was of the same view. Benedict xv had said that the Holy See left it to the bishops to determine what organisational form would best serve the growth of missionary activities within and outside their own countries, and supported and blessed their efforts.⁷⁶

Although it can be debated whether this letter truly amounted to authorisation to establish the American Board without further reference to Propaganda Fide, the American bishops interpreted it to mean exactly that. They seized the opportunity, and officially founded the American Board of Catholic Missions on 22 September 1920.

Freri informed Van Rossum that Kelley had read out Marini's letter at the meeting. Kelley also told the bishops that the pope had personally advised him that they could safely ignore Propaganda Fide's objections to the merging of the campaigns for the home and foreign missions. The bishops had gone ahead with their plans on the basis of this information.⁷⁷ Freri added that he had sent a "confidential and personal letter" of protest to many vicars and prefects apostolic in late October 1920. He called on them to object against the American bishops' inauspicious plans regarding the Mission Board, and the consequences to be expected for the Propagation of the Faith and for the addressees themselves. Freri's appeal had some success, because from the autumn of 1920 onwards, Van Rossum began to receive protests against the American plans from many superiors of mission territories.⁷⁸

Alerted by Freri, Van Rossum casually inquired from Gibbons and Bonzano on 20 November 1920 about the outcome of the American bishops' consultations concerning support for the missions, and particularly the Propagation of the Faith.⁷⁹ He received no reply from Gibbons, Bonzano, or the missionary committee.⁸⁰ Instead, on 21 December 1920 Archbishop Moeller, on behalf of the other members of the American Board of Catholic Missions, informed Benedict xv that the American

76 *Ibid.*, f 237–238: N. Marini to Henry Moeller (copy), 31 August 1920.

77 *Ibid.*, f 165–166: J. Freri to W. van Rossum, 24 September 1920; f 118: memorandum by Van Rossum on a conversation with an unidentified American prelate, 21 October 1920.

78 *Ibid.*, f 260–262: circular letter 'Lettre confidentielle et personnelle' by Msgr. Joseph Freri, representative of the Propagation of the Faith in the United States, 30 October 1920. For the protests, see f 257–411.

79 *Ibid.*, f 168: W. van Rossum to J. Gibbons, 20 November 1920; f 169: idem to G. Bonzano.

80 *Ibid.*, f 170–174: G. Bonzano to W. van Rossum, 29 December 1920. According to Bonzano, Moeller had received instructions from "a high-ranking person" in Rome that the American bishops could proceed on the path chosen. He assumed that Van Rossum knew about this.

bishops had founded the board in September. Moeller asked for the pope's blessing and for spiritual benefits, and added an exposé on the organisation and functions of the new body.⁸¹ On 1 January 1921, the *Osservatore Romano* published a lengthy article in praise of the American Board of Catholic Missions.

Three days later, after Van Rossum's first papal audience of the new year, Propaganda Fide asked the Orientale for information about the letter it had reputedly written to the American bishops approving the Mission Board.⁸² On 10 January, the Orientale sent the secretary of Propaganda, Laurenti, a copy. In a covering letter, Marini again pointed out in defence of the congregation's position that the letter reflected the pope's views. Moreover, the Orientale's approval had been *temporary*. It would become final only once all details were known and the Orientale and Propaganda had studied the case together to reach a final decision.⁸³

On 20 January 1921, Benedict xv handed Van Rossum Moeller's letter of 21 December.⁸⁴ Before the audience, Van Rossum had drafted a memorandum to outline the developments concerning the American Mission Board and the grave consequences it would have. The American bishops had simply ignored the prefect of Propaganda's instructions on how to organise the missionary support campaign, and neither they nor the delegate Bonzano had kept him informed of the steps they were taking. The letter from the Orientale had given the American hierarchy the impression that it could do as it pleased. The establishment of the American Board effectively entailed the dismantling of the Propagation of the Faith in the United States, and was a "slap in the face [for Propaganda Fide] with regard to its authority and reputation" and a disgrace for the curia in general. The affair had greatly damaged the authority of the Holy See in the eyes of the American bishops, given that two dicasteries had issued contradictory rulings. Scores of protests were now reaching Propaganda Fide, Van Rossum continued, against the effective suppression, "nationalisation" and "full impairment" of the Propagation's missionary work in America, as well as countless requests to take steps against it. As prefect, Van Rossum felt compelled to protest forcefully to the Holy Father against the course of events. He asked the pope there and then to decide that in future, no one, neither from the Orientale nor from the Secretariat of State, would be permitted to intervene in the affairs of the Propagation of the Faith without first consulting Propaganda Fide.⁸⁵

81 *Ibid.*, f 185–191: H. Moeller on behalf of the American Mission Board to Benedict xv, 21 December 1920.

82 *Ibid.*, f 197: Propaganda Fide to the secretary of the Orientale, 4 January 1921.

83 *Ibid.*, f 237–238 and f 236: Congregazione Orientale and N. Marini to C. Laurenti, 10 January 1921.

84 *Ibid.*, f 185–191: H. Moeller on behalf of the American Mission Board to Benedict xv, 21 December 1920.

The document bears the following comment: "handed to the prefect by the Holy Father at the audience of 20 January [1921]".

85 *Ibid.*, f 133–135: W. van Rossum to Benedict xv (copy).

Van Rossum was not exaggerating the unrest that had been caused. The protests against the suppression had been sparked in part by Freri's circular letter mentioned above. But the article in the *Osservatore Romano* also occasioned a barrage of protests from France, orchestrated by Alfred Baudrillart, rector of the Institut Catholique de Paris. In *L'Echo de Paris* he accused the Americans of trying to usurp France's leading role in the global missions to serve their own commercial interests. The American missionary support campaign and its missionaries were forerunners of American merchants, and would thus help to grow the influence of the United States in the world. The American attack was directed not only against the Propagation of the Faith but against France itself. He blamed this on the exceptionally strong German influence in American Catholicism – a particularly delicate subject in the light of the First World War which had only just ended.⁸⁶

In his memoirs, Kelley looked back on these accusations against “Irish and German hands more or less Americanized”. According to him, speculation had been rife in Europe about possible American ambitions to take over world trade, but this was all nonsense. It had not even occurred to the Americans and the American government to abuse religious motives such as the missions to further their secular interests: America was too big, too rich and too little interested in nationalism and colonial interests (“Are we not trying to get rid of the Philippine Islands?”) to harbour such designs. Nor did they claim leadership in the missionary support campaign. Moreover, the proposal to move the headquarters to Rome had come not from American Catholics but from Cardinal Van Rossum. “Catholics in America do not worry about the nationality of missionaries”, Kelley sneered, “unless such missionaries become more national than Catholic.” The Americans were grateful for what the French had done for the missions, and now that they themselves had more money to spend, they simply wanted to put into practice in their own way what the French had taught them.⁸⁷

Kelley's view that American Catholics were oblivious to political or church political interests is not endorsed by the American church historian Fogarty, who has written that “religious and political Americanism became inextricably intertwined” as early as the turn of the century. Liberal Catholics in particular, ‘Americanists’ or ‘modernists’ – Pius X regarded these as a single category – sought to establish contacts with likeminded groups in France, Germany and Italy to export their ideals of a more ‘collegial’ church. They had support among the curia, for instance from the Vannutelli brothers. Gasparri purportedly encouraged Gibbons, who was seen

86 *L'Echo de Paris*, 14 February 1921; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 313: J. Freri to Alexandre Guasco, 17 December 1920.

87 Kelley, *The Bishop Jots It Down*, 219–222. The United States had promised to grant the Philippines independence in 1916. It was decided in 1934 that independence would be given in ten years' time, but due to the Second World War, this was not realised until 1946.

as an important representative of this strand, to found the National Catholic Welfare Council in 1919. But the liberal camp also encountered strong opposition in the curia, particularly from a “clique” of four cardinals who, Fogarty argues, wanted to return to the politics of Pius X and feared the old Americanist spectre: Merry del Val, De Lai, Van Rossum and Pompilj.⁸⁸

The tension between a certain American sense of autonomy and docility to Rome once again took centre stage in this conflict about the American Board. The American bishops protected their own independence, including the canonical authority of diocesan bishops to organise their diocese as they saw fit. During an audience with Van Rossum in February 1921, Kelley argued that the American bishops could decide the issue of missionary fundraising themselves, as the United States was no longer subject to Propaganda Fide. Moreover, the American bishops had the approval of the Orientale, one of Rome’s two missionary congregations. But even though Kelley professed to have a great deal of respect for Van Rossum, he had to conclude after the audience that the prefect would not yield an inch.⁸⁹

At this point Archbishop Patrick J. Hayes (1867–1938) of New York had also arrived in Rome to secure approval for the American Board. It led to feverish excitement in the palace of Propaganda Fide, where Secretary Camillo Laurenti was under huge pressure to compile a file on this “very grave issue” that would be able to persuade the general congregation.⁹⁰ In a note written after a conversation he had with Hayes on 9 February 1921, Van Rossum recorded Hayes’s claim that the American bishops had been under the impression for two years that the Holy See looked favourably on their proposal (Van Rossum added: “they did not hear this from us!”). The prefect understood the Americans’ desire to operate independently from France, but greatly deplored their attempt to break away from the Propagation of the Faith, the missionary support society that united all good Catholics across the world in the great task of converting a billion pagans. Moreover, the American example would set a precedent, which would greatly harm the entire missionary support campaign.⁹¹

88 As prefect of the Congregazione Concistoriale, De Lai ultimately banned the NCWC in February 1922, at the instigation of Gibbons’s adversary William O’Connell. But due to Pius XI’s financial difficulties and his need for American support, he ultimately agreed to allow meetings of the NCWC under certain conditions. Fogarty, ‘Pius XI and the episcopate in the United States’, 552–553. Fogarty refers to John B. Sheerin, *Never Look Back. The Career and Concerns of John J. Burke* (New York 1975), 72–74, who speaks of a “clique”. Burke was the general secretary of the NCWC.

89 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 208–228: lengthy defence of the American Catholic Mission Board by F. Kelley (who was in Rome), 1 February 1921; f 249–250: F. Kelley to W. van Rossum, 2 February 1921; f 251–255: undated memorandum by Kelley concerning an audience with Van Rossum, addressed to Secretary Laurenti.

90 *Ibid.*, f 136: W. van Rossum to C. Laurenti, 23 January 1921.

91 *Ibid.*, f 416–417: memorandum by W. van Rossum on his conversation with P. Hayes, 9 February 1921.

During their meeting, Hayes assured Van Rossum that the American bishops had no desire whatsoever to act against the wishes of the Holy See or Propaganda and its prefect, and he confirmed this in writing a few days later. Once the missions had been organised under the umbrella organisation of the American Board, two subsidiary departments would be set up, one for the home missions and the other for the foreign missions. The latter department might very well be called ‘The Propagation of the Faith’, but it would have to be under the strict supervision and control of the American bishops, who understood the situation in their country best.⁹²

The American hierarchy’s request for approval of its American Board of Catholic Missions was on the agenda of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide on 21 February 1921. This time, Vincenzo Vannutelli was the rapporteur; the other cardinals in attendance, in addition to the two adversaries Van Rossum and Marini, were Vico, Cagliero, Merry del Val, Scapinelli, Lega, Gasquet and Giorgi; most of them were also members of the Orientale. In his introduction, Vannutelli condemned the American bishops for having pressed on with their plans over the express objections of Propaganda Fide.⁹³

As was to be expected, Marini came to the Americans’ defence. He argued that Vannutelli’s comments on the bishops and their sense of responsibility were excessively harsh: they were doing their best for the missions. This was why the Congregazione Orientale – at the pope’s request – had written its letter, to encourage the bishops “in accordance with their own natural competence”. Marini also defended the interests of his own congregation. It should be remembered, he said, that Propaganda was not the only stakeholder, but that the Orientale was concerned too: there were 150 million souls at stake. In further defence of his actions, Marini emphasised that the Orientale had been unaware of the details of the American hierarchy’s plans, and this in itself proved that the letter had not been motivated by animus against the Propagation of the Faith. But he did question the claim that the Propagation of the Faith’s remit was universal and that it could therefore be imposed on all bishops by the Holy See. Just like the American hierarchy, he believed that bishops had the “sacred right”, a right that “appertains *by nature* to the bishops”, to organise religious works in their dioceses as they saw fit. Rome should be very wary of antagonising them; instead, Propaganda’s view should be presented to them with *circumspection*. He admitted that the American plan, though drawn up with the best of intentions, did have a number of shortcomings and was perhaps “too national” in character. It also gave the bishops excessive freedom to decide the allocation of funds between home and foreign missions.⁹⁴

⁹² *Ibid.*, f 493–494: P. Hayes to W. van Rossum, 12 February 1921.

⁹³ ASPF, Acta, vol. 292, 1921, f 50–83: Ponzona no. 9, American Catholic Mission Board, 21 February 1921.

⁹⁴ ASPF, Nova Series, vol. 729, f 240: comments by N. Marini on the Propaganda file on the American Catholic Mission Board, 21 February 1921.

The general congregation decided that a letter would be drafted to the American hierarchy praising its zeal for the missions (this was mainly at the behest of the Orientale), while also insisting on clear separation of missionary support campaigns for the home and foreign missions, and instructing that the money collected for the foreign missions should be sent to Propaganda Fide.⁹⁵ In short, Van Rossum did not receive a mandate to compel the American bishops to accept the Propagation of the Faith, but neither was the American Board given the approval the bishops had sought.

While Van Rossum's American plans were running into trouble, he was busy in the meantime trying to find a solution for the 'French problem': the realisation of a Roman centre for missionary support work. It was clear that many branches of the Propagation of the Faith preferred to send their collections to Rome rather than to France. To facilitate this, Van Rossum worked from late 1920 onwards to establish a third central council of the Propagation of the Faith, in Rome, which would be directly dependent on Propaganda Fide. According to Drehmanns, Benedict xv actively supported this diplomatic solution after the general congregation of 12 January 1920 had ended so disastrously for Van Rossum.⁹⁶

In Italy, the Propagation of the Faith or *Propagazione della Fede* had branches in fewer than half of the country's dioceses. While the Missionary Union of the Clergy (*Unio Cleri pro Missionibus*) was gradually spreading under the leadership of its secretary Paolo Manna, it was not very clear how the popularity of the Propagation of the Faith in Italy could be increased. Manna suggested that the Holy See should entrust the leadership of the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood in Italy to the Missionary Union of the Clergy, under the direct supervision of Propaganda Fide.⁹⁷ The French central councils, who faced more or less the same problem but with regard to the foundation of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in France, proposed the exact opposite: the presidents of the Propagation should be placed at the head of the Missionary Union in France.⁹⁸ Van Rossum informed them both that the proposed constructions were undesirable. The two organisations should remain separate, as the pope also believed. The Missionary Union of the Clergy "was the society of the missionary *idea*, the other one, by contrast, the society of practical realisation": the first was for ideology, the second to collect money and create favourable conditions. The first was exclusively intended for the clergy, the second was mainly for the laity.⁹⁹

95 *Ibid.*, f 418-421: decisions of the general congregation, 21 February 1921.

96 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 367-368: decisions of the general congregation, 12 January 1920; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 96-97.

97 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 582-583: P. Manna, secretary of the *Unione Missionaria per il Clero*, to W. van Rossum, 8 November 1920. Request referring to a memorandum by the chairman, G. Conforti.

98 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 259: board of the Propagation of the Faith to W. van Rossum, 2 December 1920.

99 *Ibid.*, f 271: Propaganda Fide to president of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, 18 December 1920; f 260-261: appendix with instructions by Van Rossum for the reply. See also Chapter 14.3.

Van Rossum spoke to Benedict xv about the situation on 18 November 1920, and the outcome was the decision to found a new central council of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, directly under Propaganda Fide. In consultation with the vicar of Rome, Cardinal Pompilj, who was the director of the diocesan branch of the Propagation in Rome at the time, it was decided that the leadership of the new organisation would be entrusted to an active, dedicated new official.¹⁰⁰

Van Rossum's choice was the almost forty-year-old Bergamo priest Angelo Roncalli, as he informed Roncalli's bishop Luigi Marelli on 6 December 1920.¹⁰¹ Roncalli apparently hesitated to accept – he thought he was not the right man for the post and the missionary field did not have his immediate interest – but he was persuaded on 17 December by Cardinal Andrea Ferrari, who wrote to him from his sickbed: “God’s will is crystal clear, as the ‘red’ pope is the echo of the ‘white’ pope; and both are men of God. So accept the position.”¹⁰²

The appointment was confirmed to Marelli in early January 1921. Towards the end of the month, Roncalli received a letter from Van Rossum outlining lengthy proposals for the organisation of the new central council.¹⁰³ The central council of the Propagation of the Faith for Italy was erected by decree on 1 March 1921, transforming the existing diocesan branch for the diocese of Rome into a central council. With Cardinal Pompilj’s approval, the organisation was placed directly under Propaganda Fide.¹⁰⁴ From this moment on, it was no longer necessary to send missionary funds to Paris or Lyon, but they could also be sent directly to the Italian headquarters of the Propagation. Roncalli was installed as president on 12 March, and given an office on Piazza di Spagna, on the second floor, which had previously housed the missionary museum. Van Rossum coached the young prelate, who was initially a little insecure, with written instructions and personal conversations; Roncalli was struck by Van Rossum’s cordial demeanour and his *famigliarità*. “His words truly comforted me.”¹⁰⁵

100 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 584–585: notes on papal audience by Van Rossum concerning proposals on the Unione Missionaria per il Clero and the central council of the Propagation of the Faith in Italy, 18 November 1920.

101 Angelo Roncalli, later Pope John XXIII (Bergamo 1881–Rome 1963), was the secretary of the bishop of Bergamo, G. M. Radini-Tedeschi, from 1905 to the latter’s death in 1914. Roncalli, diplomatic and discrete, distinguished himself as an army chaplain in Bergamo, did much for workers and the Catholic Partito Popolare and gave an impassioned speech at a Eucharistic Congress. Freddy Derwahl, *Johannes XXIII. Ein Leben für den Frieden* (Munich 2004), 38; Peter Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII. Pope of the Council* (London 1984), 91–112.

102 Mario Benigni, Goffredo Zanchi, *Giovanni XXIII. Biografia ufficiale a cura della diocesi di Bergamo. Presentazione di Loris Francesco Capovilla* (Milan 2000), 154.

103 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 415–430: W. van Rossum to Angelo Roncalli, 30 January 1921.

104 *Ibid.*, f 580: copy of the decree of Propaganda Fide, 1 March 1921; f 578: W. van Rossum to B. Pompilj, vicar of Rome, 18 March 1921, with the new decree appended.

105 AAESS, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 308, fasc. 35: W. van Rossum to A. Roncalli, Presidente del Consiglio Centrale per le diocesi d’Italia, 21 May 1921; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 411–414: A. Roncalli to W. van Rossum, Bergamo 28 July 1921; KDC, ROSS, no. 65: A. Roncalli to W. van Rossum, 18 June 1927, where »

The establishment of an Italian central council turned out to be a masterstroke in the plan to move the Propagation of the Faith to Rome. The decision was widely applauded, except in France.¹⁰⁶ After the worrying news from the United States about the foundation of the American Board, the French central councils had just begun to reform the society in accordance with Van Rossum's wishes. The announcement that there was going to be a new Italian centre of the Propagation therefore came as a most unwelcome surprise. This decision, taken by the pope "secretly, without hearing us, without warning us, broke up our whole organisation. (...) It destroyed our Society." The central councils in France were no longer able to plan the distribution of funds, because they could not anticipate how much money would be collected. No doubt countries such as Italy and the United States would henceforth send their funds to Rome; they had already heard that Van Rossum had advised the Dutch branches to join the Italian centre. "As a consequence of this act, the headquarters had in effect moved from France to Italy."¹⁰⁷

Devastated by this turn of events, Cardinal Maurin wrote to Van Rossum asking him for an honest explanation.¹⁰⁸ In his reply, Van Rossum kept up the pretence that the competencies of the central councils were not affected, and that all that had happened was that *Maximum Illud's* call for the improvement of missionary support work had been realised, so that moneys could henceforth be sent both to Paris/Lyon and to Rome. In defence of the move Van Rossum told Maurin, "In our day, national sentiment and all the rivalry that comes with it are more vibrant and tenacious than ever." This was to be deplored, but it was a fact of life. The recent problems in the United States demonstrated the existence of these nationalist sentiments and rivalry, and other countries would surely follow soon. The missionary support campaign could only be shielded from this menace if the organisational centre was transferred to Rome. The foundress of the French society, Pauline Jaricot, had in fact anticipated this when she expressed the wish that the centre should be moved to Rome. This is why the pope was now giving the nations the freedom to choose the central organ they preferred: Rome or Paris/Lyon.¹⁰⁹

» he writes that he often remembered their first encounter, when Van Rossum's fatherly counsels had edified and encouraged him. See also Benigni, Zanchi, *Giovanni XXIII*, 153–156.

106 Even from France: ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 396–397, 401–404: A. Le Roy, superior general of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, to Le Floch, rector of the French seminary in Rome (copy), 11 May 1921.

107 AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, 'Memorandum', 6.

108 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 387: L.-J. Maurin to W. van Rossum, 23 April 1921. Many resented Maurin for having written this letter, but this was fair according to Letourneau: the clarity he asked for at the same time ended the organisation, which could not work without a budget. AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, 'Memorandum', 6.

109 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 393–394: W. van Rossum to L.-J. Maurin, 21 May 1921.

It was not long before various countries chose Rome. In April, Jan Smit, then director of the Dutch branch of the Missionary Union of the Clergy, wrote that he “was sending nothing to Paris” of the excellent take from the archdiocese of Utrecht.¹¹⁰ Cardinal Francis Bourne of Westminster similarly supported the new construction, although he did feel that the French deserved some consideration for the great work they had done in the past. He advocated giving France a place of honour, particularly in view of the centenary of the Propagation of the Faith in 1922.¹¹¹

Van Rossum wrote to Archbishop Moeller on 31 March 1921 to tell him that the newly established Roman central council of the Propagation of the Faith would henceforth be responsible for the American branch, so that they no longer had to send their funds to France.¹¹² He then asked Bonzano and O’Connell to urge the American hierarchy to respect the decisions of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide of 21 February 1921 during its upcoming meeting in September.¹¹³

But the American bishops refused to abandon their original plan. It is evident from a previous letter by Patrick Hayes to Van Rossum that they were well aware of the opposing views of the two ‘missionary congregations’ in Rome, and were trying to play one dicastery off against the other to further their own objectives.¹¹⁴ In a rather frank letter – at least by clerical standards – dated 24 May 1921, the chairman of the missionary committee, Moeller, said it was a “bitter disappointment” that their proposal had not received Propaganda Fide’s cordial approval. The American bishops hoped that Van Rossum would give up his opposition and ask the pope to approve the original plan in its entirety. If Rome refused, the American hierarchy threatened to stop its joint involvement in fundraising for the foreign missions and leave this to each individual bishop, which would certainly do nothing to increase revenue.¹¹⁵

The American bishops’ letter was discussed during the general congregation of Propaganda Fide on 18 July 1921. Relatively few cardinals were present, but Van Rossum had a supporter among the attendees in the former secretary of Propaganda, Camillo Laurenti, who had recently been created a cardinal. On this occasion,

110 *Ibid.*, f 467–468: J. Smit to W. van Rossum, 28 April 1921. The revenue of the collection for the Propagation in the archdiocese of Utrecht rose sharply: from over 40,000 guilders in 1918 to 80,600 in 1920.

111 *Ibid.*, f 432: Francis Bourne (Westminster) to ‘Canon Ross’, director of the British branch of the Propagation of the Faith (copy), 4 June 1921.

112 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 435: W. van Rossum to H. Moeller, 31 March 1921.

113 *Ibid.*, f 433–434: Propaganda Fide to G. Bonzano, 8 April 1921; f 437–438: W. van Rossum to W. O’Connell, 11 April 1921; f 503–504: W. O’Connell to W. van Rossum, 9 May 1921; f 440–441: G. Bonzano to W. van Rossum, 9 May 1921.

114 AANY, *Personal papers of Cardinal Patrick Hayes*, 006, box Q-39, f 4: P. Hayes to W. van Rossum, [12 February 1921; copy], appendix ‘The Plan of the American Board of Catholic Missions’, 5–6.

115 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 505–506: H. Moeller to W. van Rossum, 24 May 1921.

Moeller's and his colleagues' attitude found fewer defenders.¹¹⁶ It was observed that the obstinate American ordinaries failed to understand that the Propagation of the Faith was universal and that they must not withdraw from it. With the pope's approval, it was decided to send a circular letter to the American hierarchy asking it to reconsider its position.¹¹⁷

But when the bishops met in September 1921, a huge majority of them rejected Propaganda's proposals and instructions concerning the Mission Board, for the third time.¹¹⁸ The Propagation of the Faith therefore received no funds from the United States in 1921.¹¹⁹ In October, Moeller again urgently asked Benedict XV, on behalf of the American hierarchy, to approve the Mission Board according to its original plan. Moeller informed Van Rossum of his request in a brief, formal letter.¹²⁰

The matter of the American Board of Missions came before the general congregation of Propaganda Fide for the third time in a year, introduced by Vannutelli. Some attendees were clearly having second thoughts, because the cardinals present on 5 December 1921 discussed whether some concession should not be made to the American bishops.¹²¹ Under certain conditions – primarily that the share of the revenue to be given to Propaganda for the foreign missions was to be fixed in advance –, they were prepared to grant temporary approval for seven years, and this is the decision that was conveyed to Moeller two weeks later. The American bishops' obstinacy was finally appearing to pay dividends.¹²²

In his reply of 6 February 1922 – the day Pius XI was elected – Archbishop Moeller struck an upbeat note. He proposed splitting the annual revenue for the home and foreign missions on a fifty-fifty basis, on the understanding that the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other places where “the American flag flies” would be regarded as home missions, as would the cost of training missionaries. Any residual funds originally destined for the home missions would similarly go to the foreign missions.¹²³

116 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 292, 1921, f 241–247: Ponzona no. 23. V. Vannutelli, 18 July 1921; the meeting was attended by Vannutelli, Vico, Van Rossum praef., Scapinelli, Marini, Giorgi and Laurenti.

117 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 515–516, 518–519: Propaganda Fide to H. Moeller, July 1921; f 427–430: circular letter from Propaganda Fide to all ordinaries in the United States, 1 August 1921.

118 *Ibid.*, f 540–541: W. O'Connell to W. van Rossum, 2 October 1921; f 554–555: W. O'Connell, president of the bishops' conference, to Benedict XV, 3 October 1921.

119 This led immediately to a concerned letter by six superiors general or procurators of French mission congregations to the prefect of Propaganda Fide: ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 681, f 556–557, 28 November 1921.

120 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 600–601: H. Moeller to Benedict XV, October 1921; f 598: H. Moeller to W. van Rossum, October 1921.

121 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 292, 1921, f 349–355: Ponzona 33, Relazione con sommario V. Vannutelli, 5 December 1921; the meeting was attended by Vannutelli, Vico, Merry del Val, Van Rossum praef., Scapinelli, Billot, Lega, Gasquet, Giorgi and Laurenti. NB Marini did not attend.

122 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 556–557: Propaganda Fide to H. Moeller, 16 December 1921.

123 *Ibid.*, f 606–607: H. Moeller to W. van Rossum, 6 February 1922.

But this proposal was unacceptable to Van Rossum. He regarded it as a dangerous principle to designate missionary territories outside America, but under American suzerainty (such as the Philippines), as ‘domestic’. This was to bring in the national principle through the back door. Such territories would then be removed from the influence of Propaganda, and there was the risk that ‘national’ missions would be favoured over other missions. He also disagreed with the allocation key: fifty per cent for the foreign missions was too little; it would have to be two thirds or three fifths.¹²⁴ The secretary of Propaganda, Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, communicated these objects to Archbishop James Dougherty of Philadelphia, a member of the American Mission Board, during a meeting on 4 March 1922. Dougherty denied that the American hierarchy was motivated by any form of nationalism.¹²⁵

5 The *motu proprio Romanorum Pontificum*

In the meantime, the central councils of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon and Paris had decided to cut their losses. Rather than allowing their society to pass tacitly, and therefore ingloriously, into the hands of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Maurin, the presidents and a lay member of the council decided to come to Rome for an audience with the pope and a meeting with the prefect of Propaganda on 27 October 1921. Maurin told Benedict xv that they acquiesced in the Holy See’s repeatedly expressed wish to move the headquarters of the Propagation to Rome. But they asked for a place of honour for France in the new organisation. The pope suggested that the festive double jubilee of 1922 – the centenary of the Propagation of the Faith and the tercentenary of Propaganda Fide – could be used to dress up the transition as a *transito glorioso*. Van Rossum noted that all appeared satisfied and that the board members had even “spontaneously” acknowledged that the society was operating suboptimally in some French dioceses and that the funds had not always been impartially distributed in the past.¹²⁶

Shortly afterwards, at the prefect’s request, Angelo Roncalli and Joseph Drehmanns, who had joined the board of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle on 17 June

124 *Ibid.*, f 614–615: notes by W. van Rossum, 28 February 1922, appended to the letter by Moeller of 6 February 1922.

125 *Ibid.*, f 615: note on a conversation between P. Fumasoni-Biondi and James Dougherty, 4 March 1922. See also ENK, ANPR, no. 7695: Edward Jones and E. McCarthy of the Chinese Mission Society to J. Drehmanns, Detroit 20 August 1923. They pointed out that there was no agreement among the bishops themselves. Many supported Van Rossum; the great obstructionists were Kelley and Dougherty, who allegedly fed wrong information to the apostolic delegate Bonzano.

126 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 291–292: memorandum by W. van Rossum on the conversation with the presidents of the central councils in Paris and Lyon and a lay member, 27 October 1921. See also AAV, ANP, b. 386, fasc. 271: G. Letourneau to [B. Cerretti], 27 November 1922, ‘Memorandum’, 6–7.

1920, left together for a study trip to France (Lyon and Paris), Germany (Aachen and Munich), Belgium and the Netherlands. Their goal was to inspect missionary support work there and write a report in preparation for the reorganisation and transfer of the Propagation of the Faith headquarters to Rome. Their journey lasted from 17 December 1921 to 8 January 1922 and they spent Christmas in the Redemptorist house in Wittem.¹²⁷

In their lengthy report, Roncalli and Drehmanns wrote that they had been received politely everywhere, that they had been able to speak to many people who were immediately or indirectly involved, including the cardinals of Lyon, Paris, Cologne and Munich. They had been given unimpeded access to the books and the archives. Their inquiry had revealed that the often-repeated complaints about the Propagation of the Faith's preference for 'French' missionary causes were unfounded: the distribution truly had been impartial. But this did not mean a transfer was not necessary, and all were now convinced of this. The two visitors contended that particular consideration should be given to France in the transfer, because the sacrifice required of the French was great, even heroic, given their notoriously fervent sense of honour – *amor proprio*.¹²⁸

Just as the French central councils were consulting with each other on how to present the transfer in an acceptable manner in a draft letter to Benedict xv, the pope died.¹²⁹ The ensuing conclave elected Achille Ratti on 6 February 1922. The presidents of the Propagation of the Faith, Henri Odelin in Paris and Emmanuel Béchetoille in Lyon, wrote to the new pope, Pius xi, on 3 March 1922 reminding him that the Propagation of the Faith, “whose cradle France had had the honour of hosting”, would soon be one hundred years old. The little seed had grown into a mighty tree whose branches covered the whole world. But as the situation in the world had recently changed radically due to national sensitivities, as Cardinal Van Rossum had explained to Cardinal Maurin on 21 May 1921, it was clear that the centre of this society should be in Rome rather than Paris. Benedict xv had supported this view. Therefore, “from the bottom of our heart” and “without the slightest reservation”,

127 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 730, f 74–91: Relazione della visita di studio fatta ai centri dell'Opera della Propagazione della Fede in Francia ed in Germania, 14 February 1922, by A. Roncalli and J. Drehmanns.

See Chapter 19 on the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle and Drehmanns's role. He later implied that the central councils were not yet aware during their visit that the decision on the transfer had already been taken. Drehmanns, 'Herinneringen aan mgr. Roncalli – paus Joannes XXIII', 139 and 147. See also Stefano Trinchese, 'La missione Roncalli-Drehmanns presso le sedi francesi e tedesche delle opere missionarie (1921)', in: *Benedetto xv*, vol. 1, 392–406; Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, 104–105; Benigni, Zanchi, *Giovanni XXIII*, 163–171; KDC, ROSS, no. 124: A. Roncalli to J. Drehmanns, 21 May 1934.

128 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 730, f 74–91: Relazione della visita di studio, 14 February 1922, by A. Roncalli and J. Drehmanns.

129 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 293–294: E. Béchetoille, president of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon, to J. Drehmanns, 24 January 1922.

they agreed to move the headquarters to Rome. In the appended list of suggestions, they asked for a special place for France; for example, they proposed that one of the two presidents of the French central councils should become vice president of the central council in Rome, and that French, as “the ancient language of diplomacy”, should remain an official language alongside Latin and Italian.¹³⁰

Under cover of a handwritten letter, Pius XI forwarded these documents from the French presidents to Van Rossum so that Propaganda could write a draft reply which would praise the board for its “generous docility”. Propaganda was instructed to consider the suggestions benevolently, though of course the interests of the missions must always come first.¹³¹ Van Rossum subsequently sent the pope a draft reply, as well as a draft pontifical decree to enact the transfer of the society to Rome. He suggested dating the document 3 May 1922, the anniversary of the Propagation of the Faith: a gesture that the French would surely appreciate.¹³²

The prefect then wrote a letter to the cardinals of Propaganda Fide. They had judged it inopportune in January 1920 to move the centre of the Propagation of the Faith to Rome, but reflection in France had since “matured”, and the French board had now expressed its willingness to move the society to Rome, thus “yielding to the wishes of the Holy See”.¹³³

The *motu proprio Romanorum Pontificum* appeared on 3 May 1922. Its main message was that the headquarters of the Propagation of the Faith were being moved to Rome. The letter, together with guidelines for the establishment of the society in all dioceses and the statutes, was published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.¹³⁴

The third centenary of Propaganda Fide was marked by a great international mission congress organised by the Missionary Union of the Clergy in the Aula Magna of the Cancellaria Apostolica from 1 to 3 June 1922, wholly in accordance with Benedict XV’s policy and missionary spirit and with *Maximum Illud*. Cardinal Camillo Laurenti presided. Among the key note speakers were Guido Maria Conforti, president of the Missionary Union, Jules Tiberghien, secretary of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, and Paolo Manna, secretary of the Missionary Union and director of the Milan Institute for Foreign Missions.¹³⁵

130 AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 308, fasc. 35, f 77–82: H. Odelin and E. Béchetoille to Pius XI, 3 March 1922.

131 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 298: Pius XI to W. van Rossum, undated [c. March 1922].

132 AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 308, fasc. 35, f 83: W. van Rossum to Pius XI, 28 April 1922; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 300–301: reply by Pius XI (draft) to the letter by the presidents of the Propagation of the Faith of 3 March 1922 (received on 29 April 1922).

133 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 731, f 303–304: W. van Rossum to the cardinal members of Propaganda, 30 April 1922.

134 *Ibid.*, f 319–324: *Motu proprio* of Pius XI on the transfer of the headquarters of the Propagation of the Faith to Rome and the reorganisation of this society, 3 May 1922; AAS, 14(1922), 8 June, 321–330.

135 AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 308, fasc. 35, f 86–88: W. van Rossum to P. Gasparri, 30 March 1922, with the request to promote the upcoming congress through an appended circular letter dated 1 April 1922; AAS, 14(1922), 198–199.

On behalf of the Propagation of the Faith in Paris and Lyon, President Béchetoille told Van Rossum that the central councils had received the decision to transfer the headquarters of their society to Rome with “unspeakable deference”. They asked the prefect to present their “eternal attachment and boundless respect”, to the pope, and said they were “forgetful of all that lies in the past”.¹³⁶

From that moment on, there was only a single central council, in Rome.¹³⁷ The president of the Consiglio Superiore Generale della Pontificia Opera della Propagazione della Fede (Superior General Council of the Pontifical Society of the Propagation of the Faith), established by Pius XI on 6 May 1922, was the secretary of Propaganda Fide, Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani. To placate the French, the French prelate Augustine Boudinhon (rector of the French national church of Saint-Louis in Rome and a former colleague of Van Rossum’s on the commission for the codification of canon law) was appointed vice president. An advisory council was made up of the directors of the national centres of the Propagation and a group of Rome-based prelates of various nationalities.¹³⁸ The general council of the Propagation of the Faith met in Rome every spring to distribute the funds, and was then received in audience by the pope. At the audience of 7 April 1924, Van Rossum expressed the hope that the moment in the future would at one point be reached where the sum of the revenues was equal to the sum of missionary needs.¹³⁹

In curial terms, the American hierarchy’s resistance could be seen as a victory for the Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, but the breakthrough with regard to the Propagation of the Faith was a humiliating defeat for this body, as Isaia Papadopoulos, assessor of the Orientale, wrote confidentially to Secretary of State Pietro Gasparri.¹⁴⁰ Papadopoulos was possibly writing at Marini’s behest, who had to resign his responsibilities around this time due to ill health.¹⁴¹ The assessor of the Orientale said he believed that Cardinal Van Rossum had deliberately attempted to exclude the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. The fact that the Orientale had barely received

136 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 730, f 33–34: E. Béchetoille to W. van Rossum, 9 and 10 June 1922.

137 The Italian government also took an interest in the transfer to Rome. See *Documenti (I) diplomatici italiani. Settima serie 1922–1935*, vol. 2, 281–283: R. Avezza, Italian ambassador in Paris to B. Mussolini, first minister and minister of Foreign Affairs, 10 October 1923, in which he points out that it would increase the influence of Propaganda Fide (“the great colonial empire of the Church”). As the Italian members of this congregation had a decisive voice (even though the prefect was a Dutchman), Italy, like France previously, could pursue a “policy of penetration” in various places through the missions.

138 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 867, f 2–11. For the first members, see *Annuario Pontificio* 1923, 700; 1924, 417.

139 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 868, f 457: W. van Rossum to Pius XI, 6 April 1924.

140 AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 315, fasc. 74, f 19–22: confidential letter from Isaia Papadopoulos, assessor of the Orientale, to Pietro Gasparri, 4 May 1922.

141 *Sacra (La) Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali. Nel Cinquantesimo della fondazione (1917–1967)* (Rome 1969), 83–84, 98–99.



Meeting of the Central Council of the Propagation of the Faith, 1932

a mention in *Maximum Illud* had been brought to the attention of Pope Benedict XV, who had responded with dismay and surprise; this detail had obviously escaped his attention. Also, it was telling that the *Oriente's* letter of praise for the American bishops had angered the prefect of Propaganda Fide. The *Oriente* had written this letter in August 1920 after consulting the Holy Father and with Gasparri's permission, to encourage the Americans in their work for the foreign missions, both Latin and Oriental. Van Rossum had reacted as if this were some kind of undue interference, and had more or less claimed that anything to do with the organisation of missionary support work was the exclusive remit of Propaganda Fide. Attempts to convince this cardinal – whose zeal and good intentions were not in question, Papadopoulos added – that the *Oriente* had as much of a say had been unsuccessful.

The assessor went on to say that the exclusion of Oriental priests from receiving support from the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle was further evidence of the exclu-

sion of the Orientale, as were the new rules of the Propagation of the Faith, which made this society wholly dependent on Propaganda Fide. The Orientale was being shut out. Surely this could not be what *Maximum Illud* had intended? The Orientale, too, had real missions that were working for the conversion of millions of what were in the common Catholic parlance of the time called schismatics. But its missions and institutes were now barred from receiving any donation, regardless from what country the money came. And yet the faithful who had donated to the missions had not themselves stipulated whether it should be spent on pagans or schismatics, on the Oriental or the Latin rite. The schismatics were already much neglected and regarded as “illegitimate sons”.

Moreover, Papadopoulos argued, even if there were some moral and legal justification for excluding the Eastern churches, this still left the Holy See and the Holy Father personally with a huge financial problem. In the past, the Propagation of the Faith had supported Eastern seminaries, missions and dioceses to the tune of 1 million francs a year; almost half the Orientale’s total income.¹⁴² An important part of this sum came from the United States.¹⁴³ The new situation robbed the congregation of much of its revenue, at the very time that there was such a great need to promote the true faith in the East, especially in Russia. The assessor did not even wish to mention the millions required to resurrect the missions destroyed by the Turks, for instance in Bulgaria, the Caucasus, Albania, Serbia, et cetera, while the abundantly endowed Protestant societies were working hard to establish contacts with the schismatic peoples and their bishops.

Papadopoulos conceded that Van Rossum was prepared to support the Eastern churches. To reassure the Holy Father, the prefect had promised two years ago that Propaganda Fide would place the Propagation of the Faith’s entire income at the Holy Father’s disposal every year. He could then decide how much to earmark for the Orientale, and the remainder would be for Propaganda Fide. But this system was not suitable for the Orientale, Papadopoulos argued, nor for the Holy Father. It was delicate and arbitrary, and Benedict xv personally was uncomfortable about asking for specific sums of money. Moreover, it remained to be seen how the Orientale would fare under such a system under Benedict’s successors – specifically Pius xi.

We can conclude that Van Rossum’s objective was not – just – to gain control over the funds, but also to establish Propaganda Fide as the undisputed and sole coordi-

¹⁴² In addition, the Propagation directly sent the pope 150,000 francs for the Eastern churches, a sum distributed by the Secretariat of State partly for extraordinary expenses. The costs – half a million – of the Oriental Institute must be added to this; the total came to at least 2 million lire a year.

AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 315, fasc. 74, f 19–22: confidential letter from Isaia Papadopoulos to Pietro Gasparri, 4 May 1922.

¹⁴³ KDC, ROSS, no. 212: J. F. McGlinchey to J. Drehmanns, 4 May 1922.

nating Vatican department for all missionary affairs. This contributed to centralisation and counteracted fragmentation of missionary activities. But his goal was also to ensure that he would not have to share any of his competencies in the missionary field: he wished to emphasise the power of Propaganda Fide vis-à-vis its young competitor the Orientale.

Even before the papal decree *Romanorum Pontificum* was published, Van Rossum had held discussions in the margins of the February 1922 conclave with the American Cardinal William O'Connell, Gibbons's successor as president of the American bishops' conference.¹⁴⁴ O'Connell professed to be a fervent supporter of the Propagation of the Faith, which was flourishing in his own diocese of Boston and which he believed had many opportunities in the United States.¹⁴⁵ In a letter to Van Rossum, written in Rome and dated 20 February 1922, he dismissed the "so-called American Board" in no uncertain terms.

O'Connell clearly wrote this letter after meeting Van Rossum. He said that Gibbons had established and staffed the Board without consulting anyone. He assured Propaganda that Gibbons's attitude did not reflect the views of the American bishops as a body. Most bishops had heard from a reliable authority – he did not say who – that "the Holy Father favours our procedure and not that of the Congregation of Propaganda". O'Connell regarded this as a very serious matter, liable to undermine the authority of the Roman curia. Where would it end if a small group of American bishops could arrogate the highest authority to themselves and enlist the support of "Roman prelates who pretend to know the Pope's mind better than the Roman Congregations"? The Holy See should act decisively to restore its authority. The true Catholic faith should be presented as superior to nationalism and political motives, both in America and elsewhere. Everyone should know that Propaganda Fide was the only Roman authority when it came to the missions.¹⁴⁶

144 Fogarty, 'Pius XI and the Episcopate in the United States', 549–553. O'Connell and Dougherty arrived in Rome too late for the conclave because the *camerlengo*, Gasparri, had decided not to wait for them.

145 *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 92(1920), 156–160 and 93(1921), 156–157, shows a very varied picture of revenues from several large archdioceses, which reflect the local ordinary's approval or disapproval of the Vatican policy. Baltimore (Gibbons) collected c. 88,000 francs in 1919, Boston (O'Connell) 145,000, Chicago (Mundelein) 133,000, Cincinnati (Moeller) 1,048,000, New York (Hayes) 1,675,000, and Philadelphia (Dougherty) 725,000. Together, these dioceses contributed more than half of the total sum raised in the United States (7,274,272 francs). The following year, the United States gave more than 10 million francs, one fifth of which (2,145,000 francs) on this occasion came from Boston, 2 million francs more than the year before. Cincinnati, by contrast, almost decimated its contribution, now 135,000 francs.

146 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 607–610: William O'Connell to W. van Rossum, Rome 20 February 1922 (Italian translation f 611–613).

O'Connell's letter – translated into Italian – had the desired effect on the general congregation of Propaganda Fide held on 10 April 1922. Various passages from it were italicised in the printed version, and the sentence “spurred on and supported in this by Roman prelates who pretend to know the Pope's mind better than the Congregations” was marked with exclamation and question marks in the copy that is now in the archive of Propaganda Fide.¹⁴⁷ The meeting decided to maintain the decisions of 5 December 1921, with the proviso that half of the revenue should be given to Propaganda, to be used at its own discretion, and that the money for ‘home’ missions outside America (such as the Philippines) should also be sent to Propaganda.¹⁴⁸

Moeller again opposed this decision, but he no longer had the support of his brother bishops during their meeting in September of that year.¹⁴⁹ O'Connell told Van Rossum in a letter of 7 October 1922 that, despite the hostility of the “4 or 5 leaders of the opposition against me, you and Rome”, a good spirit had been evident at this meeting. As president of the bishops' conference, he had criticised Moeller's tactics and now the bishops were unanimously prepared to follow the “true and good way”, the way suggested by Rome. All in all, O'Connell continued, it was a huge “triumph for Propaganda Fide and for Rome!”¹⁵⁰

In his capacity as chair of the missionary committee, Moeller informed Pius XI on 14 November 1922 that the American bishops had unanimously decided on 27 September to yield to Van Rossum's desire that there should be a separate collection for the home and foreign missions, and that the Society of the Propagation of the Faith should be established in every diocese in the manner that Propaganda Fide preferred. Although the bishops heartily deplored the fact that their original, well-intentioned plans had not received Rome's “most cordial approval”, they accepted the facts.¹⁵¹ Van Rossum then wasted no time. On 30 November 1922, he sent a circular letter to the American ordinaries instructing them to establish the Society of the Propagation of the Faith in their dioceses as described in *Romanorum Pontificum*.¹⁵² To expedite the imple-

147 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 293, 1922, f 181–188: Ponzona 19, 10 April 1922, Laurenti. Relazione circa la definitiva decisione a riguardo dell' American Board (NB the word ‘definitiva’ has been crossed out in the hand-written decision). The meeting was attended by Laurenti (who acted as rapporteur), Marini, Vico, Cagliero, Van Rossum, Scapinelli, Billot, Lega, Gasquet and Giorgi.

148 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 624–633, 642–644: Propaganda Fide to H. Moeller (drafts and copy), 2 May 1922.

149 *Ibid.*, f 652: circular letter by Moeller to the American ordinaries, 1 September 1922. There is a note on the copy to the effect that this circular letter was presented to Pius XI by Van Rossum on 19 October 1922.

150 *Ibid.*, f 655–656: W. O'Connell to W. van Rossum, 7 October 1922, with the report of the American bishops' conference, 26–28 September 1922, appended.

151 *Ibid.*, f 667–668: H. Moeller to Pius XI, 14 November 1922.

152 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 730, f 11–16: circular letter from Propaganda to the ordinaries of the United States, 30 November 1922; vol. 729, f 658–659: drafts and copy of the circular letter with corrections in Van Rossum's hand.

mentation of the decisions, the apostolic delegate, Bonzano, who had from time to time criticised Van Rossum's policies, was recalled to Rome, and the secretary of Propaganda Fide, Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, was appointed his successor on 14 December 1922.

But Pius XI did not give Van Rossum a free hand in all respects. The Vatican feared the consequences, financial and otherwise, of the decisions that had been taken, probably also in light of Papadopoulos's letter quoted above, and preferred to keep its options open before a final arrangement was put in place.¹⁵³ In late 1922, Fumasoni-Biondi sent the file on the Mission Board to Bonzano, who was back in Rome, so that he could prepare himself for a meeting with Pius XI, who had obviously asked for this.¹⁵⁴ In early 1923, Moeller wrote optimistically to Pius XI that he had heard from Gasparri that the pope "intended to give further consideration" to the issue of the Mission Board.¹⁵⁵

However, once various outstanding issues had been settled, Pius XI ultimately embraced Van Rossum's plans. On 16 March 1923, the apostolic delegate, Fumasoni-Biondi, told Moeller that the pope had decided "for very grave reasons" that the instructions in Van Rossum's circular letter of 30 November 1922 were to be carried out.¹⁵⁶ This meant that the American bishops had to organise the support campaign for the foreign missions in their dioceses as determined by Propaganda Fide, and bring the curtain down on the American Board, whose future had seemed so bright only five years ago.¹⁵⁷

It was decided that all Catholics were to be told to enrol in the Propagation of the Faith in their home diocese for 1 dollar per year. 60% of this sum would go to the foreign missions and 40% to the home missions. The subscription fee of 1 dollar a year made Catholics full members of the Propagation of the Faith, and made them eligible for all the spiritual benefits attached to membership. Apart from this, one single national collection for the missions was to be held every year (in addition to the collection for Saint Peter's Pence), and the money collected was to be divided according to the same distribution key. The American William Quinn was appointed national director.¹⁵⁸ The arrangement also provided funding for the Orientale: 10% of the part intended for the foreign missions would go to the Eastern churches (and Russia). This was slightly

153 AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 315, fasc. 74, f 23–24: Isaia Papadopoulos to Pietro Gasparri, 5 May 1922, in which he writes that he was awaiting Gasparri's instructions after the latter's consultation with Pius XI on the difficult predicament of the Orientale.

154 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 729, f 671: note by P. Fumasoni-Biondi, 18 December 1922.

155 *Ibid.*, f 673–677: H. Moeller to Pius XI, 18 January and 13 March 1923.

156 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 867, f 193–194: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to H. Moeller, 16 March 1923.

157 *Ibid.*, f 191–192: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to W. van Rossum, 19 March 1923 (a copy of the letter was sent to Secretary of State Gasparri). Nonetheless, even as late as November 1923 Freri mentioned most bishops' refusal to organise the Propagation in their diocese: f 515–521, J. Freri to W. van Rossum, 15 November 1923.

158 Freri returned to France in 1925, and was made a bishop *in partibus* in recognition of his services. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 868, f 143: W. van Rossum to J. Freri, 10 April 1924; f 589–590: William Quinn, director general of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, to W. van Rossum, 30 January 1925.

more favourable for Propaganda Fide than for the Orientale, given that the schismatics numbered 150 million as opposed to 1 billion pagans. The sum destined for the Eastern churches was given to the apostolic delegate in the United States, who then sent it to the pope or the Orientale. At least for a while, this arrangement brought calm to the missionary support campaign and restored peace between the Vatican's two missionary departments.¹⁵⁹ According to an enthusiastic McGlinchey, the diocesan director of the Propagation of the Faith in Boston, the missionary support campaign could now finally begin to flourish: "the sky is the limit to our ambitions in this splendid cause".¹⁶⁰

In his letter to the American hierarchy, Fumasoni-Biondi emphasised that the fact that this arrangement was being imposed upon them did not mean that the pope lacked confidence in them. On the contrary, Pius XI had addressed "words of unlimited confidence and profound gratitude" to them.¹⁶¹ The fact that Archbishops George Mundelein and Patrick Hayes were created cardinals in the spring of 1924 was no doubt a sign of papal gratitude, particularly for the financial munificence of the Americans.¹⁶² For the first time, the United States had four cardinals. Rumour had it that Pius XI's desire to keep on the right side of the American bishops also inspired him to change the rules for papal elections, so that a future conclave would not begin until the American cardinals had arrived. O'Connell and Dougherty had missed the 1922 conclave because they had arrived too late.¹⁶³

6 Persevering to the end

The topic of the missionary support campaign appeared on the agenda of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide five times in five years. The matter at stake was Cardinal Van Rossum's plan to create a single, worldwide headquarters for the funding

159 *Ibid.*, f 288-289: P. Fumasoni-Biondi, delegate in Washington, to W. van Rossum, 22 May 1924; f 291-292: W. van Rossum to P. Fumasoni-Biondi, 21 June 1924. The arrangements were accepted at the American bishops' conference of September 1924, f 430-432: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to W. van Rossum, 11 October 1924.

160 KDC, ROSS, no. 212: J.F. McGlinchey to J. Drehmanns, 3 May 1924. In late 1924, Fumasoni-Biondi was able to send to American bishops a letter confirming that the pope and Van Rossum had approved the proposal for organisation adopted by the bishops' conference of September 1924. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 868, f 430-432: note by Van Rossum dated 7 November 1924, on a letter by Fumasoni-Biondi dated 11 October 1924, stating that the pope agreed; f 450-452: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to W. van Rossum, 11 December 1924.

161 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 867, f 193-194: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to H. Moeller, 16 March 1923.

162 Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 132-133. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 868, f 145-146: W. van Rossum to P. Fumasoni-Biondi, 15 April 1924. Van Rossum said that meetings had been held with Mundelein and Hayes to draw up a draft plan; see also Fogarty, 'Pius XI and the Episcopate in the United States', 552-555.

163 Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 136-138.

of missionary work in Rome, in the heart of the universal church, under the immediate supervision of Propaganda Fide. Priests would lead the national, diocesan and parish branches. Van Rossum chose not to create an entirely new organisation, but to take the most successful existing organisation that operated internationally, the Propagation of the Faith, and reshape it according to his ideas.

This provoked a surge of resistance, first and foremost within the Propagation of the Faith itself, which had been the pride and joy of the French nation with regard to the missions for almost a century. But the American bishops, eager to take a leading position within the Catholic church, were no more inclined to subject their own plans for their missionary campaign to Propaganda Fide. Van Rossum also encountered a great deal of opposition from within the curia. One important objective of the Secretary of State, Gasparri, was to prevent antagonising the French and the Americans. And the Orientale resisted Van Rossum's plans because they would have closed off its access to the funds collected by the Propagation.

The diverging interests of the French, the Americans and the Orientale were all played out during the sessions of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide. On more than one occasion, Van Rossum had to persuade the pope, Gasparri and his fellow cardinals that his plans were opportune. The opposition was so strong on one occasion that he considered resigning. But he persevered, with stoic stubbornness his most important instrument rather than tact or compromise. His lack of empathy went hand in hand with a strong belief in the correctness of his own actions. No one doubted his integrity, his commitment to the missions and his 'sanctity', but his judgement, flexibility and insight were often questioned. One of his American adversaries, Francis C. Kelley, was confronted with Van Rossum's repressed anger – "Once he shook his finger – only politeness made it the finger and not the fist – at me" –, and was amazed at his refusal to negotiate: "Italian tact, Italian caution, Italian tradition would have been helpful to him. Cardinal Van Rossum was no diplomat. He was a good man but stubborn. He did not understand how anyone, anywhere, could see the smallest flaw in what he thought flawless."¹⁶⁴

Ultimately, towards the end of 1924, Van Rossum got what he wanted. The Propagation of the Faith, as the 'universal mission society', was no longer headquartered in France but in Rome. The pope had ordained that the society should be established in every country, diocese and parish in the world, even in the refractory United States. Furthermore, this society was now under the direct control of Propaganda Fide, despite protests by the Orientale, and its revenue was intended primarily for

¹⁶⁴ Kelley, *The Bishop Jots It Down*, 218: "Once I left his room with the determination that I would never again set foot in it. But I said that he was a saintly man; so I did come back into that very room by his invitation and there found the same hand extended in cordial greeting. 'You must know, Monsignor', he said, 'that infallibility does not adhere to the cardinalate!'"

the mission territories that fell under Propaganda. It had been clericalised and its board internationalised. In this manner, any national and colonial-political motives for missionary support campaigns were thoroughly subordinated to the objectives of the Holy See. In addition to the Propagation, other missionary organisations could now be expanded, but in a strictly secondary capacity; ‘auxiliary societies’ such as the Holy Childhood and the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, or other campaigns for specific mission territories. Such campaigns were encouraged, but only once the Propagation had been properly organised as the main society. Despite his previous criticism, Kelley ultimately concluded, “Let it be admitted, however, that his plans were in the main excellent (...) Unhesitatingly I record the fact that it is chiefly to Cardinal Van Rossum that the credit should go for the most enlightened and progressive step made in centuries for the advancement of the Catholic missions of the world.”¹⁶⁵

But the Orientale had one last surprise in store: in early 1925, it recruited the most important man in the Propagation in Italy from under Van Rossum’s nose: the new secretary of the Orientale, Giovanni Tacci, managed to convince Pope Pius XI that Angelo Roncalli should become apostolic visitor in Bulgaria.¹⁶⁶

This whole history concerning the Propagation of the Faith shows that Van Rossum strove to make Propaganda Fide the undisputed and sole coordinating dicastery when it came to the missions, recognised as such by all, both within and outside the curia. This was a great boost to the Holy See’s policy of centralising the Catholic church. This comprehensive centralisation and concentration of power also had a dark side. Peter Hebblethwaite has called the 1922 *motu proprio* an “unashamedly centralising document which transferred the headquarters of missionary work from France to Rome”.¹⁶⁷ The ‘red pope’ already had the power to appoint missionary bishops in territories he had never personally set foot in, using procedures that seemed arcane to the outside world. Now the power to use the funds of the Propagation of the Faith to initiate projects and discipline bishops in poorer countries was also concentrated on Piazza di Spagna. This inevitably meant a certain loss of local and regional independence and episcopal freedom.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁶⁶ Benigni, Zanchi, *Giovanni XXIII*, 170–173: Gasparri summoned Roncalli on 17 February 1925, Roncalli noted in his journal, to tell him he had been appointed apostolic visitor to Bulgaria. He wrote to Van Rossum on 23 February 1925 that he had shed many tears the night after meeting Gasparri, but had nonetheless accepted in obedience: *Fiat voluntas Dei*. Roncalli was succeeded by Luigi Drago.

¹⁶⁷ Hebblethwaite, *John XXIII*, 106.

Apostolic journeys to Protestant lands

1 Cardinal globetrotter

When Van Rossum joined the Redemptorists in 1873, he could not have foreseen that he would travel so much throughout his life. But even as prefect and rector of Wittem he was on the road a lot. There were contacts in Belgium and Germany, not only with fellow Redemptorists but also with various prelates, as his friendship with the later Cardinal Fischer of Cologne shows. After he was appointed to a post in Rome in 1895, he used the opportunity, as a fervent devotee of Mary, to visit Lourdes on his way to the Eternal City. From his new base in the generalate he travelled to various houses of the congregation in Italy, such as Cortona, and with Petrus Oomen he went to Southern Italy, where they visited places that had a connection with the Neapolitan founder, Alphonsus. Later, as a member of the general government of the Redemptorists from 1909 to 1911, he visited parts of the Habsburg Empire, Germany, France, Switzerland and Belgium.

Once he became a cardinal, Van Rossum was no longer allowed to leave Rome without the pope's approval, but this was evidently not hard to come by in the summer, because he departed almost every year during the hottest months. In September 1912, he went to Vienna as cardinal legate, and in July and August 1913 he travelled to the Netherlands for two months.¹ It was much more difficult to travel in Europe during the war, and according to the recently appointed Dutch minister to the Holy See the cardinal spent the summer of 1915 on the Italian island of Capri instead for health reasons.² In addition, he had a number of favourite summer destinations closer to Rome: the villa of Propaganda Fide in Castel Gandolfo and convents of the originally Polish Sisters of Nazareth in Albano and Ariccia.

From the early 1920s, Van Rossum became a frequent visitor to the spa in Karlsbad (Karlovy Vary in what is currently the Czech Republic) on medical advice, to recuperate from his diabetes. According to his secretary Drehmanns, this illness had been brought on by fatigue during his Dutch tour in 1913. Karlsbad was a popular spa at the time that was frequented by the great and the good. There was a special

1 From 1913 to his death, Van Rossum had a diplomatic passport for European countries issued by the Dutch legation in Rome, which contains stamps for most of his foreign journeys. KDC, ROSS, no. 344 and 363.

2 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 261, note 232: L. Regout to J. Loudon, 13 September 1915.

spa hotel for ecclesiastical dignitaries, Haus Sankt Josef, run by the Ingenbohl Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross, where Van Rossum went every year for several weeks to receive treatment.³ After his visit to Karlsbad, he usually went to Ingenbohl in Switzerland, the motherhouse of that congregation, whose cardinal protector he had been since December 1913. When he fell ill in 1919, the superior general, Aniceta Regli, invited him to stay at the motherhouse during his convalescence, and he continued to go there every summer.⁴ Although he was off duty during his stays in this discreet location, he would sometimes receive visitors to give advice or deal with urgent business. He occasionally made incognito trips from Ingenbohl to the Netherlands, particularly to Wittem or other Redemptorist houses, or to his sister in a convent of the Sisters of Tilburg.⁵

According to Drehmanns, Van Rossum was “full of childlike joy” during his train journeys, not because he enjoyed the conversation or the views, but mainly because he took the opportunity to pray – initially rather to Drehmanns’s annoyance: “no sooner had the train left the first station, or he took out his rosary, which never left



Ingenbohl convent, Switzerland, 1930

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- 3 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 107. Drehmanns regularly informed the superior general about Van Rossum’s health, AGHR, LIX 1a2: J. Drehmanns to P. Murray, 7 November 1922 and Karlsbad 7 August 1925.
- 4 Agnes Maria Weber, general archivist, to V. Poels, 12 June 2012: ‘Auszüge aus Berichten in der *Theodosia*’. According to the annals, Van Rossum’s first stay there was from 9 August to 29 September 1919.
- 5 *Ibid.*: ‘Auszüge aus der Chronik von Via San Basilio, Rom und aus der *Theodosia*’; ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to provincial [Jan Kronenburg], 1 October 1921; KDC, ROSS, no. 23: Gregor Feige (Ohio, Dayton University) to J. Drehmanns, 16 January 1925; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 877, f 425–439: visit by Jan Olav Smit, 20 September 1928.

him again until he got to his destination". Drehmanns began to take a book to read on these journeys. But he also said that Van Rossum in later life dreaded long voyages, and he therefore praised the cardinal's readiness for self-sacrifice: "He could say with Paul, who also made three missionary journeys: on wanderings often working unsparingly, often without sleep, hungry and thirsty, often fasting." Drehmanns emphasised that these were not leisure trips: "on small, uncomfortable boats, with a constant, unpleasant smell of fish, in storms and seasickness, it was a huge enterprise for a venerable man of his age".⁶

Drehmanns was obviously talking about Van Rossum's three journeys to Northern Europe in 1923, 1929 and 1932. Guided by the motto, 'Bring Scandinavia back to Mother Church', these voyages had a clearly anti-Protestant character. The same objective – though expressed more discreetly – motivated his 1924 trip to Amsterdam, where he was the pope's representative at the 27th international eucharistic congress. Benedict xv had strongly anti-Protestant sentiments – as did everyone in the Roman curia at the time – but he steered clear of possible conflicts during his pontificate.⁷ By contrast, Pius xi, who had been a former nuncio in Warsaw (1919–1921) and was familiar with the situation in the Baltic countries, gave Van Rossum greater leeway to seek out confrontation with Protestantism.

2 Apostolic journey to Scandinavia in the summer of 1923

It was announced in May 1923 that Cardinal Van Rossum would travel to the Scandinavian countries. At a time that Propaganda Fide was rapidly expanding its field of action in Asia and Africa, Van Rossum never lost sight of the Protestant territories, which had stood at the origins of the foundation of Propaganda Fide. These countries had been converted to Christianity in the Middle Ages and had become Lutheran during the Reformation.⁸ Since then, Catholicism had disappeared more or less completely from everyday life there.

Scandinavia was the last corner of Europe that still belonged to the territory of Propaganda Fide. Other Protestant-majority countries such as the United States, Great Britain and the Netherlands were removed from this congregation's remit when the curia was reformed in 1908. Not so the Northern European countries, with their established Lutheran churches and very small Catholic minorities. It became evident soon after his appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide that Van Rossum

6 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 81–82, 105.

7 Raffaella Perin, 'Benedetto xv, i "figli d'Israele" e i "membri delle diverse confessioni religiose"', in: *Benedetto xv*, vol. 1, 497–513, at 502–507; Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 204–207.

8 Sweden in 1531 under Gustav Wasa; Denmark in 1537 under Christian III.

had a particular interest in these ‘heretical’ territories. Undoubtedly his background in the northern part of the Netherlands played a role here, as did the Redemptorists’ then fierce anti-Protestantism. His position as promoter of the Opera Pontificia per la Preservazione della Fede in Roma since 1902 similarly instilled the desire in Van Rossum to protect the Catholic church from hostile external influences.⁹ Benedict xv did much to further this society, as he feared the growing influence of Protestant denominations in Rome and Italy, such as the Waldensian church (*Chiesa valdese*) and the Lutheran church.¹⁰

The journey announced in 1923 was a remarkable step, and was not unrelated to political and religious developments in the Scandinavian countries. There had been several important political changes in these countries during the first decades of the twentieth century, inspired in part by the strong rise of nationalism. After centuries of domination by Denmark and Sweden, Norway had become independent in 1905. Finland had similarly acquired its freedom only recently: it seceded from Russia on 6 December 1917. As a neighbour of Russia, Finland could count on the Vatican’s particular attention.¹¹ Iceland became a sovereign country 1 December 1918, although it remained united to Denmark in a personal union until 1944. The Holy See’s interest in these new states was consistent with its policy of establishing relations with the new countries that had emerged after the First World War. Hopes in the Vatican that nations such as Protestant Britain or Orthodox Russia would convert to Catholicism had been high since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Even the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing Bolshevik regime, which made short shrift of the Russian Orthodox church’s prominent position, did not immediately temper Vatican optimism.¹²

There was a certain nostalgic regard in countries such as Iceland and Norway for their medieval glory days, before they had fallen prey to political domination by their neighbours. This heyday had also been the period before the Reformation, and some were alive to the link between these two things. Van Rossum saw this nostalgia as a hopeful sign, particularly because it inspired several famous Scandinavians to convert to Catholicism, a step that was always much commented on.

9 Perin, ‘Benedetto xv’, 502–503; Vefie Poels, ‘Cardinal van Rossum and Northern Europe (1919–1932)’, in: *Life with a Mission*, 159–171, at 162–165.

10 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 116–119.

11 Milla Bergström, Suvii Rytty, ‘La Finlandia e la Chiesa cattolica durante il pontificato di Benedetto xv’, in: *Benedetto xv*, vol. 2, 865–877; Pettinaroli, *La politique russe du Saint-Siège*, 271. Finland was regarded as a possible gateway to Russia; priests from Eastern-rite Catholic churches were consequently stationed there. KDC, *KMM archive/tape collection*, no. 895: Interview with Bishop P. Verschuren S. C. J., 7 June 1988 in Helsinki by Vefie Poels.

12 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 101–103, 111.

There were other factors that contributed to unrest in the religious field. In Sweden, fragmentation and the rise of pietistic revivalism within the Lutheran church caused concern and dissatisfaction among the so-called Young Church movement, which strove for unity within the national church. This movement had the support of the Lutheran archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, an internationally recognised pioneer of the ecumenical movement that would lead to the establishment of the World Council of Churches. In March 1918, the bishop of Oslo and the archbishop of Uppsala, the most prominent leaders of the Norwegian and Swedish churches respectively, invited the Vatican to participate in a communal conference. A year later, the Catholic church (in the person of Secretary of State Gasparri) was invited to participate in the organisation of a world conference on 'Faith and Order'. The Holy See declined: unity could be found only around the throne of Saint Peter. Van Rossum also regarded these developments as a hopeful sign for the Catholic church: the search for unity might inspire people to look to the church of Rome. It was important therefore to give the Catholic church in the Scandinavian countries a more prominent profile so as to make it more attractive for seekers.¹³ Van Rossum's strategy of eschewing dialogue and proposing the one true church to Lutherans was fully in accord with official Catholic teaching.

At the same time, the Belgian Cardinal Mercier was seeking to establish contact with Protestant denominations, particularly Anglicans, in the so-called 'Malines conversations'. Van Rossum had little sympathy for these early ecumenical initiatives in the Catholic church, and in any case, they would be brought to a – temporary – halt in 1928 with the encyclical *Mortalium Animos*.¹⁴

When Van Rossum took up his position as prefect, the situation of the Catholic church in Scandinavia left much to be desired. The sitting vicars apostolic in Norway, Denmark and Sweden had been appointed in the 1880s and were no longer energetic or in good health more than thirty years later. Several Catholics also complained that Rome took too little interest in Scandinavia. Particularly in Sweden, where difficulties had arisen between the Jesuits, who were planning to leave the country, and certain influential Swedish lay Catholics, who wanted them to stay.

At the same time, the establishment of the independent republic of Finland gave the Vatican the opportunity to establish an independent vicariate there. The initial plan had been to send Achille Ratti, then apostolic visitor in Warsaw, to Finland in early 1919 to conduct negotiations, but the chaotic situation in Poland, where Rus-

¹³ For this, see Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 123–168.

¹⁴ Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 116–119; E. Fouilloux, 'Una congiuntura interconfessionale indecisa (1914–1922)', in: *Benedetto* xv, vol. 1, 527–534.

sian hostilities were still ongoing, frustrated this plan.¹⁵ Van Rossum's proposal to conduct an apostolic visitation of Norway and Sweden, which he discussed with Benedict XV during an audience on 20 February 1919, was therefore extended to include a visit to Finland. Ecclesiastical jurisdiction over this country was transferred from the Secretariat of State to Propaganda Fide in mid-1920.¹⁶

The coadjutor of the Dutch diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch, Arnold Diepen, with whom Van Rossum was regularly in touch, was asked to carry out the visitation. The cardinal emphasised in late 1919 that this was "a matter of great importance and one of constant worry to me".¹⁷ Diepen, by then a residential bishop, undertook the two-month tour in the summer of 1920. On the basis of his report, the vicars apostolic of Norway and Sweden, the Luxembourger Jean-Baptiste Olaf Fallize and the German Albert Bitter respectively, were invited to tender their resignations, which the former did willingly and the latter under protest. The vicar apostolic of Denmark, the German Johannes von Euch, died in 1922, so that a successor had to be sought for this country too. The appointments of new missionary bishops, including for Iceland, were on the agenda of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide in March and July 1922, and on both occasions, the discussion was on the basis of a memorandum prepared by Merry del Val.¹⁸

Van Rossum was able to exert considerable influence over the choice of candidates. This became clear during the first round of discussions, about the appointment of a new vicar apostolic for Norway. The underlying documents were Diepen's report and several other files, including correspondence with the French embassy to the Holy See.¹⁹ It was agreed during the meeting that it would be best to appoint a Norwegian, or otherwise someone from a small nation, thus excluding French or German candidates. Both Diepen and the French embassy had suggested the Norwegian Karl Kjelstrup (1874–1946), despite his weak health. Kjelstrup, a former student of the Collegio Urbano, had made a few Norwegian converts and had an active, influential network.

15 Bergström, Rytty, 'La Finlandia', 868–870.

16 *Ibid.*, 871. The apostolic vicariate of Finland was erected and placed under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide on 8 June 1920. HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 1A, folder 'Visitatiereis van mgr. Diepen naar Denemarken – Finland – Zweden en Noorwegen. 7 juni–11 augustus 1920'; Werner, *Världsviid men främmande*, 232–237.

17 HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 1A, folder 'Visitatiereis van mgr. Diepen naar Denemarken etc.': W. van Rossum to A. F. Diepen, 5 December 1919.

18 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 293, 1922, f 106–123: Ponzona 11, 13 March 1922; f 413–437: Ponzona 31, 31 July 1922.

19 AAEES, *Svezia-Norvegia-Danimarca-Finlandia IV*, pos. 1, fasc. 1 (Norvegia Danimarca 1922–1955), f 3 and f 15: Embassy of France to the Holy See (Jonnart) to P. Gasparri, 4 January and 19 February 1922. The French government would have preferred a new vicar apostolic who was well-disposed to French religious because they formed the basis of the Catholic church in the country. The religious in question were the Sisters of Saint-Joseph of Chambéry (since 1865) and a number of Dominicans who had been working in the country since 1920. B. I. Eidsvig, 'Den katolske kirke vender tilbake', in: J. W. Gran et al. (ed.), *Den katolske kirke i Norge. Fra kristningen til idag* (Oslo 1993), 205, 263.

But he and several other candidates were all ruled out. Merry del Val then pointed out that Diepen had mentioned another name which did not appear in the other documents, Jan (since 1922, Jan Olav) Smit, described by Diepen as “the zealous, competent and pious and very effective secretary of the Missionary Committee”. He was a professor at the major seminary of Rijsenburg in the Netherlands and was of “most engaging and dignified appearance”, according to Diepen.²⁰ Archbishop Henricus van de Wetering also recommended him, although he was reluctant to lose him as a priest for the archdiocese, but said he would accept the decision to appoint him as representing the will of God. Pius XI confirmed the appointment the very same day: Smit, a former student of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and Van Rossum’s protégé, was the new vicar apostolic of Norway.²¹

Pius XI took a personal interest in Northern Europe. He told the newly appointed Smit in May 1922 that he had been eager before the war to travel to Norway. He added that he was acquainted with an important industrialist with whom he had often talked and dined and who had since become a minister. The pope was no doubt referring to Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, minister for trade, and from late May 1922 onwards, minister for foreign affairs, a freethinker who became the first member of a Norwegian cabinet not to be a member of the established Church of Norway.²²

The procedure to fill the Swedish vacancy was similar to the Norwegian one. About a dozen candidates were discussed during the general congregation of 31 July 1922, including Swedes, German Jesuits and Dutch Priests of the Sacred Heart. Again, a note was passed to Merry del Val towards the end of the meeting with a new name, Johannes Erik Müller.²³ This Bavarian diocesan priest had studied canon law in Rome from 1908 to 1911 and had served towards the end of his term in Rome as a liaison between the curia and the German and Austro-Hungarian bishops. He had also been the secretary general of the international eucharistic congress in Vienna in 1912. He had since gone back to the archdiocese of Munich-Freising, where he oversaw the church’s social activities. Like Smit, Müller was appointed immediately, much to his own and his entourage’s surprise.²⁴

Prelates acceptable to Van Rossum were similarly appointed in Denmark, Finland and Iceland. They were chosen from orders and congregations that already had a presence in these countries, as was customary in mission territories. In Denmark, the appointee was the Fleming Jozef Brems, a Norbertine of Averbode abbey, who

20 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 747: A.F. Diepen to W. van Rossum, 29 July 1921.

21 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 293, 1922, f 112–113; Ponenza 11, 13 March 1922.

22 Private archive: *Dagboek Jan Olav Smit*, ‘Notitieboekje 1922’.

23 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 293, 1922, f 417; Ponenza 31, 31 July 1922.

24 Werner, *Världsvid men främmande*, 250–253; KDC, ROSS, no. 236.

had been working in Denmark since 1903.²⁵ In Finland, the two main candidates to lead the newly autonomous church were Adolf Carling and W. von Christiernson, the former a representative of the Finns, the latter of the Swedish minority in the west of the country. The Finnish government preferred a local vicar apostolic, but in fact the Dutch Dehonian Michael Buckx was appointed.²⁶ In Iceland, Martin Meulenberg, a German member of the Dutch province of the Montfort Missionaries, was made prefect apostolic on 12 June 1923. The superior general of this congregation objected to his appointment because it bypassed the three names that the Montfort Missionaries had proposed themselves, but Van Rossum felt Meulenberg was good at his job and that settled the matter.²⁷ Unlike Smit and Müller, these three prelates had some previous acquaintance with their new territories.

Despite the policy propagated in *Maximum Illud*, no local missionary bishop was appointed in any of these countries, even though local candidates were discussed. Van Rossum chose zealous and highly educated men, preferably with a doctorate, who had proven their fidelity to Rome and would be able to hold their own in debates with the Lutherans. As vicars apostolic with the rank of bishop they were ‘at the same level’ as their Lutheran equivalents.²⁸ As far as possible, ancient local episcopal titles were used to add legitimacy to their position. Thus the vicar apostolic of Denmark became titular bishop of Roskilde,²⁹ Smit’s successor (like his predecessor Fallize) titular bishop of Selja, and Meulenberg in Iceland became titular bishop of Hólar in 1929.

This new Roman interest in Northern Europe did not go unobserved locally. There was talk of the “Catholic menace” that was on the rise with the appointment of the new prelates. Van Rossum did not view this as a negative thing, quite the contrary: close analysis of the Catholic church in the media, even if hostile, was to be preferred to the many years of silence that had condemned the Catholic church to the status of an irrelevant relic from the Middle Ages.³⁰

25 L.J. Brems (1870–1958) was vicar apostolic of Denmark from 1922–1938; he resigned in 1938.

26 Bergström, Rytty, ‘La Finlandia’, 871–873. The founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, Léon Dehon, had accepted Finland as a mission in 1906. Dr. J.M. Buckx (1881–1946), provincial superior of this congregation in the Netherlands, studied in Leuven, Rome and elsewhere and then worked in Finland from 1907 to 1911, before being compelled to leave the country by the Russian government. He then worked in Sweden until 1916. He became administrator apostolic of Finland on 17 March 1921 and vicar apostolic on 23 May 1923; he resigned in 1934.

27 Martin Meulenberg (1872–1941) arrived in Iceland in 1903 after this mission territory was assigned to the congregation of Montfort Missionaries in 1901. Reykjavik, Reykjavik Diocesan Archive (RDA), 3A: W. van Rossum to Enrico Richard S.M.M., superior general, 19 December 1923 (copy).

28 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1: J.M. Buckx to A.F. Diepen, 22 March 1922, forwarded to Van Rossum by Diepen on 12 May 1922.

29 AAESS, *Svezia-Norvegia-Danimarca-Finlandia IV*, pos. 1, fasc. 1, f 12: Gaetano De Lai to P. Gasparri, 15 May 1922.

30 KDC, ROSS, no. 5: J.O. Smit to J. Drehmanns, 7 January 1924.

Van Rossum's first Scandinavian journey was a further means of increasing the visibility of the Catholic church. To avoid unrest, it was billed as a private trip. The cardinal was accompanied only by his secretary and a valet, and stayed in hotels whenever no suitable 'Catholic' accommodation was at hand. To ensure that his health would not suffer, the schedule was kept light and he followed his usual strict diet.³¹

The cardinal emphasised to the press that his apostolic journey was purely pastoral in nature. He was there for the Catholic Scandinavians, and to support the newly appointed superiors. But at the same time, all kinds of activities were planned that were likely to attract the attention of the local and national press without repelling, shocking or offending the Lutherans.³² Scandinavia had a vibrant press culture and these newspapers were used to publishing long polemical pieces. Visits were scheduled to the ruins of monasteries and churches dating to the Catholic times. Requests were made to allow the cardinal to celebrate a low Mass in Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim, which had been the coronation church of Norway until the early twentieth century, and in Uppsala Cathedral. It was clear from the outset that these requests would be refused, but the governments' refusals would be discussed at length in the press by both defenders and opponents.

Van Rossum left Rome on 15 June 1923 and arrived in Copenhagen by boat on 21 June. Brems welcomed the cardinal, not only as prefect but also as protector of his order. In Denmark, which had a relatively large Polish Catholic community, the church had grown considerably under Von Euch's stewardship, and dozens of parishes and churches and several schools and hospitals had been founded. The trip passed without incident, although there was some commotion when the cardinal was refused permission to visit the relics of the Danish Saint Canute in Odense.

Van Rossum departed Denmark for Iceland on 30 June. On its way, his ship docked in Thórshavn, the most important town of the Faroe Islands. The last Catholic islander had died only recently. Undaunted, Van Rossum went in search of traces of Catholicism. He had himself rowed out in a fishing boat to Kirkebö in bad weather to visit the ruins of a never completed Gothic cathedral from the late Middle Ages.

On 7 July, the cardinal and his party reached Iceland, which was home to nearly a hundred Catholics. On 12 June 1923, just before Van Rossum's departure from Rome, the country had been elevated to the status of an apostolic prefecture, which meant it was now independent of the Danish vicariate. The Icelanders regarded the cardinal's visit as confirmation of their quest for political independence. The government, eager to show the world that Iceland, as an (almost) sovereign state, was fully

31 ABR, 2A: J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenber, 4 May 1923. This was the first mention of the journey, which had yet to be organised at the time; J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenber, 1 June 1923.

32 *Ibid.*, J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenber, 1 June 1923.

conversant with protocol, hosted a state banquet in his honour, to which all influential citizens from the fields of politics, education, the law and the economy were invited.³³ Van Rossum interpreted this grand welcome as an “expression of true affection for the Catholic church”, and believed it pointed to a longing for the old church, from whose bosom the Icelanders had, through “violence and deceit”, been torn by the Danes, who had thus cast the island into “misery and poverty”.³⁴

After a ten-day voyage at sea in an uncomfortable ship, Van Rossum reached Bergen in Norway on 22 July, where he was received by Jan Olav Smit. The bishop had arranged a guard of honour of Dutch navy officers for the occasion.³⁵ The following day, the cardinal had the joyful task of opening a new mission station in Molde. In the run-up to this day, Smit had pressurised the Dutch Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo into opening a convent there without delay. There were only two Catholics in the town, but the press was given to understand that there would be many more before long. In Oslo, Van Rossum was received in audience by King Haakon VII and a dinner was held in the cardinal’s honour in the episcopal palace, attended by the government and other dignitaries. The reports of his visit in the Norwegian press were generally positive.³⁶

On 5 August, Van Rossum arrived in Gothenburg in Sweden, where a large world exhibition was being hosted at the time. He was pleased to see that the religious art section consisted mainly of pre-Reformation material, including a replica of a Gothic church with statues of the national saints. Sweden was the country where the cardinal encountered the most hostility, although he also met a number of Lutheran ministers who expressed their doubts about the state of the Swedish church.³⁷ But a concordat that had been signed in 1922 between the newly founded republic of Latvia and the Holy See was causing much commotion, because under its terms a Lutheran church building had been assigned to the Catholics of the archdiocese of Riga. Van Rossum was asked about this in an interview in the press and expressed surprise at the clamour this had caused, as the church in question had originally been Catholic. The Lutheran Archbishop Söderblom felt obliged to protest against the suggestion that the Catholic church had any claim to buildings from the pre-Reformation period:

33 According to Drehmanns, the Icelandic government succeeded in its plan: “Iceland came first with regard to etiquette and everything that is due to a Cardinal, thanks to your excellent care.”

Ibid., J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenber, 25 September 1923.

34 W. van Rossum, *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten* (Rotterdam 1923), 15–20.

35 H. J. M. M. Alink, ‘*De Noorsche kruisreis.*’ *Uit het dagboek van den vlootaalmoezenier aan boord ‘Hr. Ms. Heemskerck’* (Den Helder [1924]), 13–33.

36 Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 157–161, 267–268; Else-Britt Nilssen, *Nonner i storm og stille. Katolske ordenssøstre i Norge i det 19. og 20. århundre* (Oslo 2001), 221–222.

37 Van Rossum, *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, 29–30.

the current Lutheran national churches were the immediate heirs of the medieval Swedish church.³⁸

The last country Van Rossum visited was Finland. He consecrated Michael Buckx in Helsinki on 15 August, with the three other Scandinavian missionary bishops assisting. It was the first time since the Reformation that Catholics had made bold to consecrate a bishop on Scandinavian soil.³⁹ The Lutheran minister for religious affairs attended the ceremony as a representative of the government. It is not known whether Van Rossum also met members of the Orthodox church, the second official denomination of Finland.

The episcopal consecration in Helsinki was the last obligation of Van Rossum's two-month-long journey. He could look back with satisfaction on a successful visit. The Catholic church had been at the centre of attention in Scandinavia for weeks, and everyone had been able to see that, far from being an ossified medieval relic, it was a fully active presence in society. He had been received respectfully in most countries, had responded graciously and tactfully, praising the great qualities, hospitality and excellent cultures of Scandinavia in countless interviews with the local press. Photos showed a relaxed Van Rossum, either in full canonicals to emphasise his cardinalial dignity, or smiling affably among the local population.

The cardinal then travelled on to Karlsbad, where he wrote a propagandistic pamphlet recording his impressions of the visit. The manuscript contains only a few, but striking corrections. He first changed his description of Luther as a "despicable man" to a "renegade monk", and then crossed out the entire section. But a passage on the "woefully deformed" liturgy of episcopal consecration in the Lutheran church, which, he claimed, involved "the bishopess, as they call a bishop's wife, imposing her hands upon her husband during his ordination as a bishop", was left unchanged.⁴⁰ The pamphlet *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten* ("To my Catholic compatriots") was published in late 1923. Van Rossum appealed to Dutch Catholics to aid the conversion of Scandinavia through prayer, financial support and volunteer work. The publication gave an optimistic, even triumphalist image of the Catholic church's prospects in the Northern European countries, where, he noted, baptism was still being administered validly. "Have mercy on the masses, deprived of the full light of truth, but who yearn for it so ardently!"⁴¹

38 Werner, *Världsviid men främmande*, 256–258.

39 Smit was consecrated by Archbishop Van de Wetering in Deventer on 29 June 1922, Müller by the nuncio, Pacelli, in Munich in January 1923, and Brems by Cardinal Mercier in Averbode on 25 January 1923.

40 KDC, ROSS, no. 8: manuscript in Van Rossum's handwriting on 'Haus St. Josef' letter paper.

41 Van Rossum, *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, 45. The pamphlet was published with a print run of 10,000 copies.



Seated, left to right: Jozef Brems O.PRAEM., Michael Buckx s.c.J., Van Rossum, Erik Müller and Jan Olav Smit, Helsinki, August 1923

Whereas the journey itself had provoked little resistance, this pamphlet caused a wave of criticism, particularly after the publication of German and Italian translations.⁴² The first devastating comments appeared in the Scandinavian press in March 1924, under the title ‘The “Red Pope’s” Tales’. The newspapers alleged that Van Rossum had now revealed the true face of the Catholic church, distorting the facts or giving deliberately twisted accounts. The Lutheran clergy protested publicly against the pamphlet and stressed that the Scandinavian people had not the slightest intention of converting to Catholicism.

42 W. van Rossum, *Die religiöse Lage der Katholiken in den nordischen Ländern*, Munich 1924; Id., ‘Viaggio nei Paesi del Nord’, in: *Vita e pensiero*, 10(1924), 65–77, 129–139.

The passage on the laying on of hands by ‘bishopesses’ was frequently quoted to impugn the cardinal’s journey and his intentions. On 5 April 1924, the Norwegian newspaper *Morgenbladet* challenged Van Rossum to reveal his source of information for this ‘fact’. The commotion compelled Van Rossum to reply. In a letter to Smit dated 15 April, intended for publication in *Morgenbladet*, the cardinal said several persons had told him of this ritual during the ordination of Lutheran bishops. He did not doubt that they had done so in good faith, and he too had acted in good faith when he repeated the story in his pamphlet.⁴³ Now that it had been disproven, he hastened to retract it and expressed profound apologies for having caused upset to the Norwegians, whom he highly respected for their virtues and culture.⁴⁴

But he retracted nothing of his negative impressions of the Lutheran national churches and the Scandinavians’ ‘yearning’ for Holy Mother Church.⁴⁵ The German translation of his pamphlet that was published later that year corrected a number of errors, but proudly retained his appeal to Catholics to bring “the full, unadulterated Christian truth” to these countries.⁴⁶ The publication of his letter did little, therefore, to assuage anger. In 1923, the Norwegian government was about to abolish the so-called ‘Jesuit paragraph’, a constitutional clause that banned members of this order from living in the country. But when a second vote was taken on this constitutional amendment in 1925 – a step previously regarded as a formality – the clause was retained.⁴⁷

The pamphlet also caused concern in the Netherlands that it might affect this country’s relations with Norway, where the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina usually spent her summer holidays. It had been announced in the meantime that Van Rossum would be the pope’s legate during the 27th international eucharistic congress, to be held in Amsterdam in July 1924.⁴⁸

43 KDC, ROSS, no. 5: J.O. Smit to W. van Rossum, 10 April 1924; W. van Rossum to J.O. Smit, 15 April 1924; ROSS, no. 36: statement by J.O. Smit on the passage in question. According to J. Drehmanns, Van Rossum hesitated to include this passage, “but the repeated and adamant assertions of Msgr. Smit emboldened him to set all doubt aside”. HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: J. Drehmanns to A. F. Diepen, 21 April 1924.

44 Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 161–168.

45 AAESS, *Svezia-Norvegia-Danimarca-Finlandia IV*, pos. 6, fasc. 2, f 68–78: ‘Viaggio del Card. Van Rossum’.

46 Werner, *Världsvid men främmande*, 265–266.

47 Three quarters of the members of the Storting voted to retain the Jesuit paragraph on 15 July 1925; Jesuits ultimately received permission to work in Norway in the 1950s.

48 Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 163–164; The Hague, National Archives, *Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, A 63 ‘Files on Roman Catholic affairs 1921–1939’, no. 1016, ‘Impression of Cardinal Van Rossum’s visit to Christiania [Oslo], 1924’: the legate, H. M. van Haersma de With, to the minister for foreign affairs, 17 March 1924. At the Amsterdam congress, Van Rossum appealed to diocesan priests to come to Scandinavia. F. Krijn, ‘Seculiere geestelijken in missiedienst’, in: *Uit het land van St. Olav*, 31(1957–58), 101–102.

The uproar was unpleasant for Van Rossum, but his pamphlet had the desired effect of keeping the spotlight on the Catholic church in Scandinavia for years. Also, his appeal helped raise considerable sums for the missions there, and various clerical and female religious institutes accepted missions in Scandinavia in the 1920s. Hundreds of Dutch priests and sisters went north to work in tiny parishes or Catholic hospitals. Missionaries from France, Germany and Belgium similarly went to the Nordic countries to help grow ‘the seed sown on rocky ground’.

They had little to do there besides simply be present. Their mission was based on Van Rossum’s conviction that increased visibility of the Catholic church would suffice to acquaint Lutherans with ‘her love’, which would then spontaneously cause them to then submit “to her doctrine and her rule”.⁴⁹ Van Rossum was a fervent adherent of this strategy – as were most officials of the curia at the time⁵⁰ – and believed its chances of success in these countries were great. He spent a great deal of energy trying to convince contemplative orders to found monasteries in Scandinavia and storm heaven with their prayers. Critics sometimes claimed that he used double standards: as per *Maximum Illud*, he frequently stressed the importance of the universal pontifical mission societies over special campaigns, for example those organised by orders and congregations for their own missions, and yet he also specifically promoted the Scandinavian missions. Van Rossum rejected this criticism, because “it was an exceptional opportunity” which could not therefore be compared to other missions.⁵¹

Rome insisted that the Catholic presence in Scandinavia must not result in dialogue with the Lutherans. A world conference of Christian churches on the theme of ‘Life and Work’ under Nathan Söderblom’s chairmanship in Stockholm in 1925, and a subsequent meeting on ‘Faith and Order’ in Lausanne in Switzerland in 1927 – conferences that prepared the way for the foundation of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948 – brought together six hundred delegates from Protestant and Orthodox churches. As has been seen, the Catholic church was also invited, but the invitation was declined on the basis that church unity was already a reality within the Roman Catholic church. Events in Stockholm were monitored from a distance by the Catholic Bishop Müller, who reported back to Rome.⁵²

On 6 January 1928, a few months after the Lausanne conference, Pius XI published the encyclical *Mortalium Animos*. This was not a direct response to the Swedish initiatives, but it resulted from consultations within the Holy Office on a report by the

49 Van Rossum, *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, 27, 38; Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 92–93.

50 Pollard, *The Unknown Pope*, 204–207.

51 KDC, *PMW*, no. 17: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 20 October 1923.

52 AAEESS, *Svezia-Norvegia-Danimarca-Finlandia IV*, pos. 7 fasc. 2, f 81–115: Congresso cristiano pragmatico. On 21 September 1925, Müller sent a report about the congress held from 19–22 August 1925 to Secretary of State Gasparri. He recommended increased lobbying of the ‘schismatics’, who were insufficiently aware of the “radical negativism” of modern Protestantism.

nuncio in Germany, Eugenio Pacelli, on the German Hochkirchlich-ökumenischer Bund. This movement and its periodical *Una Sancta* had been condemned by the Holy Office in a decree of 4 July 1919, but they were on the agenda again in 1926, together with other ecumenical initiatives, such as Cardinal Mercier's Malines conversations, as well as developments in the United States and Britain. During this meeting, Van Rossum – who, as we shall see in the last chapter, was sceptical of long encyclicals that were unlikely to find many readers – advocated publishing a short, clear letter explaining the Holy See's view instead of a doctrinal encyclical. *Mortalium Animos* did in fact begin life as an apostolic letter prepared by Ernesto Ruffini, a consultant of the Holy Office, but after additions by Louis Billot and Pius XI, the text was published as an encyclical.⁵³

This 'anti-ecumenical encyclical' argued that unity could only be effected by the return of the schismatics and heretics to the one true church. Protestants were accused – as Van Rossum had done with regard to Nathan Söderblom – of casting doubt on the divine nature of Jesus Christ and of placing individual conscience alongside or even over the authority of the church. This made them partly responsible for the rise of rationalism, individualism and modernism, tendencies that undermined the magisterium of the Catholic church and its hierarchical structures and that promoted secularisation.⁵⁴

Mortalium Animos fully reflected Van Rossum's philosophy. It was a powerful brake on Catholic ecumenical initiatives. Catholics were exhorted to avoid conversations about religious matters with non-Catholic Christians, unless they had received prior permission from Rome. The encyclical made the work of missionaries in the Scandinavian countries next to impossible. They were condemned to an isolated and sterile existence. Only after the Second World War, when the voice of ecumenism became stronger in the Catholic church, did they begin to feel they could work there openly and fruitfully.⁵⁵

53 Manuela Barbolla, 'La genesi della *Mortalium Animos* attraverso lo spoglio degli archivi Vaticani', in: *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 66(2012), 495–538, esp. 504–512. These consultations led on 9 March 1927 to discussions within the Holy Office on the proposed condemnation of several priests believed to be on a slippery slope, such as Abbot Ildefonsus Herwegen O.S.B. of the abbey of Maria Laach and his liturgical movement and Professor J.P. Steffes of the Catholic University of Nijmegen.

54 Van Rossum, *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, 39; KDC, ROSS, no. 123: J.O. Smit to J. Drehmanns, 1 March 1926.

55 Werner, *Världsviid men främmande*, 332–338; Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 527–608.

3 The Amsterdam international eucharistic congress (1924)

While Van Rossum was still attempting to limit the fallout from his pamphlet *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, he was already preparing for his next journey. The 27th international eucharistic congress was scheduled to be held in Amsterdam in July 1924, and it was announced in January of that year that Van Rossum would be the papal legate, as he had been in Vienna in 1912. The political and religious situation in Amsterdam could hardly have been more different from that in the imperial capital in 1912. Emperor Franz Joseph had hosted the papal delegation and supported the congress in word and deed – he needed the Vatican's support in the political context of the time – but the official welcome in Amsterdam was likely to be much frostier.⁵⁶

The triumphalist nature of these congresses had from time to time inspired objections to plans to host them, for example in France due to the separation of church and state. Such views were particularly strong in countries that did not have a Catholic majority.⁵⁷ It was no surprise therefore that some Protestants regarded the coming of the international eucharistic congress to Amsterdam with suspicion. The Netherlands did not have an established church, as the Nordic countries did, but Protestantism had long been dominant and had left a strong mark on the country. After the Reformation, the Catholic minority (approximately a third of the population) had for centuries been treated as second-rate citizens. But their position had changed dramatically since the introduction of freedom of worship in the Batavian Republic in 1796, which was confirmed again in the 1814/15 constitution. A new constitution in 1848 gave the Catholic church the freedom to organise itself as it saw fit, and this opened the way to the establishment of the hierarchy in 1853.⁵⁸ A few orthodox Protestant groups continued to argue that Calvinism should be the state religion in the Netherlands, but most of their coreligionists now espoused a certain religious tolerance.⁵⁹ In three-quarters of a century, Catholics went from being an oppressed minority to forming a power block. This was true also in the field of politics, where they cooperated with the Calvinist leader Abraham Kuyper's Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti-Revolutionary Party, ARP). This ultimately led in 1917 to an important victory on education: denominational schools would henceforth be funded by the state on an equal footing with public schools.

⁵⁶ See Chapter 11.2.

⁵⁷ Patricia Quaghebeur, 'De Eucharistische Kruistocht (1920–1963)', in: Rita Ghesquière, Patricia Quaghebeur (ed.), *Averbode. Een uitgever apart 1877–2002* (Averbode 2002), 92–173, at 92–98.

⁵⁸ De Valk, 'Meer dan een plaats. De keuze van Utrecht als aartsbisdom in 1853', 37–63.

⁵⁹ Kennedy, Zwemer, 'Religion in the Modern Netherlands', 256; Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland 1570–1990*, Amsterdam 1996.

This was one of the things that gave Catholics a sense that they were on the winning hand in society. Religious life flourished, as evidenced by growing Mass attendance, the popularity of devotions and increasing vocations to the priesthood and the consecrated life. Cardinal Van Rossum's appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1918 was another boost. After the confessional parties' victory at the 1918 elections, which made the Catholics the largest party in parliament, a Catholic, the Limburg politician Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, was asked to form and lead a right-wing cabinet. One of the last legal disabilities that affected Catholics, a ban on processions in most of the northern part of the Netherlands, appeared increasingly untenable. The possibility presented itself of abolishing this prohibition in 1923 through a constitutional amendment backed by the liberals and socialists.⁶⁰

Orthodox Protestants regarded the Catholic advance with suspicion, and the Catholic prime minister feared for the future of his cabinet. In 1921, Ruijs de Beerenbrouck wrote to Van Rossum that "the stronger position of Catholics in the Netherlands – the presence for instance of Catholics as chairmen of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament and of the Cabinet – [vexed] many *Right-wing* Protestants. I expect this will harm the coalition of the right-wing parties, particularly if Catholics publicly – in speech or in writing – boast about this strengthened position in tactless ways."⁶¹ Ruijs was implicitly warning the cardinal not to incite Dutch Catholics to manifest themselves all too openly and brazenly. As prefect of Propaganda, Van Rossum repeatedly made appeals to his compatriots to support the missions.⁶² This missionary activity expanded enormously during these years, and competition with the Protestant missions was an important driving force behind this.

Ruijs also tried to use Van Rossum's influence to his own political advantage. The emergence of Catholic splinter parties in 1922 threatened the political unity of Dutch Catholics. Van Rossum lobbied the Dutch bishops Van de Wetering and Schrijnen during a visit to Rome in April 1922 to take measures against the initiators of the *Nieuwe Katholieke Partij* (New Catholic Party, NKP), a dissident political group that opposed Father Willem Nolens, the leader of the Catholic parliamentary party. At the

60 Article 167 of the 1848 constitution and the 1853 Religious Denominations Act generally forbade "public worship outside buildings and enclosed spaces". In practice, this ban applied to those cities and villages where processions had not been an established tradition in 1848.

61 KDC, ROSS, no. 46: Ch. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck to W.M. van Rossum, 7 February 1921. In this letter, Ruijs mentions an upcoming constitutional amendment that was likely to include the freedom to hold processions.

62 Van Rossum was in touch with various people, including W. Nolens, the Catholic parliamentary party leader, to ensure that Catholic missionaries in the Dutch East Indies would have the same rights as Protestant missionaries. See ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder H. 'Lettere private, 1911–1919': W. Nolens to W. van Rossum, 20 June 1919.

cardinal's request, Pius XI repeated this exhortation to Archbishop Van de Wetering of Utrecht, who, after returning home, banned the formation of the NKP.⁶³

But Ruijs's call for restraint in his letter quoted above failed to impress Van Rossum, who believed Catholics should not allow themselves to be constrained by Protestants. This was also the line he took during the organisation of the 27th international eucharistic congress in Amsterdam.

The idea of organising an international eucharistic congress in Amsterdam dated back to the very beginning of these congresses. The Dutch capital fully fit the model intended by the initiator, Émilie Tamisier, of holding the event in eucharistic places of pilgrimage.⁶⁴ As the city of the 'Most Holy Miracle' – a eucharistic miracle that had happened in 1345 – and the annual 'Silent Walk' which was held as an alternative to a banned procession, Amsterdam was a very suitable place indeed.⁶⁵ But the Dutch bishops were opposed to it at the time, and the first congress, in 1881, was held in Lille in France instead.

Eucharistic devotion flourished in the Netherlands at the beginning of the twentieth century. One of its protagonists was the Augustinian Chrysostomus van Dijk, who, together with Bishop Augustinus Callier of Haarlem, founded the Eucharistic Union in 1916 to promote Pius X's eucharistic decrees. The founders hoped – in vain – for international recognition of this union, which had its main seat in the diocese of Haarlem. Van Dijk also strongly advocated bringing the international eucharistic congress to Amsterdam in 1922.⁶⁶

But the Paris-based permanent committee of the eucharistic congresses chose Rome. A diocesan eucharistic congress was held in Amsterdam instead, presided over by the bishop of Haarlem.⁶⁷ Among the attendees was the Belgian Norbertine Thomas-Louis Heylen (1856–1941), bishop of Namur since 1899 and chairman of the permanent committee. He reported back to Rome that the diocesan congress had been a resounding success, a report that Pius XI and Van Rossum read with great

63 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 1, 238–239. According to the Dutch minister to the Holy See, O.F.A.M. van Nispen, in a letter to Minister Van Karnebeek, 28 January 1924.

64 See Chapter 11.2.

65 The so-called Miracle of Amsterdam occurred in 1345 when a sick man vomited up a consecrated host, which was then thrown into the fire by the nurse but was found hovering intact above the fire the next morning. A chapel, the 'Holy Stead', was built on the spot of the fireplace in Kalverstraat. Ch. Caspers, P.J. Margry, *The Miracle of Amsterdam. Biography of a Contested Devotion* (Notre Dame, Indiana 2019), 207–211.

66 Pope Benedict XV promised them as much orally in 1920, but a year later it transpired that a Milanese confraternity had been chosen instead. KDC, ROSS, no. 35: W. van Dijk to W. van Rossum, 18 June 1921 and W. van Dijk to J. Drehmanns, 1 December 1921. Brian Heffernan, *Een kleine orde met allure. De augustijnen in Nederland 1886–2006* (Hilversum 2015), 124–126, 243.

67 L. van den Broeke, *Gedenkboek van het eerste diocesane Eucharistisch Congres in het bisdom Haarlem* (Amsterdam 1922), 7–16, 201–205.

interest.⁶⁸ The pope had reportedly been much moved by this news and Van Rossum communicated his “ardent desire” that the next congress should be in Amsterdam, as Heylen also wished.⁶⁹

There was a glitch, however, because the bishop of Haarlem – possibly on Ruijs de Beerenbrouck’s advice – failed to make an official request to the permanent committee, despite having been put under pressure to do so by the procurator of the Dutch bishops in Rome, Msgr. Bernard Eras.⁷⁰ Like Catholic politicians in the Netherlands, the Dutch hierarchy was not keen on Roman interference. The bishops’ style of government was marked by a certain particularism and careful protection of their independence.

This was clear also with regard to the foundation of a Catholic university in the country, another burning issue at the time. Most of the bishops, Archbishop Van de Wetering first and foremost among them, dragged their feet, even though the Vatican had been pushing for a Catholic university since the 1890s. The bishops were afraid of Roman involvement in the formation of their priests and of competition for their major seminaries. Nonetheless, plans for a university in the eastern town of Nijmegen were far advanced by 1918, and the initiators went to Van Rossum behind Van de Wetering’s back. The cardinal believed it was “a very fortunate idea”, and he became a great advocate of this plan after he was appointed a member of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities in 1919. He became patron of a committee “for the foundation of a Roman Catholic university” in 1921 and urged the congregation to establish a university that would meet Dutch legal conditions and the particular situation in the country. This would increase the competitive position of Catholics in the educational field and would be the “final jewel in the crown of victory”, a victory that had been achieved step by step against the opposition of Calvinists, socialists and atheists. After protracted negotiations between the initiators, the hierarchy and ‘Rome’ (particularly Van Rossum as a member, and Gaetano Bileti as the prefect of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities), the university was eventually founded in 1923. Van Rossum became the patron of the Roman Catholic University, but to his disappointment the Holy See’s influence was severely curtailed, at the behest of both the founders and the bishops.⁷¹ Moreover, professors

68 A. De Vylder, ‘Monseigneur Th. L. Heylen en de eucharistische beweging’, in: P. Al, M. Schneiders (ed.), *Een soort onschuldige hobby? Een eeuw liturgisch werk van de Norbertijnen in Nederland* (Heeswijk 1992), 55–62. The committee organised 21 international congresses under Heylen’s chairmanship.

69 Henry d’Yanville, W. van Dijk, *Gedenkboek van het xxvii Internationaal Eucharistisch Congres. Gehouden te Amsterdam van 22 tot 27 juli 1924* (Amsterdam 1925), 11.

70 Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief (NHA), *Archive of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Haarlem 1853–1965*, no. 2176, file 313.33, folder Amsterdam 1924. ‘Permanent committee. Letters concerning preparation 1922–1923–1924’: Bernard Eras to A. J. Callier, 17 December 1922, marked “secret” in red pencil.

71 De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?* Chapter 11, 269–305, at 298–303; J. Brabers, O. Schreuder, *Proeven van eigen cultuur. Vijfenzeventig jaar Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen 1923–1998* (Nijmegen 1998), vol. 1, 112–120.



Visit to the Catholic University of Nijmegen, 1929

in disciplines other than theology proved unwilling to take the antimodernist oath. “I thought they would act without diffidence and with the Catholic banner fully unfurled. [But] they give the impression of wanting as little as possible.”⁷²

Van de Wetering was not the only bishop who preferred to operate independently from Rome; so did the successive bishops of Haarlem, whose diocese included Amsterdam.⁷³ Callier hesitated about the eucharistic congress because he felt it would be difficult to accommodate so many cardinals and bishops properly in Amsterdam. But his main fear was Protestant criticism of what would inevitably be a triumphalist Catholic manifestation.⁷⁴

⁷² HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to A. F. Diepen, 25 October 1923.

⁷³ De Valk, *Roomser dan de paus?*, 341–366.

⁷⁴ NHA, *Archive of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Haarlem 1853–1965*, no. 2176, ‘Permanent committee. Letters concerning preparation 1922–1923–1924’: Th. Bosman to A. Callier, 27 December 1922.

The bishop wrote to Heylen on 10 January 1923, informing him subtly that “the choice of *Amsterdam* is indeed a great honour for Our Diocese; We have considered this very seriously” and he informed him that there were no objections to the congress “as far as *We are concerned*”, but “it must not appear to the outside world and to the civil authorities that We asked for this choice, but it must be made *very clear*, that Your Committee chose *Amsterdam* so as to fulfil the desires of His Holiness the Pope.”⁷⁵ Although Callier refused to make an official request, the committee yielded to Heylen’s pressure and decided on *Amsterdam*. When the newspapers announced on 23 February 1923 that the 27th international eucharistic congress was to be held in *Amsterdam*, they dutifully clarified that the initiative had come entirely from Heylen, who had first secured the permanent committee’s support and then the pope’s.⁷⁶ It was reported in January 1924 that the Dutch cardinal would come to *Amsterdam* as the pope’s legate.⁷⁷

Ruijs de Beerenbrouck shared Callier’s reservations. He not only regarded the congress as a threat to the stability of his coalition cabinet, but also viewed the Dutch papal legate’s visit as a political problem. As the Catholic minister Piet Aalberse recorded in his diary, the three Catholic cabinet members now faced the problem of whether the government and the queen should officially receive Van Rossum.⁷⁸ The Netherlands was a Christian nation with a Protestant monarch but with a large Catholic minority, and it seemed more prudent to avoid any public meeting between the queen and the Dutch cardinal.⁷⁹ Van Rossum had not been officially welcomed by the government either during his 1913 visit, although he had been received in audience by Queen Wilhelmina, who had granted him the highest Dutch knighthood. The governments of the Nordic countries had clearly been less timorous, because Van Rossum had been received on several occasions by the government or by government delegations on his voyage. As his visit on this occasion would be in his capacity as papal legate – that is, as the pope’s personal representative – it was regarded as even more problematic.

After lengthy consultations, the prime minister and the two other Catholic ministers advised the queen and the government not to receive the cardinal. The fact that there had been no official notification of the legate’s visit was taken as evidence that the Vatican did not expect an official reception either. It was decided that the three Catholic ministers would attend several highlights of the congress in a personal capacity, not on

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, A. J. Callier to Th. Heylen, 10 January 1923.

⁷⁶ *De Tijd*, 23 February 1923.

⁷⁷ NHA, *Archive of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Haarlem 1853–1965*, no. 2176, ‘Cardinal v. Rossum Legate 1924’: telegram from Th. Heylen to W. van Dijk O.S.A., 13 January 1924; *AAS*, 16(1924), 327–329.

⁷⁸ J. P. de Valk, A. C. M. Kappelhof (eds.), *Dagboeken van P. J. M. Aalberse 1902–1947* (The Hague 2006), 509–510.

⁷⁹ Poels, ‘Henricus van de Wetering or Willem van Rossum?’, 143–166.

behalf of the government “but because the three of us are Roman Catholics”.⁸⁰ To avoid any misunderstanding, Queen Wilhelmina would be out of the country during the congress: she went to Norway to spend the summer there, as was her custom. It is not known whether she was confronted there by questions about Van Rossum’s pamphlet.

To ensure that the congress would not provoke strongly negative responses from Dutch Protestants, Ruijs de Beerenbrouck made sure that Van Rossum’s reception would be as low-key as possible. On his trip to Vienna, the cardinal had been received in private audience by Emperor Franz Joseph in the Radetzky rooms of the imperial Hofburg palace shortly after his arrival, but this time Queen Wilhelmina was on holidays, and the papal legate stayed at the home of the businessman Willem Dreesmann. Dreesmann did have a chapel built in his home for the occasion.

The Catholic prime minister had several confidential meetings with the organisers of the congress to persuade them to tone down the triumphalism, causing a certain degree of frustration.⁸¹ Van Dijk complained to Drehmanns on 5 June 1924 that they had had to abandon many plans for fear of the reaction. “I had imagined the congress much grander and organised on a broader scale, but alas!” The result was that the congress attracted little international publicity.⁸² Cardinals who had already accepted an invitation – Van Dijk spoke in January 1924 of fifteen princes of the church – subsequently changed their minds, for example the Belgian Cardinal Désiré-Joseph Mercier.⁸³

Van Rossum’s private secretary, a lawyer by training, also deplored the sober welcome the cardinal received. Twelve years before, the mayor of Vienna had officially received Van Rossum as papal legate, but on this occasion circles in the Dutch capital were suggesting that Van Rossum himself should wait on the mayor of Amsterdam. Drehmanns wrote to the Amsterdam parish priest Gerard van Noort, one of the organisers, on 19 July 1924 that this was unthinkable: “Those non-Catholics (and perhaps Catholics) do not know the position of a Cardinal. Every Cardinal is of the rank of a prince of the blood, specifically the Crown Prince.”⁸⁴ Eventually, the deputy

80 De Valk, Kappelhof (eds.), *Dagboeken van P.J.M. Aalberse*, 509–510.

81 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 199–200.

82 KDC, ROSS, no. 17: W. van Dijk to J. Drehmanns, 5 June and 2 July 1924.

83 KDC, ROSS, no. 15: W. van Dijk to W. van Rossum, 13 January 1924. Van Dijk wrote on 11 July 1924 (KDC, ROSS, no. 17) that Cardinals Gasquet, Mercier, Csernoch, Ranuzzi de Bianchi, Granito di Belmonte and Tacci were not coming.

84 NHA, *Archive of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Haarlem 1853–1965*, no. 2176, ‘Cardinal v. Rossum Legate 1924’: J. Drehmanns to Rev. parish priest, 19 July 1924 (a note on the letter says “from Msgr. Van Noort’s private archive”). Stricter guidelines on the so-called diplomatic *préséance* of cardinals (of the curia) were issued on 8 December 1930. See AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 453, fasc. 435, f 26–27: ‘Istruzioni per gli Eminentissimi Cardinali’, published by the Congregazione Cerimoniale.



*The Catholic cabinet ministers of the Netherlands during the Eucharistic Congress;
Prime Minister Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck in the middle*

mayor, the social democrat and lapsed Catholic Floor Wibaut, attended the audience Van Rossum granted on 23 July.⁸⁵

The grand entry was similarly downsized. Van Rossum had intended to arrive by train – as he had done in 1913, when he had been cheered by Catholic crowds at countless stations –, but when it became clear that he would not be permitted to use the royal waiting room at Amsterdam central station, it was decided that he would arrive by boat instead.⁸⁶ Van Dijk told Drehmanns on 2 July that they had finally

⁸⁵ *Gedenk-album. Herinnering aan het xxvieste Internationaal Eucharistisch Congres gehouden te Amsterdam 22–17 juli 1924 (Haarlem-Leiden 1924)*, [13].

⁸⁶ *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 27 July 1924.

managed to charter a ship, the *Batavier II*, “which is also [sometimes] used by our Queen”.⁸⁷ Van Dijk wrote to all parish priests of parishes along the route to gather the crowds to cheer and greet the cardinal on his way.⁸⁸

Despite these difficulties, a great mass of Catholics rallied to the congress. The Dutch cardinal sailed from Antwerp in Belgium via IJmuiden and the North Sea Canal to Amsterdam on the stately vessel *Batavier II*, and was greeted with applause from the crowds along the IJ quays. The ship was surrounded by countless other boats in his honour, including the entire fishing fleet of the Catholic fishing town of Volendam. In Amsterdam, Van Rossum and his retinue were welcomed by the assembled Dutch bishops and a guard of honour of the Knights of Malta.⁸⁹ A long train of forty carriages brought the prelates through the streets of Amsterdam to the city’s largest Catholic church, Saint Willibrord’s ‘buiten de Veste’, where proceedings commenced.

At the opening session on Wednesday evening 23 July, Van Rossum read a papal brief praising the Catholics of Amsterdam but also expressing displeasure at the ban on processions, which was then still on the statute book (Ruijs had resiled from tabling the bill to abolish it in 1923), preventing Catholics from practising their faith in public.⁹⁰ Over the following days, each of the eight cardinals who were in attendance celebrated Mass every morning in one of the churches of Amsterdam for the pilgrims from their home country or language group who had come to attend the congress.⁹¹ In the afternoon there were meetings and debates, and the evenings were concluded with musical recitals and large-scale religious manifestations. The cinema newsreels reported on the congress and a film called *Adoro Te* was made in the typically triumphalist style that pervaded the congress.⁹²

Due to the ban on processions, the great closing procession, the high point of every international eucharistic congress, had to take place off the public road in a football stadium. The Blessed Sacrament was carried under a canopy, followed by Van Rossum deep in adoration, as well as a long train of cardinals and other high-ranking

87 KDC, ROSS, no. 34: W. van Dijk to J. Drehmanns, 2 July 1924.

88 KDC, ROSS, no. 17: W. van Dijk to J. Drehmanns, 11 July 1924.

89 NHA, *Archive of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Haarlem 1853–1965*, no. 2176, ‘Permanent committee.

Letters concerning preparation 1922–1923–1924’: W. van Rossum to A. J. Callier, 25 May 1924, in which he officially announced that he had been appointed papal legate by letter from the secretary of state dated 15 May, and that the pope had appointed the domestic prelates Carlo Salotti and Bernard Eras and the secret chamberlains of the sword and cape the Marquess Claes Lagergren and Count Pio Ranuzzi de Bianchi as members of his retinue.

90 D’Yanville, Van Dijk, *Gedenkboek van het xxvii Internationaal Eucharistisch Congres*, 73–75.

91 *Ibid.*, 19–23.

92 Piet de Rooy (ed.), *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam. Deel IV: Tweestrijd om de hoofdstad 1900–2000* (Amsterdam 2007), 136–137; *Adoro Te. Officieel programma- en tekstboek van het cinematografisch beeld der blijde vierdagen van xxvii Intern. Eucharistisch Congres te Amsterdam* (Leiden 1924). For video footage, see the collection of the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision (www.beeldengeluid.nl).



The Netherlands had never seen so many cardinals before

prelates, priests and religious, the Catholic ministers, including Prime Minister Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, the political leader Willem Nolens, the rector and professors of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, a deputation from the army and the navy and a multitude of banners of Catholic civic organisations. Tens of thousands of Catholics had gathered inside and outside the stadium for the “greatest and most impressive procession” ever, albeit one shielded from public view.⁹³

Van Rossum’s call to abolish the ban on processions had not gone unnoticed. Relatively few objections against the congress had so far been expressed publicly by Protestants, but now various orthodox Calvinist spokesmen began to raise their voice, including Gerrit Kersten, a Protestant clergyman and founder of the new Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (Reformed Political Party, SGP).⁹⁴ He called on Dutch Protestants to

⁹³ *Adoro Te*, 8. See also *Gedenk-album. Herinnering aan het xxvieste Internationaal Eucharistisch Congres*.

The national Catholic papers and many magazines published special or extra editions.

⁹⁴ *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden*, 27 July 1924; *De Banier. Staatkundig Gereformeerd Dagblad*, 7 August 1924, signed “K”. The SGP continued the fight against lifting the ban on processions for many decades: it was only abolished in 1983.

join forces to resist the ultramontane attempt at Catholicisation which had the ‘conversion of the Netherlands’ as its goal. He feared that the weaker brethren among them in particular were vulnerable to the lure of papist outward splendour and the idolatrous mysteries of the eucharist, which appealed to “ancient primitive religious instincts”.⁹⁵ But to the disappointment of fanatical antipapists, collective Protestant outrage proved elusive.⁹⁶

Someone else who had reason to be upset by the public criticism of the procession ban was the Catholic prime minister. The papal brief was a slap on the wrist for Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, who had sacrificed the freedom to hold processions to save his coalition. Formally speaking, the reprimand came from the pope, but Van Rossum was very likely the initiator. The cardinal set great store by the presence of the Catholic faith in the public sphere. It was also consistent with Pius XI’s policy of promoting the cult of Christ the Universal King. In 1925, the sixteenth centenary of the First Council of Nicaea in 325, the pope instituted the annual solemnity of Christ the King, to express the belief that Christ’s reign extended over all sectors of society as well as over every human being.⁹⁷

Ruijs was furious that Van Rossum and the curia had intervened in his political policy. His notes show that he sought support from Bishop Callier after hearing the papal message; Callier assured him that, had his advice been asked, he would have insisted on scrapping the offending passage.⁹⁸

On the other hand, the legate, and probably more so, his secretary Drehmanns, continued to harbour resentment at the fact that there had been no official reception by the Dutch government. Ruijs had a meeting with the offended cardinal on the last day of the congress.⁹⁹ The prime minister argued that, since the Vatican had sent no formal announcement of Van Rossum’s visit, the government had not been able to prepare an official reception of the cardinal legate either. Also, Ruijs said, it was in any case a strictly religious event. Van Rossum contended that it would have been more courteous to find some middle way, “given the importance of the Congress and impressions abroad”. He ended the conversation by telling the prime minister that he would report back to Rome about all that had taken place. Afterwards, Ruijs had a short meeting with Drehmanns, who dismissed the lack of an official announce-

95 A. C. Schade van Westrum, *De eucharistie in verband met het Eucharistisch Congres* (Hillegom [1924]), 22; H. E. Beermink, *Het Eucharistisch Congres te Amsterdam* (Rotterdam [1924]), 18.

96 *Het Volk. Dagblad voor de arbeiderspartij*, 29 July 1924. The number of newspaper articles expressing Protestant protests was small. Johan van Zuthem, ‘Heelen en halven’. *Orthodox-protestantse voormannen en het ‘politiek’ antipapisme in de periode 1872–1925* (Hilversum 2000), 266–269.

97 Emma Fattorini, *Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican. Pope Pius XI and the speech that was never made* (Cambridge 2011), 40–45.

98 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 357–358 in which he quotes from notes by Ruijs de Beerenbrouck.

99 KDC, ROSS, no. 101: C. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck to J. Drehmanns, 27 July 1924; De Valk, Kappelhof (eds.), *Dagboeken van P. J. M. Aalberse*, 510–511.

ment as an error on the part of Secretary of State Gasparri and of incompetent ecclesiastical officials.¹⁰⁰

That same afternoon, Drehmanns, “in Cardinal Van Rossum’s name”, tried to have articles placed in the Catholic newspapers which sharply condemned the government’s and the queen’s absence. When the prime minister got wind of this, he immediately went to see Callier, whose diocese of Haarlem encompassed the big cities in the west of the country where the large newspapers had their headquarters, and who had some influence over Catholic chief editors.¹⁰¹ Callier was able to prevent publication of these articles that criticised the government’s handling of the eucharistic congress.¹⁰²

Ruijs’s notes, and correspondence between the prime minister and the Dutch minister to the Holy See, show that Van Rossum’s threat to mention the affair in Rome had made an impression. This might jeopardise good relations between the Netherlands and the Vatican, which in turn might threaten the Dutch legation in Rome, which had only been established – with Van Rossum’s help – in 1915.¹⁰³ The prime minister went to great lengths to mend fences with the cardinal while he was still in the country, that is, until 16 August. He suggested that an audience with Queen Wilhelmina could be arranged after all, as the monarch had returned from Norway on 1 August. Ruijs, who was in Maastricht at the time, also asked for a second meeting with the cardinal, in the nearby Redemptorist monastery in Wittem. Van Rossum dismissed both requests: he had nothing to add to what he had said.¹⁰⁴

In early September, Van Rossum wrote from Karlsbad to his fellow Redemptorist Ter Haar in Rome that the congress had been a marvellous success, “above all expectations”.¹⁰⁵ This was also the message he conveyed to the pope and to Secretary of State Gasparri after his return to Rome on 28 September. The internuncio, Cesare Orsenigo, similarly sent positive reports. The Vatican’s goal had been realised: a massive display of Catholic public support for the eucharist, the pope and Christ the King. Moreover,

100 KDC, C.J.M. Ruijs *de Beerenbrouck papers* (RUIJ), no. 110: notes by Ruijs de Beerenbrouck. See also Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 356–357.

101 KDC, RUIJ, no. 110: Alphons Laudy, editor-in-chief of *De Tijd*, to Ruijs de Beerenbrouck, 25 July 1924. He wrote that it was a request from Father Drehmanns on behalf of Cardinal Van Rossum.

102 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 358–363. Ruijs wrote to Van Nispen on 20 October 1924 that there had been no consultation between the Catholic ministers about an official welcome and a government delegation. But it is clear from De Valk, Kappelhof (eds.), *Dagboeken van P.J.M. Aalberse*, 510 that there had been a “long meeting” on this topic.

103 KDC, RUIJ, no. 110: notes by Ruijs de Beerenbrouck. See also Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 209–210. On the legation, see Chapter 11.3.

104 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 210, 363, note 495, where he quotes W.J.A.J. Duynstee c.s.s.r. to R.B. Ledebøer, advocate general at the Hoge Raad (High Court), Wittem 6 August 1924.

105 AGHR, LIX 1a2: W. van Rossum to F. ter Haar, consultor generalis, Karlsbad 5 September 1924.

it had been an occasion for the Catholic church to manifest itself without too many difficulties in this predominantly Protestant country. The streets of the Dutch capital had been lined for days on end with “cassocks, habits and purple bands”.¹⁰⁶

The queen’s and the government’s absence did not seem to perturb the Roman authorities too much. Van Rossum probably never even mentioned it, despite his previous threat. But the affair eventually reached the secretary of state through a letter by Callier, who sent him the article that Drehmanns had tried to have published in the newspapers. Gasparri told the Dutch minister to the Holy See, Octaaf van Nispen tot Sevenaer, that publication of this piece would have severely damaged relations between the Netherlands and the Vatican. This diplomat’s position in Rome and that of the internuncio in The Hague might both have become untenable. Gasparri added that the Vatican had deliberately decided not to send the government any official communication about the congress, precisely to spare it any embarrassment. He had also shown the article to Van Rossum and had told him to instruct his secretary to stick to his own business in future. Van Rossum had given no sign of acknowledgement, agreement or disapproval, but had simply said he would convey the message to his secretary.¹⁰⁷

As it happens, the Dutch legation’s days were numbered anyway, and it was shut down in 1925 after a parliamentary motion tabled by the SGP passed, occasioning the collapse of the government and an end to the confessional coalition. Van Nispen blamed Van Rossum and the eucharistic congress for having directly provoked Dutch Protestants. He wrote to Ruijs that he had warned the cardinal, but Van Rossum had only replied, “You shouldn’t be so afraid of [Protestant] ministers.” When Van Nispen reminded the cardinal of these warnings, he had made no reply but had worn a “dejected” expression on his face.¹⁰⁸

It must be asked, however, whether the closure of the legation really was due only to the eucharistic congress. The Catholic advance in politics had been the target of orthodox Protestant concern for a long time, and there had been previous attempts to have the legation shut down.¹⁰⁹ Relations with the Vatican had been very important for the Dutch government during and immediately after the war, but this necessity was no longer very clear in 1925.¹¹⁰ The loss of the legation was a setback for the Vatican.¹¹¹ It did not mean that relations with the Netherlands were broken off completely: the internuncio remained in The Hague. Nor did it cause the Vatican

106 De Rooy (ed.), *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, 136–137.

107 Puchinger, *Colijn*, vol. 2, 211–212.

108 *Ibid.*, 364, 403, 420, note 44, 695.

109 *Ibid.*, 418, note 39. Van Wijnbergen to Van Nispen, 26 December 1925.

110 Frans Verhagen, *Toen de katholieken Nederland veroverden. Charles Ruijs de Beerenbrouck 1873–1936* (Amsterdam 2015), 230–231.

111 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 101.

to take a more cautious approach to international eucharistic congresses, even in majority-Protestant countries. The next congress was held in Chicago in 1926 with a tremendous display of Catholic triumphalism, including a special red train for the cardinals and a closing procession on the public road with no fewer than 750,000 Catholic participants.¹¹²

Van Rossum deplored the closure of the Dutch legation, but appears to have been more upset by Ruijs de Beerenbrouck's political decisions during his visit. In the following years he felt little urge to help the Dutch government again from his position in the Vatican, complaining that he never received recognition for whatever assistance he did offer.¹¹³ It is remarkable too that Drehmanns in his biography does not mention the international eucharistic congress in Amsterdam at all, whereas his account of the 1912 congress in Vienna occupies about a quarter of the book. He clearly had bad memories of the event.¹¹⁴

Although Van Rossum had not had the political and episcopal support he had hoped to get, particularly from Callier, he had received the acclaim of many Dutch Catholics, from all walks of life. A monument in the Amsterdam Begijnhof or beguinage that was unveiled in 1928 was testimony to this. It was a bust of Van Rossum, flanked by reliefs of Bishops Heylen and Callier, although the latter refused to contribute financially.¹¹⁵ Certain wealthy friends of the cardinal's had to step in instead. Van Rossum had his photograph taken in front of the monument in 1929, surrounded by a group of friends, including Willem Dreesmann. Nearly a century later the monument has been truncated by the removal of Callier and Heylen, but Van Rossum's bust is still there, as a Catholic *lieu de mémoire* pointing to the "greatest of all demonstrations" ever held in Amsterdam.¹¹⁶

112 XXVIII *International Eucharistic Congress June 20–24 1926, Chicago Ill.*, [Chicago] 1926. Van Rossum at one point considered attending this congress, but his clash with the American bishops (see Chapter 15) possibly dissuaded him. KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Sister Domicilla (Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth) to W. van Rossum, Philadelphia 14 March 1925. She wrote, "With what joy I heard the news that Your Eminence will preside over the Eucharistic Congress in Chicago. What a privilege for the whole community to have its most Rev. Card. Protector here in America. How often I wished (...) that his Eminence would come over to America and see for Himself the extensive field of work." See also KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli (Sisters of the Holy Cross of Ingenbohl) to W. van Rossum, Merrill 1 December 1925; Aniceta Regli to J. Drehmanns, Merrill 1 December 1925.

113 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 5 November 1930.

114 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*. The biography runs to 110 pages.

115 The organisers unsuccessfully tried to supply part of the sum required from the positive balance of the congress. The words "Not a Euch. cause" appear in the margins of a reminder to Bishop Callier, 7 July 1926 in NHA, *Archive of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Haarlem 1853–1965*, no. 2176, 'Cardinal v. Rossum Legate 1924'.

116 *De Maasbode*, 9 September 1929. The monument was designed by the architect J. Kuijt and the sculptures were by Gerard Hoppen. The sculpture of Th. L. Heylen is currently in the abbey of Berne, De Vylder, 'Monseigneur Th. L. Heylen en de eucharistische beweging', 55. The current whereabouts of the Callier relief are unknown.

4 Second journey to Iceland (1929)

For Van Rossum and Drehmanns, the trip to Iceland in 1923 had been the highlight of their Nordic voyage. The great reception reserved for them had been impressive. They were very hopeful that great sacrifices would yield many divine blessings. “How beautiful it would be if not only Iceland were to be converted, but a mighty stream were to go forth from Iceland for the conversion of all the Scandinavian countries.”¹¹⁷ To achieve this, it was necessary to restore the Catholic church there and give it back as much of its medieval splendour as was viable.¹¹⁸ “Do not rest before you have brought Iceland back to Jesus’ Sacred Heart”, Van Rossum wrote to the prefect, Meulenberg, from Norway immediately after his visit to Reykjavik.¹¹⁹

Back in Rome, Van Rossum promised Meulenberg that he would return to Reykjavik in five years’ time, if the prefect had by then built an imposing new church and Iceland counted three thousand Catholics. This would make it possible to open several mission stations and raise Iceland to the status of an apostolic vicariate – Van Rossum would then return to ordain Meulenberg a bishop and personally consecrate the cathedral.¹²⁰ This promise was a great stimulus for Meulenberg. He had already told Van Rossum during his visit that he was planning to build a new stone church in Reykjavik instead of the old wooden building that served as a church at the time. But the architectural plans he showed Van Rossum, based on old Icelandic building styles, failed to excite the cardinal’s enthusiasm.¹²¹ Van Rossum believed more in having an alluring, imposing church. “Make sure you build a beautiful church, as I have told you often; not like a Waterstaatskerk, but a beautiful Gothic church that will make an impression.”¹²² The Gothic or neo-Gothic style had gone out of fashion in Western Europe, but for Van Rossum it was still the most appropriate style for a Catholic church. To make an impression, the new church would have to become the tallest building on the island – taller than any of the Protestant churches.

Meulenberg promised that the church would be a monument to Van Rossum’s visit and to the “glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus”.¹²³ He initially estimated the costs at 300,000 crowns. Over the following years, Meulenberg frequently received financial support from the cardinal, including for the publication of an Icelandic catechism.

117 RDA, 3A: J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenberg, 24 June 1924.

118 Vefie Poels, ‘Tussen distels en doornen. De zware taak van Gerard Boots als missionaris in IJsland 1921–1973’, in: *Horster Historiën*, no. 5 (Horst 1999), 161–186.

119 RDA, 2A: W. van Rossum to M. Meulenberg, 23 July 1923.

120 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenberg, 13 October 1923.

121 *Ibid.*, 3A: J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenberg, 12 November 1924.

122 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to M. Meulenberg, 8 November 1924. Waterstaatskerken were simple, usually neo-classical churches built under the supervision of, and often subsidised by, the Dutch government department of Waterstaat (water management and public works) in the nineteenth century.

123 *Ibid.*: M. Meulenberg to W. van Rossum, 21 January 1924.

The money came out of the donations Van Rossum received after the publication of his pamphlet *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*.¹²⁴ He also persuaded the Propagation of the Faith to make an extraordinary donation of 25,000 crowns for the new church. In late 1925, Van Rossum advised Meulenberg to take out a loan; if the Montfort Missionaries were not able to help, he was to contact the Redemptorists in Amsterdam on his behalf.¹²⁵ The cardinal's official letters often went accompanied by an informal note and a cheque, small or large, and he frequently exhorted Meulenberg not to mention these donations to his colleagues in other Scandinavian countries or to his provincial or superior general, obviously to avoid jealousy or awkward questions.

The money raised by late 1927 seemed insufficient to complete the church in time for the cardinal's promised visit in the summer of 1928. Pius XI recognised the importance of the new church in Reykjavik and contributed himself; Gasparri sent 50,000 lire on the pope's behalf in October 1927. The pope did have one wish: the cathedral was to be dedicated not to the Sacred Heart of Jesus but to Christ the King, a devotion dear to Pius's heart. He sent a statue of Christ the King to accompany the donation, "so that the devotion of the faithful might be focused ever more vividly on Christ, the Lord and Redeemer".¹²⁶ Even though there was not enough money for a spire, the church would remain the tallest building in the land until after the Second World War.

Meulenberg founded two new mission stations, the first in Hafnarfjörður. Van Rossum urged him to start by inviting sisters to open a convent there: "This is a most important point". There was no shortage of sisters in the Netherlands, he wrote on 26 December 1923, and if Meulenberg needed recommendations, he could count on him.¹²⁷ Van Rossum persuaded the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chambéry, who already had a convent in Reykjavik, to build a small hospital in Hafnarfjörður in 1926. Later, he also inspired the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary to go to Stykkishólmur – a village of 700 inhabitants without a single Catholic – and build a hospital there, so that there was a third station by 1935. He also promoted the establishment of contemplative monasteries, but was unable to convince any Trappists or Benedictines to come to the island. However, the contemplative Carmelite sisters of Egmond in the Netherlands decided in the 1930s to found a convent in Hafnarfjörður.¹²⁸

124 *Ibid.* Van Rossum sent Meulenberg more than five thousand Danish crowns on 15 February 1924.

125 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to M. Meulenberg, 3 December 1925.

126 *Ibid.*: P. Gasparri to M. Meulenberg, 25 October 1927.

127 *Ibid.*, 2.AII: J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenberg, 26 December 1923, with an addition by W. van Rossum.

128 Luk Van de Sijpe, 'Plannen voor een nieuwe stichting op IJsland (1924)', in: *Abdijleven*, 45(2001), 12–20; ENK, *Archive of the Carmel of Iceland*, no. 9: W. van Rossum to Direction de l'Œuvre 'Contemplation et Apostolat', Saint Andrew's abbey, Lophem-les-Bruges, 31 December 1928 (copy); RDA, 3A: M. Meulenberg to W. van Rossum, 5 September 1924; 4A: M. Meulenberg to W. van Rossum, 27 October 1930 in which he also thanks him for the bells; KDC, ROSS, no. 7: M. Meulenberg to W. van Rossum, 21 April 1932. The same letter says that the Trappists were going to go to Iceland. »



Reykjavik's Cathedral of Christ the King under construction, c. 1927

But the objective of increasing the number of Catholics to 3,000 proved elusive. Meulenberg went to great lengths to inflate the figures so as to give an optimistic impression. His close associate Gerard Boots warned Drehmanns that this impression was false: there were very few Catholics and almost no “renunciations”. Rome had been told that the Montfort Missionaries were providing pastoral care to 3,000 French fishermen, but in fact there were not more than fifty. “You should not take His Reverence’s figures too literally.” Boots added that the Montfort Fathers were reluctant to see Iceland elevated to the rank of an apostolic vicariate with Meulenberg as its bishop, given certain reservations concerning Meulenberg’s personal suitability. He concluded by asking Drehmanns not to give his letter to Van Rossum, or at least to ensure that Meulenberg, who was also the superior of the Montfort Fathers on the island, would not find out about it.¹²⁹

Van Rossum’s second visit to Iceland was scheduled for the summer of 1928, but it had to be cancelled because he fell seriously ill at the beginning of the year.¹³⁰ He did feel able to travel to Limerick in Ireland, however, where he attended the sixtieth anniversary of the archconfraternity of the Holy Family from 20 to 22 July, a celebration organised by the Redemptorists. The superior general, Patrick Murray, believed that

» See also Brian Heffernan, *Modern Carmelite Nuns and Contemplative Identities. Shaping Spirituality in the Netherlands* (Manchester, forthcoming).

¹²⁹ KDC, ROSS, no. 7: G. Boots to J. Drehmanns, 1 February 1928; Poels, ‘Tussen distels en doornen’, 172–173.

¹³⁰ RDA, 3A: J. Drehmanns to M. Meulenberg, 20 December 1927.

the anniversary of the largest branch of the archconfraternity could not be celebrated without Van Rossum, who was the former director of this sodality in Wittem.¹³¹ The cardinal received a magnificent welcome in this thoroughly Catholic country, which had only recently fought Protestant Britain to gain its independence in 1921.¹³²

The voyage to Reykjavik finally went ahead in July 1929. The pope had just approved the elevation of the prefecture to the status of a vicariate and the appointment of Meulenberg as vicar apostolic. Müller and Brems joined the cardinal as co-consecrators for Meulenberg's ordination.¹³³ Pius XI sent a beautiful chasuble with an image of Christ the King.¹³⁴ Van Rossum consecrated the cathedral on 23 July 1929, as a commemorative stone in the cathedral still shows, and a tile bearing his portrait was placed in the wall. The cardinal once again drew large crowds who marvelled at him as if he were the eighth wonder of the world, as one of the priests wrote to his provincial.¹³⁵ He was given the high honour of the knight's cross in the order of "Íslenska falkans" ("Icelandic Falcon") to mark the occasion, an award made with the approval of the king of Denmark and Iceland.¹³⁶

Meulenberg was consecrated titular bishop of Hólar. This appointment symbolically repaired the 'rupture' in the history of the Catholic church in Iceland, because Hólar had been the see of the last Catholic bishop during the Reformation, Jón Arason, who was beheaded in 1550 for having fought to keep his country 'free and Catholic'. The decision to choose this titular see caused some protest from Icelanders who felt it was an attack on the Lutheran national church.

Meulenberg wrote to Van Rossum that Catholics would flock to the new church in great numbers once it was consecrated, but this miracle never happened. *Agentia Fides* reported on 14 November 1931 that a bell had arrived in Reykjavik for the cathedral, a gift from Van Rossum, and it mentioned that there were two hundred Catholics in the country.¹³⁷ The cardinal, now somewhat suspicious, asked Meulenberg at the end of the year if this number had in fact been reached.¹³⁸

131 Limerick, *Archive of the Redemptorists*, Holy Family Chronicles: II, 1898–1975; KDC, ROSS, no. 224; KDC, ROSS, no. 45; Michael J. Keynes, mayor of Limerick to W. van Rossum, 4 August 1928. Van Rossum was made an honorary freeman of the city during his visit.

132 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 84–87. See also Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment. Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland, 1919–21*, Manchester 2014.

133 His retinue consisted of Drehmanns, his brother (the cardinal's gentleman), Brother Egidius and a servant. RDA, 3A: W. van Rossum to M. Meulenberg, 6 June 1929. On 25 June, he sent him 5000 crowns to pay for the costs.

134 *Ibid.*: P. Gasparri to M. Meulenberg, 18 September 1929.

135 Poels, 'Tussen distels en doornen', 172.

136 Reykjavik, National Archive, *Falkaorðan*, F-1-I and II, 1924–1934, 1989 B/74: telegram, 22 July 1929 with royal assent.

137 KDC, ROSS, no. 224.

138 RDA, 4A: W. van Rossum to M. Meulenberg, 20 December 1931.

Van Rossum never stopped believing in the conversion of the Lutheran North. On 2 February 1930, he wrote in strict confidence to Brems that he wanted to relaunch the mission to the Faroe Islands. The enterprise would have to be kept out of the public eye – publicity might jeopardise it – but he had found two priests of the Collegio Urbano who were prepared to go there, the Dutchman Engelbert Boekenoogen and the Scot Thomas King. The funds for this “penniless” mission would come from a donation, and both priests were to be paid directly by Propaganda Fide. At Van Rossum’s instigation, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary also established themselves in the islands, initially in civilian attire. Boekenoogen reported back to the cardinal on 28 May 1931 that the population was generally very pleased with the arrival of the missionaries, which gave Van Rossum a “great deal of hope”.¹³⁹

5 The Scandinavian eucharistic congress in Copenhagen (1932)

A Scandinavian eucharistic congress was held in Copenhagen from 19 to 21 August 1932. The formula was similar to that of the international eucharistic congresses held in Vienna and Amsterdam, where Van Rossum had been the papal legate. But unlike these international congresses, this one was not organised by the permanent committee, but was the fruit of a private initiative, as were the many national and diocesan eucharistic congresses of the inter-war years. It was announced in mid-March 1932 that the congress would be presided over by Bishop Brems and that it would be the “greatest Catholic celebration” in Denmark since the Reformation.¹⁴⁰

Van Rossum was in attendance as the pope’s representative, although not this time as *legatus a latere*. There were considerably fewer high-ranking clerics than at international eucharistic congresses. Among the attendees were the Polish Cardinal August Hlond, ten bishops and missionary bishops, including the vicars apostolic of the Northern European countries, the abbot general of the Norbertines, Gummarus Crets, and Msgr. Alfred Baudrillart of the Institut Catholique of Paris. Many Danes came to gape at the unusual display of so many Catholic dignitaries at Copenhagen station.

The evening session of 19 August was broadcast live by radio. Van Rossum spoke in French and told the attendees that the pope loved the people of Scandinavia and was very pleased with the eucharistic congress. He had given the cardinal the extraordinary faculty to impart solemn apostolic benediction with a plenary indul-

139 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: W. van Rossum to J. Brems, 2 February 1930, Nota d’archivio 387/1930 of Propaganda Fide, E. Boekenoogen to W. van Rossum, 28 May 1931;

KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 24 October 1931; interview with E.G. Boekenoogen (1902–1996) by Vefie Poels, 29 October 1993, Amersfoort.

140 *De Maasbode*, 15 March 1932.

gence to all attendees.¹⁴¹ Both the Danish king and the pope in Rome listened to the two-hour broadcast. On Sunday afternoon, a procession was held on the public street ‘for the first time in centuries’, in marked contrast with the international congress in Amsterdam. Baudrillart, who was critical of Van Rossum and accused him of damaging French interests in Morocco and elsewhere, was nonetheless impressed by the reception in Denmark, the respect shown to the church, the crowds that attended a special Mass for children, and the great interest in the congress, and grudgingly acknowledged Van Rossum’s role.¹⁴²

The cardinal, now stooped and looking weary as the photos of the congress show, was pleased with the reception and the festivities. He had written to Drehmanns in mid-July that he was completely exhausted, more “worn out” than ever, but he wrote from Karlsbad on 2 August to say that he was back to his old self again.¹⁴³ But the Copenhagen congress took its toll on him. Van Rossum is missing in many photographs of the congress that feature the other bishops. He declined the king’s invitation to the Catholic prelates to attend a private audience in Amaliaborg palace on Monday morning, and instead left that morning for the Netherlands, his last, very busy, visit to the fatherland.

As a Dutch cardinal of the curia, Van Rossum was sent by the Holy See – perhaps at his own behest – to convince the Lutherans of Northern Europe and the Calvinists of the Netherlands of the greatness of the Catholic faith. He was hostile to all Protestant denominations, a sentiment fed no doubt by his Dutch and Redemptorist backgrounds, but one which was not unusual for curial officials at the time. He was convinced of the official doctrine that the Catholic church was the only true church, and even though the ecumenical movement was making progress in the 1920s under the influence of the Swedish bishop Nathan Söderblom, he believed church unity could be achieved only if Protestants returned to the bosom of Holy Mother Church. He was not always very tactical in propagating this view, and this damaged the prestige of the Catholic church. But for Van Rossum and the Holy See, which reiterated these views in the encyclical *Mortalium Animos*, there could be no doubt that there was only one true church: that led by the pope in Rome.

141 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: ‘Un salut et une bénédiction de Rome’, 19 August 1932, speech in Van Rossum’s handwriting.

142 Christophe (éd.), *Les carnets du cardinal Baudrillart*, vol. 5: 1928–1932 (Paris 2003), 256–263, 271.

See also 233 (Lille, 25 July 1932) about the new organisation of the church in Morocco that was imposed by Propaganda Fide. Van Rossum had made much of this as a great victory for the church, but Baudrillart sneered, “yes, of the same kind as the [victories] won in the Scandinavian countries that have arrested the progress of Catholicism”.

143 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 15 July and 2 August 1932.

An army of good religious

1 The shock troops of the church

One of the reasons Willem van Rossum was an ideal candidate for the job of prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1918 was the position he occupied in the world of the religious. It would have been impossible to carry out the expansionist missionary policy set out in *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae* without the help of a large number of missionaries, or “privates”, as they were called in *Rerum Ecclesiae*.¹ Under Van Rossum’s leadership during the interwar years, religious became a growing army, commanded from the heart of the church in Rome, to assist the Catholic church in its rapid spread across the globe. In the way he organised missionary work, Van Rossum followed in the footsteps of the policy launched under Leo XIII, but he executed it with Dutch entrepreneurial spirit. He had a sober, almost legalist view of the religious life, and regarded religious rules and constitutions as strict guidelines. This had been evident during his years in Wittem, and it would be a clear principle for him throughout his life. Religious discipline based on personal conviction was of the essence. He expected all religious to be thoroughly persuaded of this, including those who worked in the missions.

The cardinal influenced the assembling and formation of the church’s missionary shock troops in a number of ways. As a member of the Congregation for Religious, he was involved in the drafting and approval of rules and constitutions, drawing for this on his experience on the commission for the codification of canon law. As prefect of Propaganda Fide, he succeeded in having certain competencies of the Congregation for Religious transferred to his own dicastery. And, as we will see in the following chapter, as cardinal protector of dozens of religious institutes, many of which were engaged in missionary work or began to do so at his behest, he fulfilled his responsibilities to act as their ‘leader, protector and corrector’. Finally, whenever doctrinal matters were at stake, he took appropriate measures in his capacity as a member of the Holy Office.

Van Rossum was strict when it came to governing religious, but the thousands of letters preserved in the archives of Propaganda Fide in Rome and the Catholic Documentation Centre in Nijmegen and in the Redemptorist archives in Rome

¹ *Rerum Ecclesiae*, 67.

and Sint Agatha in the Netherlands also show him taking a warm, personal interest in his correspondents, reflecting his own experience as a religious. Priests, sisters and brothers sought his help in a wide range of issues, both trifling and important. Many letters were about financial problems and internal conflicts within congregations or orders. Sometimes superiors were at daggers drawn with one another, or former superiors felt unjustly treated, or a split seemed likely.² Other writers complained of fellow sisters' predilection for confectionery, which some loophole in the constitutions permitted them to indulge.³ Many letters were about conflicts between religious and bishops or vicars apostolic, and sometimes about requests for new mission territories.⁴

Some were very personal, such as the cardinal's correspondence with a prefect apostolic whose conscience was troubling him due to his sexual contacts with men.⁵ Issues relating to sexual relationships or abuse appeared only sporadically in the letters I have seen. Some letters appear to refer to sexual abuse of sisters by priests, but the references are never explicit.⁶ One letter contained a clear denunciation, by a whistleblowing sister, of the situation in an orphanage where the children were exploited, not fed properly and worked from early in the morning till late at night, emptying latrines in the city for example.⁷ Others wrote to Van Rossum about physical and mental health issues, or to ask for his advice concerning a suicide attempt by a sister who had been refused for final profession.⁸

2 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 960, Chanoinesses Missionnaires de St. Augustin, f 411–425: Ursula De Jonckheere to W. van Rossum, Leuven 1 July 1927.

3 AGHR, *Correspondence with Redemptoristines (OSSR)*, folder 'Sambeek': M. Augustina van de Goddelijke Liefde to W. van Rossum, August 1925. She complained about the excessive consumption of chocolate – “whole bars” –, butter tablet, acid drops and peppermint. Intervention by the Redemptorists of Wittem put a stop to this; see Mother Theresa van Jesus to W. van Rossum, 27 December 1925. On the Redemptoristines and their relationship with the Redemptorists and Van Rossum, see also Chapter 9.4.

4 See for instance KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Maria Antonia a Spir. Sto c.d.i. subprioress, to W. van Rossum, Carmel of Echt in Limburg 4 March 1929. She asked whether he knew a place in the missions because they “would be so pleased to give Your Eminence the joy and consolation of a new foundation in the missions”; KDC, ROSS, no. 94: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 7 January 1932: the provincial of the Montfort Missionaries had asked him whether Van Rossum could give them a mission territory (“débouchés”) in the Dutch East Indies.

5 See Chapter 14.5.

6 See *infra* on the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood.

7 KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Sr. M. Stanislas Bongard to W. van Rossum, Fribourg, Orphelinat de Sales (Gruyère), 30 June 1925. The rules of her institute (the Ingenbohl Sisters) permitted her to write directly to the cardinal protector. She feared she would be dismissed from the congregation on account of her complaint, but hoped, given her age (60), that she would be allowed to stay at least as an unsalaried servant.

8 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Theresia Beck, superior general of the Ingenbohl Sisters, to W. van Rossum, 2 April 1929; J. Zeman, physician, to Theresia Beck, 28 March 1929.

Van Rossum replied personally to many letters and his secretary Drehmanns did the rest, while official missionary business was mostly dealt with by the officials of Propaganda Fide on the cardinal's instructions. In addition, many missionary bishops and superiors of male and female institutes came to discuss their questions and problems with him in private during his daily audiences in the palace on Piazza di Spagna.⁹

In Van Rossum's eyes, good religious placed themselves at the service of Holy Church, were faithful to their own order or congregation by observing the rule and constitutions, were obedient to their superiors and sought the things that are above, that is, were detached from earthly and material things, in doing so setting an example for others. They could reach eternal salvation by living according to the three evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty and chastity. He often praised congregations – especially of sisters – for their “spirit of simplicity”. He wrote to the Dutch Sisters of Our Lady Mother of Mercy (the Sisters of Mercy or Sisters of Tilburg), the first congregation whose cardinal protector he became, that the noviciate served to overcome worldly affections and unmortified passions.¹⁰ The noviciate should focus entirely on religious formation, and not on any secular objective such as teacher training. Otherwise, sisters were likely to become dissatisfied, restless and unhappy, and a bad influence on the rest of the community. It was better to have five good religious – humble, modest, obedient and charitable – than ten mediocre ones.¹¹

For Van Rossum, the rule and the constitutions, once approved by the Holy See, were the rock upon which the religious life was built. He held this view throughout his life, as is evident from his 1931 letter to the Redemptoristine Sisters that appears as the preface of their new constitutions of that year.¹² Van Rossum imagined the scene of an angel descending from heaven to communicate God's will to the sisters – the sisters would surely have placed great trust in his words. But the new rule and constitutions, the cardinal continued, were even more certain. God was giving the sisters “the holy Constitutions, stamped with the seal of the first and highest Authority here on earth: they have been confirmed by Holy Church”. Some might harbour doubts about the words of an angel, but “you must not have the least doubt about the Holy Rule” and the certainty this offered.¹³

9 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 91.

10 This congregation was founded in 1832 by the later Bishop Joannes Zwijsen and became an institute of pontifical right in 1848. It had c. 3,400 sisters in 1912 and just under 3,800 in 1932. It was the largest active congregation of women religious in the Netherlands at the time. Alix van de Molengraaf, *Drie begijnen zijn begonnen. Geschiedenis van tienduizend Zusters van Liefde 1832–1964* (Tilburg [1992]), 228.

11 ENK, AZLT, no. 2858: W. van Rossum to M. Theresinia Favier, Rome 16 January and 21 December 1917.

12 *Regels en constituties voor de ordezusters*, 3–7. Van Rossum and Drehmanns were involved in the revision of these constitutions. See KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, Karlsbad 11 August 1931.

13 *Regels en constituties voor de ordezusters*, 3–7.

The rule and constitutions not only codified an institute's manner of life and governmental structure, but also the task that the order or congregation in question had to fulfil within the church and society as a whole. Every religious could contribute to this task by strictly abiding by the rules. This was also how Van Rossum himself lived his life. The conflicts that he had had with his fellow Redemptorists as prefect of students and rector of Wittem had ultimately been about his belief that they were not living according to the rules that Alphonsus Liguori had given his institute.

Of course, as a Redemptorist, Van Rossum knew that human nature was weak and that the devil was always trying to ensnare people through temptations. The best remedy was simple piety – devotion to Mary or to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus – and particularly prayer. As he wrote to the superior general of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, all their strength lay in prayer: “light, wisdom, patience, strength, virtue, charity, zeal and generosity to follow Our Saviour”.¹⁴ A certain forbearance with those who broke the rules was in order, as per Alphonsus's teachings, but Van Rossum believed there was no place in the congregation, or even in the church, for religious who refused to mend their ways after repeated admonishments.

Van Rossum's sober conception of the religious life left little room for feelings of religious rapture or passionate mysticism, but his secretary Drehmanns had a rather different perspective. As Van Rossum delegated much of his correspondence to Drehmanns, the latter took the opportunity to convey his own personal ideas to his religious correspondents from time to time, and this did not always meet with the cardinal's approval. Van Rossum discovered in 1915 that Drehmanns had been forming so-called mystical circles among the Sisters of Tilburg, little groups of sisters who were supposedly closer to Jesus than other sisters. The cardinal strongly disapproved and he warned the superior, “It is excellent to set up circles, confraternities, spiritual societies or groupings among secular people, in parishes, at schools, boarding schools, colleges, etc, and it is a most forceful instrument for the young.” But this was not so for religious communities, all of whose novices and sisters “form a holy circle around Jesus”, from which no member should be excluded. Distinguishing special groups within religious societies was liable to foster jealousy and factionalism.¹⁵ He did not, however, forbid the sisters from occasionally asking Drehmanns for spiritual counsel, and he had no doubts as to the latter's “holy intentions”.¹⁶ It is not known whether Drehmanns also encouraged the setting up of similar circles

14 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: W. van Rossum to Sister M. Paula Emunds, superior general, 21 June 1914.

15 ENK, AZLT, no. 2858: W. van Rossum to Theresinia Favier, 21 May 1915.

16 *Ibid.*, 21 May and 4 August 1915.

in other congregations, but they continued to exist among the Sisters of Tilburg for many decades.¹⁷

Over the course of his life, Drehmanns developed a mystical view of the religious life that revolved around the concept of “infused contemplation”: the advanced path to religious perfection and proximity to the divine.¹⁸ In his biography of Van Rossum, Drehmanns asserted that the cardinal, too, was of a mystical disposition and had achieved the highest stage of prayer. Van Rossum would surely have rejected such a claim. Correspondence between him and Drehmanns in 1931 about the writings of Blessed Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort show his reserved attitude to religious ecstasy. Drehmanns defended the founder of the Montfort Missionaries, saying that he was very much like Alphonsus; Van Rossum praised his devotion, but wrote confidentially that he regarded Montfort’s concept of various mystical stages leading up to “slavery to the Blessed Virgin” as the highest, third stage, as excessive. “I have to admit that I’ve always had a great deal of veneration for and devotion to Mary; but I’m not very keen on this ‘slavery.’” He argued that it was possible to have “perfect devotion to Mary” without it, and yet ascend to even higher planes, like Benedict had done.¹⁹

2 Member of the Congregation for Religious

The numerical growth of male and female religious institutes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave the Holy See the opportunity to expand its influence in various important sectors of society. The activities of religious in the fields of education, healthcare and community work gave the church the chance to further the reign of Christ the King. More religious also created new opportunities for the worldwide missions. But given the Holy See’s preference for centralisation and standardisation, the expansion of religious communities brought with it the challenge of homogenising and regulating these institutes.²⁰

One instrument to both stimulate and streamline the religious life was the creation of an organ of the curia dedicated to this task. *Sapienti Consilio* established the Congregation for Religious in 1908, as a split-off from the Congregation for Bishops

17 See Chapter 19.5.

18 José Eijt, *Een roeping in de wereld. Geschiedenis van het seculier instituut Unitas 1942–1987* (Nijmegen 1990), 20–28.

19 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 5 December 1931; ROSS, no. 94: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 3 January 1932. Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 98–106.

20 Jan De Maeyer, Sofie Leplae, Joachim Schmiedl, ‘Introduction. Religious Institutes in Western Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries: an Underrated History’, in: *Religious Institutes in Western Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, 7–25.

and Regulars. Its first prefect was the influential Spanish Cardinal Vives y Tutó, an integralist with whom Van Rossum was closely acquainted, and who was, according to some, a religious fanatic. After his creation as cardinal in late November 1911, Van Rossum was appointed a member of this new dicastery. When Vives y Tutó died in 1913, the expectation was that Van Rossum would succeed him, but instead Ottavio Cagiano de Azevedo was appointed. Cagiano's term was followed by a long succession of prefects over a short period of time, of whom Camillo Laurenti, former secretary of Propaganda Fide, in particular was an important ally of Van Rossum's.²¹

One of the Congregation for Religious's tasks was to approve new religious institutes and to endorse or adapt their rules and constitutions. It was the Congregation's policy to discourage the unbridled multiplication of new institutes as well as excessive diversity in rules and constitutions.²² Instead, it strove for the expansion of existing orders and congregations, or the merging of congregations of the same spiritual family. This happened for example in South Africa, where six congregations of Dominican Sisters merged in 1922 to become the Dominican Third Order of Saint Catherine of Siena in South Africa.²³

Propaganda Fide had played an important role in the approval of rules before 1908, particularly through the 'Commission for the study and approval of rules and constitutions of new religious institutes' founded in 1887. Until 1908, many congregations fell under its jurisdiction, as many Western countries still belonged to the remit of Propaganda. In 1885, Propaganda also acquired the faculty to issue the *decretum laudis* or decree of praise to approve new congregations and make them institutes of pontifical right; this was granted particularly with a view to missionary work in countries such as the United States. It removed these institutes from the jurisdiction of the diocese in which they had been founded, thus curtailing the influence of local bishops and increasing that of the Holy See. At the same time, it broadened these institutes' range of action, as it made it easier for them to operate in other dioceses or mission territories. But the establishment of the Congregation for Religious in 1908 deprived Propaganda Fide of many of these privileges.²⁴

21 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 42; Del Re, *La Curia Romana*, 182. The prefects of the Congregation for Religious during Van Rossum's time were José Calasanz Vives y Tutó O.F.M.Cap. (1908–1913); Ottavio Cagiano de Azevedo (1913–1915); Domenico Serafini O.S.B. (1916); Diomede Falconio O.F.M. (1916–1917); Giulio Tonti (1917–1918); Raffaele Scapinelli di Léguigno (1918–1920); Teodoro Valfrè di Bonzo (1920–1922); Camillo Laurenti (1922–1928); Alexis Lépiciér O.S.M. (1928–1935).

22 Del Re, *La Curia Romana*, 174–182; cf. for example ENK, *Archive of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Saint Anthony (AMFHA)*, no. 65; B. Eras to G. van Schijndel, 27 June 1909.

23 G. Pelliccia, G. Rocca, *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione (DIP)* (Rome 1974–2003), vol. 3, 800.

24 Rafael Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones religiosas y de las Sociedades y Seminarios para las Misiones', in: *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/1: 1815–1972, 123–149; »

The code of canon law, on which Van Rossum had worked under Pietro Gasparri's leadership, was promulgated on 27 May 1917; it came into effect on Pentecost Sunday of 1918. The code generally strengthened the authority of the pope and the Roman curia and further enhanced centralisation. For religious, it meant that all constitutions and rules had to be revised to make them compatible with the new code. There were hundreds of institutes and this was therefore a huge operation that took many years to complete. It led to the drafting of rules and constitutions that were more legalistic than before and that caused a certain impoverishment of the religious life. By no means all congregations complied happily.²⁵ The new code also stipulated that larger institutes of male religious had to appoint a procurator general if they did not have one yet, and they were preferably to move their generalate to Rome.²⁶ The procurator functioned as an intermediary between the order or congregation in question and the Holy See. This shortened lines of communication with the curia, but also allowed the curia to exercise greater control over the institute.

Van Rossum was involved in a great number of cases of approvals of institutes and their rules and constitutions. Vives y Tutó authorised him to approve the foundation of the Congregation of Franciscan Missionary Sisters of Saint Anthony (Missionary Sisters of Asten) in 1913.²⁷ Van Rossum also oversaw the drafting of new constitutions for the Dutch Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo after they became a congregation of pontifical right.²⁸ In 1918, James Walsh of the Maryknoll Missionaries asked him to lobby the Congregation for Religious to permit the founding of the congregation of the Maryknoll Sisters of Saint Dominic.²⁹ And in 1922, Van Rossum approved the establishment of the Oblates Franciscan Missionaries of Mary as an affiliated indigenous branch of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, with the same privileges.³⁰

» Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire du Saint Siège*, 295–338. Serafini O.S.B. and Lépicier O.S.M. were members of this commission.

25 See for example the complaints by the superior general of the White Sisters, M. Salomé Roudant. Marie-Josée Dor, Marie-Aimée Jamault, *A Rereading of Our Family History. Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa* (Rome 2015), 26–27.

26 CIC 1917, can. 517. On 4 June 1920, the Congregation for Religious issued a *Monitum* that exhorted religious institutes to appoint a procurator general. *AAS*, 12(1920), 301.

27 ENK, *AMFHA*, no. 205: Congregation for Religious to W. van Rossum, 11 February 1913; decree of erection, 17 February 1913, signed by W. van Rossum. *DIP*, vol. 4, 359: 'Franciscane Missionarie di Sant'Antonio di Padova'. The Capuchin Vives y Tutó gave Van Rossum faculties to approve the foundation as long as they would accept the Franciscan rule rather than that of the White Sisters. See also Chapter 14.5.

28 KDC, ROSS, no. 42: Veronica Damoiseaux, superior general of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo to W. van Rossum, Maastricht 18 February 1914.

29 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 601, f 417–418: J. Walsh to C. Laurenti, 27 May 1918; f 426: W. van Rossum to J. Walsh, 29 July 1918 (copy); f 429: C. Laurenti to secretary of the Congregation for Religious, 28 November 1918.

30 *DIP*, vol. 6, 576. They worked in India, China and Belgian Congo, among other places.

Although rules and constitutions in this period were standardised – at Pius XI's personal instigation, according to Moya –, Van Rossum made sure that the original goal of the institute in question was not abandoned.³¹ He insisted, for example, that the Crosier Fathers take their own seven-hundred-year-old rule as the basis for the revision of their rule and constitutions.³² And when the Congregation of the Poor Sisters of Saint Francis (of Aachen in Germany) were being compelled in the United States to open maternity wards in their hospitals, even though this ministry was not mentioned in their rule, they asked for his assistance.³³ But Van Rossum was quite willing to change certain disciplinary rules. He wrote in 1921 to the newly elected superior general of the Sisters of Tilburg that their founder, had he lived now, would have been critical of, and would have abrogated the old regulations (from 1832) on such things as family visits after profession, due to the changed circumstances. The protector believed the same and ensured that superiors general of this congregation were no longer appointed for life, a measure that greatly enhanced flexibility of government.³⁴

The Van Rossum papers in the archive of Propaganda Fide contain lists of resolutions of the Congregation for Religious that present a fragmentary image of Van Rossum's involvement in issues on the agenda of the general congregations of this dicastery.³⁵ There are 91 lists of resolutions – which indicate not only the names of the cardinal

31 Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones religiosas', 130.

32 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder J. 1920–1929: Pro-memoria e lettere del p. Van Asseldonk OSC, procuratore generale, sugli statuti dell'Ordine di S. Croce, 12 and 17 July 1922. "Personal and confidential".

33 KDC, ROSS, no. 42: Sr. Pancratia, provincial superior (in Hartwell, Ohio, in the diocese of Cincinnati, USA) to W. van Rossum, 26 July 1918.

34 ENK, AZLT, 2858: W. van Rossum to superior general Th. Favier, 16 March 1918; Reglement voor het beheer der tijdelijke goederen, undated (probably before 1918) in Van Rossum's hand; W. van Rossum to superior general Christine Borsten, 2 November 1921; Bepalingen voor de Alg. Overste en Gen. Assistenten, gemaakt bij het inwerking treden der nieuwe Constituties 1 jan. '22 volgens de voorlichting van Z. Em. Kardinaal van Rossum, gegeven aan de Alg. Overste, Zr. M. M. Christine, tijdens haar verblijf in Rome 4–17 april 1922.

35 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, folder E. 'Sacra Congregazione dei Religiosi (1913–1930)' and folder D. 'Carte riguardanti i religiosi', 1918–1930. Unfortunately, I was unable to consult the archive of the Congregation for Religious; various requests for access between 2009 and 2014 went unanswered. The lists of resolutions in ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, folder E. 'Sacra Congregazione dei Religiosi (1913–1930)' are possibly incomplete. The first one is dated 1913; the last June 1930. Folder D. 'Carte riguardanti i religiosi', 1918–1930, contains letters, printed matter, notes by Van Rossum etc., probably intended for the Congregation for Religious, even though not all documents concern religious. Part of the archive of the Congregation for Religious from the 1908–1910 years was transferred to the AAV between 2011 and 2015. Van Rossum was not yet a member of this dicastery during this period and later material was not yet available at the time of my research. See Alejandro M. Dieguez, 'Gli archivi delle Congregazioni romane: nuove acquisizioni e ordinamenti', in: *Religiosa Archivorum Custodia. IV Centenario della Fondazione dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano (1612–2012). Atti del Convegno di Studi 17–18 aprile 2012* (Città del Vaticano 2015), 305–334, at 311.

rapporteurs but also the pope's decision – and 24 of them feature Van Rossum as the rapporteur for one or more of the issues tabled, all of them in the 1916–1926 period; he was no longer mentioned as *ponens* after 1926. The cases he dealt with were mostly approvals, permanent or temporary, of institutes and/or of their rule and constitutions,³⁶ new foundations³⁷ or decisions by contemplative institutes to become active congregations.³⁸ Some cases concerned wills.³⁹

When the Assumptionists' government structure was changed in 1921, the Congregation exhorted them on the basis of a proposal by Van Rossum to abolish the superior general's election for life. Two years later, the new constitutions were approved on condition that the generalate was moved to Rome.⁴⁰

A number of cases were disciplinary in nature, such as that concerning a Franciscan friar laicised for apostasy from the religious life, probably because he had left his monastery without permission.⁴¹ Another case involved mediation in a conflict between the archbishop of Paris and the Brothers of Saint Vincent de Paul about who had authority over their work in Auteuil.⁴²

Two cases that Van Rossum presented to the general congregation were related to the war. Jesuits and Franciscans were permitted to celebrate Mass even if they had only one arm or a prosthetic arm.⁴³ Another issue that resulted from the First World War was the question whether religious who had served in the army during the war could retain and dispose of their salaries, disabled veterans' benefits or allowances that came with the honours they had been awarded.⁴⁴

Van Rossum recommended in 1922 that an inquiry be held into the problems relating to the assignment of young sisters as nurses to clinics and hospitals. It was decided to ask the congregations in question and a number of well-informed bishops and experts for further information first.⁴⁵

36 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, folder E. The following files: 23 June 1916. Galveston. Sisters 'della Carità del Verbo Incarnato'; 24 November 1916. Rome. 'Priests of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ'; 26 January 1917. Versailles. 'Serve del Sacro Cuore di Gesù', with the note that they had been temporarily approved despite Van Rossum's objections; 28 June 1918. St. Louis. Sisters of the Adoration of the Precious Blood (O'Fallon); 23 May 1919. Bergamo. Suore delle Poverelle; 4 January 1924. Paris. Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul; 29 March 1924. Munich. Bridgettines of Altmünster; 11 December 1925. Saint-Flour. Sisters of the Holy Infant Jesus; 23 April 1926. Trier. Fratelli della Misericordia.

37 *Ibid.*: 22 June 1917. S. Miniato-Livorno. Sisters Crocifissine di Castelnuovo della Misericordia.

38 *Ibid.*: 19 May 1917. Acerra. Suore Angeliche; *idem*, 29 March 1919.

39 *Ibid.*: 25 January 1918. Ivrea. Monastero della Visitazione; *idem*, 8 April 1921; 29 November 1918. Vicenza.

40 *Ibid.*: 7 January 1921. Paris. Assumptionists; *idem*, 27 January 1923.

41 On the basis of CIC 1917, can. 2385 and 2386. ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, folder E: 12 May 1916. Cincinnati. Sub secreto.

42 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 3, folder E: 13 April 1923. Paris.

43 *Ibid.*: 27 July 1916.

44 *Ibid.*: 20 January, 24 February 1922. Sacra Congregazione dei Religiosi e Fatebenefratelli.

45 *Ibid.*: 28 April 1922.

These lists of resolutions do not indicate Van Rossum's specific contribution to the discussion of the cases mentioned here. But the archives contain more detailed information about one particular case, concerning the Dutch Brothers of Tilburg – the Brothers of Our Lady Mother of Mercy –, which came before the Congregation for Religious in 1916. Van Rossum took an active part in it because he was also this institute's cardinal protector.⁴⁶ The congregation, an institute of pontifical right founded in 1844 by Bishop Joannes Zwijsen, had a peculiar structure. It had been founded for the purposes of educational work, which was done by brothers, but it also had a number of priest members. These formed a small minority: there were only 28 priests and more than 550 brothers around 1915.⁴⁷ It was not unusual for orders or congregations to have both priest and non-priest members, but normally the lay brothers were a minority and worked as auxiliaries for the priest members and their pastoral tasks. For the Brothers of Tilburg, however, education was their primary goal, and this was done by the lay brothers, although only priests could become superior general.

This situation gave rise to tensions. A conflict involving financial interests arose in 1914: the priest members wanted to build a new church, the lay brothers a new teacher training college. The bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch, Wilhelmus van de Ven, appealed to Van Rossum, who told him he disapproved of the structure of the congregation. Its main task was education, but the priest members were not involved in educational tasks and therefore occupied a second-class position within the congregation. This was incompatible with their religious and social status. The cardinal immediately took steps “to come to the only healthy solution”, as he called it in his letter to Van de Ven: separation of the brothers and priests.⁴⁸

The Congregation for Religious gave the protector special faculties to call an extraordinary general chapter to decide the issue. The votes were tied, but Van Rossum acted decisively with the support of Arnold Diepen, Van de Ven's coadjutor, and bypassed the members of the congregation. A decree signed by the prefect of the Congregation for Religious was published on 7 August 1916, reducing the congregation to the status of a lay institute pure and simple. The priest members left the institute and became secular priests. Many older priests and brothers in particular were pained by this dismemberment of Zwijsen's old foundation and “tears were shed

46 *Ibid.*: 27 July 1916. Den Bosch. Brothers of Tilburg. Strangely, Van Rossum was appointed cardinal protector of this congregation twice (it had had no protector since 1908): the first time on 6 January 1913 at the request of superior general Emile Siebelink (AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, Busta separata 183, Protettorie cardinalizie, no. 43, fasc. 2 (W. van Rossum), f 17–26), and a second time on 24 June 1915 at the request of superior general Maria Barnabas Verhoeven (*Ibid.*, f 111–115).

47 Tharcisio Horsten, *De Fratres van Tilburg 1844–1944* (Tilburg 1952), vol. 3: 1912–1944, 24.

48 HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to [W. van de Ven], Rome 1 November 1915.

when the *corona* of priests was bid farewell”.⁴⁹ By contrast, Van Rossum thanked Diepen for his support in bringing this “important and delicate matter” to a good end.⁵⁰ It also meant that entirely new constitutions had to be drawn up, and the Brothers had to wait, with increasing frustration, until August 1927 before they were ready. The institute was in a state of legal paralysis throughout this period, which made it difficult for instance to found new houses or elect new superiors.⁵¹

3 Prefect of Propaganda Fide

Ever since its foundation in 1622, Propaganda Fide had looked for the implementation of its task primarily to religious who worked as missionaries in the areas that came under its jurisdiction. The seventeenth century also saw the foundation of the Missions Étrangères de Paris (M.E.P.), the first-ever institute of secular priests wholly dedicated to the foreign missions, and it fell immediately under Propaganda Fide. Various old orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, Capuchins and Discalced Carmelites also had missions. But at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the total number of religious who worked in the territories of Propaganda Fide was not more than a few hundred.⁵²

The numbers of religious began to grow during the course of the nineteenth century due to the religious revival in Western Europe. Various old orders revitalised their missionary involvement. And from mid-century onwards, newly founded religious institutes began to appear, particularly in France. Propaganda Fide had a say over many of these, either because they were missionary congregations or were active in mission territories. Purely missionary institutes such as the Belgian Scheut Missionaries, the Italian congregation of Saint Francis Xavier for Foreign Missions of Parma (founded by Guido Maria Conforti), and the German Society of the Divine Word were subject to Propaganda Fide from the moment of their foundation.⁵³

Other congregations were persuaded by Propaganda Fide to turn their original purpose into a missionary one, such as the Missionaries of the Holy Family, the Spiritans and the Marists. Up to 1908, Propaganda Fide had the power to grant temporary approval to new foundations (sometimes for three, seven or ten years) and it could propose necessary changes to the rule and constitutions. The Marists, for

49 Horsten, *Fraters van Tilburg*, vol. 3, 39.

50 HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to A.F. Diepen, Rome 13 September 1916.

51 Horsten, *Fraters van Tilburg*, vol. 3, 108. Van Rossum had asked for the assistance of the Crosier Father A. van Asseldonk in the drafting of new constitutions. See KDC, ROSS, no. 107: A. van Asseldonk to J. Drehmanns, Munich 2 August 1926.

52 Moya, ‘La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones’, 125–126.

53 *Ibid.*, 126–135.

instance, were told that they could expect approval as a congregation only if they agreed to take over a mission territory in Oceania from the Picpus Fathers.⁵⁴ In addition, Propaganda Fide encouraged the establishment of contemplative monasteries in the missions, particularly of Benedictines and Trappists – this was another field in which Van Rossum played an active role.⁵⁵ The nineteenth century also saw the first women religious deployed in the missions.⁵⁶

From the start of its existence, Propaganda Fide delegated the government of territories under its jurisdiction to vicars and prefects apostolic (in European mission territories sometimes recruited from the areas in question, for example the Netherlands, but elsewhere generally from Western countries) who were sent out as missionaries. As ecclesiastical superiors, vicars apostolic (titular bishops, also known as missionary bishops) and prefects apostolic (who were not of episcopal rank), fell immediately under Propaganda Fide and not, as was the case for ordinary bishops, under the Congregation of the Consistory. Although they had more or less the same faculties and tasks as ordinary diocesan bishops, they exercised these tasks on behalf of the Holy See and not on the basis of their own canonical authority as diocesan bishops.⁵⁷ This helped curtail the influence of the secular power in mission territories that were not subject to the *patronato/padroado* rights of the kings of Spain and Portugal: vicars and prefects apostolic had no proper jurisdiction in their territories, but acted as vicars of the Holy See.⁵⁸

Normally vicars and prefects apostolic were members of the order or congregation to whom the mission territory in question had been entrusted ‘in commission’ (the *ius commissionis*). This obliged the religious institute to provide staff and funds from their home countries, and in return they had the right to nominate a missionary bishop, which gave them access to and influence in the higher echelons

54 Jan Sniijders, *A Mission Too Far... Pacific Commitment and the Marist Missions 1835–1841* (Adelaide 2012), 1–25.

55 ENK, *Carmel of Iceland*, no. 9: W. van Rossum to Direction de l'Œuvre 'Contemplation et Apostolat', Saint Andrew's abbey, Lophem-lès-Bruges, 31 December 1928 (copy): "it is absolutely necessary (...) that the mission countries themselves should have contemplative monasteries". See also Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 93, where he recounts that when the British government refused to give permission, Van Rossum turned to the South African prime minister General Jan Christian Smuts and secured his permission for the Benedictines to establish themselves among the Zulus. Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones', 136–137. The contemplative life sometimes clashed with the demands of missionary work. The Trappists who went from Westmalle abbey to Congo in 1894 merged with the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in late 1925. Rome, GAMSC: W. van Rossum to superior general A. Brocken, 16 December 1925, giving the Trappist priests and brothers "della Missione di Nuova Anversa" permission, to join the local M. S. C. house under certain circumstances.

56 Carine Dujardin, 'Gender: een beloftevolle invalshoek voor de studie van missie en zending', in: *Trajecta*, 12(2003), 275–310.

57 CIC 1917, can. 293–311 and 329–349.

58 Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones', 141–143.

of the hierarchy.⁵⁹ It was prestigious for an order or congregation to have missionary bishops, and prestige could boost recruitment. Missionary bishops received a stipend from Propaganda Fide and were subject only to the prefect of Propaganda Fide; although they remained members of their order or congregation, they were no longer bound to obedience to their religious superior.

Mission territories were always assigned to a single order or congregation, but the vicar apostolic might invite other clerical institutes to come and support his work in a specific part of the territory. After a while, this secondary order or congregation could then request Propaganda Fide to have the region in question assigned to it as its own mission territory, with the right to provide a prefect or vicar. This system ensured that large mission territories were divided up into ever smaller districts and that ever more institutes – or provinces of institutes – were drawn into missionary work.

Despite its many advantages, the *ius commissionis* was also a source of conflict. Thus, orders and congregations or ecclesiastical superiors sometimes refused to admit other clerical institutes to ‘their’ mission territories. The apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* had reserved some choice words for this kind of attitude: the interests of the expansion of the missions should trump any inter-congregational sensitivities.⁶⁰

But the system was mainly a source of internal conflict within orders and congregations themselves, particularly between vicars and prefects apostolic on the one hand and their own institute on the other. Once appointed, a vicar or prefect answered only to Propaganda Fide and no longer to his superior. At the same time, he relied for manpower and funding on his order or congregation, whose communities in the mission in question were usually governed by a separate missionary or religious superior. The various interests frequently clashed. Such conflicts were often about religious discipline, the authority to move missionaries and, importantly, finances. Missionaries who had personally, through relatives or acquaintances, collected a sum of money before their departure sometimes concealed this from their ecclesiastical superior, because it might otherwise disappear into the coffers of the vicariate.⁶¹

59 During the First Vatican Council (1869–1870), 69% of the council fathers who were present came from Europe, and 31% were vicars or prefects of mission territories. Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 13–15. During the Second Vatican Council, the number of these latter categories was much higher, and in addition African and Asian bishops and missionary bishops attended for the first time. They exercised significant influence over the genesis of the decree on missionary activity *Ad Gentes*. Vefie Poels, ‘In dienst van de Propaganda Fide? De missiemotivatie van orden en congregaties in het licht van het *ius commissionis*’, in: *Trajecta*, 13(2004), 81–102, at 96–98; Bruls, ‘De missiearbeid van 1850 tot Vaticanum II’, 257–260.

60 *Maximum Illud*, 443–444; Prudhomme, ‘*Maximum illud*, una svolta missionaria?’, 409.

61 Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 245–254.

Discussions about how a harmonious *modus vivendi* could be achieved appeared on the agenda of the general congregations of Propaganda Fide for years. In practice, every institute had to find its own solutions. As we have seen before, this was an important preoccupation for Van Rossum from the moment he was appointed a cardinal member of Propaganda Fide. In 1912, he had to deal with certain internal problems within the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. And in 1916, a dispute over who controlled particular funds within the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart made it onto the agenda of a general congregation.⁶² Van Rossum asked consultors on numerous occasions to draft reports on how the various competencies could best be divided, including control over money and other possessions.⁶³

The importance of good arrangements was to the fore also in a lengthy letter which the White Father Victor Roelens, vicar apostolic in Congo, wrote to Van Rossum in 1919. According to Roelens, ecclesiastical superiors were afraid to operate independently from the missionary superiors. They feared giving offence to the superiors of their order or congregation, because the latter controlled the purse strings and had their own means of recourse under canon law. As a result, ecclesiastical superiors could only offer their indigenous staff meagre wages, while orders and congregations built “palaces” and “cathedrals”. This was all the more painful, because that was precisely the job of vicars and prefects in the eyes of the outside world. Roelens spoke of a “reversal of the whole hierarchical organisation of the Church”. Orders and congregations had founded their own little kingdoms in the missions, where they reigned untrammelled and usurped the position of the official ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁶⁴

To solve these problems, the general congregation of Propaganda Fide discussed a proposal in March 1919 for a general *modus vivendi*, which could be adjusted to particular circumstances in each location and would comply with the new code of canon law. Van Rossum drew up a draft text, which stipulated that all the goods of the mission would fall under the ecclesiastical superior’s control and that he was the only person authorised to appoint to posts in his territory. But both the general congregation and the pope were reluctant to antagonise the religious orders and congregations, and as a result, the matter remained undecided for years.⁶⁵ The – revised

62 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 645, f 4–16, 31, 401–407. See also Chapter 13.6.

63 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 643, f 325–399: ‘Progetto circa *Modus Vivendi* per regolare i rapporti tra i Capi di Missione ed i Superiori Regolari dell’Ordine cui appartengono’; f 326–328: proposal for a *modus vivendi* by the consultor L. Copéré S.M., April 1917.

64 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 619, f 306–313: V. Roelens, vicar apostolic of Haut-Congo, to W. van Rossum, 15 July 1919. See also vol. 643, f 350–359: consultor L. Zaleski, patriarch of Antioch, to W. van Rossum, 29 April 1918, with similar complaints.

65 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 643, f 363–379: proposal for a *modus vivendi* by the consultors L. Copéré and A. Delpuch, 17 March 1919; f 387–396: draft instruction of Propaganda Fide in Italian, in Van Rossum’s hand, undated, probably 1919–1920; f 386: note by the archivist Monticone, 19 February 1931, about a conversation with Van Rossum, during which the cardinal told him that he had wished to deal with this problem even before he was prefect but that the time had not been ripe for it then.

– *Instructio ad Vicarios Praefectosque Apostolicos et ad Superiores Institutorum quibus a S. Sede Missiones concreditae sunt* was only published on 8 December 1929.⁶⁶

The new instruction gave the vicars and prefects apostolic exclusive jurisdiction over the administrative and financial management of the mission, pastoral care, the administration of the sacraments and the management of schools. The orders and congregations would be responsible for the religious life and spiritual well-being of their missionaries. Vicars and prefects apostolic were prohibited from interfering in matters relating to religious discipline, which was the sole responsibility of religious superiors. Nor could they expel duly appointed religious without their superior's consent (except in cases of public scandal). The ecclesiastical superior normally took precedence over the religious superior in case of conflict, but the latter had the right to appeal to Propaganda Fide or the Congregation for Religious to decide any contentious matter.

The instruction enshrined this division of responsibilities in canon law.⁶⁷ The *ius commissionis* remained in force until well into the twentieth century, and was abrogated only by the Second Vatican Council: under the new *ius mandati* that applied from 1969 onwards, missionaries were no longer regarded as bearing responsibility for the local church, but as auxiliary forces.⁶⁸

During Van Rossum's prefectship, it became increasingly common for lay, and particularly female, congregations to become involved in missionary work. Their rules and constitutions were in force in their monasteries in the West, but equally so in the mission territories, where they offered additional security in unfamiliar and sometimes dangerous circumstances. But strict observance of the rule could also lead to bizarre anomalies: for example, missionaries often clung for decades to Western dietary customs. Religious went to the missions to conduct the activities their rules prescribed, such as provide education, healthcare or charity. In addition, an instruction from 1923 encouraged religious brothers to go to the missions as craftsmen.⁶⁹

As has been seen, Van Rossum regarded the contribution of women religious as crucial to establishing contact with local populations – particularly women and children – and thus to supporting the clergy's attempts to make converts.⁷⁰ While

66 AAS, 22(1930), 111–115; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1074, f 612–641. The undated draft of the instruction is entirely in Van Rossum's hand (f 613–625). *Sacrae Congregationis de Propaganda Fide*, vol. III/2: 1815–1972, 780–783.

67 CIC 1917, can. 293–311.

68 Poels, 'In dienst van de Propaganda Fide?', 97–100.

69 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 875, f 826–827.

70 When the master general, H. Hollmann, requested in 1925 that the Crosier Fathers' mission territory in Congo be elevated to the status of an apostolic prefecture, Van Rossum replied that this was conditional upon the presence of sisters. Roger Janssen, *De Kruissheren in Congo. De missie van de Kruissheren in West-Uélé, 1920–1953* (St. Agatha-Cuijk 2017), 58–59.

women were regarded mainly as spouses and mothers in the Western world, and Catholic clerics and politicians blocked married women from joining the labour market, as missionary sisters they had a full-fledged role to play in building up a Catholic society. Van Rossum believed they should fulfil this task in relative independence.⁷¹

To facilitate this and to prevent abuses, the cardinal strongly promoted drawing up contracts, co-signed by himself as prefect of Propaganda Fide, as well as the observance of enclosure – so that men could not enter the sisters' living quarters other than in exceptional cases. These contracts not only stipulated the tasks of religious priests, sisters and brothers, but also separated their finances. Thus, Van Rossum wrote to the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood as their cardinal protector that they should gain control themselves over the money they earned and should phase out work in priests' kitchens by excluding this as much as possible from any new contracts.⁷² Women religious should not be used as domestic servants by the bishops or priests with whom they worked.⁷³

Financial independence was important, because vicars apostolic were not always sufficiently conscious of the basic needs of the missionary sisters and brothers in their districts, while simultaneously benefiting financially from the work that these religious did. This was particularly true when female or lay male congregations worked in schools funded by the colonial powers, as was the case for example for the Brothers of Tilburg in Suriname, a Dutch colony that had been assigned to the Redemptorists as a mission territory in the nineteenth century. The vicar apostolic of Paramaribo collected the salaries of the teachers and then paid out a smaller sum to the Brothers to meet their daily needs. This meant the Brothers had no financial security and were unable to plan any expansion of their work. After complaints, Van Rossum insisted that a contract be drawn up which would specify that the salaries should be paid out directly to the Brothers and that the missionary bishop, or the

71 See Chapter 14.5. Dujardin, 'Gender: een beloftevolle invalshoek voor de studie van missie en zending'. She says (281) that the number of Belgian missionary sisters doubled from 1,184 in 1922 to 2,303 in 1934, out of a total number of missionaries, which increased from 2,686 to 4,060. There were 1,250 missionary sisters from the Netherlands in 1924; in 1940 this number had risen to 2,485. See Vefie Poels, Anna Damas, *Vrouwen met een missie. Vier congregaties in Nederland en de toekomst van hun missionair verleden* (Nijmegen 2008), 17–18.

72 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, 16 June 1914, with notes by Van Rossum. Emunds petitioned Pius X on the same day for permission to take out two loans, one for 40,000 francs for a school and postulant house for German candidates in Dieffen, and one for 25,000 francs for a school in the Dutch village of Tienray.

73 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 828, f 314–320: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, Mariannahill 28 June 1922. It was nonetheless reported in 1927 that the sisters did domestic work for the priests in almost every place where they were based. See vol. 962, f 61–71: *Relazione straordinaria*, June 1927. See also HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 1A, folder 'Visitatiereis van mgr. Diepen naar Denemarken etc.': W. van Rossum to A.F. Diepen, 31 January 1924.

vicariate, would receive a fixed percentage of the amount (generally about a third). The vicar apostolic, Theodorus van Roosmalen C.S.S.R. long refused to sign any such contract, but when Van Rossum threatened intervention by Propaganda Fide, a contract was eventually signed in 1931.⁷⁴

Without such contracts, lay and female congregations had little recourse against the clergy they worked with. The French Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles wrote a concerned letter to Van Rossum in 1926 to complain that Jean Marie Chabert, superior general of the Society of African Missions (S.M.A.), with whom they had worked pro bono for fifty years, had announced in the S.M.A.'s missionary periodical that he was planning to found a new congregation of sisters who *were* prepared to work in the most difficult missionary territories. The sisters were offended, because they were willing to work wherever they were needed, but they received no financial support whatsoever from the S.M.A. – “if they would only give us the sum they spend on tobacco!” – to found convents. When the superior, Sister Emmanuel, had mentioned this to Chabert, he had flown into a rage. She wrote to Van Rossum that Providence had so far prevented them from dying from hunger, but this unjust attack wounded them to the quick. Van Rossum replied in a letter which, she said in her own reply, had given her new courage.⁷⁵

It is unlikely that the cardinal had given her money: religious who worked in the missions received no financial support from Propaganda Fide, except for the ecclesiastical superiors. Another exception were male orders and congregations in Africa, who received a substantial amount from the revenues of the Anti-Slavery Society.⁷⁶ Other orders and congregations could apply for funding from the Propagation of the Faith. Because this society fell under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide from 1922 onwards, Van Rossum exercised some influence over it, as he did for instance with regard to the funding of a cathedral in Iceland.⁷⁷

Van Rossum often appointed apostolic visitors to inquire into and solve problems in mission territories. This expedient was also used when conflicts arose between orders and congregations in the same mission territories, as happened for example with the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood and the Mariannahill Mission Society in South Africa. Both congregations originated in Mariannahill abbey, which had been founded in Natal in 1880 by the Trappist Franz Pfanner, but had since closed. As cardinal protector of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, Van Rossum

74 KDC, ROSS, 338: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 7 July 1930, “confidential”; W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, Castel Gandolfo 12 July 1930.

75 KDC, ROSS, 43: Sister Emmanuel to W. van Rossum, Vénissieux 21 April and 2 July 1926.

76 ASPF, Nova Series, vol. 605, f 613–622; vol. 1229, f 426–488.

77 See Chapter 16.4.

took a particular interest in their affairs. In 1913, there were about four hundred (mainly German) sisters working in 43 posts in South Africa (Natal) and in areas of current-day Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya and Congo.⁷⁸ Since its separation from Mariannhill in 1906, the young congregation had had to find its own way and it was struggling to defend its interests against the Mariannhill Missionaries, who had originally been contemplatives but became a missionary congregation in 1909.

As we have seen, Van Rossum launched an apostolic visitation of the activities of these two congregations in Africa in 1919. He charged the prefect apostolic of Northern Transvaal, Ildefonso Lanslots O.S.B. and the Dutch Jesuit Everardus Schröder with this task, Schröder specifically with improving the situation of the sisters.⁷⁹ The visitation, which took place from November 1919 to 24 May 1920, led to new arrangements on the independence of the sisters' activities and limited contacts between the priests and the sisters. Despite strong opposition, Schröder also moved many priests out of the mission; two of them were sent to a 'correctional home for priests' in Germany.⁸⁰

But according to the superior general, Paula Emunds (1909–1931), the visitation did not produce the desired results. She visited the area herself in 1922 and 1923 and observed that the Mariannahillers were reluctant to accept that sisters had rights of their own and had to be able to do their work freely. Schröder's instruction that the Mariannahillers should remunerate the sisters for work they did for them had had the opposite effect: the priests now regarded the sisters entirely as their domestic servants. The existing dependencies were detrimental to the development of the sisters and were occasions of moral and other danger to both parties, as many unfortunate incidents evidenced. "O, I could cry tears of blood at all the things I had to witness! Slavish fear caused several sisters to conceal many things from the Rev. Father Visitor."⁸¹

Emunds consulted with the new vicar apostolic of Mariannhill, Joseph Adalbert Fleischer (1922–1950; also superior general from 1920–1926) to discuss contracts that would implement canon law and create a clear separation between the work and finances of the sisters and those of the mission. Contacts with Mariannahillers would be limited to spiritual direction and pastoral care. The negotiations for these contracts between the two congregations – both of which now fell under Propaganda Fide

78 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, with an appendix, 'Kurzer Bericht über die gegenwärtige Situation der Genossenschaft', 16 August 1913.

79 KADOC, ANSI, *Personal papers*, Z 43, no. 589: correspondence of E. Schröder s.j., apostolic visitor of Mariannhill: W. van Rossum to E. Schröder, 26 April 1919; C. Laurenti to E. Schröder 27 March 1920. In addition to correspondence, the file also contains the manuscript versions of the visitation reports: 'Visitatie der Paters & Broeders Missionarissen van Mariannhill door I. Lanslots & P.E. Schröder, nov. 1919–24 mei 1920'; 'Visitation der Schwestern v. Kostb. Blut', 8 december 1919 – 15 augustus 1920. See also Chapter 14.5.

80 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 646, f 41–42: E. Schröder to W. van Rossum, Mariannhill 12 April 1920.

81 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 828, f 314–320: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, Mariannhill, 28 June 1922.

and both of which had Van Rossum as their cardinal protector – took place mainly in Rome, where Emunds personally discussed her congregation’s problems with the cardinal. “[O]nce he had seen that we were inclined to be too lenient”, Van Rossum conducted the talks with the vicar apostolic in person.⁸² Emunds herself drew up a contract with Robert Brown S.J., prefect apostolic of Zambesi (Zimbabwe).⁸³

In 1929, the apostolic delegate in South Africa, Jordanus Gijlswijk O.P., reported to Van Rossum from Mariannahill that the sisters were now independent and free with respect to their work in girls’ schools and other institutions. Ownership of their convents had been transferred to the sisters without financial disadvantage to the vicariate.⁸⁴



General superior Paula Emunds and Bishop Adalbert Fleischer of Mariannahill with indigenous ‘Daughters of Saint Francis of Assisi’

82 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: Paula Emunds to J. Drehmanns, probably 1935, ‘Bericht für den H. H. Pater Drehmanns’. At Drehmanns’s request, Emunds returned all of Van Rossum’s letters to her with her own (undated) letter. Unfortunately, she had not kept all of them: before her visitation journey to the African missions she had “destroyed certain very confidential letters”. According to Emunds, the congregation owed Van Rossum a great deal for his assistance in many difficult issues.

83 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 859, f 627–636: contract between Robert Brown S.J., prefect apostolic of Zambesi, and Maria Paula Emunds, superior general of C. P. S., 22 June 1923, co-signed by Van Rossum, Rome 25 December 1923.

84 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1091, f 544–546: Jordanus Gijlswijk to W. van Rossum, Durban 7 July 1929.

4 Expanding Propaganda Fide's authority over religious in the missions

Propaganda Fide had lost much of its authority over religious when the Congregation for Religious was established in 1908. Missionary congregations which had once been founded with approval from Propaganda Fide, now had to address requests for changes to their rules to this new dicastery. Propaganda Fide retained jurisdiction only over the secular institutes and missionary seminaries, as well as indigenous congregations in the mission territories.

Ever since the foundation of the Missions Étrangères de Paris, missionary institutes of secular priests had been subject immediately to Propaganda Fide. The Paris society had provided the first vicars apostolic of Tonkin, Cochinchina and Nanking in French Indochina.⁸⁵ Canonically speaking, these missionaries were not religious but secular clergy, because they did not take religious vows. Van Rossum preferred religious, as his reply to a request by the apostolic administrator of Montréal for papal approval of a new missionary institute in 1924 shows. When the administrator asked Van Rossum whether he would prefer the envisaged institute to be a religious institute, Van Rossum replied that this was indeed preferable – both for the members themselves and for the missions – but because the church permitted both categories, he would not impose it.⁸⁶ In fact, the institute was founded as planned and chose the same constitutions as the Missions Étrangères de Paris. But around the same time, former secular institutes in Turin and Parma were converted into ordinary religious congregations.

The relative freedom that the members of secular institutes enjoyed was somewhat restricted under Van Rossum. It was decided, for example, that in mission territories entrusted to them, the ecclesiastical superior could not be the same person as the superior of the mission, a rule that was also increasingly applied to religious institutes. Members of secular institutes were also required to take an oath corresponding to the evangelical counsels in lieu of the three religious vows. National or diocesan missionary societies were increasingly separated from their dioceses of origin.⁸⁷ The pool of secular missionaries was fed not only from these institutes and seminaries, but also from the Collegio Urbano of Propaganda Fide.

85 Prudhomme, *Stratégie missionnaire*, 3–8.

86 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 861, f 399–439, at f 400–404.

87 Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones', 137–141.

There were thirteen 'missionary societies without vows' under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide in 1924.⁸⁸ Two of these were Italian: the Society for Foreign Missions (*Società delle Missioni Estere*) of Milan and the Pontifical Seminary of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (*Pontificio Collegio dei ss. Pietro e Paolo per le Missioni estere*) in Rome. The latter institute fell directly under Propaganda Fide, and as prefect, Van Rossum was its *ex officio* president.⁸⁹ He commissioned a visitation there in 1923, which brought to light the rather disappointing state of the institute. It had only eleven trainee missionaries and the staff consisted of the rector, Domenico Callerio, and a vice rector. In the 53 years of its existence it had produced only 61 missionaries, who worked in a small vicariate in China as well as in North and South America. Discipline and expertise were wanting and the future of the institute seemed uncertain.⁹⁰

Plans to merge the institute with the *Società delle Missioni Estere* of Milan had been mooted before. The Milan society was led by Paolo Manna, with whom Van Rossum was in close contact about the organisation of home support for the missions. The cardinal had presented a proposal for a merger to the general congregation of Propaganda Fide as early as 1913.⁹¹ The leadership of the Roman pontifical seminary opposed new plans for a merger in 1923, but a number of missionaries and the visitor were in favour. Pius XI hesitated, but when the protests of the rector and a number of students of the Roman institute became louder, he made up his mind and approved the plans.⁹² Van Rossum drafted a letter for Manna asking him to agree, under certain conditions, to a merger with the Roman seminary. He suggested that the new institute should be called the '*Pontificio Istituto per le Missioni Estere sotto la protezione dei ss. Apostoli P. e P. e di Ambrogio e Carlo*' (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions under the protection of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul and of Saints Ambrose and Charles, P. I. M. E.).⁹³ Manna eagerly accepted, as he told Van Rossum on

88 In addition to the M.E.P., there were Canadian seminaries in Ontario and Montréal, the seminary 'am Immensee' in Switzerland, the seminary of the African Missions of Lyon, Saint Joseph's seminary of the British Society of Mill Hill, the Society of the American Maryknoll Fathers, the White Fathers in Algiers, the Irish Columban Society for Chinese Missions and the institutes in Milan and Rome that will be mentioned below. See the list in the inventory of the Archive of Propaganda Fide, 1924, section 81.

89 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 861, f 243-263; vol. 954, f 44-53, 135-159: file on the merger of the Pontificio Collegio (Rome) and the Società delle Missioni Estere (Milan), 1925-1926.

90 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 861, f 151-160: Visitation report by the consultant Luca E. Pasetto O.F.M. Cap.

91 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 286, 1913, f 272-307: Relazione con voto. Circa la progettata unione del Pontificio Seminario dei Ss. Apostoli Pietro e Paolo per le Missioni Estere ed il Seminario Lombardo per le Missioni Estere, e circa l'approvazione delle Regole per l'erigendo Istituto.

92 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 861, f 151-160: visitation report by a missionary bishop from 1923, with notes by Van Rossum; f 243-263: responses to the merger plans.

93 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 954, f 45-46: W. van Rossum to P. Manna, May 1926.

15 May 1926, and was ready to take over the Chinese vicariate assigned to the Roman institute and adopt the new name suggested by the cardinal.⁹⁴

A meeting of the two superiors, Manna and Callerio, took place in the palazzo on Piazza di Spagna on 25 May 1926. The secretary of Propaganda, Marchetti-Selvagiani, read the papal motu proprio that ordered the merger between the two institutions, and Callerio submitted obediently by kneeling before Manna and asking his blessing. But in a letter to Van Rossum a few days later, Callerio complained bitterly about his situation and asked for a new job.⁹⁵ To no avail, apparently, because his name appears a few years later in the *Annuario Pontificio* as a monsignor and “super-numerary board member” of the newly merged Società delle Missioni Estere.⁹⁶

As has been seen, when Van Rossum began his term as prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1918, all missionary congregations in principle fell under the jurisdiction of the Congregation for Religious. Although the missionary aspects of the work of all institutes were subject to Propaganda Fide⁹⁷ – thus they needed permission from Propaganda to found a new mission post or sign contracts with another congregation, although the prefect could dispense them from this obligation in an indult⁹⁸ –, their dependence on the Congregation for Religious was not ideal in the case of missionary congregations. It meant that all kinds of decisions required consultations with the Congregation for Religious, leading at the very least to loss of time, and in some cases to obstruction of Propaganda Fide’s missionary policy goals. The bureaucracy involved was highly inefficient and handicapped Van Rossum in his pursuit of rapid expansion of the missions.⁹⁹

An exception had been made for two institutes: the ‘Istituto della Consolata per le missioni estere’ or Institute of Consolata Missionaries of Turin and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. The former had originally been a secular institute. After it was changed into a congregation in 1909 during the prefectship of Girolamo Maria Gotti, it was allowed to remain where it was, under Propaganda. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary had been placed under the jurisdiction of Propaganda on 7 February 1916, in one of the last acts of Gotti’s prefectship.¹⁰⁰

94 *Ibid.*, f 139–140: P. Manna to W. van Rossum, 15 May 1926.

95 *Ibid.*, f 147, f 199–201. For Van Rossum’s memorandum on the case for Pius XI, see f 375–384.

96 *Annuario Pontificio*, 1931, 494.

97 As regards male institutes, columns 82 and 83 of the inventory of the Archive of Propaganda list twelve orders and more than thirty congregations for 1924.

98 ENK, AMFHA, no. 132a: Indult for Vicar Apostolic Jan Olav Smit, dated 10 August 1923, signed by Cardinal Van Rossum 16 August 1923 in Helsinki.

99 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 85.

100 This is evident from the entries in the Propaganda archive: column 79 listed the male, and 80 the female congregations that were *dipendenti da Propaganda*. The Franciscan Missionaries of Mary had been founded in 1877 (*decretum laudis* of 12 August 1885). The foundress, H  l  ne de Chappotin de Neuville, died in 1904. The congregation then had 3,000 members and 86 houses; this number had grown to 208 houses in 1927: 61 in Europe and 147 in the missions (first in India). They had their generalate on Via Giusti 12 in Rome.

This had created a precedent. Very soon after Van Rossum became prefect, more congregations became *dependenti da Propaganda*. The first were the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, whose cardinal protector Van Rossum had been since 1913. The sisters had been removed from the supervision of the Trappist abbey of Mariannahill in 1906, received the *decretum laudis* and moved their generalate to Aarle-Rixtel in the Dutch province of North Brabant. As a rule, all members of this congregation worked in Africa, but smaller houses were built in Germany and the Netherlands in addition to the motherhouse to earn money, recruit new members and provide care to old and sick sisters.¹⁰¹

The superior general, Paula Emunds, asked the pope on 30 September 1918 to place the congregation under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide. She argued that the congregation originated in the missions in Africa and worked exclusively in the missions. In addition, Propaganda Fide had always taken a great interest in the institute and had helped it deal with many difficulties in the missions. The congregation had a number of convents in Germany and the Netherlands and was made up predominantly of German sisters. They were now facing demands from bishops in Germany to expand their apostolate there to include education and healthcare, which was endangering their primary objective – missionary work in pagan lands. They would be happy to be tied to Propaganda Fide by even closer bonds, a vision that Van Rossum shared. Emunds also pointed out that other missionary institutes already enjoyed the desired privilege. A handwritten note by Van Rossum on the application says that the pope had granted the request during an audience on 19 December 1918 and that he had asked that the Congregation for Religious be notified of this.¹⁰²

Under Van Rossum's stewardship, eleven female and six male religious institutes in total were transferred to the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide.¹⁰³ The procedure was always the same as for the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood.¹⁰⁴ After securing Van Rossum's support as prefect of Propaganda Fide, the congregation submitted a petition to the pope. The correspondence shows that the initiative usually

101 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, with the appendix 'Kurzer Bericht über die gegenwärtige Situation der Genossenschaft', 16 August 1913. There were 90 professed sisters, 31 novices and 37 postulants in Germany and the Netherlands. They opened a house in Bornholm in Denmark in 1916.

102 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 680, f 2–5: Paula Emunds to Benedict XV, 30 September 1918. This was Cardinal Scapinelli's first day as prefect of the Congregation for Religious. He was sent a confirmation of the transfer on 30 December 1918. The five-yearly report for 1914–1919 (f 6–25), which Van Rossum praised on 5 February 1920, shows that the congregation had 495 sisters in final vows, 64 in temporary vows and 118 novices in 1919. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 962, f 61–71: *Relazione straordinaria*, June 1927, mentions 795 sisters, 717 of whom in vows.

103 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, 3959/1926, f 591–592.

104 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1204, 1881/1932, f 434–474: Giuseppe Monticone, archivist of Propaganda Fide, *Nota d'archivio circa la procedura seguita per il ritorno di Congregazioni religiose missionarie sotto la giurisdizione della Sacra Congregazione 'de Propaganda Fide' dopo la Costituzione 'Sapienti Consilio'*, 12 May 1932.

came from Van Rossum. He then discussed the application with the pope during his fortnightly audience, and after papal approval, the Congregation for Religious was notified of the transfer by decree. Given the dates of application, audience, notification and decree it seems likely that the Congregation for Religious was often unaware that a procedure was underway.¹⁰⁵ Once the formal transfer had been enacted by decree, Propaganda Fide asked the Congregation for a brief report on the membership, religious spirit and finances of the institute.

The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood were followed in 1919 by the 'Figli del S. Cuore di Gesù per le Missioni dell'Africa Centrale'.¹⁰⁶ Five institutes were transferred in 1920: three congregations of women religious, including the White Sisters, and two male congregations, including the Mariannahill Missionaries mentioned above.¹⁰⁷ Only the Scheut Missionaries followed suit the following year. On 10 July 1922, a few days after Camillo Laurenti, former secretary of Propaganda Fide, had been made cardinal prefect of the Congregation for Religious, the Bavarian Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing were placed under Propaganda Fide. Two other female congregations followed later that year.¹⁰⁸ Two more congregations of missionary sisters were transferred to Propaganda in 1923, as well as the newly independent German/Austrian branch of the Figli del S. Cuore di Gesù (Verona).¹⁰⁹ In 1924, it was the turn of the Sodality of Saint Peter Claver for African Missions, and of the Sisters of the Apostolic Carmel, who had a motherhouse in Mangalore. Finally, the institute of the Missionary Brothers of Saint Francis in British India came under the jurisdiction of Propaganda on 7 August 1926.

As with the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, the reasons advanced in the petitions were usually that the institute had been founded purely for missionary work. This was the case for the White Sisters, who also added that the vicars apostolic, who were White Fathers, supported the request: it would lead to better formation and guidance for the sisters in their missionary work. After the pope's approval of their transfer in late September 1920, the decree was sent to Léon Livinhac, supe-

105 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, 3959/1926, f 591–592: list of all congregations under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide, 1 December 1926, with the data of approval by the pope, drawn up at the request of Enrico Caiazza, undersecretary of the Congregation for Religious, 29 October 1926 (f 584–586).

106 Decree dated 14 July 1919. They worked in Khartoum with the Pie Madri della Nigrizia from Verona.

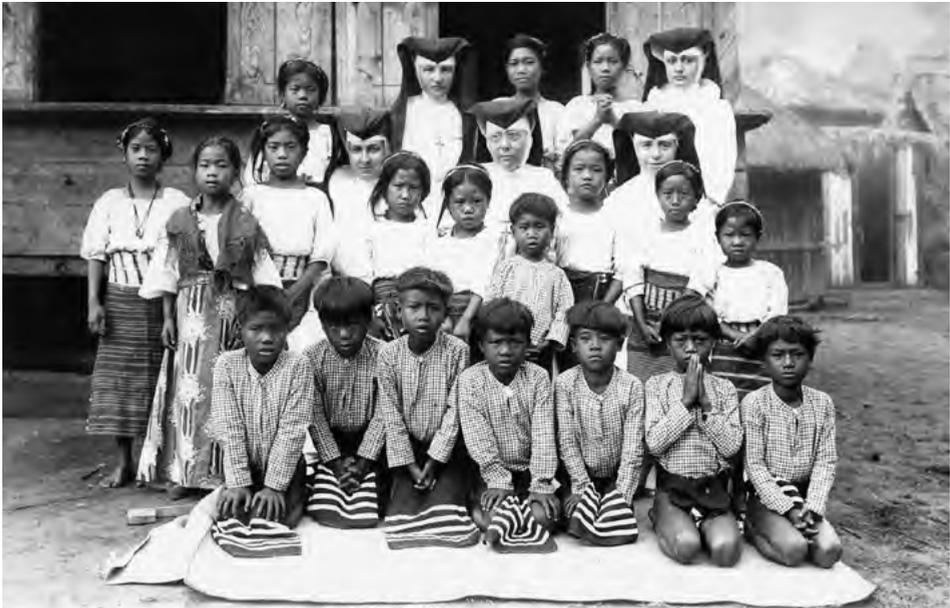
107 Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine (Belgian) 25 September 1920; White Sisters from Algiers (French) (audience of 17 June 1920; decree 8 October 1920); Pie Madri della Nigrizia from Verona (Italian) (audience of 18 November 1920, notification on 22 November 1920); Institute of Saint Francis Xavier for Foreign Missions of Parma (15 June 1920; previously a secular institute); Mariannahill (audience of 17 June 1920; notification on 30 June 1920; decree of 28 June 1920).

108 Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles for African Missions (7 August 1922) and Dominican Third Order of Saint Catherine of Siena in South Africa (16 November 1922).

109 The Missionari Figli del Sacro Cuore di Gesù became independent on 27 July 1923. See *DIP*, vol. 3, 1518–1519 and vol. 5, 1445–1446. The other institutes that were transferred that year were the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (Steijl, the Netherlands; 4 January 1923) and the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Spirit (France; 26 February 1923).

rior general of the White Fathers, with a cover letter. Laurenti asked him on Van Rossum's behalf to congratulate the sisters, trusting that their zeal and the new, strong bonds which tied their institute to Propaganda Fide would yield abundant fruit for the souls and the glory of God.¹¹⁰

Marie-Louise De Meester, foundress of the Belgian Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine, whose cardinal protector was Van Rossum, hailed the transfer to Propaganda Fide as "a historic message". The decree incorporated the congregation into the church's missionary institutions, which finally gave the sisters the recognition as a missionary congregation which they coveted and allowed them to spread their wings. In 1918, the congregation had 136 European and 42 Indian sisters. Two years later, De Meester reported as many as 397 professed sisters and 47 novices, who worked in British India, the Philippines, the Antilles and the United States.¹¹¹



Marie-Louise De Meester (middle), foundress of the Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine (now Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary), with children in Bontoc (Philippines), 1911

110 GASRMA, *Archives de la Maison-Mère*, A 231: Décret qui replace la Congrégation sous le Gouvernement de la Sacrée Congrégation de la Propagande; C. Laurenti to L. Livinhac, 8 October 1920.

111 Cecile Sandra, *Marie-Louise De Meester. Op weg met God* (Beveren 1981), 180, 215–216. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 960, f 469–479: Relazione straordinaria. C. Laurenti and C. Pecorari to Marie-Louise De Meester, 25 September 1920, on the transfer to Propaganda Fide. KADOC, *Archive of the Congregation of 'Zusters van de Jacht'*, 1696.69 contains extensive correspondence. Drehmanns, too, corresponded extensively with Marie-Louise De Meester (1857–1928) and Sister Marie-Ursula (Germaine De Jonckheere, 1872–1958). For correspondence on a wide range of problems, including "very confidential" letters, see ENK, ANPR, no. 7695.

Some congregations appear to have sought the transfer to Propaganda Fide because they hoped for a less rigid regime. This may have been the case for the Scheut Fathers, who had generous holiday arrangements which fell foul of the new code of canon law. But Propaganda Fide in fact tightened the rules. Van Rossum imposed organisational and disciplinary measures on the Congregation of Scheut in 1929. As a great believer in the “true religious spirit”, the prefect put an end to the Scheut Fathers’ custom of so-called “family holidays”.¹¹²

The advantage of these transfers for Propaganda Fide was clear: it allowed the congregation to deploy religious more efficiently and flexibly in the growing number of mission territories. And it made it easier to ensure that missionary congregations did not deviate from their goals, as the transfer meant that Propaganda once again had the right to fix their rule and constitutions. New rules or changes to existing ones were discussed in the general congregation and either approved, temporarily or permanently, or rejected. Propaganda Fide was also authorised again to issue the *decretum laudis*, as it did in 1926 for the congregation of the Apostolic Carmel. The Congregation for Religious had been decisively side-lined when it came to drawing up contracts between orders and congregations in the missions.¹¹³

The fact that the Congregation for Religious relinquished – or was compelled to relinquish – part of its competencies highlights Van Rossum’s position of influence, but also reflects the priority that Benedict xv and Pius xi gave to the missions in this period. However, questions soon began to be asked about the transfer of so many religious institutes. On 29 October 1926, the undersecretary of the Congregation for Religious requested a full list of all institutes under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide, including the date of papal approval.¹¹⁴ At the time, there were nineteen such institutes: twelve female and seven male.¹¹⁵

These questions appear to have resulted from concerns within the Congregation for Religious about excessive leniency in admitting new members to these institutes. This is clear from an archival note that precedes the list in the archive of Propaganda. The note states that Propaganda Fide was “without any doubt” authorised to dispense in the ban on admissions of candidates born from adultery or “sacrilege”.¹¹⁶ The prefect could grant such dispensations without first running them by the pope.

112 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1083, f 251–258: note in Van Rossum’s hand on a visitation report by Natalis Gubbels O.F.M., 2 February 1929; f 557–585: W. van Rossum to J. Rutten, superior general, 29 March 1929.

113 Moya, ‘La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones’, 131.

114 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, f 584–586: request of 29 October 1926.

115 *Ibid.*, f 591–592: list of 1 December 1926.

116 *Ibid.*, f 587: Nota d’Archivio Circa le facoltà di Propaganda di dispensare dalla irregolarità *ex defectu natalium*, e anche per i nati *ex adulterio*, oppure *ex sacrilegio*.

He did this for example in the case of petitions addressed to the pope by the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood. Van Rossum permitted them to admit a woman of illegitimate birth and two candidates who were too old to be accepted according to the constitutions, but who had spent many years caring for relatives.¹¹⁷

There were almost no further transfers to Propaganda after 1926, although the previous transfers were not reversed.¹¹⁸ The fact that this trend was halted was possibly due to a reluctance to concentrate too much power in the hands of Propaganda Fide. Perhaps there had been protests from the Congregation for Religious, although the prefect of this dicastery at the time, Camillo Laurenti, was an ally of Van Rossum's. It is also possible that the initiative came from Pius XI personally, who also began to limit Van Rossum's protectorates of religious institutes at this time.

Propaganda Fide occasionally sent out circular letters and instructions to all vicars and prefects apostolic and to the superiors general of orders and congregations (usually only of male institutes). Most of the exhortations which these contain also appeared in *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae*.

We have already seen that nationalism in the missions was strongly condemned. Van Rossum and Propaganda also called for the building up of indigenous churches, in anticipation of the wave of decolonisation that had become inevitable due to the growing recognition of the right to national self-determination at the end of the First World War.¹¹⁹ Various additional instructions exhorted ecclesiastical superiors and the superiors of orders and congregations to give special attention to the formation of indigenous candidates.¹²⁰ A circular letter of 20 May 1923 praised the work that orders and congregations were doing, and exhorted them to ensure that all missionaries were well-trained and conversant with the language and customs of the areas they were being sent to. Serious attention should also be paid to the formation and training of indigenous priests and religious: the objective was that the Western orders and congregations would leave the mission territories once the work of conversion was done.¹²¹

The competencies of ecclesiastical superiors were a particular object of solicitude, as an instruction issued in 1924 demonstrates. Suitable candidates for this position were

117 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 728, f 372–375: Sr. Hermana, secretary general, to Pius XI, 7 June 1922; f 338:

Sister Alexandra, vicareess general, to Pius XI, 18 July 1922. Van Rossum personally wrote the replies on the petitions; f 381–382: W. van Rossum to Sr. M. Aletha, novice mistress, 16 January 1923.

118 Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones', 131, gives the number of congregations of pontifical right in 1936 as 23, 7 male and 16 female.

119 See Chapter 14.4.

120 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, 1927, f 82–83: Circolare da inviare ai Superiori d'Ordini di Società e d'Istituti Religiosi, che hanno missioni per esortarli ad affidare anche al clero indigeno gli uffici maggiori; f 91–92: draft version, thoroughly revised by Van Rossum.

121 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 875, f 826–827.

men who had the benefit of thorough formation, who mastered the vernacular, who had organisational qualities and were able to manage finances properly. They should promote concord and charity and seek cooperation with the indigenous clergy.¹²²

Diverging interests were a problem also when it came to recruiting indigenous priests. Missionary bishops, even those who belonged to a religious institute, preferred secular priests because these fell exclusively under their own authority and were not also subject to a religious superior. But vicars apostolic often lacked the means to train them. Founding local seminaries was therefore a major priority for Propaganda Fide, which entrusted this job to the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle (see Chapter 19). The order or congregation to whom the territory had been assigned had its own houses of formation, in Rome or elsewhere in the West. Candidates for the priesthood, who had often first encountered Catholicism through the orders and congregations, sometimes preferred to join these institutes rather than the local vicariate as a secular priest.

Congregations of sisters and brothers faced similar challenges. Candidates had the choice of joining Western or indigenous institutes; Propaganda Fide left them free to decide for themselves. Some Western female congregations encouraged the entry of indigenous candidates, such as for example the Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine. The Indian sisters of this congregation did not form a separate institute. They lived according to the same rule and constitutions as the European sisters, with the exception of one specific chapter that accommodated their own cultural lifestyle.

The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood chose the same solution. In a proposal that Emunds sent to Van Rossum, the indigenous sisters had the same status as the Western sisters, but they had their own noviciate and slept and ate in rooms of their own where they could follow their own customs. But all sisters had the same habit and constitutions and received the same formation. Once there were enough fully professed indigenous sisters, they would be given a province of their own. A small stipend was to be paid out of a special fund to each sister to pay for her personal needs.

Paula Emunds emphasised that the recruitment of indigenous candidates was important because the South African government increasingly demanded that schools for Zulu children were run by black sisters. Benedictine and Dominican Sisters in other vicariates in the vicinity had already been authorised by their ecclesiastical superiors to accept indigenous sisters. The Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood themselves were engaged in consultations with the Jesuits in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) about the issue, and these talks were progressing satisfactorily. By contrast, Fleischer, the vicar apostolic of Mariannhill, refused permission to accept indige-

122 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 851, f 176–186: instruction of 11 January 1924.

nous candidates, and Emunds asked Van Rossum to overrule him. Van Rossum was not uninclined to do so, he replied on 3 June 1931, but first requested more information.¹²³ The following year, the new superior general, Maria Ebba Tirpitz (1932–1959), asked for permission to start a noviciate exclusively for indigenous sisters, in the mission post of Saint Patrick (Umtata) in South Africa. No fewer than seven independent indigenous congregations ultimately originated from her congregation.¹²⁴

Other congregations, such as the White Sisters, were reluctant to accept indigenous members because this might lead to the undesirable outcome of Westernising local sisters. Missionary bishops similarly preferred to found new diocesan congregations instead. Thus, the Scheut Father Godfried Frederix, vicar apostolic in Mongolia (Ningsia), wrote to the superior general of the Canonesses of Saint Augustine, Marie-Louise De Meester, that he thought it would be unwise to accept Chinese candidates: “It would be wrong to suppress the Chinese mentality by giving the girls a European formation, or to conceal the typically Chinese features behind the religious habit of the West.”¹²⁵

Ecclesiastical superiors often sought the assistance of the missionary congregations in their dioceses to help with the formation of sisters and brothers in newly founded indigenous congregations. Fleischer asked the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood to mentor the indigenous congregation of the Daughters of Saint Francis of Assisi, a request to which the Missionary Sisters, somewhat reluctantly, agreed.¹²⁶ Vicars apostolic quite easily received permission from Propaganda Fide to found indigenous diocesan congregations. The Congregation for Religious had to be notified, but its consent was not required; a situation confirmed again by the pope at Van Rossum’s request during an audience on 20 November 1930.¹²⁷ The advantage of a diocesan congregation for missionary bishops was that they were dependent on the diocese, so that the vicar apostolic had greater control over the institute’s work and life. But the downside were cases of arbitrary use and abuse of power. The White Sisters in particular set themselves the task of forming and training such congregations – they mentored more than twenty of them – to have the knowledge and self-consciousness to resist excessive or inappropriate demands.¹²⁸

123 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1091, f 634–641: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, 8 May 1931. Van Rossum wrote “in congressu” 12 May 1931 under this letter; W. van Rossum to Paula Emunds, 3 June 1931.

124 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1222, f 68–75. *DIP*, vol. 5, 1594–1595.

125 Sandra, *Marie-Louise De Meester*, 231–240.

126 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1091, f 549–560: Paula Emunds to W. van Rossum, Mariannahill 19 and 27 January 1930.

127 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1074, f 784–786: note by Van Rossum on a papal audience (with a reference to CIC can. 492, par. 1), 20 November 1930; f 789: W. van Rossum to A. Lépicier, prefect of the Congregation for Religious, 29 November 1930.

128 KDC, *KMM Archive/tape collection*, 938: interview with Tiny Hölscher, former superior of the White Sisters, 4 October 2004 in Boxtel, the Netherlands, by Vefie Poels.

In several respects, 1926 marked a turning point in the pope's involvement with the missions. It was the year in which Pius XI consecrated the first six Chinese bishops and published the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae*. At the same time, the need was felt to evaluate the missionary project and steps were taken to compile a full-scale survey. All institutes that worked in the missions were asked in 1927 to draft a special report describing the situation in their mission territories and at home (including any missionary journals they published). Their reports were to include an impression of the spiritual, intellectual and professional formation of candidates. Special attention was given in the survey to institutes subject to Propaganda Fide. They were asked to provide statistics of the total membership (professed, novices, postulants), lists of houses and institutions (schools, hospitals etc.) as well as their institutional goals.¹²⁹

The results were published in 1930 in a statistical survey called *Missiones Catholicae*. The work gave a complete overview of all apostolic vicariates and prefectures subject to Propaganda Fide at the time, including population figures and statistics of religious affiliation (“catholici, schismatici, haeretici, hebraei, mahumetani, pagani”) as well as the number of priests, sisters, brothers, baptised, Catholic schools and healthcare institutions, and also presented the intellectual, social and economic condition of the Catholic faithful. This was followed by an *elenchus* of institutes who worked in territories subject to Propaganda Fide: 69 clerical institutes, 28 congregations of brothers and 380 institutes of women religious. For each institute, the number of members was indicated, how many of them worked in the missions and in what mission territories.¹³⁰

The growing missionary involvement of Dutch orders and congregations is striking, particularly for the Catholic church in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia).¹³¹ Many religious institutes that had a presence in the Netherlands contacted the cardinal to acquire a mission territory of their own, and Van Rossum strongly

129 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 948, 1927, f 13–26; f 82–111: letter to all ordinaries (17 January 1927) and their answers, and f 121–128 to the general superiors of institutes of male and female religious (30 May 1927; in French and Italian), including a questionnaire. Separate forms were distributed in 1931 for areas that were in the charge of indigenous clergy (ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1074, f 811–817). Another survey had been sent on 1 May 1919 to all ordinaries of mission territories to obtain information about the state of schools and colleges. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 875, f 1–746: file containing the replies and a recommendation by consultor J. Hudeček (f 731–746).

130 *Missiones Catholicae cura S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide descriptae statistica. Data statistica referuntur ad diem 30 Iunii 1927* (Vatican City 1930), 413–512. For the geographical division of the mission territories at the time, see *Atlas der Kath. Weltmission. Zusammengestellt und mit erläuterndem Text versehen durch die Internationale Fideskorrespondenz in Rom unter Verwertung kartographischen und statistischen Materials des Archivs der Hl. Kongregation der Glaubensverbreitung, Jahrbuchfolge 1932 der Unio Cleri pro Missionibus im Deutschen Sprachgebiet*, Munich 1932.

131 Th. M. P. Bekkers, ‘Nederlandsche deelname aan den missiearbeid der H. Kerk in den aanvang van 1930’, in: *Het missiewerk. Tijdschrift voor missiekennis en missieactie*, 12(1930/31), 66–128; *Eerste rapport inzake het verloop van de roepingen bij de vrouwelijke religieuzen in Nederland* (The Hague 1955), 45 shows that Dutch female congregations began to focus on missionary work mainly between 1920 and 1935.

encouraged them to do so. Around 1900, some fifty Jesuits were the main missionary work force in this large archipelago, but forty years later the number of priests had increased more than tenfold, and there were fourteen clerical orders and congregations and 45 congregations of brothers and women religious with missions in the Dutch East Indies. The number of Catholics, most of them non-European, increased fivefold to half a million in a total (and predominantly Islamic) population of circa 62 million.¹³² In addition, Van Rossum helped the spread of the Catholic church by encouraging young Catholic workers and entrepreneurs to establish themselves in this Dutch colony.¹³³

In his various personae, as a religious priest and a former general consultor of the Redemptorists, as a member of the Congregation for Religious and of the commission for the codification of canon law, as prefect of Propaganda Fide and – as we shall see in the next chapter – as cardinal protector of many religious institutes, Van Rossum exercised huge influence over the organisation, structure and activities of religious in the first decades of the twentieth century. He involved himself personally in the affairs of many orders and congregations: the revision of their constitutions and rules, the appointment of superiors and procurators general, the assigning of mission territories and appointment of vicars or prefects apostolic, correspondence with religious who asked for advice or were somehow in trouble, and the drafting of guidelines for a good religious life.

As a religious to the core himself, his ideal was to raise the level of the religious life. As prefect of Propaganda, Van Rossum tried to make it easier to send religious to the missions. Missionary work expanded greatly under his leadership as dozens of orders and congregations became involved, both institutes specifically founded for that purpose and existing orders and congregations whom he convinced to take up missionary work for the first time. The typical nineteenth-century missionary usually embarked on a solitary adventure, but in the twentieth century, the Catholic missions became a well-organised supranational enterprise that was increasingly under the control of Propaganda Fide. Nationalist agendas were checked as much

132 Hans de Valk, 'Hollandia docet? Cardinal van Rossum and the Catholic Missions in the Dutch East Indies (1918–1932)', in: *Life with a Mission*, 143–157; K. Steenbrink, *Catholics in Indonesia, 1808–1942*. Volume 2: *The Spectacular Growth of a Modest Minority, 1903–1942*, Leiden 2007.

133 A remarkable meeting took place between Van Rossum and Drehmanns on the one hand and J. A. Schippers of the Nederlandsche Landbouwbank Amsterdam (Dutch Agricultural Bank Amsterdam) on the other in the summer of 1928 in Ingenbohl, following the dissemination of a "strictly confidential, not for publication" treatise by H. Schaapveld, director of the NV Cultuurmaatschappij 'Bagdjanagara', under the title *Cultuurondernemingen als steunpunten voor de missieering* ('Agricultural companies as pillars of missionary activity'), in which the author criticised the lack of Catholic entrepreneurs in the Dutch colonies. KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 30 August and 7 September 1928.

as possible. To prevent conflicts between orders and congregations due to clashing interests and activities in the mission territories, Van Rossum issued a large number of instructions and stimulated the use of contracts between religious institutes.

The nature of Catholic missionary work changed radically as large numbers of male and female religious began to set up missionary projects in the fields of education, healthcare, care for the poor and for orphans. As a result, the missionary presence in large parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America played a crucial role in the Christianisation and – intentionally or not – Westernisation of the colonised areas and other spheres of Western influence. The Holy See's increasing interest in missions snowballed across the Western world: more and more religiously motivated young people were eager to join, and the beneficiaries were religious orders and congregations who were active in the missions. The focus in the lives of many religious shifted during the inter-war years from devotions to the missionary adventure, a transition that is clearly visible in periodicals.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ See for example KDC, ROSS, no. 94: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 3 and 7 January 1932: all Montfort Missionaries desired a mission in the Dutch East Indies, whereas the “Marian maniacs” were in decline. The congregation launched the periodical *De Standaard van Maria* (‘Mary’s Standard’) in 1920 in addition to the existing magazine *Onze missionarissen (en missiehuizen)* (‘Our Missionaries (and Mission Houses)’), which turned its attention from Marian devotion to the missions after 1920. See Vefie Poels, Zjuul van den Elsen (eds.), *Bibliografie van Katholieke Nederlandse Periodieken*, vol. 3: *Godsdienstig en kerkelijk leven* (Nijmegen 2012), sub 793, 794, 1025. The Franciscans’ periodical *Sint Antonius*, originally a purely devotional publication, began to focus increasingly on the missions from 1909 onwards and became a full-fledged missionary magazine in 1934 (*Ibid.* sub 954).

Cardinal protector

1 Leader, protector and corrector

There was an office, unconnected to any curial organ, that served both to help and protect religious institutes and streamline and control them: that of cardinal protector. This position had been in existence since the thirteenth century. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the Secretariat of State oversaw appointments of cardinal protectors. Religious institutes could petition the pope for a specific cardinal protector, normally a member of the curia. The cardinal in question had to have given his consent beforehand. For religious institutes, having a protector of their own meant easier access to the curia, for instance to obtain useful privileges. For the curia, it meant having short lines of communication with the institutes. A cardinal protector's competencies were limited. Formally, his task was to give advice on internal affairs and to act as a patron of the institute externally; he had no say in internal discipline or the management of temporal goods. But in practice the cardinal's influence over the institute as 'leader, protector and corrector' could be great.¹

The position of cardinal protector was prestigious, both for the orders or congregations and for the cardinal. Appointments to a protectorate were published in the *Osservatore Romano* and the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, and a cumulative list of them was published each year in the *Annuario Pontificio*. Not all cardinals of the curia had protectorates, and not all institutes had a protector. Generally speaking, the institutes that had one were institutes of pontifical right, but otherwise they ranged from new congregations to old orders, both male and female. Often certain specific problems inspired a religious institute to ask for a cardinal protector, and orders and congregations that already had one normally sought to have a successor appointed when he died.

1 Alejandro Mario Dieguez, "'Gubernator, protector et corrector': Il processo di nomina del cardinal protettore", in: F. Jankowiak, Laura Pettinaroli (eds), *Les cardinaux entre Cour et Curie. Une élite romaine, 1775–2015* (Rome 2017), 111–123. The *buste separate* in the archive of the Secretariat of State contain the files of 313 cardinal protectors and five popes. Information received from Alejandro Mario Dieguez, 22 October 2014. AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, b.s., *Protettorie* 43, fasc. 2 (W. van Rossum). The institute in question had to pay a certain sum to obtain the protectorate. Once this amount had been paid, the appointment was announced in the *Osservatore Romano*. The dates in Dieguez's overview are the dates of publication of the appointment.

Very soon after Van Rossum became a cardinal, he was appointed protector of the Dutch Sisters of Charity of Tilburg. Dozens of orders and congregations were to follow: he had 31 protectorates when he died. Almost all the petitions were submitted by the superiors general of the institutes in question, occasionally through their procurator general. The bulk of Van Rossum's appointments occurred during the pontificates of Pius X and Benedict XV.²

It is clear from correspondence that other orders and congregations also sought Van Rossum as their cardinal protector and that he agreed to their requests. The petition by the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Grazer Schulschwestern), whose motherhouse was in Eggenberg-Graz, was rejected most likely due to external reasons. They were eager to have "the red pope" as their protector and be his "good, obedient children", but probably did not meet the requirements to become an institute of pontifical right.³ In a similar case, Van Rossum wrote to Maria Agnes, the superior general of a congregation of Franciscan Sisters in Pasto in Colombia, agreeing to become their cardinal protector. Their application in 1928 was supported by Bishop Robertus Bürkler of Sankt Gallen and the Sisters of Ingenbohl, but Pius XI refused. He told them Van Rossum was too busy: "He showed us a long list of religious families that are lucky to have Your Eminence as their protector." They had to make do with Enrico Gasparri instead. It did not stop them from asking Van Rossum to use his influence to expedite approval of their constitutions.⁴

2 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, b.s., *Protettorie* 43, fasc. 2, W. van Rossum. He was cardinal protector of the following institutes: 1. Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy (Tilburg), 8 February 1912; 2. Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine (Belgium), 30 June 1912; 3. Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy (Tilburg), 6 January 1913 and 24 April 1915; 4. Redemptoristines (O.S.S.R.), 15 February 1913; 5. Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth (Poland), 7 May 1913; 6. Order of the Holy Cross, 15 November 1913; 7. Sisters of the Holy Family of the Sacred Heart, 6 December 1913; 8. Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, 16 December 1913; 9. Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross of Ingenbohl, 20 December 1913; 10. Sisters of Saint Felix of Cantalice Third Order of the Seraphic Saint Francis (Cracow), 20 December 1913; 11. Norbertine Order, 18 January 1914; 12. Sisters of the Retreat of the Sacred Heart, Society of Mary (Angers), 11 August 1914; 13. Dames of Saint Juliana, Apostolic Sisters of the Most Blessed Sacrament (Brussels), 30 January and 10 March 1915; 14. Order of Cistercians of the Common Observance (petition by Abbot General Amedius de Bie), 27 March 1915; 15. Poor School Sisters of Notre Dame (Munich), 21 December 1915; 16. Grey Nuns of Saint Elisabeth (Breslau), 9 May 1917; 17. Franciscan Sisters of the Poor (Aachen), 8 March 1918; 18. Madri Pie Venerini ('Magistrarum Piarum Venerini' institute), 31 May 1919; 19. Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer (Strasbourg), 20 October 1919; 20. Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo (Trebmitz), 11 May 1920; 21. Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.), 15 May 1920; 22. Alexian or Cellite Brothers (Aachen), 27 June 1920; 23. Sisters of Mercy of Saint Charles Borromeo (Prague; petition by auxiliary bishop Karl Kaspar), 30 November 1920; 24. Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (M.S.C.), 29 January 1921; 25. 'Opera del Santuario di Patrasso', 13 April 1921; 26. Mariannahill Missionaries, 14 December 1921; 27. Daughters of the Most Precious Blood, 26 November 1923; 28. Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Montreal, Canada), 8 July 1925; 29. Catholic Students' Mission Crusade of Cincinnati, 10 May 1926; 30. Daughters of the Good Shepherd (Caen), 17[6] February 1928; 31. Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles (Lyon), 20 February 1931. See also KDC, ROSS, no. 55: papal decisions, signed by the secretary of state.

3 KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Maria Alfonsa Hajek, superior general, to W. van Rossum, Mautern 8 November 1923.

4 KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Maria Agnes to W. van Rossum, Convento de Nra. Sra. del Perpetuo Socorro, Pasto 24 April 1928.

There were a few reasons why Van Rossum was so popular as a cardinal protector. First, orders and congregations preferred a regular to a secular cardinal. Sometimes there were existing personal connections, or he had been specifically recommended to an institute, for instance by Cardinal Vives y Tutó. Dutch, Belgian, German, Swiss and Polish institutes chose him for linguistic reasons; he was the only cardinal of the curia who spoke Dutch and one of the few who knew German. But a number of French congregations also asked him.⁵ Once he had become prefect of Propaganda Fide, missionary congregations chose him because of the kind of apostolate they practised. A missionary society of students from Cincinnati was clearly the odd one out, as it was an association of laymen rather than a religious institute.⁶

In a number of cases, bishops who struggled to solve some problem they had with an order or congregation sought Van Rossum's help. Thus Van Rossum became cardinal protector of five institutes in short succession in the diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands at the instigation of the local bishop, Wilhelmus van de Ven: the Sisters of Charity, the Brothers of Tilburg, the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood,⁷ the Crosier Fathers⁸ and the Norbertines.⁹ Bishop Adolf Bertram of Breslau asked Van Rossum in late 1916 to become protector of the Italian houses of the 'Grey Nuns' of Saint Elisabeth. The cardinal had in fact already promised as much to the German sisters who remained in Rome during the war, offering them his help and protection.¹⁰

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- 5 KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Catherine, superior general of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Apostles, to W. van Rossum, 21 October 1930: "amid the current difficulties, [the cardinal's willingness to become their protector] is both a very great consolation to us and a precious reassurance."
 - 6 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, b.s., Protettorie 43, fasc. 2, f 210–217: Catholic Students' Mission Crusade in Cincinnati, 10 May 1926. Request by the president, Bishop Francis Joseph Beckman of Lincoln.
 - 7 Possibly due to financial problems that plagued the congregation and led it to consider moving to Paderborn. Van Rossum discussed the request with them personally in the Redemptorist monastery in Antwerp. KDC, ROSS, no. 21: Paula Emunds to J. Drehmanns, 12 and 20 December 1913.
 - 8 Like the Norbertines, this order had been founded in the twelfth century and followed the Rule of Augustine. The request was probably due to problems arising from their attempt to found a house in the United States. J. Scheerder, 'Henricus Martinus Franciscus Hollmann. Tweeënvijftigste Magister Generaal der Orde van het H. Kruis 1853–1927', in: *Clairlieu. Tijdschrift gewijd aan de geschiedenis van de Kruissheren*, 23/24 (1965–1966), 1–246, at 197–200. Van Rossum had had a special connection with the Crosier Fathers through his titular church, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, since 1915. In the run-up to the sixteenth centenary of the finding of the Holy Cross, a special committee was established to mark the jubilee and find a "a fitting repository for the relics of the Passion in this church". Both Hollmann and Van Asseldonk were invited to become members of this committee founded by Pius XI, which was under Van Rossum's patronage. Scheerder, 'Henricus Martinus Franciscus Hollmann', 210–212; AAS, 18 (1926), 182–185.
 - 9 Van Rossum visited the Norbertine abbey of Heeswijk-Dinther in 1913. Their procurator general, J. Nouwens, who also acted as the Roman agent for the Crosier Fathers, recommended asking Van Rossum to succeed the previous protector Oreglia, as "there was a lot at stake". Averbode Archive, A.1.5.3: J. Nouwens to Abbot Gummarius Crets, 24 December 1913.
 - 10 KDC, ROSS, no. 130: A. Bertram to W. van Rossum, 29 December 1916. The request was granted on 9 May 1917 on the basis of a petition by superior general Lamberta Fleischer. AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, b.s., Protettorie 43, fasc. 2, f 123–129.

Other requests came through fellow Redemptorists, who effectively formed a worldwide network of confreres for Van Rossum. The Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine asked him in 1914 because superior general Marie-Louise De Meester's spiritual director was a Redemptorist, a priest called Godts, who was possibly Van Rossum's former prefect of students.¹¹ The Alexian Brothers, whose main apostolate was the care for psychiatric patients, asked Van Rossum in 1918 after the death of their previous protector, Cardinal Lorenzelli. They had been in touch with the German provincial superior of the Redemptorists, Adolph Brors, and asked for Van Rossum's help in a dispute with the archbishop of Cologne. The archbishop was using the new code of canon law in an attempt to withdraw their exempt status, which gave them a certain independence from the diocesan bishop.¹² And in 1928, the Redemptorist Alphonse George asked Van Rossum to become protector of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd after Billot was stripped of his cardinalate and could no longer fulfil this position. George promised they "would not be a burden to him".¹³

Officially speaking, the office of cardinal protector was unsalaried, but it was not unusual for Van Rossum to receive cheques from institutes under his protection.¹⁴ He also regularly received gifts from congregations as expressions of gratitude; Van Rossum's papers in the Nijmegen Catholic Documentation Centre contain many such presents for the cardinal protector.¹⁵ The Sisters of Tilburg gave him a beautiful album in 1924 and commissioned a portrait of him painted by a renowned Catholic painter in 1929.¹⁶ The Brothers of Tilburg sent him poems and artfully designed scrolls detailing their work. Van Rossum would send portrait photographs of himself inscribed with words of encouragement or gratitude, and such gifts often ended up framed on the wall of a monastery chapter hall, for example in a convent of the Grey Nuns.¹⁷

11 Sandra, *Marie-Louise De Meester*, 10–20.

12 KDC, ROSS, no. 110: Generalrektor Paul Overbeck to W. van Rossum, 6 April 1918 and an undated letter.

13 KDC, ROSS, no. 43: A. George to W. van Rossum, Paris 25 November 1927.

14 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: W. van Rossum to Paula Emunds, 3 January 1916. He expressed thanks "for the cheque", without further details, in this letter in which he announced a new mission to Denmark. On 2 February 1918, he thanked Emunds again for a cheque received from Basle, but added, "But it would have been better to send the gift to the poor sisters in the Danish mission." He received a sum of 5000 lire from the Grey Sisters of Breslau for the missions in 1920; possibly due to a testamentary disposition. KDC, ROSS, no. 42: Lamberta Fleischer, 5 July 1920, co-signed by Cardinal Bertram; no. 19: the curator of the Congregation, Msgr. Steinmann, to W. van Rossum, 8 May 1920.

15 KDC, ROSS, no. 214; no. 244; no. 407.

16 Jan van Delft's portrait is now in KDC, the album in Catharijneconvent Museum in Utrecht, the Netherlands. See also ENK, AZLT, no. 77: W. van Rossum to superior general Christine Borsten, Rome 3 May 1923.

17 KDC, ROSS, no. 130: L. Fleischer, superior general, to W. van Rossum, 8 May 1920.

Van Rossum sometimes had personal reasons to accept a protectorate, for instance that of the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg. Van Rossum's younger sister Hendrina had received the habit of this congregation on 30 November 1873 as Sister Gerulpha.¹⁸ After his creation as cardinal, Van Rossum invited her to come to Rome together with the superior general, Maria Theresinia Favier (1909–1921).¹⁹ It was the first time that they visited Rome and Van Rossum made much of his sister, who would be his last remaining sibling after their youngest brother's death in 1915. They were received in audience by the pope, and on that occasion Favier asked Van Rossum to become their cardinal protector. The appointment was approved on 12 February 1912.



With his sister, Gerulpha, a Sister of Charity of Tilburg, 1913

In this case – and possibly in other cases – the suggestion that the superior general should petition the pope to appoint Van Rossum cardinal protector probably came from the cardinal himself. As cardinal protector, he could keep an eye out for his sister and ensure she received the attention she required. When she fell seriously ill in

¹⁸ Tilburg, *General Archive of the Sisters of Charity*: personal file of Sister Gerulpha van Rossum. Gerulpha lived in many convents: Beek near Nijmegen, Venlo (Saint Martin's), Rijsenburg, 's-Hertogenbosch, Venlo (Nazareth), Stratum, Geffen, Tilburg (Heikant) and the motherhouse. She was disqualified for the mission in Suriname on medical grounds in 1908. (NB the personal files will in due course be transferred to ENK).

¹⁹ *Tilburgsche Courant*, 10 January 1912.

1924, the superior general updated Van Rossum frequently about her condition and made sure she was as comfortable as possible.²⁰ When writing to the superior, he regularly included a short personal letter for his sister.²¹ And he would try to arrange a meeting with her whenever he was in the Netherlands, not only on official visits but also during ‘incognito’ stays.

Van Rossum had had a personal bond with the Redemptoristine Sisters ever since he visited their motherhouse in Scala and persuaded several Belgian sisters to move there. At his instigation, the Belgian Sister Marie-Philomène became superior of this convent, and he kept in touch with her regularly. He commiserated with her on illnesses and adversity, gave advice on accepting candidates and in late 1928 drafted a memorandum on the renovation of the convent. Although he had no formal authority over the management of the house, he sent Scala a sum of money every year – mostly from donations by Redemptorists or Redemptoristines elsewhere or from interest on funds deposited in Amsterdam. These donations were the convent’s lifeblood, and he gave the superior advice on how best to use the money. Up to 1919, the sum was usually less than 10,000 lire, but the “spese annue” quickly rose to 33,000 lire in 1921 and 64,000 lire in 1930.²² He also ensured that Marie-Philomène retained her position as superior when a number of Italian sisters attempted to depose her.²³

Van Rossum had been a frequent visitor to the convent of the Sisters of the Holy Family on 18 Via Machiavelli in Rome, near the Redemptorist generalate, long before he became their protector in 1913.²⁴ He regularly said Mass there, and every year during Easter Week, he was a welcome guest at the congregation’s convent in Albano, just outside Rome, accompanied by his secretary, who served as their confessor. It was an opportunity for him to unwind after the obligations of Holy Week.²⁵

The cardinal liked to spend his long summers with the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross in Ingenbohl in Switzerland. If the entries in their annals and in their

20 ENK, AZLT, no. 77: W. van Rossum to ‘waarde nicht’ (‘Dear cousin’), 22 December 1924.

21 ENK, AZLT, no. 218: W. van Rossum to superior general Christine Borsten, Wittem 15 August 1924, Karlsbad, 24 August and 10 September 1924.

22 ENK, ANPR, no. 826: cash book by W. van Rossum with income and expenditure for the convent of Scala, 1912–1933; KDC, ROSS, no. 202: financial files. It must be added that the Italian lire lost much of its value between 1918 and 1921.

23 AGHR, *Correspondence with Redemptoristines (OSSR)*, folder ‘Scala’ with almost a hundred letters by Van Rossum to the superior of Scala from 1921–1932. On the appointment of the superior: W. van Rossum to superior Marie-Philomène, 5 April 1924. On financial independence: Marie-Philomène to J. Drehmanns, 17 September 1932. The cardinal and Drehmanns also corresponded with some thirty other convents of the order. In the preface to the new constitutions of the Redemptoristines in 1931, Van Rossum noted that the directory had to be approved not only by the bishop of the diocese in which the convent was situated but also by the cardinal protector. *Regels en constituties voor de ordeusters*, 3–5.

24 Van Rossum was the confessor of the foundress, Franciszka Siedliska, from 1898 to 1902: ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1918: memorandum by Van Rossum, 15 October 1918.

25 KDC, ROSS, no. 106: Sister Domicilla to J. Drehmanns, 9 September 1923; KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 21 March 1931.

journal *Theodosia* are to be believed, as well as the accounts of a number of sisters recorded soon after his death, his sojourn there was always a time of true relaxation for Van Rossum.²⁶ In Ingenbohl, he was not a “severe prince of the church”, but a priest and a “fatherly friend” to the sisters. The memories of the cardinal’s visits all portray him as a cheerful, simple and grateful guest, who liked to tease his secretary Drehmanns and enjoyed a practical joke – he used to hide the soup ladle and was amused when the sister on duty discovered, after initial consternation, who the culprit was. One of the sisters characterised the atmosphere during his visits as heavenly. All fear was banished and the sunny rays of the cardinal’s benevolence warmed the whole convent.



1927 general chapter of the Ingenbohl Sisters

²⁶ Information received from Agnes Maria Weber, general archivist, 12 June 2012; ‘Kardinalprotektor Willem Marinus van Rossum. Auszüge aus Berichten in der *Theodosia*’.

The sisters also emphasised his deep piety. Speaking about Jesus was like honey to him and a refreshment for the soul. “His love of Holy Church was boundless” and he gladly bestowed apostolic benediction with a plenary indulgence at least once during every visit. He must also have enjoyed the annual religious festivities to mark the giving of the habit to new candidates, professions and jubilees. Given the size of the congregation, such occasions involved dozens or even a hundred or more sisters. Scenes like these symbolised his model vision of the religious life. Sister Lidwina Madlener recounted that he told her with tears in his eyes after some beautiful ceremony: “O how great that we are Catholics! But how sad it would have been if we hadn’t been Catholics!”²⁷

Van Rossum was on excellent terms with the superior general of the congregation, the Swiss Mother Aniceta Regli.²⁸ After the death of their protector Vives y Tutó, she personally went to Rome to ask Van Rossum to succeed him. The congregation, founded in Switzerland in 1856, experienced enormous growth in a short period of time, expanding throughout Switzerland, to Austria and other parts of the Habsburg Empire. It was active in all fields of education and social work, and established convents in Rome in 1883, in British India in 1894, in the United States in 1912 and in China in 1927.²⁹

The congregation’s house on Via San Basilio in Rome had to be torn down in the early 1920s to accommodate the Fascist government’s new street plan. The congregation then decided to build a modern hospital. Van Rossum was informed of the plans, approved them and helped look for a suitable plot. A terrain was purchased in



*Aniceta Regli, superior general
of the Ingenbohl Sisters, 1927*

27 Ingenbohl, Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, *IAI*, A 13, 25: memories of Lidwina Madlener from Ingenbohl.

28 M. Aniceta (Josefa Rosa) Regli (1857–1939), superior general from 1906 to 1921. She was sent to the US in 1922 at the age of 65 to establish a novitiate there. KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli to W. van Rossum, Merrill 1 December 1925. She returned in 1927 and was appointed superior in Rome, in the convent attached to the Quisisana clinic. Agnes Maria Weber, general archivist, to Vefie Poels, 9 and 15 April 2014.

29 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: ‘Jahres-Bericht über die Kongregation der Schwestern vom hl. Kreuze in Ingenbohl’, 11 May 1917; *Die Kongregation der barmherzigen Schwestern vom heiligen Kreuz Ingenbohl*, [Ingenbohl, c. 1950].

1924 and Van Rossum came to bless the chapel and house in May 1927. Quisisana – ‘we heal here’ – on 5 Via Gian Giacomo Porro hosted the general chapter in June, and the new hospital opened its doors in July. It soon became the “preferred private clinic for cardinals, bishops, curial officials, and for members of the royal family”.³⁰

Van Rossum and Drehmanns were frequent visitors to the Roman convent; they often went there for dinner on Sunday. The cardinal was admitted to Quisisana in early 1928 due to complications from diabetes, and it was widely feared that he would not survive.³¹ His condition improved in April, but later that year he had to go back to hospital again. The situation was not as serious as it had been the year before, as he informed the concerned bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch. “I am allowed to say Holy Mass again since a few days; but one leg is still very bloated and stiff. It will have to wear off slowly.” He thanked the bishop for the pictures of Our Lady of 's-Hertogenbosch that he had sent him.³²

As cardinal protector, Van Rossum assumed the role of protector of German and Austrian religious in Italy who were affected by the First World War. As we have seen, this motivated the bishop of Breslau to ask him to become the protector of the Grey Nuns. Most German and Austrian sisters had to leave Italy in May 1915. Van Rossum took a close interest in the fate of those who had to leave as well as those who stayed behind, and this must have further strengthened his reputation of being a ‘friend of the Germans’.

There were a number of Germans and Austrians among the Roman community of the Sisters of Ingenbohl, and their presence occasionally attracted the hostile attention of the Italian government. One of these sisters was arrested in 1915 on accusations of spying. Although there was some worrying talk of execution, in fact she was released unmolested. Van Rossum consoled her and her sisters, also on behalf of the pope. He made sure the community had enough to eat and every year brought little gifts, both for the sisters and for the children in their boarding school. Once he insisted that the sisters should consume their treats on the spot so that they would not be able to give them to others after he had left. In early 1918 it was announced that all Austrian sisters would be interned outside Rome with all their compatriots. Van Rossum’s own attempts to have the sisters exempted failed, but he appealed to the pope and the sisters remained free.³³ He also defended the congregation’s inter-

30 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli to J. Drehmanns, 20 June and 20 September 1930. Information received from Agnes Maria Weber, general archivist in Ingenbohl, on 9 April 2014.

31 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 16 February and 28 April 1928.

32 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 11 December 1928; HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7: W. van Rossum to A.F. Diepen, 20 December 1928.

33 Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl: Auszüge aus der Chronik von Via San Basilio, Rom, 28 January 1918.

ests in other moments of peril, for example when the Italian government threatened to confiscate their house.³⁴

In early 1918, German Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood in South Africa ran into difficulties with the British government which made it impossible for them to continue their work. Van Rossum asked the Secretariat of State to make representations to the British government.³⁵ The result was that the sisters were permitted to stay in South Africa and Rhodesia. They had to leave most areas in East Africa in 1920, but were allowed to return in 1925 and 1926.³⁶

2 Concentration of power

Van Rossum's influence was greatly enhanced by the fact that he combined multiple positions. He was able to ask the Congregation for Religious to advance business concerning orders and congregations whose cardinal protector he was, such as approving the resignation of a superior general.³⁷ When the Congregation for Religious instructed the Crosier Fathers to stipulate in their new statutes that their generalate had to be in Rome, they successfully asked their protector to secure a grace period.³⁸

On other occasions, Van Rossum worked in close concert as protector with the Congregation for Religious to bring about desired changes within an institute. The Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth were an example. This congregation had had houses in the United States since 1885, where it worked among European Catholic immigrants like many female congregations, helping to spread the Catholic church.³⁹ The sisters ran dozens of schools for the children of Polish immigrants, but after the war their work fell foul of the 'Americanism' of their bishop, who tried to ban them from teaching Polish as a second language. This would deprive them of their most profitable advantage, they told Van Rossum, as Polish parents would start sending their children to free public schools instead.⁴⁰ At the same time, Van

34 Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A 13, 25: memories of Nazaria Schmidlin, superior in Rome at the time.

35 KDC, ROSS, no. 21: W. van Rossum to Paula Emunds, 13 May 1918, in which he responds to her letters of 26 January, 28 March, 18 and 25 April 1918 as "a most devoted father and protector".

36 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 962, f 61–71: Relazione straordinaria, June 1927. They opened a house in the United States in 1925.

37 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder H. 'Lettere private, 1911–1919': A. F. Diepen to W. van Rossum, 8 November 1919, on Brother Radulphus Hermus's request to resign as superior general of the Brothers of Tilburg.

38 *Ibid.*, folder J. 'Lettere private. 1920–1929': A. van Asseldonk to W. van Rossum, protector, July 1922. Memorandum on the revised statutes.

39 Moya, 'La colaboración de las Órdenes y Congregaciones religiosas', 129–130.

40 KDC, ROSS, no. 43: Sister Domicilla to W. van Rossum, Philadelphia 14 March 1925; idem to J. Drehmanns, 14 May 1925.

Rossum received a letter from the Congregation for Religious asking him to use his influence with the superior general to end the sisters' "exclusive focus on the Polish language and nationality" in their schools.⁴¹ German, Italian and Polish sisters would have to acquiesce in the predominance of English as the main language.⁴²

To better attune the congregation's future policies to their American context, Van Rossum was authorised to split its United States province into three new provinces, which thus gained a majority voice at the general chapter (there were only two European provinces).⁴³ The protector personally presided over these chapters. The Congregation for Religious urged him to ensure that a capable sister would be elected superior general. When the tally showed that the sitting superior was likely to be re-elected for a third time, and the pope and the Congregation for Religious did not appear to object, Van Rossum pointed out that this was against the canonical rules and violated the spirit of the constitutions. His influence decided the affair and someone else was elected instead.⁴⁴

Van Rossum again presided over the general chapter of this congregation in June 1932. He had previously arranged that a second province was erected in Poland, redressing the balance between the three American and three European provinces.⁴⁵ At the opening of the chapter, the cardinal launched into a lengthy speech in which he "simply objectively" reminded the seventeen sisters present of all the rules and obligations that the church imposed upon them and that their constitutions contained. He had personal conversations with a number of participants before the vote was taken. A new superior general was unanimously chosen, and Van Rossum immediately ratified and approved the election, using the required faculties he had received to do this.⁴⁶

Almost all orders and congregations that had Van Rossum as their cardinal protector worked in the missions, expanded their missionary activities or accepted work in the missions. He urged the Belgian Redemptorist provincial to allow the Redemptoristines to go to the missions as "precious auxiliaries". In 1922, the Dutch Redemp-

41 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder I, 'Lettere private. Suore della Sacra Famiglia di Nazareth (1918-1921)': Congregation for Religious to W. van Rossum, protector, 28 June 1921.

42 Schwedt, 'Alte Welt gegen Neue Welt', 143-161.

43 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 4, folder I: decree by W. van Rossum, 28 July 1918: division of the United States province into three new provinces: Chicago, Conshohocken (diocese of Philadelphia) and Erie (near Pittsburgh).

44 *Ibid.*: Congregation for Religious to W. van Rossum, protector, 25 May and 5 June 1920; memorandum by Van Rossum.

45 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 27 February 1932.

46 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 5 June 1932.

toristines agreed to go and work in the missions in Brazil.⁴⁷ The congregation of the Brothers of Tilburg already worked in Suriname and Curaçao, but during Van Rossum's prefectship they accepted tasks in three further mission territories in the Dutch East Indies (Sumatra, Padang in 1923 and Medan in 1926; Celebes, Minahassa in 1924).⁴⁸

His influence was even greater if the congregation in question was placed under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide. Van Rossum authorised the Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine in 1920 to go to Belgian Congo to work with the Redemptorists; a year later they accepted another project there with the Scheut Fathers.⁴⁹ They went to Mongolia in 1923.

The German branch of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, whose cardinal protector Van Rossum had been since 1921, rapidly expanded its fields of work. In 1923, the cardinal asked them to accept a mission in China: German missionaries were welcome in this immense country; they would enjoy a lot of freedom and the Catholic faith was respected, including by the pagan government.⁵⁰ The missionaries established themselves in Shihtsien, a region within the vicariate of Kweiyang, which was in the charge of the Missions Étrangères de Paris. The following year, the newly erected apostolic prefecture of Thsuapa in Congo was entrusted to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart,⁵¹ followed in 1931 by the prefecture of Coquilhatville in Congo.⁵² The Chinese region of Shihtsien became an independent mission territory in 1932. The secretary of Propaganda Fide congratulated the superior general, Adrianus Brocken, with the trust that the pope had placed in his congregation and expressed the hope that the blood of Father Winkelman – who had been murdered there in 1929 – would bear much fruit.⁵³

In 1919, Van Rossum ensured that a part of the apostolic prefecture of West Uélé in Congo, where the Norbertines of the abbey of Tongerlo in Belgium had started a mission in 1898, became independent and was assigned to the Crosier Fathers. He was cardinal protector of both orders. Although the Crosier Fathers hesitated – they were

47 KADOC, *Archive of the North Belgian Province of the Redemptorists*, 9.3.1.3: W. van Rossum to Jozef Strybol, 20 January 1919. Van Rossum corresponded with the new house in Vassouras/Itú: AGHR, *Correspondence with Redemptoristines (O. Ss.R.)*.

48 Horsten, *Fraters van Tilburg*, vol. 3, 105–106, 146–177.

49 KDC, ROSS, no. 42: Sister M. Ursula (de Jonckheere) to W. van Rossum, Leuven 8 November 1920.

50 Rome, GAMSC: W. van Rossum and F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani to A. Brocken, 13 April 1923 and 21 May 1929.

51 *Ibid.*: F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani to A. Brocken, 31 January 1924.

52 *Ibid.*: C. Salotti to Emilio Kuntz, procurator general of the M.S.C., 30 June 1931. In the meantime, the Dutch Missionaries of the Sacred Heart received a mission in Java in 1931, after having accepted a mission in Sulawesi (Celebes) in 1919; and they had been active in New Guinea since the beginning of the century.

53 Rome, GAMSC: C. Salotti to superior general A. Brocken, 17 March and 20 September 1932.

small and their predominantly Dutch membership was not very interested in a mission in Belgian Congo – Van Rossum persuaded them to accept, primarily through the offices of Anton van Asseldonk (1892–1973), a Crosier Father and a student at the Angelicum and the Pontifical Biblical Commission.⁵⁴ Van Rossum promised him that “as soon as there is a new mission territory available in the Dutch colonies, the Crosier Fathers would have first choice”.⁵⁵ Van Rossum asked Van Asseldonk, whom he appointed the first procurator general of his order, to found Crosier missionary journals to attract publicity and benefactors. He also provided a generous subsidy for the mission in Congo.⁵⁶

Around 1919 and 1920, the Norbertine abbey of Berne in the Netherlands had plans to found a mission in the Dutch East Indies. But the Norbertine procurator general, Hubertus Noots, informed the abbey that requests made to this end to Propaganda Fide in August 1920 and the spring of 1921 had displeased Van Rossum. The first because it contained the proviso that “our Abbey is suited for a mission in more civilised areas”, and the second because it had not heeded Van Rossum’s request for confidentiality. When the Carmelites, Lazarists and Priests of the Sacred Heart were subsequently assigned missions in the Dutch East Indies in 1923, it became clear that the abbey’s chances of obtaining a place in this colony were slim. Instead, they accepted a mission in India from the archbishop of Madras, the Mill Hill Missionary Johannes Aelen.⁵⁷

The Norbertines were disappointed that they were being bypassed for a territory in the Dutch East Indies, but the Crosier Fathers, by contrast, felt overwhelmed by the speedy fulfilment of the promise made to Van Asseldonk of an Indonesian mission. Without awaiting the order’s formal acceptance, Van Rossum instructed them to start helping the Jesuits around Bandung, adding that this would prepare them for their own mission. In August 1926, the chapter accepted “Cardinal Van Rossum’s proposal (...) to send three priests to Java” joyfully, but not without some concern, as it was a great sacrifice to make for the order.⁵⁸

54 Janssen, *De Kruissheren in Congo*, 29–35; A. Ramaekers, ‘Doctor Anton van Asseldonk O.S. Crucis 1892–1973’, in: *Clairlieu*, 36(1978), 5–52; at 7–9.

55 Scheerder, ‘Henricus Martinus Franciscus Hollmann’, 187–188.

56 Ramaekers, ‘Doctor Anton van Asseldonk’, 12–13. Van Asseldonk recounted that Van Rossum had personally made sure in late 1920 that he obtained this post rather than anyone else (8). The missionary magazine *Zegepraal des kruises* was published in Diest in Belgium in 1921, and *Kruistriomf* in Sint Agatha in the Netherlands.

57 J.C.M. van Stratum, *De vijftig van Berne. Het werk van de Norbertijnen in India 1923–1998* (Heeswijk 1998), 21–22. Jabalbur became an apostolic prefecture in July 1932, with C. Dubbelman O.Praem. as its prefect.

58 Scheerder, ‘Henricus Martinus Franciscus Hollmann’, 188–191, 196. There is mention on p. 209 of the huge debt that encumbered the order at Hollmann’s death.

In the mid-1960s, the Crosier Fathers' retrospective assessment of Van Rossum's involvement in their missionary work was positive. It was due to him that they had accepted three missions, so that "the order currently counts missionary work among its most important tasks".⁵⁹ This had saved their "old order, which was about to die out", as the Jesuit Jac. van Ginneken had observed in 1928. It is certainly true that the Crosier Fathers experienced remarkable growth in the 1920s, as did other orders and congregations. There can be no doubt that this was at least partly due to the recruiting potential of their missionary activities.⁶⁰

3 Van Rossum's long arm

It is clear from all this that Van Rossum's influence over the religious of his day was great. He played an important role in the history of dozens of orders and congregations, through the Congregation for Religious and through his part in the revision of rules and constitutions followed the publication of the new code of canon law. His influence was even greater over institutes involved in missionary work, all the more so if they fell under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide. And institutes whose cardinal protector he was were quite unable to escape the cardinal's long arm, particularly if problems arose or individual religious failed to observe the rules.

As has been seen, the superior general of the Priests of the Sacred Heart experienced this in the case of a priest of his congregation who had been having an affair with a religious sister; Van Rossum had this priest placed under supervision.⁶¹ Sister Ursula De Jonckheere of the Missionary Canonesses of Saint Augustine felt trapped between difficulties she was having with her superior general and the congregation's missionary and financial policies, and expressed the problem very pertinently. The rules of the religious life stipulated that she should report abuses to her superiors, but what if "the superiors themselves are at fault"? The only way open to her in case of conflict with her superior was to write to Rome, and she had been advised by some to contact the Congregation for Religious. "But they don't realise that we are under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda and particularly that its August Prefect has deigned to be *Our Cardinal Protector*." She underlined these

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 185–186.

⁶⁰ J. van Ginneken, 'Het getal en de schakeering onzer priesterroepingen', in: *Jaarboek van het onderwijs en de opvoeding der RK jeugd in Nederland en koloniën*, 17(1928), 427–454, at 435. Van Ginneken pointed particularly to the spectacular growth of the s.v.d. between 1907 and 1925 (477 seminarians), and of the m.s.c. (190) and Mill Hill (192). The number of new religious priests in the Netherlands exceeded that of new secular priests from 1910 onwards; the figures were 114 secular priests vs. 253 religious priests in 1925, as opposed to 103 secular priests and 91 religious in 1907 (445).

⁶¹ See Chapter 14.5.

last words several times in blue pencil.⁶² The cardinal tried to encourage De Jonckheere, exhorting her to remember her vow of obedience and accept the situation.

In a number of cases, Van Rossum took more far-reaching disciplinary measures to bring back sheep who had, in his eyes, strayed too far from the fold. Three cases show the lengths to which he was prepared to go as cardinal protector.

In 1910, the Dutch Norbertine Joseph Nouwens of the abbey of Berne was appointed procurator general of his order. The Norbertines of the abbey of Tongerlo in Belgium, who had previously always provided the procurator general, opposed his appointment, and accusations were made to the Congregation for Religious in 1912 that he was having an affair with a woman. Van Rossum helped to refute these accusations.⁶³

But on 14 January 1920, Nouwens was condemned by the Holy Office – during a meeting at which Van Rossum was present – on the basis of a vague charge that seemed to point to Bolshevik sympathies. It is not clear whether Nouwens ever knew about this accusation, but the Norbertine abbot general, Norbert Schachinger, was informed of this case of conscience *sub secreto Sancti Officii*. The Holy Office instructed him to remove Nouwens from Rome and place him under his personal supervision in the abbey of Schlägl in Austria.⁶⁴

Nouwens repeatedly refused to obey this instruction and told everyone that he had Van Rossum's permission for this (due to health reasons and his *votum stabilitatis loci*, which bound him to the abbey of Berne). This put Van Rossum in a difficult position, as it implied that he was presuming to overrule a decision by the Holy Office. He decided to send a spy to investigate Nouwens, and the investigation produced evidence that Nouwens was living with a woman. Van Rossum and the abbot general then put huge pressure on Nouwens to request laicisation, which he did in late 1922.⁶⁵ Nouwens's repeated refusal to obey and the fact that he chose the 'natural' over the 'supernatural' were sufficient reason for Van Rossum to justify dismissal from the order. Another motive was possibly that Nouwens's departure placated the powerful abbey of Tongerlo, which could now once again provide the procurator general, in the person of Hubertus Noots. Noots later became abbot general.⁶⁶

62 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 960, f 422–425: Ursula De Jonckheere to W. van Rossum, August 1927; f 367–372: idem, Leuven 7 June 1927; f 383–406: idem, 1 July 1927 with appendices on the problems.

63 Poels, Sengers, 'Power Play in the Norbertine Order and the Roman Curia', 195–216.

64 ADDF, SO, *Decreta* 1920, 14 January 1920, prop. 2.

65 Poels, Sengers, 'Power Play in the Norbertine Order and the Roman Curia', 204–210.

66 Hubertus Noots (1881–1967) was involved in the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle in Rome (see Chapter 19) and was abbot general from 1937–1962.



Van Rossum in Rome with Crosier Fathers and Norbertines and others, c. 1931. First row, third from the right: Hubertus Noots. Behind Van Rossum to the right, his secretary Bernard Lijdsman

Around 1925, a heated dispute arose within the Belgian Congregation of Scheut between the superior general, Jozef Rutten (1874–1950), and his first assistant and predecessor Florent Mortier (1877–1963). The congregation had come under the authority of Propaganda Fide in March 1921. Mortier was dismayed by Rutten's government of the institute and as a result wrote a letter to Pius XI on 19 July 1926 asking to be laicised. He sent a cover letter to Cardinal Van Rossum telling him that the procurator in Rome could provide further details.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 955, f 419–422: Florent Mortier to Pius XI, 19 July 1926.

Van Rossum was aghast at Mortier's letter. Surely Mortier did not seriously intend to leave the congregation and the priesthood just because of some conflict, destroying in one stroke both his own reputation and his many merits? Conflicts could result in something good, he added. He exhorted Mortier to pray, seek the counsel of a pious and experienced priest and resist the emotions of the moment.⁶⁸ While Rutten was having Mortier removed from all his positions, Van Rossum was trying hard to retain him for the congregation and the church, seeking the assistance of the nuncio in Brussels, Clemente Micara, and the Belgian Cardinal Jozef Van Roey.⁶⁹

But Mortier ignored their and Van Rossum's instructions to return to his monastery. This meant he had committed the *crimen apostasiae a religione*, which was grounds for excommunication. The affair was discussed in the general congregation of Propaganda Fide in July 1927. Van Rossum subsequently wrote another letter of warning to Mortier, which was handed to him on 30 August by Van Roey in person. But Mortier persisted, and this resulted in a decree of expulsion that was drawn up with great care by Van Rossum.⁷⁰ In his reply, Mortier said he had received the message, but that he had not given up hope that his objective would be realised: a thorough investigation of Rutten's governmental, administrative and financial mismanagement.⁷¹

An extraordinary visitation of all houses of the congregation was in fact conducted in 1928, by the Dutch Franciscan Natalis Gubbels. Gubbels reported various deficiencies in the religious mentality of the members.⁷² Van Rossum presented the visitation report to four consultors, "in the most absolute, everlasting and total secrecy". The consultors' reports and further conversations with Gubbels resulted in a letter that Van Rossum wrote in March 1929, announcing organisational and disciplinary measures. The upshot was that the Scheut Fathers, who had up to that point been a somewhat loose group of secular priests, were effectively transformed into a religious congregation.⁷³

68 *Ibid.*, f 423–424: W. van Rossum to Florent Mortier, 29 July 1926.

69 *Ibid.*, f 436–439: circular letter by J. Rutten 3 October 1926; f 483–486: C. Micara, nuncio in Brussels, to W. van Rossum, 24 January 1927; f 536–540: advice by Generoso Graziosi S.J. on the Mortier case, 31 January 1927; f 533–534: further advice by Generoso Graziosi S.J. to the secretary of Propaganda on the Mortier case, 3 February 1927; f 543–544: Generoso Graziosi S.J. to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, secretary of Propaganda, 27 April 1927.

70 *Ibid.*, f 650–651: W. van Rossum to F. Mortier, [July 1927]; f 654: W. van Rossum to J. Van Roey (Mechelen), 19 July 1927; f 699–704: J. Van Roey to W. van Rossum, 12 September 1927.

71 *Ibid.*, f 715–717: decree drafted by W. van Rossum, 22 October 1927; f 738: F. Mortier to W. van Rossum, 5 November 1927.

72 *Ibid.*, f 883–884: First report by the visitor, N. Gubbels O.F.M., on his extraordinary apostolic visitation of the Congregation of Scheut, 20 September 1928; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1083: f 349–399, 400–552: visitation report, 8 December 1928.

73 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1083, f 251–258: memorandum by W. van Rossum, 2 February 1929; f 557–585: decisions by Propaganda Fide in memorandum by Van Rossum, 29 March 1929.

Anton van Asseldonk, the procurator general of the Crosier Fathers, faced an entirely different kind of problem. He became known mainly for his activities for *Amici Israel*.⁷⁴ This priestly society originated in the work of the Dutch Jewish convert Sophie van Leer, who was called Francisca after her conversion.⁷⁵ Van Leer wanted to work as a kind of female Messiah for the conversion of her people to Catholicism and for respectful treatment of the Jews. Her plan was to establish a kibbutz of Jewish converts to Catholicism who would work for the conversion of other Jews, and she sought Van Rossum's support and blessing for this endeavour. Van Rossum of course wanted to convert the whole world to Catholicism, including the Jewish people. The plan also chimed with the Vatican's policy of supporting Catholics in Palestine amid the growing influx of Jews since 1917, particularly from Russia and Ukraine.⁷⁶ The cardinal expressed interest in her plans during an audience in late 1924. In a letter dated 2 February 1925, Van Leer asked him if the wording of the liturgical prayers on Good Friday could be changed so that they would no longer call the Jews "perfidious".⁷⁷

Van Leer met Anton van Asseldonk in Rome in 1925, and together with the Dutch Franciscan Laetus Himmelreich,⁷⁸ they decided to set up a priestly society called *Amici Israel*. Their aim was to be "true friends" of Israel, to respect the Jewish people and support Jews who wished to convert to Catholicism. The inaugural meeting was held in Munich on 24 February 1926. Dom Benoît Gariador O.S.B. was appointed president, Van Asseldonk secretary. The society soon became very popular. A 'status operis' of late 1927 shows that there were nineteen cardinals among the members, including Van Rossum, Merry del Val, Laurenti, Pompilj, Gasquet, Frühwirth, Enrico

74 Marcel Poorthuis, Theo Saleminck, *Op zoek naar de blauwe ruiter: Sophie van Leer: een leven tussen avant-garde, jodendom en christendom (1892–1953)*, Nijmegen 2000; Theo Saleminck, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum and Amici Israel (1926–1928). The Conversion of Jews and the Debate on Zionism', in: *Life with a Mission*, 173–187; L. Deffayet, 'Pie XI et la Condamnation des Amis d'Israel (1928)', in: J. Prévotat (ed), *Pie XI et la France. L'apport des archives du pontificat de Pie XI à la connaissance des rapports entre le Saint-Siège et la France* [= *Collection de l'Ecole Française de Rome*, 438] (Rome 2010), 87–102; Hubert Wolf, "'Pro perfidis Judaëis'. Die "Amici Israel" und ihr Antrag auf eine Reform der Karfreitagsfürbitte für die Juden (1928). Oder: Bemerkungen zum Thema katholische Kirche und Antisemitismus', in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, 279 (2004), 611–659. On the role of the Catholic church with regard to antisemitism, see also Jan Bank and Lieve Gevers, *Churches and Religion in the Second World War* (London and New York 2016), 104–107.

75 Sophie van Leer (1892–1953) had fought alongside the German revolutionaries Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in 1919. She was spared the death sentence because of her conversion to Catholicism.

76 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 87–90.

77 KDC, ROSS, no. 16: Maria Francisca van Leer to W. van Rossum, Haifa, Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 2 February 1925 and Roermond 20 October 1925; ROSS, no. 34: M. Francisca van Leer to W. van Rossum, Haifa, Monastery of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 23 December 1924; Poorthuis, Saleminck, *Op zoek naar de blauwe ruiter*, 242–287.

78 Himmelreich had baptised Francisca van Leer and had been living in Rome as the secretary of the superior general of the Franciscans, B. Klumper, since 1921. Poorthuis, Saleminck, *Op zoek naar de blauwe ruiter*, 264–266.

Gasparri, Faulhaber, Maurin and Hlond, as well as 278 bishops and three thousand priests.⁷⁹

The society and its aims had Van Rossum's sympathy; he was regarded as a friend of the Jews.⁸⁰ On 27 May 1926, he addressed the second meeting of the society in the *Ospizio dei Catecumeni e Neofiti*, a Roman guesthouse that supported Jews who wished to convert and that stood under the patronage of three cardinals, including Van Rossum.⁸¹ According to the cardinal, the work of the society was most pleasing to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Christ greatly loved the people of Israel, because he was born a member of this nation according to the flesh, as was his mother.⁸² Like all other peoples and races, God was calling the Jews to become Catholics.

Anton van Asseldonk threw himself fully into his work for *Amici Israel*. The Crosier procurator general's office in Rome became a centre of operations for the society and Francisca van Leer was a frequent visitor. Van Rossum initially supported Van Asseldonk, but in the course of 1927, he began to have suspicions about the society's and its secretary's activities. On 6 October 1927, while Van Asseldonk was away on a first journey to Palestine, Van Rossum ordered a thorough search of the procurator general's office. Afterwards, he instructed the general of the Crosier Fathers, Willem van Dinter, to take disciplinary measures: the search had obviously turned up evidence of impropriety. If Van Dinter were to refuse, the cardinal wrote, he would bring the matter to the attention of a higher authority, that is, the Holy Office.⁸³

Meanwhile, Van Asseldonk continued with his activities. On 2 January 1928, Dom Gariador and Van Asseldonk wrote to the Congregation of Rites proposing to adapt the liturgy of Good Friday in accordance with Van Leer's previous suggestion to Van Rossum, as the prayer in question was "ex sensu antisemitico". The Congregation of Rites was not fundamentally averse to this proposal, but ran it by the Holy Office first. This dicastery rejected the suggestion, on the basis of a number of arguments,

79 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1928, no. 2, f 22: Roma et alibi. S. Congr. dei Riti. Il comitato centrale degli "Amici d'Israel" domanda che sia riformata la preghiera per gli Ebrei che si legge nella liturgia del Venerdì Santo. The organisation published a periodical called *Pax super Israel*.

80 Salemink, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum and Amici Israel', 177–178. Stanislas Fumet, *Histoire de Dieu dans ma vie. Souvenirs choisis* (Paris 1978), 300–301, visited Van Rossum in 1925 and called him a friend of the Jews. Van Rossum apparently told him that the popes throughout history had protected the Jews, but that Catholics nonetheless had much to answer for for the way they had treated them. "He had tears in his eyes when speaking of the Jews."

81 This institution had been founded by Pope Paul III in the sixteenth century. Alphonsus Liguori was reputed to have performed his first miracle in the guesthouse on 39 Via Madonna dei Monti. It offered free accommodation and instruction to Jews who wished to convert. *Annuario Pontificio* 1917, 47 and 642 calls Van Rossum Convisatore Apostolico dei Luoghi Pii dei Catecumeni. He subsequently became pro-visitor and from [1921] one of the three visitors, together with Cardinals M. Lega and O. Cagiano de Azevedo.

82 *De Tijd*, 31 May 1926.

83 Salemink, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum', 178–179. There was possibly a direct link between this threat by Van Rossum and the condemnation and suppression of *Amici Israel* by the Holy Office.

including recommendations by the consultor Joseph Drehmanns, who was the censor of the society's journal, *Pax super Israel*. At their following meeting, on 27 February 1928, the consultors also recommended that the society should be dissolved altogether.⁸⁴

This recommendation was discussed at a meeting of the Holy Office on 7 March 1928, in Van Rossum's absence due to serious illness.⁸⁵ According to the German historian Hubert Wolf, Merry del Val, despite being one of the society's first members, gave an antimodernist and antisemitic speech. *Amici Israel* was accused of inter-confessionalism, indifferentism – terms that hailed from antimodernist discourse – and of dangerous sympathies for political Zionism.⁸⁶

It was not long before the society was officially condemned. On 25 March 1928, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* carried Pius XI's *Decretum de consociatione vulgo 'Amici Israel' abolenda*.⁸⁷ Van Asseldonk formally submitted to the Holy Office and to his superior general, Van Dinter, whom he promised never to contact Francisca van Leer again. But Van Leer and Van Asseldonk met only a month later, and on 1 August 1928 they moved into an apartment in Haifa in Israel, their rooms separated by a small chapel. They were convinced that they were a 'new Adam and Eve' whose task it was to help prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.⁸⁸

Van Rossum – whose conception of the religious life was far removed from such exalted ideas – had Van Asseldonk tracked down by the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, Luigi Barlassina.⁸⁹ The patriarch assured the cardinal that there was no reason to doubt Van Asseldonk's morals. Van Rossum, Van Dinter and Barlassina, who tried to make Van Asseldonk realise it was all a "hallucination", then put huge pressure on the Crosier Father until he succumbed. He left Palestine on 14 November 1928.

Unlike Nouwens, Van Asseldonk was not asked to leave his order and the priesthood. Van Rossum believed he had changed his ways. The cardinal never lost trust in Van Asseldonk, whose motives had not been 'worldly'. Van Asseldonk departed to the Crosier Fathers' mission in Java in March 1930. When Bandung was made an apostolic prefecture in April 1932, Van Asseldonk's name was at the top of the *terna*, but after consultation of the Holy Office, the post went instead to the number two on the list. Although three cardinals – Gasparri, Frühwirth and Van Rossum – had

84 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1928, no. 2, f 2–18; Salemink, 'Cardinal Willem van Rossum', 178.

85 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 16 February, 10 and 24 March 1928.

86 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1928, no. 2, f 20: votum by Merry del Val for the general congregation of 7 March 1928; Wolf, "'Pro perfidis Judaeis'", 636–637.

87 AAS, 20(1928), 103–104.

88 KDC, ROSS, no. 108: W. van Dinter to W. van Rossum, 27 April 1928.

89 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1928, no. 2, f 51: Luigi Barlassina to W. van Rossum, 4 October 1928; ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: L. Barlassina to W. van Rossum, 29 October 1928, and A. van Asseldonk to W. van Rossum, 6 November 1928.

no objection to Van Asseldonk in May 1932, the other cardinals vetoed his appointment on the basis of the 1928 letters from Jerusalem. The pope accepted the majority decision.⁹⁰

As cardinal protector, Van Rossum was in a position to exercise strong and immediate influence over many orders and congregations. In combination with his other positions within the curia that have been discussed in previous chapters, he played a decisive role in many cases, particularly in the institutes whose protector he was. In combination with his position as prefect of Propaganda Fide, he was able to persuade many of these institutes to take up missionary work or to expand their investment in the missions.

In Van Rossum's eyes, this accumulation of positions did not create any conflict of interests: all his activities were for the good of the church and its expansion throughout the world. But the fact that so many functions were united in the hands of one cardinal was not without its drawbacks. His various positions gave Van Rossum the power to exercise a great deal of control, even to the point of setting up a spy network. This was a cause of concern to individual religious as well as to orders and congregations that felt they were being monitored by institutes under Van Rossum's patronage. The cardinal's long arm was a force to be reckoned with. His support could work wonders, but his opposition could be devastating.

While Van Rossum's policies enjoyed the pope's support, he continued unwearingly to build his 'army of good religious'. Pius x and Benedict xv gave him freedom to do this, for example by appointing him to a large number of protectorates and by transferring congregations back to the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide. Pius xi initially did the same, but in the second half of the 1920s he called Van Rossum's expanding influence to a halt. In the meantime, Pius xi sought to build his own profile as the 'pope of the missions'. But according to the cardinal, this did little to make efficient use of the growing group of motivated religious to further the coming of Christ's kingdom in the world. As we shall see in Chapter 21, he believed that the church under Pius xi lacked an inspired and purposeful papal policy to achieve this.

90 ADDF, SO, *Rerum Variarum* 1928, no. 2, f 51, 52 and 52bis/1.

The Society of Saint Peter the Apostle and the banishment of Drehmanns by Pius XI

1 Private secretary

When Willem van Rossum was created a cardinal in 1911, he asked his fellow Redemptorist Joseph Maria Drehmanns to come Rome to become his secretary.¹ We have encountered Drehmanns frequently in the previous chapters. His influence over Van Rossum was great, not only over his domestic arrangements, but also over his work as a cardinal of the curia and as prefect of Propaganda Fide. This latter role in particular, which made Drehmanns an important force and occasionally a weak link in Van Rossum's life as a cardinal, requires further inquiry.

A native of Roermond in the Netherlands, Drehmanns was a canon lawyer and a zealous religious. He was also ambitious and consumed by the idea that he had an important role to fulfil in the church. When he was 21, he told a fellow student that he would like to live in Rome, as it was "the place where it is easy to become a saint".² It was no wonder then that he jumped at the opportunity when Van Rossum asked him to come to Rome to be his private secretary. But Drehmanns's ambitions went much further. One of his motives for joining the Redemptorists after completing his studies at the Roermond major seminary in 1905 was precisely to avoid becoming a secretary to his uncle, who was the bishop of Roermond. But Rome offered greater opportunities to achieve his religious and other ambitions than did the provincial diocese of Roermond. In a rather sentimental letter, Van Rossum asked Drehmanns to become his "companion in suffering", emphasising that they would be able to continue their religious observance in close contact with the community in the Redemptorist generalate. Drehmanns's coming would be a "true consolation" to the cardinal, who clearly regarded the red hat as a burden, at least with regard to his life as a religious.³

As private secretary, Drehmanns became Van Rossum's right-hand man and confidant. He looked after the cardinal's correspondence, kept his diary, organised journeys and took care of a myriad other practical chores. Van Rossum also obtained various important positions within the curia for him. They worked together closely for nearly twenty years, a period during which, in Van Rossum's words, they "became very closely knit".⁴ Pope Pius XI abruptly ended it all on 15 April 1930 when he banished Drehmanns

1 See Chapter 10.3.

2 See KDC, ROSS, no. 82: A. Slijpen to J. Drehmanns, 28 December 1911.

3 KDC, ROSS, no. 122: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns (*solis*), 2 November 1911.

4 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 16 May 1930.



Van Rossum and Joseph Drehmanns, probably in the garden of Via dello Statuto

from Rome with immediate effect. What caused this decision and what were the consequences for the cardinal's position? In order to answer these questions, we will look in this chapter at the collaboration between Van Rossum and Drehmanns within the Roman curia, particularly Drehmanns's role as secretary general of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, and the attendant pitfalls. We will also address Drehmanns's attempts to make a name for himself as the founder of a religious congregation. It was an endeavour that ended in catastrophe.

On 6 May 1912, not long after his arrival in Rome, Drehmanns was appointed consultor of the Holy Office.⁵ He would never have been able to obtain such a position so quickly without Van Rossum's support. For Van Rossum, this appointment was important to consolidate his own position within the curia: he had become a member of three dicasteries after his elevation to the cardinalate, but not of the influential Holy Office, even though he had been a consultor of this dicastery since 1896. That post automatically lapsed upon his creation as cardinal, but the vacancy was filled within six months by the then thirty-year-old Drehmanns. The post of consultor of the Holy Office had lost none of its potential as a launching pad for successful ecclesiastical careers: the later Cardinal Camillo Laurenti and later Pope Eugenio Pacelli both became consultor of this dicastery in the same year.

According to the archive of the Holy Office, Drehmanns dealt with at least 45 cases as consultor, writing one or multiple memorandums or *voti*. The cases in question were on a range of topics, generally not the most sensitive ones, and included such things as the Catholic position on cremation, the 'secret of La Sallette', where two children had had a vision of Our Lady in 1846, the condemnation of the writings of Léon Daudet (an adherent of Action Française), euthanasia and the priesthood of women.⁶ This latter case was before the Holy Office because of an article by Margarethe Adam called 'Die Frau als Seelsorger' ('Woman as Pastor'); Adam was a Catholic who had studied theology at the Protestant university of Berlin. In his *votum*, Drehmanns called the article a "dangerous work".⁷ Van Rossum was ultimately appointed a member of the Holy Office on 13 April 1913, so that he could from that point on, if desired, take a common line with Drehmanns on the various cases without breaking any of the solemn oaths of secrecy they had sworn.

5 'Joseph Hubertus Maria Drehmanns CSSR', in: Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 1, 509–510.

6 Resp. ADDF, SO, MD RV 1926, no. 5; *Censurae Librorum* 1879–1886, no. 13; *Censurae Librorum* 1927 103/1927; DV 1914, no. 11; MD RV 1922, no. 7. See also Wolf, Schwedt, Lagatz, *Prosopographie*, vol. 2, 'Anhang', 1600 ff.

7 The article appeared in *Die Frau*, 29(1922), 7 (April). Drehmanns's *votum* of 24 June 1922 qualified it as a "lavoro pericoloso", f 3.

On 12 May 1912, Drehmanns was appointed consultor of the Commissione Cardinalizia per l'Opera Della Preservazione della Fede (the Society for the Preservation of the Faith in the city of Rome), with particular responsibility for the Dutch branch, a position previously occupied by Van Rossum. Van Rossum had become a member of this commission after being made a cardinal, but a reorganisation in 1930 ended the involvement of both men.⁸ In 1915, after Van Rossum's appointment as major penitentiary, Drehmanns also became consultor of the Apostolic Penitentiary, specifically for the section on indulgences.

Van Rossum was soon confronted with a particular streak in his private secretary's character which manifested itself both within and outside his work as a consultor: wilfulness. Drehmanns had certain views on the mystical side of the religious life, which he strove first and foremost to communicate to women religious. Van Rossum felt obliged in 1915 to intervene in Drehmanns's role as spiritual director of the Sisters of Tilburg, where his 'mystical circles' for sisters who were allegedly closer to Jesus than others were causing unrest. In his letter to the superior general of this congregation, Van Rossum condemned Drehmanns's endeavours, but immediately glossed over them by assuring her that he had no doubts about Drehmanns's "saintly intentions" – "the sanctification of souls and the glory of Jesus".⁹ The incident did not prompt Van Rossum to keep a closer eye on Drehmanns's correspondence with religious. On the contrary, as his own diary filled up, he increasingly left cases involving religious to Drehmanns, who continued to encourage his 'circles' among the Sisters of Tilburg, possibly without Van Rossum's knowledge.¹⁰

2 The Society of Saint Peter the Apostle (S.P.A.) as a cornerstone of *Maximum Illud*

Van Rossum gave Drehmanns an important new post in 1920: treasurer of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle (S.P.A.) (in French: Œuvre de S. Pierre Apôtre; in Italian: Opera di S. Pietro, O.S.P.), a mission society that had been mentioned in *Maximum Illud* as one of the auxiliary societies of the Propagation of the Faith. The specific

8 ENK, ANPR, no. 7695: document signed by Cardinal Respighi, president of the commission, 12 May 1912.

9 See Chapter 17.1; ENK, AZLT, no. 2858: W. van Rossum to Theresinia Favier, 21 May 1915.

10 Drehmanns's influence remained palpable for a long time, even after his death. The diocesan monastic visitor P. Riep spoke of the "Drehmanns movement" as a kind of "mystical covenant" or "unity movement". "Those who are keen on it try to experience very strongly the inhabitation of the Most Holy Trinity, in itself a good thing of course, but they also wish to experience love in each other, in a somewhat overwrought attitude towards each other, which is expressed in certain sensual expressions towards one another." The upshot was that the others regarded themselves as "less perfect" and felt excluded. ENK, AZLT, no. 3305: P. Riep to E. van Galen O.C.D., 4 October 196[3].

goal of the Society of Saint Peter was to raise funds for the formation of indigenous priests who came from the mission territories. This would make it possible to indigenise the church and break the stranglehold of the colonial political powers over the missions, a cornerstone in Van Rossum's new missionary policy. The advantage of having indigenous priests was strongly felt in the years immediately after the First World War. Europeans were and remained strangers in the colonies, and as long as all priests were European, the Catholic faith would remain an alien religion to many. The danger was that, as soon as the inevitable future decolonisation would take effect, Christians would become targets of persecution. The chances of this would be considerably lower if the church had by then been indigenised and was run by an indigenous clergy and hierarchy.

As we have seen in Chapter 14, the idea of forming an indigenous clergy was not new – it appeared already in Pope Alexander VII's 1659 *Instructio* – but little had been done to implement it. Not only did missionaries still often operate as extensions of the colonial powers, but an ethnocentric Western self-image, whether or not this included more or less open racism, proved an obstacle to taking actual steps to train indigenous priests, to treating them on an equal footing and giving them the same career possibilities in the church as Western priests. One objection that was often raised was that the indigenous population “was not ready yet” or unsuited to celibacy. The vicar apostolic Edmond Luijpen s.j. candidly told a fellow Jesuit in the Dutch East Indies around 1920 that the thought of ordaining indigenous priests was almost unbearable to him.¹¹ The objections were even greater in the case of indigenous bishops. Certain European superiors argued that Chinese priests lacked the management skills required or did not enjoy the respect of their countrymen.¹²

Van Rossum was determined to break the resistance that missionaries or vicars apostolic were putting up “out of parochialism and a desire to stay in control”.¹³ In his biography, Drehmanns wrote that Van Rossum “openly expressed his disapproval of the English Government, which, because of racism, regarded the presence of such

11 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 693, f 354–357: B. Cattaneo, apostolic delegate in Sydney, to W. van Rossum, 13 December 1920. By contrast, Frans van Lith, a confrere of Luijpen's who had worked in Java since 1897 and strongly criticised the racialist and Eurocentric character of the mission around 1922, was an ardent supporter of a full-fledged indigenous church. But a conference of missionary superiors in the Dutch East Indies organised at Van Rossum's initiative in 1925 did not lead to the kind of commitment to forming an indigenous clergy that he desired. See De Valk, ‘Hollandia docet?’, 146–157.

12 ASPF, *Acta*, vol. 293, 1922, f 261–388: Circa la situazione religiosa in Cina e Visita Apostolica, *relazione* by J. de Guébriant, at f 342; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 815, f 354–359: B. Klumper, superior general of the Franciscans, to W. van Rossum, 19 February 1924.

13 KDC, *PMW*, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 14 January 1922; See also J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 12 November 1921; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 966b, f 325–337: critical note from 1927 on the annual calendar published by the Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi (Lyon) under the theme ‘Le patriotisme des missionnaires’.

bishops in its territories as undesirable”.¹⁴ Drehmanns, too, was an ardent supporter of an indigenous clergy, even before the publication of *Maximum Illud*: “As soon as there will be civilised negro states in Africa, we must be ready to give them negro priests, who know how to lead the people”, he wrote to the Dutch mission propagandist Jan Smit.¹⁵ Van Rossum wrote to Jean de Guébriant, superior general of the Missions Étrangères de Paris in early 1924 that Propaganda Fide was considering abolishing the privileges that apostolic missionaries enjoyed over indigenous priests to aid the normalisation of relations between European and indigenous clergy.¹⁶

Not long after his appointment as prefect of Propaganda Fide, Van Rossum asserted control over the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle. The society had been founded in 1889 by the French widow Stephanie Bigard-Cottin and her daughter Jeanne Alexandrine Bigard, who had passed it on in 1904 to the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (F.M.M.) in Fribourg in Switzerland. Family quarrels over the funds and the First World War brought the society to the verge of collapse by the end of the war.¹⁷ On 28 May 1919, the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* carried a letter by Secretary of State Gasparri, announcing that Pope Benedict XV was entrusting the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle to Msgr Roger de Teil, who was already in charge of the Holy Childhood Association (Œuvre pontificale de l'Enfance missionnaire, or Sainte-Enfance), the other auxiliary society of the Propagation of the Faith. This association's goal was to educate orphaned boys or boys redeemed from slavery, but the aim was extended to include the training of indigenous priests. Benedict gave the association 50,000 lire by way of encouragement. This letter was widely disseminated in missionary periodicals.¹⁸

Gasparri's letter had clearly been written without Van Rossum's knowledge. It greatly dismayed the prefect, who pointed out to the pope during an audience in mid-June 1919 that the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle fell under the jurisdiction of Propaganda Fide and that its task could not therefore simply be relinquished to another organisation. The Holy Childhood should stick to helping orphans. The Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood were then still in French hands, but Propaganda Fide had control over the Society of Saint Peter, as it had been entrusted to the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, which had been placed under the jurisdiction Propaganda Fide in 1916. As Van Rossum recorded with satisfaction, Benedict XV agreed

14 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 90.

15 KDC, *PMW*, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 31 July and 26 November 1919; J.M. Drehmanns, 'Inlandsche priesters. Het Liefdewerk van den H. Petrus', in: *Het Centrum*, 11 August 1919. He told Smit confidentially that Gasparri's letter to De Teil (see *infra*) was due to a misunderstanding.

16 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 875, f 484–489: W. van Rossum to J. de Guébriant, 19 January 1924.

17 Zampetti, 'Le Pontificie Opere Missionarie', 425–427.

18 AAS, 11(1919), 250; *Het missiewerk. Tijdschrift voor missiekennis en missieactie*, 1(1919), 78–80; Jan Smit, 'Inlandsche Priesters door de H. Kindsheid', in: *Het Centrum*, 24 July 1919.

with him and promised to raise the matter with Gasparri. As a result, the transfer to the Holy Childhood Association was reversed.¹⁹

A few months later, after the publication of *Maximum Illud* on 30 November 1919, the superior general of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Marie-Madeleine de Pazzi, – whether of her own accord or at Van Rossum’s prompting – requested papal approval of the Society of Saint Peter.²⁰ Van Rossum drafted the new rules and statutes. They stipulated that the superior general of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary would nominate three competent and enthusiastic sisters to Propaganda Fide to act as director, secretary and treasurer of the society. The funds raised could only be distributed to the ecclesiastical superiors of the mission territories in question or to apostolic delegates, and only to mission territories that fell under Propaganda Fide (this excluded areas under the Orientale).²¹

The S.P.A. was given an office in the palace of Propaganda Fide on Piazza di Spagna in addition to its office in the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary’s convent on 12 Via Giusti; there was also a seat (“siège social”) in Fribourg in Switzerland, where the society’s funds were lodged with the congregation as a legal entity. According to the draft rules, the society was governed by a central council, whose president was the secretary general of Propaganda Fide, and whose members – priests of various nationalities – were appointed by Propaganda Fide. The council would meet four times a year. National councils were to be established as soon as possible in the various countries where the society was active, under the leadership of a zealous priest-director, with the approval of the local bishop. The central council would distribute the funds in consultation with the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary and under the supervision of Propaganda Fide.

The general congregation of Propaganda Fide approved the rules and statutes on the basis of Van Rossum’s draft and granted the request for papal approval *ad experimentum* for three years on 29 March 1920. Benedict XV confirmed the approval on 26 April 1920.²² Shortly afterwards, the pope also permitted the society to use the title ‘Opera Pontificia’ or pontifical society.²³ In early June 1920, the society received the 50,000 lire from Gasparri that had previously been given to Msgr De Teil and had since been returned. Gasparri exhorted the society to establish itself in every country, every diocese and every parish.²⁴

19 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 732, f 2–3: memorandum by Van Rossum, ‘Opera di S. Pietro’; notes on papal audience of 19 June 1919.

20 *Ibid.*, f 26–27: Marie-Madeleine de Pazzi to W. van Rossum, 18 January 1920.

21 *Ibid.*, f 4–7: ‘Statuts (spéciaux) de l’Œuvre de St. Pierre pour le Clergé Indigène des Missions’, 25 January 1920, in Van Rossum’s handwriting.

22 *Ibid.*, f 28, 33–41: 29 March 1920; AAS, 12(1920), 247.

23 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 732, f 54: note by Van Rossum, 21 May 1920, on the audience of 20 May.

24 *Ibid.*, f 47: P. Gasparri to W. van Rossum, 10 June 1920.

Van Rossum appointed the board of the Society of Saint Peter on 17 June 1920. The French prelate and curia official Jules Tiberghien (1867–1923) – a friend of Pope Benedict XV's²⁵ – became secretary, and Drehmanns treasurer.²⁶ The general secretary of Propaganda, Camillo Laurenti, was *ex officio* president; the same construction would later be used for the Propagation of the Faith. Two national presidents of the society were also appointed, for the Netherlands and France: Jan Smit and Jean de Guébriant respectively.²⁷ In order to promote the establishment of the society in other countries, Van Rossum sent letters in November of the same year to the nuncios in Spain, South America and elsewhere and to the apostolic delegate in Canada.²⁸

The society's headquarters were in a small office in the palace of Propaganda Fide on Piazza di Spagna. The team consisted of Tiberghien and Drehmanns, joined in 1921 by the Swiss priest Hubertus Delatena and in 1922 by the German Lazarist Wilhelm Stienen.²⁹ Tiberghien and Drehmanns were largely free to organise their work as they saw fit, as Laurenti showed little interest. The central council of the society, whose task it was to distribute the funds, did not meet once under his chairmanship, which lasted until 1922. According to Drehmanns, the situation was much the same under Laurenti's successor Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi.³⁰ The role of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary also swiftly receded into the background.³¹

This left the field free for the energetic Drehmanns to become the main promoter of the society, thanks also to support from the Netherlands, particularly in the early years. Smit, a skilled communicator, launched a popular periodical there in May 1921 – a six-monthly publication called *Vlugschrift* ('Pamphlet') – which provided information and included many photographs of young students and seminary classes.³² The first issue featured a cover photograph of "Stephanus Kaoze, the first black Priest of Upper Congo".³³ This kind of missionary propaganda, as well as the formula of offering memberships (1 cent a week), annual stipends (250 guilders, allowing one

25 A. Olichon, *Les origines françaises de l'Œuvre Pontificale de Saint-Pierre-Apôtre pour la formation des clergés indigènes en pays de missions* (Paris 1929), 96, 102.

26 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 732, f 50–53: appointment of Tiberghien (he was made a titular archbishop in 1921) and Drehmanns, 17 June 1920.

27 *Ibid.*, f 61: appointment of Smit, 3 July 1920; f 57–58: appointment of J. de Guébriant, 19 July 1920. J. Smit had been asked as early as 17 October 1919. KDC, PMW, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 17 October 1919.

28 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 732, f 73 ff.: 17 November 1920.

29 H. Delatena had been working for the S.P.A. since 3 May 1921. *Communicanda a consilio centrali superiori Operis Pontificii a S. Petro Apostolo pro clero indigeno in locis missionum*, Rome, 1(1926), no. 1 (1 Jan.), 57–59. The Briton J. MacShane and the Spaniard C. Blay were appointed to the central council in 1922.

30 KDC, PMW, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 12 November 1921 and 14 January 1922.

31 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 15 November 1920.

32 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 12 November 1921: "If only we had something like that in Italy." Drehmanns felt that the national director for Italy, E. Mauri, was not functioning properly.

33 B. Sundkler, C. Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge 2000), 603 calls Kaoze, who was ordained a priest in 1917, a protagonist of black self-consciousness.

seminarian to study for a year), and so-called ‘life stipends’ (2,500 guilders, allowing multiple students to be supported for a longer period) was a big success in the Netherlands, including among the clergy. Private donors, parishes, seminarians and dioceses proved very generous.³⁴ Portraits of Asian and African seminarians moved Dutch Catholics – individually or collectively – to support these students, who were expected to write at least one letter to their benefactors a year and to say several Masses for them once ordained.³⁵ In the first issue of his periodical, Smit set a goal for the Netherlands: to finance the studies of a hundred seminarians every year. It was a target easily attained. The funds raised in the Netherlands were so abundant – the country topped the list in the first years of the society after its reconstitution³⁶ – that Theodorus Bekkers, Smit’s successor, decided in 1922, with the approval of the bishop of Breda, to give the society legal personality under civil law to help it manage the funds.³⁷ From that moment on, the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle was a separate entity in the Netherlands, which made it easier to receive bequests.

The central council of the s. p. a. met for the first time on 3 April 1922, a few months after Pius XI’s election. The society’s success in the Netherlands stood in marked contrast to its performance in other countries, a source of great pride for Van Rossum, who, Drehmanns wrote, was “exhilarated” at the results from his native country.³⁸ Other countries soon began to found national branches too, including the United States, Spain, Brazil and Belgium.³⁹ To launch the Italian branch, Angelo Roncalli, who had been head of the Propagation of the Faith in Italy since 1922, toured all Italian dioceses in 1923 to give the three pontifical mission societies a boost, including the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle. He reported back at length to Drehmanns.⁴⁰

When Tiberghien died in early January 1923, Drehmanns decided to take on the post of secretary himself, as the separation between the two posts was “complicated” and inefficient.⁴¹ Surprisingly, Van Rossum agreed to this, even though it meant his secretary suddenly had a lot more work to do and was more difficult to super-

34 KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 20 November 1922; A. Ariëns, ‘Rede van Dr. Ariëns. Parochiegeestelijken en missie’, in: *Bijlage van het missiewerk. Orgaan van de Priester-missiebond*, 6(1924/25), appendix no. 1(Aug.), 4–8.

35 KDC, *PMW*, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, *St. Jan* (24 June) 1921.

36 KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 21 May 1924, with the full results of the collection for 1923/24: the Netherlands 1,090,000 lire (c. 100,000 guilders); France 1,075,000; United States 559,000; Belgium 356,000; Spain 172,000; Italy 139,000; Switzerland 111,000; Britain 40,000, Canada 11,000; Bavaria 6,000; Austria 404.

37 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 20 November 1922. Smit had meanwhile been appointed vicar apostolic of Norway. *PMW*, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 18 May 1922.

38 KDC, *PMW*, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to J. Smit, 12 March 1922.

39 KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 20 October 1923.

40 KDC, *ROSS*, no. 43: A. Roncalli to J. Drehmanns, 17 November 1923.

41 KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 4 January 1923.

wise.⁴² Fumasoni-Biondi had meanwhile been appointed apostolic delegate in the United States. His successor as president of the Society of Saint Peter was not the new secretary of Propaganda, Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani – as the temporary statutes required –, but the undersecretary, Cesare Pecorari. According to Drehmanns, Marchetti-Selvaggiani was too busy to take on this position as well.⁴³ Two new members were appointed to the central council in the spring of 1923: the French curia prelate Eugène Tisserant and the Belgian Norbertine and procurator general of his order, Hubert Noots, bringing the total membership up to eight.⁴⁴ The temporary statutes lapsed in the summer of 1923, but despite frequent requests by Van Rossum, Drehmanns never prepared definitive statutes.⁴⁵

A new idea was mooted in 1923: to use the Society of Saint Peter not only to support the training of individual seminarians but to fund entire seminaries in the missions. The occasion was Van Rossum's journey to Scandinavia of that year. At the episcopal consecration of Johannes Buckx S.C.J., vicar apostolic of Finland, the ecclesiastical superiors of Northern Europe agreed to found a joint Scandinavian seminary, to be established in Copenhagen and run by Norbertines.⁴⁶ They would start by setting up a minor seminary; students would then go to the Collegio Urbano in Rome for further studies.⁴⁷ It was decided that the Society of Saint Peter would buy the empty buildings of the Jesuit Saint Andrew's College in Copenhagen to this end.⁴⁸

The idea of founding seminaries instead of merely awarding individual stipends opened all kinds of new perspectives. The news soon spread far and wide, and new requests began to arrive. The apostolic delegate Celso Costantini was a major applicant who submitted various requests for financial support for national and regional seminaries in China. Other requests came from Burma, India, Japan and the Dutch

42 See ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 7 June 1922, which shows that Drehmanns was already operating independently; in this case, he had offended the board of the Dutch East Indies Mission Society. "To avoid such unpleasantness and misunderstandings in the future, I have told Father Drehmanns to submit any letters that implicate Prop. or the Prefect in any way."

43 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 872, f 4–8; KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 12 and 20 January 1923. In a later document, Van Rossum gave an evasive excuse for not having appointed Marchetti-Selvaggiani. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1073, f 821–822: undated memorandum by Van Rossum for Pius XI.

44 Pecorari (appointed 27 January 1923), chair, Drehmanns, general secretary (17 June 1920), Delatena (3 May 1921), Stienen C.M. (13 May 1922), MacShane (15 November 1922), Blay (15 November 1922), Noots O.Praem. (15 March 1923), Tisserant (15 March 1923). *Communicanda*, 1(1926), no. 1(1 Jan.), 57–59.

45 KDC, *ROSS*, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 8 May 1930.

46 Poels, 'Cardinal van Rossum and Northern Europe (1919–1932)', 159–171.

47 The Collegio produced many missionaries for Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark and the Faroe Islands, including eight Norwegians, a Fin, an Italian and nine Dutchmen. In his 1924 publication *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, 46, Van Rossum promised any seminarian willing to go to Scandinavia a place in the Collegio Urbano to complete his studies for the priesthood.

48 KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, Karlsbad, 29 August 1923.

East Indies; in a short period of time, the society had received applications to the tune of more than 5 million lire in total.⁴⁹

The s.p.a. did not have this kind of disposable money – much of its capital was earmarked for stipends and other funds would have to come from memberships or free donations or bequests – and it had to make choices. At Cardinal Van Rossum's request, the central council decided in 1925 to prioritise the seminary in Copenhagen.⁵⁰ The Jesuits drove a hard bargain: the asking price for their building near Ordrup was in excess of 1.3 million lire. Drehmanns reported in early 1926 that he had purchased the seminary; the money had come mainly from Rome and some of it from France. It was such a drain on the s.p.a.'s capital that other requests for seminaries had to be postponed.⁵¹

Meanwhile, the s.p.a.'s success was increasingly being noted in France. The appointment of Tisserant to the central council in March 1923 marked a 'rediscovery' of the French origins of the society. After De Guébriant left to become superior general of the Missions Étrangères de Paris in March 1921, Van Rossum tried to have A. Aubert appointed his successor as national director of the s.p.a. and secretary of the Missionary Union of the Clergy. But Tisserant proposed Armand Olichon, and this candidate was appointed after it was discovered that Aubert had helped himself to 500,000 francs of s.p.a. funds.⁵² The position of the s.p.a. was strengthened in 1924 when it began to work together with the Sodality of Saint Peter Claver, a society founded by Maria Teresia Ledóchowska (1863–1922), which focused among other goals on training African priests. The s.p.a. acquired a say in the distribution of the sodality's funds.⁵³

The emphasis that Tisserant and Olichon placed on the s.p.a.'s French origins was due in part to their and their countrymen's wounded pride at the transfer of the Propagation of the Faith to Rome in 1922.⁵⁴ They regarded the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle as a separate organisation, independent of Propaganda Fide, and were

49 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 20 September 1925.

50 *Ibid.* Van Rossum was supposedly afraid that the Jesuits might otherwise begin a new seminary of their own. In his letter to Pius XI of 30 May 1929, Tisserant emphasised that the s.p.a. had been obliged by Propaganda to purchase the buildings even after it had become clear that there was no prospect of using them. Montferrer, *Tisserant papers*, File V4 (Œuvre de Saint-Pierre-Apôtre): E. Tisserant to Pius XI, 30 May 1929 including a 'Mémoire sur la situation des Œuvres Missionnaires en France'.

51 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 11 January 1926. It became evident at the end of the same year that the purchase was a mistake. There were not enough students to fill the classrooms. Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 6 December 1926.

52 Montferrer, *Tisserant papers*, File V4: E. Tisserant to Pius XI, 30 May 1929.

53 KDC, PMW, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 5 June 1921 and 9 January 1924.

54 See Chapter 15.4–5.

eager to keep it that way. They found support for this view in the S.P.A.'s considerable success in raising funds in France, where the take exceeded that collected for the Propagation of the Faith; the same was the case in the Netherlands. But this was not what Van Rossum had envisaged: he regarded the S.P.A. – and the Holy Childhood – as auxiliary societies of the Propagation of the Faith, whose task as the main society of Propaganda Fide was to unite all the faithful in their universal responsibility for the missions. Attempts by Van Rossum to relegate the S.P.A. to a subordinate position were consistently interpreted by Tisserant as attacks by Propaganda Fide on the successes of the Society of Saint Peter.

Instead of promoting Van Rossum's programme, Drehmanns in fact preferred the French vision of an independent S.P.A. Any success the S.P.A. would have would be a personal success for himself, as well as divine confirmation that his great task in the church lay here. His position at S.P.A. headquarters became so strong that Pecorari yielded to him in everything and he could do as he pleased. Van Rossum later wrote, "Everyone knew and said and still says: in the S.P.A., everything is in [Father Drehmanns]'s hands; no one else has any say in anything."⁵⁵ Drehmanns claimed he kept the accounts of the society in a single book, which he refused to show to anyone.⁵⁶ And he acted arbitrarily when it came to distributing the funds. Orders and congregations who had displeased him by pushing their own causes too hard had their funding reduced.⁵⁷ Vicars apostolic such as Bishop Frans Schraven C.M. in China who refused to follow S.P.A. instructions – for example by not sending portraits of students because they would know that they were being funded from Europe, which might be a temptation against humility – were threatened with withdrawal of funding: no portraits, no money.⁵⁸

The financial success of the Society of Saint Peter Apostle and the opportunities which this offered were not lost on Pius XI, who was busy at the time building a profile for himself as 'pope of the missions'. In 1925, the pope proclaimed the hugely popular Saint Therese of Lisieux, who had been canonised earlier that year, patron saint of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle (she only became the patron saint of

⁵⁵ KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

⁵⁶ KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 22 January 1930. "I have always recorded the (small, even very small) income and expenditure in this book very meticulously." He did not need any other books as the money was administered by the banks and "the rest is with you". Bekkers pointed out in 1923 that the financial accounts of the society were riddled with mistakes, to which Drehmanns replied that no one would ever check anyway. J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 20 October 1923.

⁵⁷ KDC, PMW, no. 410: J. Drehmanns to Father Van de Geest O.P., 5 June 1921 (copy in Jan Smits's handwriting); no. 411: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 25 October 1923. Bekkers had a more nuanced view: if Rome wished to encourage congregations to take up missionary work and found seminaries, it should also give them the opportunity to raise the required funds. The pontifical mission societies' money was insufficient.

⁵⁸ KDC, PMW, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 12 February 1925.

missions in general in 1927).⁵⁹ It was a source of immense joy for Drehmanns. On 1 January 1926, he produced the first issue of a Latin periodical called *Communicanda a consilio centrali superiori Operis Pontificii a S. Petro Apostolo pro clero indigeno in locis missionum*. Pecorari forwarded this sixty-page overview to Van Rossum on 27 January 1926, but Drehmanns had written all of it himself.⁶⁰ It began with the ‘Acta Pontificia’: Gasparri’s letter of 29 July 1925 proclaiming Saint Therese of the Child Jesus the perpetual patroness of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle.⁶¹ The *Communicanda* also contained an explanation of the goals and methods of the society, with an overview of the funds raised showing that the Netherlands was the largest contributor in 1924/25 with 1.4 million lire.⁶²

Pius XI reiterated his strong support for the formation of an indigenous clergy in early 1926. He did this first during the closing ceremony of the great Vatican mission exhibition on 10 January 1926, when he spoke at length on two occasions about the importance of an indigenous clergy.⁶³ This formed the prelude to the publication of the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* on 28 February 1926. Whereas only a single line of *Maximum Illud* had been devoted to the s.p.a., no less than a quarter of *Rerum Ecclesiae* was about the building up of indigenous churches and the formation of an indigenous clergy: a shift in emphasis that was probably more Pius XI’s doing than Van Rossum’s. The national director for Italy, Enrico Mauri, called the encyclical “a hymn to the cause of the indigenous clergy” as well as to the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle.⁶⁴

On 10 March 1926, immediately after the publication of the encyclical, Pecorari and Drehmanns asked Cardinal Van Rossum’s approval to take out a loan of 1.5 million guilders (c. 13,500,000 lire), in two tranches of 750,000 guilders, to be paid back in twenty years, to build seminaries for indigenous priests in the missions.⁶⁵ Plans for a loan to create a building fund dated from February 1925 and were the result of the idea proposed at that time to use s.p.a. funds to establish seminaries. The society did not have the money required for this, but the annual revenue from memberships, donations and bequests would cover principal repayments as well as interest

59 Even as a priest, Achille Ratti had had a great devotion to Therese of Lisieux and her spirituality of the “little way”. See Fattorini, *Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican*, 45–49.

60 KDC, PMW, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 15 December 1925.

61 *Communicanda*, 1(1926), no. 1(1 Jan.), 12. It is unlikely that Drehmanns had official permission for this periodical. None of the issues mentions a *nihil obstat* or *imprimatur*. The first issue was dated 1(1926–1927), no. 1(1 Jan.), the last 2(1928–1929), no. 3(1 Jan.).

62 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 23–56: C. Pecorari to W. van Rossum, 27 January 1926. Followed by the United States (1.2 million), Britain (470,000), Belgium (450,000), Italy (300,000) and France (270,000). Strangely, the American share increased and the French one declined.

63 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 11 January 1926.

64 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 59: E. Mauri to W. van Rossum, 6 February 1926.

65 *Ibid.*, f 123: C. Pecorari and J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 10 March 1926.

on a substantial loan. The s.p.a.'s capital in Switzerland – 200,000 guilders – could serve as collateral for the loan.⁶⁶

Van Rossum did not approve of the loan, as it would cost “75,000 guilders per year!” to service it, as a marginal note on Drehmann's and Pecorari's letter shows. He wrote a memorandum observing that Propaganda Fide was opposed to such ventures on principle, and that it was most unusual to take out large loans, certainly if this meant publicly committing the Holy See or Propaganda.⁶⁷ If any such plan were ever to be considered, it could never be done without the explicit approval of Propaganda Fide.⁶⁸ Despite repeated requests, and assurances by Pecorari and Drehmanns that the national branches had given their approval, Van Rossum refused to give his permission. Drehmanns hoped that the request would not be placed on the agenda of the general congregation of Propaganda Fide, as he believed the cardinals of the congregation operated under the motto *nihil innovetur*.⁶⁹

Bekkers came up with an alternative proposal in late August: the loan could instead be taken out by Nederlandsche Stichting het Pauselijk Liefdewerk van den H. Petrus (Dutch Association of the Pontifical Society of Saint Peter, the Dutch legal entity under which the s.p.a. operated in that country) based in Breda. He had already reached an agreement with J. Schippers, who was the manager of the Nederlandsche Landbouwbank (Dutch Agricultural Bank) and a “good Catholic”. All the Holy See had to do was authorise the transaction, in the same way it authorised orders or congregations to take out large loans to build a monastery or an institution. The loan would have to be paid off in 22 years.⁷⁰

On 28 October of that year, Pius XI personally consecrated the first six Chinese bishops in a well-publicised ceremony. Van Rossum had been lobbying for this since 1920. At his request, the Lazarist Vincent Lebbe had sent him four names of virtuous, theologically well-versed and competent priests for the post of vicar apostolic. The first Chinese priests accepted their appointment as prefects apostolic in 1924.⁷¹ The ordination of these bishops was yet another sign that creating an indigenous hierarchy was a top priority for the Vatican.⁷² This underlined the importance of building

66 Drehmanns had the account put in his name as of 1 January 1927, probably without Van Rossum's knowledge. KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 9 January 1927.

67 KDC, PMW, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 15 November 1925.

68 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 125–131: C. Pecorari and J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 14 April 1926; note by Van Rossum.

69 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 23 March and 30 April 1926.

70 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 27 August 1926; J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 1 October 1926.

71 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 805a, f 650–652: Pro Memoria dell' Emo Card. Van Rossum prefetto, 20 December 1920; f 678–683: Celso Costantini to W. van Rossum, 14 April 1924. Costantini reported that Odorico Tcheng and Melchiorre Souen had accepted their appointment.

72 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 7 July 1926. He wrote that “it was all the Holy Father could think about”. The Chinese bishops also visited the Netherlands for a week. During their stay »



After the consecration of the first Chinese bishops, 1926. In the middle Francesco Marchetti-Selvaggiani, Van Rossum and Celso Costantini

seminaries in China, and therefore also of the loan. The apostolic delegate Costantini had travelled to Rome for the occasion, and Drehmanns hoped that he would be able to secure approval for the loan. As he felt Costantini would not be able to persuade Van Rossum either, he convened a meeting between himself, the delegate, Bekkers and the French director Olichon, at which they asked Costantini to raise the subject of the loan with Pius XI personally.⁷³ This tactic proved successful. Pius XI did not dismiss the plan out of hand. It was decided in consultation with Marchetti-Selvaggiani to seek the advice of two reliable Catholic financial and legal experts.⁷⁴

» they went to Nijmegen to pay their respects to a monument to Bishop Ferdinand Hamer, who had been killed during the 1900 Boxer Rising. Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 3 January 1927; HDA, *Correspondence with Rome*, box 7.

⁷³ KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 4 and 14 October 1926.

⁷⁴ ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 125–131: note of Marchetti-Selvaggiani's papal audience.

But Drehmann's administration and accounts were in such poor shape that the experts advised against the plan. By contrast, Bekkers's bookkeeping was impeccable, and he sent his own accounts to Marchetti-Selvaggiani as input for the latter's audience with the pope on Monday 20 December 1926.⁷⁵ Bekkers's accounts, a Dutch audit report and the positive advice of the legal expert, Francesco Pacelli,⁷⁶ sufficed to secure papal permission for the Dutch branch of the S.P.A. to take out two bond loans of 750,000 guilders each.⁷⁷ Drehmann called it a miracle, which he ascribed to the intercession of "the Little Flower".⁷⁸ The French member of the central council, Eugène Tisserant, had a more prosaic interpretation: he told Pius XI in 1929 that "only Your Holiness's intervention" had enabled the loan to go ahead. According to Tisserant, the fact that Propaganda Fide had blocked the loan for two years was further proof of this congregation's hostility to the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle.⁷⁹

From the moment Drehmann decided to go over Van Rossum's head to the pope for permission for a loan that the prefect had refused, the Society of Saint Peter began to work openly at cross purposes with Propaganda Fide. Van Rossum had up to this point never truly disciplined his private secretary – probably also because the society was doing so well – even though there were ample grounds for a reprimand: despite Van Rossum's repeated requests, Drehmann refused to draw up statutes or give a proper account of his administration and of the society's finances. On this occasion, however, Van Rossum intervened, leaving Drehmann in direct conflict with Marchetti-Selvaggiani and his "beloved cardinal".⁸⁰ Drehmann's correspondence with Bekkers from this period contains hostile comments mainly about Marchetti-Selvaggiani, possibly also because Van Rossum left the implementation of measures against Drehmann's policies to his official secretary. But Drehmann now regarded Van Rossum as an enemy as well. "Inimici hominis domestici eius" (Your enemies will be the members of your household, Matthew 10:36), as Drehmann wrote to Bekkers on 7 April 1927.⁸¹ He felt Van Rossum was working against him as he could not accept that Drehmann's own undertakings were successful.⁸²

75 KDC, PMW, no. 412: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 11 December 1926.

76 Francesco Pacelli, Eugenio's older brother, acted as legal adviser to the Vatican and played an important role in the negotiations leading up to the Lateran Treaty (February 1929).

See Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 138–143.

77 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 134–158; f 162: F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani to C. Pecorari, 20 December 1926.

78 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 18 December 1926.

79 Montferrer, *Tisserant papers*, File V4: E. Tisserant to Pius XI, 30 May 1929.

80 KDC, ROSS, no. 343 (J.M. Drehmann's diary, written in Italian, 2 vols., 1930–1933, 1946): Diary 2, 44–45, 5 September 1932.

81 KDC, PMW, no. 412: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 3 January and 4 March 1927; J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 7 April 1927 and 14 May 1928.

82 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 3 October 1930.

Immediately after the papal audience in which the loan was approved, Marchetti-Selvaggiani told Pecorari that the prefect from then on wished to be informed beforehand of each individual subsidy that the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle was planning to award for the founding of seminaries, including grants financed by the Dutch loan.⁸³ Drehmanns meanwhile continued his crusade, endeavouring, as Van Rossum put it a few years later, “to set up a new Prop., as it were, alongside Prop.”⁸⁴

Drehmanns persuaded a number of national directors to more or less ignore Van Rossum’s policy that the s.p.a. could only be established in any given parish if the Propagation of the Faith was operating successfully there. This inevitably fired the flames of competition with the Propagation of the Faith, in the Netherlands, France, the United States and other countries.⁸⁵ The Missionary Union of the Clergy (Unio Cleri de Missionibus, U.C.M.) was also involved in this struggle, and the result was that these missionary organisations often worked against each other rather than with each other.⁸⁶ There were mutual accusations and recriminations: Tisserant claimed that the Propagation had sabotaged the operation of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in France, and that it was also attempting to eclipse the s.p.a. At the same time, the president of the Paris council of the Propagation, André Boucher, complained that under Olichon, who was also the secretary of the U.C.M., the s.p.a. was pushing Propagation out of the parishes.⁸⁷

It was unacceptable for Van Rossum that the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle should try to overshadow the main society, and in February 1927 Olichon received

83 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 162, 201–206: On 19 January 1927, Pecorari and Drehmanns submitted a proposal to Propaganda for the distribution of the envisaged subsidies for thirty different causes up to an amount of 919,000 guilders; proposal and reply with substantial changes by Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 27 January 1927. KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 28 January 1927.

84 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930. It is unclear whether “Prop.” means Propaganda Fide or the Propagation of the Faith; probably the former.

85 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 873, f 287: L. Dubois to W. van Rossum, June 1925; f 289: W. van Rossum to L. Dubois (copy); vol. 1096, f 631–633: W. Quinn to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 3 October 1929; KDC, PMW, no. 412: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 1 and 28 March 1927; J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 9 January 1927.

86 Others complained too. See ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 873, f 461–463: G.B. Tragella, ‘missionario apostolico’, to W. van Rossum, 26 November 1925, on unfair competition with regard to missionary magazines; f 466–468: Luigi Drago, secretary general of the Italian U.C.M., to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 2 December 1925.

87 Montferrer, *Tisserant papers*, File V4: E. Tisserant to Pius XI, 30 May 1929 and accompanying report. A main concern of Tisserant’s was to support A. Olichon, who had lost his struggle with Boucher. He provided figures to demonstrate the success of the s.p.a.: in 1921–22, the society supported 47 seminarians, but in late 1927–28 this number had risen to 3,581; the revenue came to 600,000 lire in 1922, and to more than 8 million in 1928. AAV, ANP, b. 426, fasc. 371: A. Olichon to the nuncio L. Maglione, 1 June 1929. The organisation of the Dutch branch of the Missionary Union of the Clergy was held up as an example in 1931: Alphons Mulders, ‘L’Union missionnaire du Clergé hollandais’, in: *Compte rendu et Rapports. Premier Congrès national de l’Union missionnaire du Clergé de France* (Paris 1931), 20 ff.

“higher orders from Rome” to resign his secretaryship of the U.C.M.⁸⁸ An intervention also seemed imminent in the Netherlands in 1927, as the S.P.A.’s revenues exceeded those of the Propagation, as in France. Van Rossum exhorted the bishops of Breda and ’s-Hertogenbosch to ensure that the Propagation would be the primary society as regards revenue.⁸⁹ Similar measures were taken in the United States.⁹⁰ In late 1927, the delegate Fumasoni-Biondi wrote to all the American bishops that they should first establish a branch of the Propagation in their dioceses, and that they could only permit the foundation of the Society of Saint Peter once the local branch of Propagation was up and running.⁹¹ The S.P.A.’s American revenue then decreased dramatically.⁹²

In the meantime, the S.P.A. continued its policy of obstructing Propaganda Fide. In early 1927, Propaganda decided to inaugurate World Mission Sunday on the last Sunday of October to support the work of the Propagation of the Faith. Drehmanns regarded this as a new onslaught on the Society of Saint Peter. He and Olichon feared that Mission Sunday would be exploited by the Propagation to push out the two other societies. The central council of the S.P.A. therefore decided on 27 January 1927 to write to all the bishops of the world to inform them that Mission Sunday was not intended only to benefit the Propagation of the Faith, but all three pontifical mission societies.⁹³ And when Propaganda Fide needed money that year for the building of the new Collegio Urbano on the Gianicolo, the S.P.A. replied that it could only contribute a miserly 100,000 lire per year.⁹⁴ The reason it gave was that many bishops were working against the society, and it asked if Propaganda could not do something about that first.⁹⁵

A missionary congress was hosted in Poland (Posen/Poznan) in 1927. The archbishop of Gnesen-Posen, Cardinal Hlond, had asked for a representative of Propaganda Fide to attend, but Van Rossum had turned this down to avoid setting a precedent, as was his custom. But Drehmanns secretly sent Father Stienen of the Society of Saint Peter, and when this became known, Hlond regarded it as a personal snub by

88 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 1 February 1927.

89 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 1 February and 29 April 1927; Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 28 March and 16 May 1927. Drehmanns begged Bekkers not to send his accounts to Propaganda.

90 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 7 April 1927 and 14 May 1928. Drehmanns was apprehensive about the meetings Van Rossum was going to have in Rome in early 1927 with the national directors Quinn and McGlinchey.

91 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 966b, f 469–471: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to W. van Rossum, 27 December 1927.

92 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 26 April and 14 May 1928.

93 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 1 February 1927; Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 7 February 1927. I was unable to find the letter in question.

94 Drehmanns’s views on the building project had been more positive two years before.

See KDC, PMW, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 15 November 1925.

95 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 225: central council to W. van Rossum, 12 July 1927.

Propaganda Fide. The papal chargé d'affaires in Warsaw sent a report on the issue to the secretary of state, who in turn informed Van Rossum. The prefect then felt obliged to apologise to Hlond for Drehmanns's actions. He told Gasparri that Propaganda Fide had had nothing to do with it, and that he had strongly reprimanded Drehmanns.⁹⁶

In the meantime, Drehmanns was beginning to fear that the s.p.a. – his life's work! – might be suppressed and its funds transferred to the Propagation of the Faith. To prevent this, he persuaded a number of national directors to write to Rome arguing that the Missionary Union of the Clergy should become the primary organisation, with authority over the three pontifical mission societies. Drehmanns found supporters for this idea in France (Armand Olichon and Jean de Guébriant),⁹⁷ Belgium (Alfons De Boeck) and the Netherlands (Theodorus Bekkers and Adrianus Hermus); the superior general of the Scheut Fathers, Jozef Rutten, also signed the letter Drehmanns drafted. He told Bekkers he would not be signing it himself, because no one was to know he was involved, due to his "great difficulties" with the s.p.a.⁹⁸

3 Drehmanns's plans for two missionary congregations

There was a good – but secret – reason for Drehmanns's concern about the position of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle: he had decided in the autumn of 1927 to found two new congregations, one for women (*opera femmine*) and one for men (*opera maschile*), which would dedicate themselves specifically to training indigenous priests in the missions. The female branch would perform domestic duties and, above all, contribute to the education and religious formation of young boys with a view to a possible future career as priests. The male branch would train professors for the mission seminaries. Founding two congregations would mean amply realising Drehmanns's great ambition: to make an important contribution to the church. It might even open the way to possible sainthood.⁹⁹ Preparations for these

96 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 974, f 370–383: report by chargé d'affaires in Warsaw to P. Gasparri, 21 October 1927; W. van Rossum to P. Gasparri, 10 November 1927.

97 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 716–717: J. de Guébriant to W. van Rossum, 12 April 1927 ("Confidentielle"). According to De Guébriant, the pontifical mission societies had "a very great susceptibility" to the U. C. M. Independent leadership in Rome by the Unio Cleri pro Missionibus, "[with a] free [rein] vis-à-vis the three pontifical societies", was desirable.

98 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, late December 1927; see also his letters dated 8 and 12 December 1927. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 967, f 694–695: A. Olichon to W. van Rossum, 16 December 1927. Bekkers's and De Boeck's letter only arrived a year later; f 889–893: Th. Bekkers and A. De Boeck to W. van Rossum, 28 November 1928. The archives do not contain any reply to the letter.

99 Founders of orders and congregations have a relatively high chance of being canonised. K. Kempf, *Die Heiligkeit der Kirche im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Apologie der Kirche* (Einsiedeln 1928), 1–10, 606. Four out of every five saints were religious and dozens of saint's feasts in the Roman calendar celebrate founders.

foundations were largely shrouded in secrecy.¹⁰⁰ Although he regarded the congregations as part of the Society of Saint Peter, he never informed the central council, and he told Van Rossum only the barest outlines.

The female congregation appears first in the sources: the Sisters of San Piero in Bagno, a place near Forlì in the Romagna (south east of Bologna). Their official name was Missionary Sisters of Adoration and Reparation of the Sacred Eucharistic Heart of Jesus and they were based in the diocese of Sansepolcro.¹⁰¹ Drehmanns wrote to Bekkers in August 1927 that a group of women had been formed in central Italy who wished to dedicate themselves to the Society of Saint Peter, and who intended to go to the missions to do domestic work in the central seminaries there. He added that he had twice tried unsuccessfully to obtain permission for the foundation from the Congregation for Religious, but it may be doubted that he did so himself.¹⁰² Van Rossum was a member of this dicastery but was unaware of the existence of the sis-



The congregation of women religious founded by Drehmanns in San Piero in Bagno

¹⁰⁰ There are bits of information in the spiritual diary that Drehmanns wrote in the years after his banishment from Rome: KDC, ROSS, no. 343. He wrote in Italian, possibly to ensure easy access to documents that would go on to be important within the institutes he was to found and that could also be used as evidence in a cause for the beatification/canonisation of their founder.

¹⁰¹ 'Missionarie Adoratrici e Riparatrici del Sacro Cuore Eucaristico di Gesù', in: *DIP*, vol. V, 1503.

The devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus was dear also to Van Rossum. See Chapter 8.5.

¹⁰² KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 16 August 1927.

ters until 1929. The request was probably made by the vicar general of Sansepolcro, Enrico Merizzi; the bishop, Pompeo Ghezzi, kept his distance from the project.¹⁰³ It is unknown how Drehmanns met these women; he possibly recruited them somehow from the entourage of an unnamed congregation that Van Rossum had entrusted to his care in 1925.¹⁰⁴

The first mention of the male congregation was on 14 December 1927. On that day, the Redemptorist Frans ter Haar, rector of the Alphonsianum in Rome, wrote to Van Rossum to say that Drehmanns had come to him more than a month ago to discuss plans for a congregation that would dedicate itself to training professors for indigenous seminaries.¹⁰⁵ Drehmanns had been mulling over this idea for six months and wanted Ter Haar's advice. Given the Holy See's interest in creating an indigenous clergy, Ter Haar wrote, he thought it was not a bad idea. He regarded Drehmanns's motives as entirely "supernatural", but suggested that the leadership should not be entrusted to Drehmanns and that he should not be allowed to act as founder. He could, however, act as "a powerful instrument" in the implementation of the plan – few could rival his zeal for the S.P.A. –, despite his failings, "for it is better to have failings and to succeed, than to have no failings and not to succeed". Ter Haar had told Drehmanns to show his letter of advice to Van Rossum.

It is not known whether Drehmanns did as Ter Haar asked, but Van Rossum fell seriously ill in early February 1928, so seriously in fact that the doctors had "largely lost hope".¹⁰⁶ He was admitted to the Sisters of Ingenbohl's Quisisana clinic in Rome. On 16 February of that year, Drehmanns wrote to Bekkers that he was permitted to see Van Rossum only two minutes a day. Administration of insulin, a relatively new procedure, saved the cardinal's life.¹⁰⁷

While Van Rossum was in hospital, and without his knowledge, Drehmanns arranged for Maria Letizia Guaraldi and Maria Clelia Tumiatì to come to Rome for a fortnight to prepare for entry into the religious state as Sisters of San Piero.¹⁰⁸ According to the diaries that Drehmanns later wrote, they received the habit in San

103 'Missionarie Adoratrici e Riparatrici del Sacro Cuore Eucaristico di Gesù', in: *DIP*, vol. v, 1503.

104 KDC, *PMW*, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 27 October 1925.

105 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: F. ter Haar C.Ss.R. (S. Alfonso, Rome) to W. van Rossum, 14 December 1927, accompanied by a copy of a letter to Drehmanns.

106 KDC, *PMW*, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 16 February 1928. Van Rossum attended the meeting of the Holy Office on 1 February 1928, but was absent from further meetings until 28 March 1928. He was absent again due to illness from 7 November onwards until the end of the year. *ADDF*, *SO*, *Decreta*.

107 KDC, *PMW*, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 16 February 1928: "I will tell him everything later. Thank God he is on the mend. Prayer alone saved him." J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 10 and 24 March 1928. In this last letter, Drehmanns wrote that Van Rossum had worked a full day for the first time on 22 March. Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 106.

108 KDC, *PMW*, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 3 March 1928. KDC, *ROSS*, no. 343: Diary 2, 30–31, mentions that he began work on the sisters' religious formation on 11 February 1928, apparently when they were in Rome.

Piero on 30 April 1928, a “day of paradise”.¹⁰⁹ The vicar general had evidently obtained temporary approval for the foundation of a diocesan congregation.¹¹⁰ From that day on, Drehmanns made frequent brief visits to San Piero.¹¹¹ There were six sisters – he told Bekkers there was no more room, or the group would have been bigger – but he projected that there would be six hundred in ten years’ time.¹¹²

The sisters came to Rome for four days in early June 1928. Without Van Rossum’s knowledge, Drehmanns used a room in the offices of Propaganda Fide to hold meetings and conferences and to give the women instruction in the religious life.¹¹³ Together with the sisters, he went to look at a villa that cost seven million lire which he hoped could serve as a convent for the congregation. Drehmanns did not have the required funds, but as he wrote to Bekkers, he felt that the villa would one day be theirs. He added in passing that, in a few years’ time, the Society of Saint Peter should earmark a sum for the building of a convent for the sisters in the missions.¹¹⁴ In his reply, a bewildered Bekkers wrote that this was a bizarre idea given that the S.P.A.’s task was to fund the building of seminaries, not convents, implicitly accusing Drehmanns of financial manipulation, enabled by his – intentional? – failure to keep proper accounts.¹¹⁵ Drehmanns hastened to reassure Bekkers; he had given him the wrong impression and there was no question of building a convent for the sisters.¹¹⁶

Meanwhile, Drehmanns also focused on the *opera maschile*, which was similarly dedicated to the Sacred Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.¹¹⁷ He later claimed that he had a religious experience (“a memorable union with the Divine Will”)¹¹⁸ in November 1928, after which he began to work to realise his plans in Corsano (near Siena), but it is unclear whether there were actually any candidates at the time. Drehmanns’s plan was to add a new branch to the Redemptorists, and he felt that training professors for mission seminaries was fully consistent with Saint Alphonsus’s guidelines. As we have seen, he had discussed the idea with Ter Haar in late 1927. It is not known what the superior general, Patrick Murray, thought of the plan, but Van Rossum and

109 KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 1, 83–84, 30 April 1931.

110 ‘Missionarie Adoratrici e Riparatrici del Sacro Cuore Eucaristico di Gesù’, in: *DIP*, vol. 5, 1503.

This article also says the archive of the diocese in question contains no documentation about this congregation.

111 He probably combined these clandestine visits with other tasks, such as overseeing the elections of a new superior in Scala in October 1928. KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 21 October 1928.

112 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 14 May 1928.

113 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

114 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 9 June 1928.

115 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 18 June 1928.

116 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, June 1928.

117 KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 1, 3 July 1930.

118 *Ibid.*: Diary 2, 18, 11 November 1931. Jesus spoke to him again on 11 March 1932, about the “new enterprise” he had to found.

Murray very likely discussed it in the summer of 1928 when they both travelled to Limerick in Ireland to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the successful local branch of the Archconfraternity of the Holy Family.¹¹⁹ Van Rossum gave the project his blessing at Christmas 1928, albeit not without “a certain concern”.¹²⁰

4 Van Rossum intervenes in the s.p.a.

Drehmanns’s activities on behalf of his fledgling congregations left him with little time to run the office of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle. His continued failure to convoke a meeting of the central council and account for the society’s finances ultimately prompted the concerned national directors of the Dutch and Belgian branches to visit headquarters. Bekkers and his Belgian colleague De Boeck came to Piazza di Spagna in September 1928, at a time when Van Rossum and Drehmanns were probably in Ingenbohl after their Irish journey. They found the place in disarray. There were no proper workplaces, and Delatena and Stienen had to make do with a corner where they worked without clear instructions or sound information.¹²¹ Bekkers had his own administrative guidelines translated into French so that the s.p.a. staff would at least have something to go by. He felt there was *periculum in mora*.¹²²

In early 1929, Bekkers once again asked for a meeting of the central council to decide on the distribution of the building subsidies. Some issues had been awaiting resolution for a year and a half now, while there was more than enough money: there was a glut in the Netherlands, where the funds were even being invested in real estate.¹²³ At the same time the missions were asking urgently for the disbursement of the promised funds. Drehmanns replied that there was not enough to pay everyone and that there were “secret plans” afoot – probably his own two congregations – about which he could not say anything and of which the central council was unaware.¹²⁴

119 *Ibid.*: Diary 1, 24, 49–51, 15 July, 4 and 11 November 1930; Limerick, *Archive of the Redemptorists*, Holy Family Chronicles: II, 1898–1975.

120 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930; no. 343: Diary 2, 24, 25 December 1931.

121 KDC, PMW, no. 412: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 2 September 1928.

122 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, St. Raphael [29 September] 1928; J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 31 October 1928, 18 and 22 March 1929.

123 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 23 February, 13 March, 30 June and 11 December 1928. Bekkers was able to give Costantini more than 100,000 American dollars in early 1928. See also J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 30 March 1928.

124 *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 28 January 1929; J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 2 February, 18 and 22 March 1929.

Drehmanns very likely used money from the S.P.A. to finance his own congregations during this period. He was very apprehensive about having to show his accounts to Propaganda in late 1927,¹²⁵ and he turned down requests for money, deeming them to be problematic or otherwise inadmissible. When Propaganda Fide asked for an amount of 250,000 yen (290,000 guilders) to purchase a plot of land for a seminary in Tokyo to mark the consecration in Rome in October 1927 of Januarius Hayasaka as the first Japanese bishop of Nagasaki, Drehmanns went to great lengths to wriggle out of it.¹²⁶ He also refused a request from Turin, because he alleged that the Turinese “were rolling in money” themselves. He claimed that orders and congregations were inventively trying to extract money from the S.P.A., but that he saw through their schemes. Nevertheless, friends could continue to count on his largesse: “This morning my (figuratively and literally) great friend, Msgr Roncalli, Delegatus Apostolicus of Bulgaria, wrote to ask for help to build a minor seminary that is vitally important for him and for the Mission there.”¹²⁷

All the while, the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle continued to compete strongly with the Propagation of the Faith. After persistent complaints by the Italian branch of the Missionary Union of the Clergy and the Propagation of the Faith about the S.P.A.’s aggressive tactics, Van Rossum decided in March 1929 to intervene once again. He wrote a circular letter to all the Italian bishops to put the S.P.A. in its place: the society was only to be established in parishes where the Propagation had taken firm root. He also stressed that the newly minted Mission Sunday was intended exclusively to benefit the Propagation of the Faith.¹²⁸ This letter was followed by a strongly worded warning to Enrico Mauri, the national director of the S.P.A. in Italy, not to obstruct the Propagation of the Faith in any way.¹²⁹ It is not impossible that Mauri was being held responsible for certain ventures stimulated or even carried out by Drehmanns – Drehmanns had written to Bekkers on various occasions that Mauri was not operating properly and that he had therefore assumed some of his tasks himself.

125 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 12 and 23 December 1927.

126 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 30 March 1928. Januarius Hayasaka was consecrated in Saint Peter’s basilica on 30 October 1927.

127 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 3 January 1928.

128 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1095, f 183–184, 350, 354: circular letter by Van Rossum to the Italian bishops, 25 March 1929; f 257–260: Pietro Coffano to W. van Rossum, 28 February 1929; vol. 1096, f 241: Italian Unio Cleri to W. van Rossum, 12 February 1929. Similar complaints were received from the councils of the Propagation in Paris and Lyon. *Nova Series*, vol. 1095, f 620–626: councils to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 12 July 1929. They complained that the Propagation of the Faith was everywhere being pushed out and ‘replaced’ by the S.P.A.

129 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1096, f 45–46: W. van Rossum to Enrico Mauri, 27 March 1929.

It was now evident to all parties that Van Rossum had had enough and that drastic measures were soon to follow. Pecorari called in sick.¹³⁰ The threat of a reorganisation of the Society of Saint Peter was a true nightmare for Drehmanns. It was becoming ever clearer that the era of “his s. p. a.,” of the society as the free instrument of his personal designs, was coming to an end.¹³¹ An inquiry was set up to investigate the content of his periodical *Communicanda*: “They have now been with the Cardinal for more than a week, [and he] has asked Msgr. M[archetti-Selvaggiani] to assess them.”¹³² While consultations on the future of the s. p. a. were being held behind closed doors, Drehmanns roamed his office, which now looked like a house in mourning, like a “tormented soul”.¹³³

On 28 May 1929, the matter came before the *congresso*, the meeting of the prefect and higher-ranking officials of Propaganda which discussed all day-to-day business. A terrified Drehmanns appeared that afternoon in the offices of the s. p. a. to hear from Pecorari that Marchetti-Selvaggiani had presented the draft of a papal motu proprio which would bring the curtain down on his involvement. Reeling from the shock, Drehmanns had to support himself against the doorpost and clutched his heart: “Poor Father Drehmanns could no longer speak, overcome by emotion. (...) For a moment I thought he would faint... Poor Drehmanns!”, Delatena wrote to Bekkers.¹³⁴

The motu proprio proposed in the *congresso* was probably the first printed version of *Vix ad Summi Pontificatus*, dated Pentecost 1929 (19 May), which enacted the final statutes of the s. p. a. An accompanying memorandum in the archive states that the text of the draft was not published “due to changes”.¹³⁵ Drehmanns and the outside world ascribed authorship of the document to Marchetti-Selvaggiani; so did Tisserant, who spoke of a “battle royal” between Marchetti-Selvaggiani and Drehmanns.¹³⁶ But the underlying documents in the archive of Propaganda Fide show that the first draft of the new statutes, which formed the basis for the Italian draft text, was in Van Rossum’s handwriting.¹³⁷

130 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, [Easter [31 March] 1929.

131 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 13 May 1929: “Since a month, the s. p. a. is being subjected to a true persecution which is of course a source of great suffering for me. But fiat voluntas Dei! (...) I trust it is a persecution by Satan against the indigenous clergy. I hope that I will come out of this unscathed.”

132 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 24 May 1929.

133 *Ibid.*: W. Stienen to Th. Bekkers, 23 May 1929.

134 *Ibid.*: H. Delatena to Th. Bekkers, 29 May 1929.

135 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1073, f 775–779: first printed version of the motu proprio, Pentecost 1929.

136 Having witnessed this conflict at close quarters, Tisserant, later a cardinal of the curia, reportedly decided never to engage a private secretary to prevent tension arising between the secretary and curial officials. Étienne Fouilloux, *Eugène cardinal Tisserant 1884–1972. Une biographie* (Paris 2011), 520.

137 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1073, f 746–749: undated draft of *Vix ad Summi Pontificatus* in Van Rossum’s handwriting.

The archive also contains an undated memorandum by Van Rossum intended for Pius XI (marked “Mgr. Marchetti 22.IV.29” on the back), in which he gives an account of the state of the three pontifical mission societies mentioned in *Maximum Illud*. In this memorandum, Van Rossum proposed a return to his original plans. His proposal was to vest the combined chairmanship of the Propagation of the Faith and the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle in the secretary of Propaganda Fide, “under the authority of His Eminence the Prefect”. This had always been the wish of Propaganda Fide, but “due to particular circumstances” it had not so far been possible to implement it. And there was to be a single periodical publication for both societies.¹³⁸

After the *congresso* of 30 May, Tisserant wrote a long letter and an accompanying report to Pius XI in an attempt to save the S.P.A.’s independence. He argued that the society was out of place under Propaganda Fide, which had always tried to frustrate its work. Also, it was a French organisation, whose special character would evaporate if it were to be subjected directly to Propaganda Fide.¹³⁹ Olichon followed up in June with consultations with Marchetti-Selvaggiani and letters to Gasparri and Van Rossum in which he advocated preserving the S.P.A.’s independence, highlighting its many successes.¹⁴⁰ In the same year, Olichon published a book in which he strongly emphasised the French origins of the society.¹⁴¹ He entirely overlooked the inconvenient truth that the S.P.A. had been ‘de-Frenchified’ when it was transferred to Switzerland in 1904 and then brought under the influence of Propaganda by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Nor did Tisserant and Olichon mention that there was a precedent for entrusting the presidency of the society to the secretary of Propaganda Fide: this had been the situation between 1920 and 1923, and Van Rossum was now attempting to restore this.¹⁴²

Drehmanns regarded the dismantling of the S.P.A. he had built as a serious threat to the future of his congregations, and he reacted like a desperate man. On 6 June 1929, a week after hearing the devastating news about the *motu proprio*, he took a sum of 500,000 lire from the coffers of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle and gave or lent it to the Sisters of San Piero.¹⁴³ Van Rossum probably only found out about the

138 *Ibid.*, f 821–822: undated memorandum by Van Rossum for Pius XI. This ended Drehmanns’s *Communica*nda.

139 Montferrer, *Tisserant papers*, File V4: E. Tisserant to Pius XI, 30 May 1929 and accompanying report. See also Christophe (éd.), *Les carnets du cardinal Baudrillart*, vol. 5: 1928–1932 (Paris 2003), 250, 1 July 1929.

140 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1096, f 62–65: A. Olichon to ‘Eminentissime Seigneur’, 18 June 1929 (given the accompanying card, probably P. Gasparri), “Strettamente confidenziale”; f 66: A. Olichon to ‘Éminence’, probably W. van Rossum, 19 June 1929.

141 Olichon, *Les origines françaises de l’Œuvre Pontificale de Saint-Pierre*.

142 See also Fouilloux, *Eugène cardinal Tisserant*, 181.

143 KDC, PMW, no. 412: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 25 January 1930; J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 30 January 1930, where he claims the loan was given with Delatena’s and Stienen’s approval.

existence of this congregation at this point, and he later severely reproached Drehmanns for this: “As [I am] prefect of Propag. it would have been fitting, to say the least, that you, who were living by my side, should have informed me, all the more so because the sisters, as I found out later, were destined to serve in the missions.”¹⁴⁴

It is not known how soon Drehmanns’s most recent financial transaction became common knowledge, but the draft of *Vix ad Summi Pontificatus* underwent a number of changes in the course of June, including stipulations that further tightened control over the s.p.a. The first version still thanked Drehmanns for having “built up and strengthened [the organisation] through his unceasing zeal” as general secretary, but this was pared down in the second version to a mere word of thanks “for the care with which he had carried out his work”.¹⁴⁵ A new article (art. XI) required that decisions by the central council be presented for approval not only to Propaganda Fide but also to the pope – this could be interpreted as a papal snub of Van Rossum.

Another addition was art. XXI, which announced that the status of the national directors and the coordination of the pontifical mission societies would be addressed in a separate motu proprio entitled *Decessor Noster*, to be published on the same date.¹⁴⁶ The original draft of this document, in the form of eight articles, is also in Van Rossum’s handwriting and it served as the basis for the Italian text written by Marchetti-Selvaggiani.¹⁴⁷ These two motu proprios of 24 June fixed the organisation and statutes of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, and placed the coordination of the pontifical mission societies in the hands of a coordinating committee supervised by Propaganda Fide, one of whose duties was to keep the pope informed. Clear guidelines were put in place for an annual financial audit. It was determined that the general secretary of Propaganda Fide would be the *ex officio* president. The new general secretary of the Society of Saint Peter, appointed on this occasion “by us” (the pope), was Pietro Coffano.¹⁴⁸

Drehmanns wrote to Bekkers on 5 July 1929: “The blow has been dealt: this morning our President brought me the double Motu Proprio that organises the entire Mission Action and pertains particularly to our society.” He added pathetically, “It is my solemn interment.”¹⁴⁹ After Marchetti-Selvaggiani informed the central council

144 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930. “The enterprise of the sisters. I’m not sure, my dear Jozef, but I doubt very much that this was from God, started in God and was continued with God, on your part at least.”

145 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1073, f 764–779. KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 11 June 1929. According to him, Marchetti-Selvaggiani was trumpeting lies about him, including to the pope.

146 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1073, f 785–787.

147 *Ibid.*, f 791–792: undated draft of *Decessor Noster* by Van Rossum; f 793–803 undated draft of *Decessor Noster* by Marchetti-Selvaggiani.

148 *Ibid.*, f 746–749: undated draft in Van Rossum’s handwriting, but the comment that the appointment would on this occasion be made “by us” is in a different hand. Coffano had been national president of the Propagation of the Faith in Italy since February 1929; he was Drago’s successor.

149 KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 5 July 1929.

of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle that the *motu proprio* had come into effect immediately upon its publication, the board resigned on 7 July. The board's letter of resignation, addressed to the pope, was signed by the president, Pecorari, the general secretary, Drehmanns, and the members, Blay, Canestri, Noots, Stienen and Tisserant.¹⁵⁰ The following day, Pecorari and the other members received a letter from Cardinal Van Rossum, confirming once again that the *motu proprio* was now in force, and praising the board for its work, particularly Pecorari and Drehmanns.¹⁵¹

This reorganisation of the S.P.A. was not only directed against Drehmanns, but was also meant to end the strife between the mission societies that had flared up in France due to nationalist sentiment. It became clear very soon that the French regarded this as another Vatican slight of their national pride. The French ambassador to the Holy See, Louis de Fontenay, sent a note to Pietro Gasparri on 10 July responding to the *Osservatore Romano's* announcement of the reorganisation of the pontifical mission societies. The news had caused a great deal of commotion and had dismayed the French prime minister, Aristide Briand, who had instructed the ambassador to tell Gasparri that the societies in question were originally French. The Holy See had no right to move the headquarters of these organisations outside France without French consent, nor to place the S.P.A. under the jurisdiction of any other organisation in Rome: this was an infringement of international law and should have been raised with the French government through diplomatic channels.¹⁵²

Gasparri replied the following day that the ambassador's note had caused the Holy Father great sorrow, as it always pained him greatly when secular authorities interfered in religious matters. Nothing was more closely connected to the church's essential mission than societies and organisations that worked, under her supervision, to spread the kingdom of Christ among the pagans. The organisation of these societies was therefore not a matter for international law and the secular authorities had no grounds for interference.¹⁵³

The French government dropped its opposition to the subordination of the Society of Saint Peter to Propaganda, which in any case was a *fait accompli*. But it continued to object strenuously to the possible transfer of the Sainte-Enfance or Holy Childhood, as would become clear later that year. The ambassador wrote to Gasparri on 9 December 1929 that the French government was very concerned that the *motu proprio Decessor Noster* of 24 June would result in the transfer of this society out of

150 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1096, f 129–130: board of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle to Pius XI, 7 July 1929.

151 *Ibid.*, f 56–57.

152 AAESS, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 315, fasc. 74, f 39–40: the French ambassador to the Holy See [L. de Fontenay] to P. Gasparri, 10 July 1929, and f 33–34: 15 July 1929.

153 *Ibid.*, f 35: P. Gasparri to Ambassador L. de Fontenay, 16 July 1929.

France. The Holy Childhood was “so essentially French by its origins and by the value which it is assigned in France” that the issue had caused much upset in parliament and among French Catholics. Gasparri forwarded the ambassador’s letter to Van Rossum on 17 December. The prefect obviously had no appetite for another showdown with the French, and the Holy Childhood remained where it was.¹⁵⁴

On 8 July 1929, a day after Drehmanns and the central council of the S.P.A. sent their letter of resignation to the pope, Van Rossum and Drehmanns departed Rome to attend the consecration of the cathedral of Christ the King in Reykjavik on 22 July.¹⁵⁵ After their Icelandic journey, they went to Karlsbad in early August, from where Drehmanns wrote a letter to the pope. In this letter, which I have unfortunately not been able to locate in the archives, he described his plans for a new congregation of priests which would train professors for mission seminaries.¹⁵⁶ The new institute would be closely linked to the Redemptorists, thus ensuring that the doctrine of Saint Alphonsus would be taught in all indigenous seminaries.

Van Rossum and Drehmanns then continued to the Netherlands to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the cardinal’s ordination as a priest. He was received in audience by Queen Wilhelmina and Crown Princess Juliana on 3 September, before travelling to Amsterdam and other cities where he was received in great state.¹⁵⁷ The newspapers announced that he would give a speech in Nijmegen or Tilburg, which the directors of the electronics company Philips would have broadcast by radio, so that the cardinal’s voice would also be heard in the missions. The press did not report whether this speech actually took place, but did say that any gifts Van Rossum was to receive on the occasion of his jubilee would go to the missions.¹⁵⁸

Van Rossum announced, possibly out of compassion with his depressed secretary, that the moneys received would be given to an “institute that focuses exclusively on training professors for and among the indigenous clergy”.¹⁵⁹ But the cardinal did not

154 *Ibid.*, f 46: L. de Fontenay to P. Gasparri, 9 December 1929 (with the comment “Inviato duplicato a Propaganda dd 10.1.1930”); f 47: P. Gasparri to W. van Rossum (copy), 17 December 1929, with a request for heads of an answer. The request was struck through and does not appear in the letter that was ultimately received by Propaganda Fide. ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1096, f 14. In-person consultations were possibly held instead.

155 See Chapter 16.4.

156 Drehmanns afterwards discussed the letter in his correspondence with Van Rossum. See Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 11 May 1930; KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

157 KDC, ROSS, no. 17: W. van Rossum to his relative Gerard and Trees, Karlsbad 5 August 1929.

158 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 3 September 1929; *Nieuwe Tilburgsche Courant*, 12 September 1929; *De Tijd*, 13 and 16 September 1929. He visited the Catholic University of Nijmegen as its patron on 13 September 1929.

159 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930; KDC, PMW, no. 412: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 2 July 1929.

have much confidence in the enterprise. He indicated that he regarded Drehmann's letter to the pope as a mistake; he should not have written any such letter given his emotional state at the time. Drehmanns denied later that he had written the letter on an emotional impulse.¹⁶⁰ As was to be expected, there never was any reply from the pope, and Drehmanns was in a melancholy state after their return to Rome. During their daily walk in the Villa Borghese in late September 1929, he poured out his heart to the cardinal: "Will things remain like this for me forever? I have had a special education and no ordinary training and formation, and what am I now? I have accomplished nothing; how long must this remain like this? My life cannot be like this. I must accomplish something with my talents."¹⁶¹

Drehmanns's precarious mental state persuaded Van Rossum not to involve his private secretary in the new set-up of the Society of Saint Peter at all. The other former members were invited to join the new council as national representatives. On 10 October 1929, Van Rossum sent letters of appointment, including to Eugène Tisserant (France),¹⁶² Hubertus Delatena (Switzerland), Hubertus Noots (Belgium) and Enrico Mauri (Italy); the new Dutch representative was Bernard Eras, the Dutch bishops' procurator in Rome.¹⁶³ When Drehmanns found out about this, he reproached Van Rossum bitterly. The cardinal answered that he had wished to spare him, as it pained him to see him suffer. The decisive factor had been the thought of putting him in a difficult position vis-à-vis the new president, Marchetti-Selvaggiani: "Believe me, I love you sincerely and am loath to hurt you."¹⁶⁴

Drehmanns subsequently refused any assistance to make the relaunch of the reorganised society a success.¹⁶⁵ When the new secretary general Pietro Coffano asked him on 9 November 1929 to explain the financial situation – there was talk of a bankruptcy, probably of a bank where some of the S.P.A. funds were deposited –, he

160 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 11 May 1930.

161 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

162 KDC, *Nova Series*, vol. 1096, f 82–120: E. Tisserant accepted the appointment on 15 October 1929, but later resigned: f 133–135: E. Tisserant to W. van Rossum, 28 March 1930. He resigned because of the division of the Society of Saint Peter in France into two branches (Paris and Lyon), due to the 'parochialism' of Lyon and its cardinal. Van Rossum accepted his resignation on 4 April 1930 after consultation with Pius XI. Montferrer, *Tisserant papers*, File V4: E. Tisserant to [A. Olichon], 16 February 1930. See also AAV, ANP, b. 426, fasc. 371 (Sacra Congregazione Propaganda Fide): A. Boucher (Paris) and P. Arthaud (Lyon) to F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani, 19 March 1930.

163 The other invitations went to E. David (Germany), C. Blay (Spain), J. Considine (US) and C. Duchemin (GB). ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1096, f 82: F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani to Pietro Coffano, secr. general of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle, 10 October 1929. Accompanied by Van Rossum's letters of appointment dated 10 October 1929 (f 75).

164 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 4 November 1929.

165 But Drehmanns asked others to try and obtain some position in the S.P.A. for him. KDC, ROSS, no. 35: Augusto Moglioni to J. Drehmanns, 28 November 1929.

insisted that he was no longer accountable to anyone with regard to the s.p.a.¹⁶⁶ He refused to submit his accounts. Van Rossum saw no other solution than to ask the Dutch national director, Bekkers, to come to Rome to explain the situation as best he could.¹⁶⁷ But Bekkers fared no better with Drehmanns when it came to access to the accounts. Before he returned to the Netherlands, Van Rossum asked Bekkers if the accounts were now in order. Bekkers replied that he had not been able to ascertain this, but together with the accountant he had discovered that the sum of 500,000 lire that Drehmanns had taken for 'his' sisters had come from the free donations. No real malpractice was established. The s.p.a. faced a substantial deficit due to the bankruptcy and the missing sum for the sisters, but these difficulties were not such as to threaten the society's future.¹⁶⁸

Drehmanns meanwhile continued to defend his donation to the sisters in a letter to Bekkers: "this is my conviction: that the future will prove me right: that in the future the initial formation of future priests will be entrusted to Sisters, as is already the case in some of the Missions of the [White Fathers], with excellent results".¹⁶⁹ In other words, it was a better investment than building a seminary. He added that this was the principle that had informed his actions, and he would have done much more if the mercantile spirit of some had not stopped him.¹⁷⁰

5 Banished from Rome

Drehmanns left Rome for a while after this tumultuous period. He was in San Piero in late December 1929, where he received a letter from Van Rossum greeting and blessing the sisters – the cardinal had probably received them in audience in October. Drehmanns also visited Ingenbohl and the Netherlands.¹⁷¹ He was back in Rome

166 KDC, ROSS, no. 70: 'Dichiarazioni del Rev.mo P. Drehmanns', 9 November 1929, notes, probably by P. Coffano. See also PMW, no. 412: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 25 January 1930.

167 KDC, PMW, no. 412: P. Coffano to Th. Bekkers, 13 November 1929. Drehmanns was obviously annoyed by this, because he wrote to Bekkers not to harbour any illusions. Bekkers was a *straniero*, a foreigner, and in Roman eyes there was nothing worse: "I was a *straniero* too and that is why I had to leave". J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 27 November 1929.

168 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 22 January 1930; Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 25 January 1930.

169 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 22 January 1930. This is a strange claim: as far as I know, future priests were never educated by sisters, not by White Sisters either. Possibly he meant boys in primary schools.

170 *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 22 January 1930; Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 25 January 1930. Bekkers continued to think that it was "premature to equate Sisters with the building of seminaries" and he could not understand how Drehmanns could "have come to the deed of 6 June" (the gift or loan to the Sisters of San Piero) under the circumstances. This, and Drehmanns's refusal to hand over the accounts, created the strong suspicion that he was acting out of ulterior motives.

171 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 29 December 1929.

in early 1930 to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood on 8 April. The jubilee was marked by festivities in the Redemptorist generalate, naturally also attended by Van Rossum.¹⁷² Drehmanns also received the pope's personal congratulations on that day: *Pius PP. XI peramanter perque libenter in Domino*: the pope blessed him gladly and lovingly in the Lord.¹⁷³

According to the recollections of Bernard Lijdsman, later written down by M. Mulders, Cardinal Van Rossum and the superior general, Patrick Murray, were summoned for separate audiences with Pius XI precisely a week later, on Tuesday 15 April 1930, Tuesday in Holy Week.¹⁷⁴ Murray was received before the traditional sermon on the Passion that day, and was told: "I have a painful message, painful for you, painful for secretary Drehmanns and painful for the Cardinal: Father Drehmanns must leave Rome permanently one of these days. This is not a punishment, but paternal solicitude. You must tell Father Drehmanns and I will also tell the Cardinal." Van Rossum was received after the meditation had ended and was given the same message. When he asked the pope why, Pius XI reportedly replied that he was not at liberty to tell him. Van Rossum pointed out that Drehmanns was just celebrating his twenty-fifth jubilee and that his relatives were on their way to Rome, but to no avail.¹⁷⁵ Nor did the pope yield to Van Rossum's request to allow Drehmanns to stay as a personal favour to himself.

Drehmanns was told to come to Propaganda Fide at three o'clock in the afternoon, and was received there by Van Rossum and Murray. After Murray had told him the news, Drehmanns reportedly burst into tears.¹⁷⁶ He left Rome a week later, on Tuesday morning 22 April 1930. He travelled back to the Netherlands via Bologna (where the Sisters of San Piero greeted him), Milan (where he stayed with Paolo Manna) and Ingenbohl, and was met at Aachen station by the Dutch provincial on Saturday 26 April and brought back to his native country. Bernard Lijdsman, a professor of canon law at the major seminary of Wittem, was hastily appointed Van Rossum's new pri-

172 Giuseppe Orlandi, 'Giovanni XXIII e i Redentoristi', in: *SHCSR*, 50(2002), 425–468, at 439–440.

173 It was a portrait of the pope with a handwritten note dated 8 April 1930. Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*.

174 ENK, ANPR, no. 18886: Memories of Fr. B. Lijdsman, written down by Fr. M. Mulders, undated, probably 1949 or 1950. Lijdsman, who was still living in Wittem in April 1930 and would succeed Drehmanns as Van Rossum's private secretary that same month, possibly heard the story from Van Rossum, Drehmanns, and/or Murray.

175 Orlandi, 'Giovanni XXIII e i Redentoristi', 439–440 comments that Drehmanns had already celebrated his jubilee on 8 April. But another festive occasion was planned, for which his brother Henri and sister-in-law Jeannette were going to come to Rome. They cancelled their trip. KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 27 April 1930. As a salve for the disappointment, Van Rossum arranged for a papal award for his 'gentleman', Henri Drehmanns, which he sent to Joseph Drehmanns. Joseph then secretly gave the medal "to little Wim [Willem], your godchild; he then very sweetly offered it to his father". *Ibid.*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 24 October 1930, "Confidential".

176 ENK, ANPR, no. 18886: Memories of Fr. B. Lijdsman, written down by Fr. M. Mulders.

vate secretary, and Drehmanns took over Lijdsman's job in Wittem. Van Rossum, who "wept and suffered very greatly", was glad to hear that the Redemptorists had given Drehmanns a warm welcome and that Drehmanns himself had taken it all "so well and virtuously".¹⁷⁷

The question why the pope had decided to banish Drehmanns from Rome in the week between 8 and 15 April 1930 was hotly debated in the correspondence between the cardinal and his former secretary. Van Rossum (and their confrere Cornelis Damen) soon raised the possibility that it was to do with Drehmanns's overbearing and caustic character, his tendency to dominate and boss people around. Everyone regarded this as a disagreeable trait. He was inclined to overestimate himself and suffered from a lack of humility, if not towards God, "then at least too frequently towards fellow human beings, even your superiors".¹⁷⁸ This had given the devil a foot in the door: "We are so miserable and our nature is so corrupt and the devil is so clever and cunning."¹⁷⁹

Van Rossum's main point was that Drehmanns's autocratic management of the S.P.A., his refusal to produce the accounts and the sum that he had lent or given to the Sisters of San Piero had greatly damaged his reputation. Even Propaganda was unaware of what was going on in the S.P.A. The other societies that depended on Propaganda constantly sent Van Rossum reports and information, and no one took any measures without the prefect's knowledge and approval. But there had been nothing of the kind from the S.P.A., which never sent any communication. The secretary's continued refusal to give a full account of the society's affairs had led to "the Holy Father's intervention in the form of the new organisation and the corresponding lapse of your secretaryship". Van Rossum could not understand that Drehmanns had not taken him into confidence in filial trust: "I would have given everything I have here in Rome and in Amsterd. and in America and I would have tried to collect even more to save you."¹⁸⁰ "I did not know any of this. I have been too weak and should have called you to account both here and with regard to your actions in the S.P.A." But he had refrained from doing so for fear of hurting Drehmanns. Van Rossum also said that he had hoped

177 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, Ingenbohl 24 and 27 April 1930; KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 26 and 29 April, 2 May 1930; no. 343: Diary 1, 81, 22 April 1931.

178 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

179 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 29 April and 8 May 1930; C. Damen to J. Drehmanns, 24 April and 27 May 1930. Damen acted as the cardinal's private secretary in the first days after Drehmanns's departure.

180 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 8 May 1930. It can similarly be deduced that there was a financial component to his banishment from the fact that Bekkers was summoned back to Rome in May 1930 to explain the situation of the Society of Saint Peter. *Ibid.*: Th. Bekkers to J. Drehmanns, 25 May 1930. For Van Rossum's own finances, see Chapter 21.1.

that his indulgent attitude would have inspired trust in Drehmanns to confide in him, but the cardinal had been sorely disappointed on that score.¹⁸¹

Nor had Drehmanns's activities for the new male congregation done him any favours. According to Van Rossum, his lack of a supernatural disposition had, here too, "killed its germ of life. (...) In an enterprise like this, initiative, action and energy are not the most important things, but rather profound humility, a supernatural disposition and prayer. And so, here too, the evil spirit made you write that unfortunate letter to the Holy Father from Karlsbad in a state of mind that was far from good. And what was the result? His Holiness – so I was told later – informed someone who is no friend of yours of this letter. The latter knew nothing of the plan at the time, but said that such a foundation was entirely unnecessary. Without saying a word about it to me, the Holy Father dismissed the whole affair, and as long as he is alive, I do not believe it is any use even thinking about it again."¹⁸² Van Rossum thought that the occurrence "which has cast both of us in such deep sadness" originated in these quarters. It was only a suspicion, because the pope had not alluded to it in any form. "Not a word during the latest audience: [it went] as if nothing had happened, even though he must have noticed that I was suffering." None of the cardinals had said anything either: they were reluctant to get involved.¹⁸³

Drehmanns did not believe that his letter from Karlsbad could have provoked his dismissal, although the letter had been misunderstood by many, he wrote to Van Rossum on 2 May 1930. He had indeed argued in it that a new congregation, a kind of extension of the Redemptorists, should be founded. But he assured Van Rossum that he had never intended to distance himself from the Redemptorists.¹⁸⁴ Drehmanns blamed the French government, which, he alleged, thought that the cardinal's private secretary was behind all his anti-French measures.¹⁸⁵ "I am willing to believe that they regarded you as the 'evil genius' behind the Cardinal in this respect", Van Rossum replied. Comments had even been made about the books displayed in the waiting room in Piazza di Spagna, which were German rather than French. But this could not have been the cause of the banishment, the cardinal continued: quite apart from Drehmanns, the French had mistrusted him from the start, from the time he

181 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

182 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 26 and 29 April 1930.

183 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 8 May 1930. See also his letter dated 16 May 1930.

184 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 2 and 11 May 1930. The fact that Murray was summoned by the pope on 15 April raises the suspicion that the congregation was indeed involved in some way. Murray was reportedly particularly nervous before the audience. See also KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 15 June 1930: "The Most Rev. Father General, who leaves tomorrow with Fr. ter Haar and Fr. Lutz, had his audience yesterday. Thank God the Holy Father was very kind."

185 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 2 May 1930.

had found a place for exiled German missionaries in South Africa at the beginning of his term as prefect of Propaganda Fide.¹⁸⁶

However damaging all these things were for Drehmanns's reputation, they were nothing new and were not acute issues in the period between 8 April – when Pius XI sent Drehmanns a personal congratulation – and 15 April 1930, when the pope told him to leave Rome immediately. One possibility is that the pope was only apprised of Drehmanns's financial malpractices during this week and immediately decided to act. The Italian historian Emma Fattorini has pointed out that Pius XI was strongly preoccupied by the Vatican's finances, particularly after the economic crisis broke – and the crisis was being felt markedly in Rome by 1930. One prelate of the curia, Domenico Tardini, scoffed in his memoirs that Pius XI was more perturbed by the slumping value of the dollar than by moral decline, and that he felt the financial losses more keenly than the loss of souls.¹⁸⁷

The archive of the Holy Office points to another possible reason for Drehmanns's exile. The relevant documents do not contain any specific date in April, but from late January 1930 onwards, a serious sexual offence was discussed at multiple sessions of the Holy Office, and Drehmanns's name came up in these discussions.

The meeting of the consultors of the Holy Office on 27 January 1930, which was attended by Drehmanns, addressed accusations that a 44-year-old Italian Conventual Franciscan priest had committed the crimes of *sollicitatio*, false mysticism and breaking the seal of confession. All were agreed that the priest in question should be placed under close supervision by his superiors and banned from leaving his monastery.¹⁸⁸

The case of this priest was raised again at the meeting of the consultors on 23 June 1930, this time in Drehmanns's absence.¹⁸⁹ It was specified on this occasion that the man had been accused by four women of having frequently committed immoral acts during confession. The priest had confessed to the crime, and said that he had done the same thing with other women, who had not, however, made any accusations.

186 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 8 May 1930. According to Van Rossum, other French grievances were the issues concerning the mission societies and the fact that he was averse to all liberalism and related tendencies, which were gaining strength in France at the time.

187 Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 127–149; Fattorini, *Hitler, Mussolini, and the Vatican*, 59, where she quotes notes of the audience taken by Tardini (who stood in for Secretary of State E. Pacelli), 3 February 1934.

188 ADDF, SO, *Decreta* 1930: Acta in Congregatione Consult., 27 January 1930. The matter was discussed in the meeting of cardinals on 5 February 1930. René Bastiaanse, *Onkuisheid. De Nederlandse biechtpraktijk 1900–1965* (Zwolle 2013), 189 describes *sollicitatio* as the worst sin a priest could commit: seducing a penitent to engage in immoral conversation or unchaste acts during confession.

189 The last meeting of consultors that Drehmanns attended was on 7 April 1930. See ADDF, SO, *Decreta* 1930.

One of these four women was a superior in a congregation of Franciscan sisters in Assisi, but two others were members of the Missionarie Adoratrici e Riparatrici del S. Cuore Eucaristico di Gesù of the diocese of Sansepolcro, otherwise known as the Sisters of San Piero. All the consultors present agreed that the man should be punished severely, and it transpired at the next meeting of cardinals, on 2 July 1930, that the cardinal members, including Van Rossum, were of the same opinion. The priest was to be reduced to the state of a simple lay brother (“ad statum simplicis conversi”) with all the resulting canonical consequences.¹⁹⁰ The pope adopted this proposed penalty in a decision dated 3 July 1930. He also determined that the superior who had been abused should be placed under supervision in another institute for a year. Furthermore, the compromised congregation of the Sisters of San Piero was to be dissolved, and the sisters should be asked to transfer to another congregation. Father Drehmanns, who had the care of this institute, was ordered to break off all contact with the sisters.¹⁹¹

Moreover, Drehmanns’s spiritual diary shows that the bishop of Sansepolcro had made accusations against him. Drehmanns wrote “a very secret letter” to the vicar general, Merizzi, on 18 July, asking him to have the bishop’s accusations withdrawn as they were tarnishing his honour and his good name. He also wrote to one of the sisters (“figlia traditrice”) on 9 October to persuade this “traitress” to retract the accusations she had made to the bishop.¹⁹²

The nature of the accusations against Drehmanns remains unclear, but they cannot have been as bad as those made against the Conventual Franciscan priest, as Drehmanns would in that case have been punished more severely and his case discussed in greater detail at the meetings of the Holy Office. But Pius XI obviously believed that Drehmanns’s behaviour towards women religious was unacceptable, or at least dangerously close to becoming so.¹⁹³ This is further confirmed by a letter which the superior general, Murray, wrote to Drehmanns six years later, in which he told him that the pope had, through the cardinal vicar, permitted Drehmanns to give retreats to women religious, on condition that Murray would be responsible for it, that persons of confidence would supervise the retreats, that the retreats could not be too frequent and that Drehmanns could not act as the habitual director or confes-

190 For the punishment for *Sollicitantes (ad turpia)* see also CIC 1917, can. 2368.

191 ADDE, 50, *Decreta* 1930: Acta in Congregatione Consultoria, 23 June 1930; Acta in Congregatione Publica, 2 July 1930; audience 3 July 1930.

192 KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 1, 24, 42, 75, 18 July and 9 October 1930.

193 The fact that almost all of Drehmanns’s correspondence with and about the congregation of San Piero has disappeared (including correspondence with the sisters themselves, with the diocese of Sansepolcro, with ‘the benefactress’ et cetera), as has the file in the Sansepolcro diocesan archives (as DIP claims), indicates that the abuses were probably grave.

sor of the sisters.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, it is remarkable that the pope only banished Drehmanns from Rome and not from Italy (Murray subsequently also prohibited him from travelling to Italy).¹⁹⁵ This would have allowed him to meet his sisters again, except of course that the congregation was suppressed in July 1930.

Despite this, and despite the dissolution of the Sisters of San Piero – of which Drehmanns was informed on 27 July 1930, according to his spiritual diary – he secretly continued to keep in touch with the sisters.¹⁹⁶ He had not given up hope that the congregation would eventually be recognised, and he asked Van Rossum whether some friendly cardinal might be of help. Van Rossum told him repeatedly that it was pointless to entertain this hope. “If the Holy Father takes such a decision, nothing further can be done about it. That is his character. Nor does he speak to anyone in such cases. (...) I think it is entirely futile and quite harmful to continue to take steps.”¹⁹⁷ The matter of the Sisters of San Piero was discussed again by the cardinals of the Holy Office on 17 December 1930, in Van Rossum’s presence. Pacelli reported on the outcome of the meeting that same day during his audience with the pope, who repeated that the sisters must submit to the previously taken decisions.¹⁹⁸ Drehmanns’s diary says that the sisters had to stop wearing the habit and leave San Piero after their congregation was dissolved on 1 January 1931. A fortnight later, he wrote that Van Rossum had agreed to his proposal for the winding up of the congregation’s finances.¹⁹⁹

But Drehmanns did not submit to the papal decision. He attributed everything that happened to the will of God, the successes as well as the failures and humiliations he had to endure. *Fiat voluntas tua* – Your will be done – was a frequently recurring motto in his letters, and the title of a small book of meditations he published in the course of 1931.²⁰⁰ The greater the humiliation, the greater the fruit it would bear for his sanctification. He continued to keep in touch with the sisters and nourished

194 ENK, ANPR, no. 7708: P. Murray to J. Drehmanns, 25 April 1936. Murray congratulated him on this permission.

195 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 24 June 1930.

196 KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 1, 52, 12 November 1930, mentions that Drehmanns used his brother to send money to the sisters.

197 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930. Drehmanns also wrote to Carlo Salotti, Marchetti-Selvaggiani’s successor as secretary of Propaganda Fide. Diary 1, 57, 25 November 1930.

198 Sergio Pagano, Marcel Chappin, Giovanni Coco, *I «Fogli di udienza» del cardinale Eugenio Pacelli Segretario di Stato, I* (Vatican City, 2010), 348.

199 ADDF, SO, *Decreta* 1930: Acta in Congregatione Secreta, 17 December 1930; KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 1, 68–70, 1 and 15 January 1931. The sisters tried to have the decision overturned by pointing out their parlous financial situation to Van Rossum in a letter. If the congregation were to be dissolved, they would have to pay back the amount of 500,000 lire, but they did not have the funds to do this. KDC, ROSS, no. 66: Maria Letizia Guaraldi and Maria Clelia Tumiatì to W. van Rossum, 27 December 1930.

200 G. M. D. [Giuseppe Maria Drehmanns], *‘Fiat voluntas tua!’ Trentatre meditazioni sull’unione colla divina volontà*, Milan, Pontificio Istituto Missioni Estere, 1931.

their hope that the congregation would one day be recognised by the church.²⁰¹ After Van Rossum's death on 30 August 1932, he hoped that his intercession might help him to found his congregations after all: he promised to promote the dead cardinal's cause for beatification if he were to see to this from heaven.²⁰² Drehmann's only relinquished hope after 1 February 1933, when the decree of suppression of the Sisters of San Piero was published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, with the addition that the Holy Office had first issued an order to this effect in July 1930 but that it had not been obeyed.²⁰³

Drehmann's never gave up his plan to become a saint. In 1942, he founded the Society of the Brides of Jesus in Amsterdam without telling his superior or the bishop of Haarlem. The society consisted of a group of women who lived in the world but who committed themselves to their community and to God under his leadership. He performed all the various ceremonies, including consecrating their rings and blessing the women, and instructed them to keep the existence of the group and their membership a strict secret. The group was eventually discovered, and his superiors and the bishops attempted to remove him as leader, all the more urgently because his previous actions had caused unrest in five unnamed other congregations. He was banished from the country, first to Luxembourg, and later, in 1950, to Brazil. He took eight Brides of Jesus with him and continued to lead them, including the women who had stayed behind in the Netherlands, in defiance of the ban. The then superior general of the Redemptorists, Leonard Buijs, characterised Drehmann's as someone with "all the characteristics to become not only a great man but also a saint, except for one: common sense (...). As a result, he entertains bizarre ideas concerning mysticism and is entirely immune to reason when any of his hobbyhorses are involved."²⁰⁴ After his death in 1959, the Brides of Jesus themselves sought and received recognition as a secular institute called *Unitas*.²⁰⁵

201 KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 2, 11–12, 15–16, 30 July and 3 November 1931. In Drehmann's diary, the hope that his male and/or female congregations might still be recognised alternated with despair and self-pity at his suffering and the "most sweet punishments" he had to endure, with Drehmann's portraying himself as nailed to the cross together with Jesus, "my adored Beloved One". He read the lives of founders of orders to console himself, as they had also experienced much opposition, whereas his own ordeal appeared to continue without end.

202 *Ibid.*, no. 343: Diary 2, 46, 1 December 1932.

203 AAS, 25(1933), 36–37; 'Missionarie Adoratrici e Riparatrici del Sacro Cuore Eucaristico di Gesù', in: *DIP*, vol. 5, 1503.

204 AGHR, PH IX H. *Personalialia* '1947–1953', folder 1: L. Buijs, superior general of the Redemptorists, to F. Wuts, provincial superior in Brazil, 2 April 1953. See also Peter Drehmann, *Erfsmet. Roman* (Amsterdam/Antwerpen 2004), 248.

205 José Eijt, *Eine Berufung in der Welt. Geschichte des Säkularinstituts Unitas 1942–1987* (Nijmegen 1991), 20–49. Drehmann's found a forum for his ideas in various magazines (such as the *Seminarie missieblad*, *Het Maria-uur*, *O Bonitas!*, *Adveniat*) and wrote *Bidden. Een wegwijzer voor mensen die God zoeken*, 's-Hertogenbosch [1939] (Prayer. A Guide for those who seek God), as well as other publications.

6 A weak link

Van Rossum clearly had a soft spot for his private secretary. The evening before Drehmanns left, he composed a farewell note, “with a most grateful soul”, to his “dearest secretary”, who had served him for 19 years “with such love, devotion and sacrifice”.²⁰⁶ During this period, Drehmanns had become more or less a family member. Van Rossum also knew his brother, Henri Drehmanns, who fulfilled the ceremonial role of ‘gentiluomo’ whenever the cardinal was in the Netherlands. The bonds were further strengthened in 1928 when Van Rossum agreed to be godfather to Henri’s youngest child, christened Willem after the cardinal. In the same year, Van Rossum allowed himself to be drawn into a conflict within the municipal council of the Dutch town of Roermond. Formally speaking, the dispute was about whether the Sisters of Tilburg could continue to work in a local hospital, and Van Rossum came to their defence as their cardinal protector. But in fact, it was a power struggle between Henri Drehmanns, who was a municipal councillor, and the other members of the council. Van Rossum’s intervention damaged his reputation in the Netherlands, particularly among certain religious institutes.²⁰⁷

The close bond he had with Joseph Drehmanns is evident also from the nickname ‘das Ritterlein’ (‘the little knight’) which the cardinal and the Sisters of Ingenbohl used for Drehmanns.²⁰⁸ Van Rossum never reined in Drehmanns’s unconventional enthusiasm but condoned it. He does not seem to have taken him too seriously, but regarded him as a trusty Don Quixote, knighted by Emperor Franz Joseph with the Order of Franz Joseph, who waged his own inimitable battles. These battles were not, as Drehmanns liked people to believe (and as he probably himself believed), for the church of Christ, but for his own reputation, for his own eternal holiness. The story of Joseph Drehmanns shows how the basically rational organisation of the curia could become intertwined, in irrational, often elusive ways, with personal religious ambitions.

It may surprise us that Van Rossum stood by his private secretary all those years. Of course, Van Rossum wanted to be loyal to Drehmanns as a fellow Redemptorist.²⁰⁹ But although Drehmanns was an energetic and zealous secretary, he also obstinately worked against the cardinal’s interests on several fronts. Some of the things he did

206 Official portrait of Van Rossum with a note dated 21 April 1930. Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*.

207 KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 1 October 1928; Gabriëlle Dorren, *Met de minsten der mijnen. Geschiedenis van de Kleine Zusters van de H. Joseph* (Hilversum 2013), 187–189.

208 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli to J. Drehmanns, 15 June 1930.

209 Like all Redemptorists, Van Rossum had promised never to reveal anything that might harm the congregation or one of its members. See Chapter 3.3.

happened behind Van Rossum's back, but as I have shown, the cardinal was aware of much of it: there had been clear signs since 1915 that Drehmanns was engaging in harmful and unauthorised actions which Van Rossum knew about and which sometimes frustrated his own policies. He occasionally reprimanded his secretary, paternally pointing out the "failings in his character", but never dismissed him. After a series of missteps, culminating in obstruction of the policies of Propaganda Fide (that is, Van Rossum's policies), a diplomatic incident, financial malpractices and abusive behaviour towards women religious, Pope Pius XI personally ended Drehmanns's career in the Roman curia. The fact that he insisted on calling this measure not a punishment but an expression of paternal solicitude (as Drehmanns's successor Lijdsman testified) shows that the pontiff was reluctant to punish him too severely, possibly because Drehmanns had also been of great service to him as the leading figure behind the S.P.A.

It has been suggested that Pius XI deprived Van Rossum of his assistant – once disparagingly described by Gasparri as 'le Petit secrétaire' – on purpose, to weaken the cardinal or curb his influence.²¹⁰ We shall see in the following chapter that relations between Pius XI and Van Rossum did indeed deteriorate from the mid-1920s onwards, so this motive cannot be ruled out. Depriving curial officials of their valued assistants was regarded, at least in a later period, as a proven method to side-line people within the Roman curia.²¹¹

Van Rossum was strongly emotionally affected by the banishment of his secretary and life companion, as he himself described Drehmanns. He gave free rein to his sorrow in his letters to Drehmanns after 1930.²¹² The pope's decision led to gossip about Drehmanns's departure among the other cardinals. And yet, these years were not bad years for Van Rossum. He was in good health and felt energetic, both before and after the fateful date of 15 April.²¹³ He could not have wished for a better successor for Drehmanns than Bernard Lijdsman, whom he described as dedicated, competent, pious, optimistic and cheerful.²¹⁴ Unlike Drehmanns, this canon lawyer had no hidden agenda that was liable to land the cardinal in hot water. If only because Van Rossum did not repeat the mistake of giving his new private secretary any influential positions within the curia.

210 Puchinger, *Colijn*, Vol. 2, 364 n. 501.

211 Frédéric Martel, *In the Closet of the Vatican. Power, Homosexuality, Hypocrisy* (London 2019), 329.

212 For instance in KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 October 1930.

213 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli to J. Drehmanns, 15 July 1930: Van Rossum was "all fresh & very jovial".

214 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 8 May 1930; B. Lijdsman to J. Drehmanns, 9 and 17 May 1930. Like Drehmanns, B. Lijdsman (1881–1950) had studied at the Roman Seminario dell'Apollinare (from 1911–1913).

No second pope

1 The 1922 conclave

Benedict xv died on Sunday 22 January 1922 after a short illness, probably due to complications arising from a simple flu. The election of Achille Ratti a fortnight later heralded the start of a new period for Van Rossum. After the struggle against modernism under Pius x which had been the making of him, and the period of the First World War and its aftermath under Benedict xv, whose pontificate he influenced so strongly as prefect of Propaganda Fide, relations with the pope became more complicated under Pius xi.

Van Rossum probably did not vote for Ratti at the 1922 conclave. His favoured candidate was the Spanish Cardinal Merry del Val, a proponent of the policies of Pius x, like Van Rossum himself and those other stalwarts of the old antimodernist group, De Lai and Pompilj. It was a public secret that Van Rossum strongly advocated the election of a non-Italian pope.¹ He had made no bones about this view in his conversations with the other cardinals prior to the conclave. The Viennese Cardinal Piffel (who broke the rules by writing down his impressions of this and the previous conclave, in 1914) said that the Spanish cardinals agreed with Van Rossum that it should be a non-Italian. Initially, they regarded the Dutchman as their candidate. The German and Austrian cardinals, by contrast, favoured the secretary of state, Gasparri, whose candidacy Van Rossum strongly opposed. He saw Gasparri as the candidate of continuity with the policies of Benedict xv, and he resented his nepotist tendencies. According to Van Rossum, Gasparri was a marionet in the hands of his relatives, but not all the cardinals shared this fear.²

The conclave began on 2 February, with some sixty cardinals (the number had been fifty in 1914). Piffel was pleased that the cells of the German and Austrian cardinals were close to each other so that they could easily confer. They decided they would all vote for Gasparri in the first round; but if it were to become evident in the first round that his candidature was not going anywhere, they would all decide for themselves whether to vote in the second round for Pietro La Fontaine, the patriarch of Venice, or for Van Rossum before conferring again. Van Rossum's cell, no. 56, was

1 Christophe (éd.), *Les carnets du cardinal Baudrillart*, vol. 6: 1932–1935 (Paris 2003), 261, 21 August 1932.

2 Liebmann, 'Les conclaves de Benoît xv et de Pie xi', 47–52.



Pope Pius XI

in a different part of the apostolic palace, near the Scala Papale, the papal stairs, in the papal apartments. He was probably less pleased with his lodgings than in 1914, when his cell had been near to De Lai's and Pompilj's. On this occasion, Bisleti was one of his neighbours, a man with whom he had little affinity.³

The contest was initially mainly between the two favourites Merry del Val and Gasparri. Van Rossum received four votes in the first round (probably from the Spanish cardinals), but none in any of the following rounds. Merry del Val soon lost many votes to La Fontaine. When it became clear that Gasparri would not be able to secure a two-thirds majority either, the focus turned to Ratti, who had the support of the Polish and the French. Ratti was eventually elected in the fourteenth round, on Tuesday 6 February. Rumour had it that Gasparri had struck a deal with him, and the fact that Ratti kept him on as secretary of state – an unusual step for a new pope – was regarded as proof.⁴

Gasparri denied the allegation in his memoirs: Ratti had asked him to stay on only after the conclave was over, and he had been reluctant to agree. The new pope then told him that a group of ten to twelve cardinals around De Lai had tried to extract a promise from him not to appoint Gasparri as secretary of state in return for their votes, but Ratti had of course refused this. Van Rossum was allegedly one of these cardinals. When Gasparri later confronted him with this allegation, Van Rossum reacted with shock and dismissed it. It was strictly forbidden to cast votes in papal elections on condition of some prior pledge (*voto condizionato*); the apostolic constitution *Vacante Sede Apostolica* of 25 December 1904 banned this practice on pain of excommunication *latae sententiae*. We cannot know whether Van Rossum's shock was feigned or genuine, but he certainly agreed with De Lai's criticisms of Gasparri.⁵

Merry del Val received no further votes after the seventh round, which means that Van Rossum too must have voted for another, Italian, candidate from that moment on. It is possible that he ultimately did support Ratti, like De Lai. Another possibility is that he voted for Laurenti, the former secretary of Propaganda Fide, with whom he was on cordial terms. Laurenti received between one and five votes in every round.⁶

3 KDC, ROSS, no. 251.

4 Liebmann, 'Les conclaves de Benoît XV et de Pie XI', 50–52.

5 Giovanni Spadolini, *Il cardinale Gasparri e la questione romana (con brani delle memorie inedite)* (Florence 1973), 260–269. De Lai accused Gasparri of nepotism, and blamed him for having brought about the reconciliation between the church and the modernist Ernesto Buonaiuti. Moreover, De Lai was upset at Gasparri's and the Affari Straordinari's interference in French episcopal appointments, which De Lai regarded as the exclusive prerogative of the Congregazione Concistoriale, whose secretary he was. Gasparri defended himself against these allegations in his memoirs: all candidates that De Lai had proposed were sympathisers of Action Française. Gasparri had then submitted the case to Benedict XV, who decided in favour of the secretary of state.

6 Liebmann, 'Les conclaves de Benoît XV et de Pie XI', 50–52. In addition to Merry del Val and Van Rossum, Mercier was the only non-Italian to receive any votes: one, in the first round.

2 Relations with Pius XI

Achille Ratti was born in Lombardy in 1857 and had been created a cardinal (and appointed archbishop of Milan) as recently as 1921; according to Carlo Confalonieri, his private secretary for 18 years, he was an authoritarian who brooked no opposition. He was also bad-tempered and feared by many in the curia.⁷ Merry del Val, the secretary of the Holy Office, reportedly once complained that the pope treated him like a schoolboy, and many cardinals trembled as they entered the papal rooms for an audience.⁸ Cesare Maria de Vecchi di Val Cismon, the Italian ambassador to the Holy See, described Pius XI to Mussolini on 22 July 1929 as a man of steel, who governed the church single-handedly and accepted no interference from anyone else: “any possible intrigue pulverises upon contact with this square block of granite”.⁹

Ratti was an autocrat and regarded the College of Cardinals not so much as the “senate of the church” but as a group of individual assistants. He wanted every cardinal to confine himself to his own field and report to him directly without consulting colleagues.¹⁰ The most important dicasteries under Pius XI’s pontificate were the Secretariat of State, which functioned as his ministry of foreign affairs, but also took care of a myriad other business, the Holy Office and Propaganda Fide. The importance of Propaganda increased during the course of Pius’s pontificate as he reserved more time and attention for the missions. Ratti made no attempt to reshuffle the men at the head of the curia: he retained Gasparri as secretary of state, Merry del Val in the Holy Office and Van Rossum as prefect of Propaganda Fide.

Pius XI had no talent for diplomacy and was forthright in his interactions with others. He resented the curial bureaucracy which tended to dominate pontificates. In some ways, Van Rossum and Pius XI were like each other. There are stories in the Redemptorist community in Rome that the two men clashed regularly and raised their voices during audiences, and that the pope eventually had enough of the Dutch cardinal because he would not tolerate a ‘second pope’ alongside himself.¹¹ It was not unthinkable for Pius XI to dismiss a cardinal. There were rumours in the summer of 1931 that Pacelli was planning to resign as secretary of state – he complained that

7 Confalonieri, *Pio XI visto da vicino*, 112.

8 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 128–132.

9 Sandro Setta (ed.), *Tra Papa, Duce e Re. Il conflitto tra Chiesa cattolica e Stato fascista nel Diario 1930–1931 del primo ambasciatore del Regno d’Italia presso la Santa Sede di Cesare Maria de Vecchi di Val Cismon* (Rome 1998), 13–15.

10 Giovanni Coco, “L’Anno Terribile” del Cardinale Pacelli e il più segreto tra i concistori di Pio XI’, in: *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 47(2009), 143–277, at 156–157. According to Coco, Pius XI’s views on how to govern the church were influenced by Robert Bellarmine, whom he canonised in 1930 and proclaimed a doctor of the church in 1931 (268–269).

11 Information received from G. Enderle of the Redemptorist Historical Institute, 11 June 2009.

he had not the slightest influence over the pope – or that he would be fired.¹² A similar fate had previously befallen the French Jesuit Billot. This unbendingly orthodox cardinal had failed to express sufficient enthusiasm for Pius XI's denunciation of the Action Française, and was then "invited" to return his cardinal's hat, which he did.¹³ Van Rossum sometimes spotted "the ex-C[ardinal] B[illot]" in the church of Galloro, where Billot spent his last years, but never talked to him: despite having been close colleagues, they were never friends.¹⁴



Louis Billot S.J., consultor of the Holy Office and co-drafter of the antimodernist oath

But Van Rossum and Pius XI had a good working relationship in the early years of Ratti's pontificate.¹⁵ Pius XI strongly supported the cardinal's missionary policy. The transfer of the Propagation of the Faith from Paris and Lyon to Rome, initiated under Benedict XV, was only carried out (in May 1922) because Pius XI approved it, to the horror of the French. Like Van Rossum, Pius XI was not afraid to stand up to the Western powers in these post-war years: the missions increasingly pursued their own agenda and no longer passively followed the expansion of the Western colonial powers. Van Rossum's success since 1918 in upscaling missionary activity made it possible for Pius XI from the start of his pontificate to create a profile for himself as pope of the missions. He narrowly associated his pontificate with the missions, for example by marking the Holy Year of 1925 with the great World Mission Exhibition. Van Rossum celebrated Pius XI's role as pope of the missions in a publication on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the pope's priestly ordination in 1929.¹⁶

12 Coco, 'L'"Anno Terribile"', 243–244.

13 On the condemnation of Action Française, see Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l'Action française*, 263–342; P.J. Bernardi, 'Action Française Catholicism and Opposition to Vatican II's *Dignitatis Humanae*', in: *A Realist's Church*, 21–39. For the Billot affair, see Sergio Pagano, 'Dalla porpora al chiostrò. L'inflessibilità di Pio XI verso il cardinale Louis Billot', in: Jean-Pierre Delville, Marco Jacov, *La papauté contemporaine (xix–xx siècles). Hommage à chanoine Roger Aubert* (Vatican City 2009), 395–410.

14 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 29 May 1930, 12 and 14 May 1932.

15 See particularly Chapters 14 and 15. See also KDC, PMW, no. 411: J. Drehmanns to Th. Bekkers, 11 November 1923, where he writes that Pius XI had expressed his support for Van Rossum's policy to Archbishop Jan Aelen of Madras: "if the cardinal of Prop. wishes it, then it is my wish too".

16 G.M. van Rossum, 'L'opera di Pio XI per le missioni', in: *Vita e pensiero. Rassegna Italiana di cultura*, 20(1929), 392–394.

Van Rossum had emerged victorious from his conflicts with French and American bishops in the early 1920s. He had achieved much by imposing the missions and the pontifical support campaign for the missions on all Catholics as a universal duty. The numerical growth of and increased interest in indigenous priests and bishops had been facilitated by Drehmann's indefatigable efforts as promoter of the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle. Pius XI was very appreciative: his decision to proclaim Saint Therese of Lisieux the patron saint of the society in 1925 is testimony to this (he would only proclaim her the patron saint of the missions later, in 1927). The cash-strapped pope was also impressed by Drehmann's fundraising prowess, particularly in the Netherlands and France. The publication of the encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* and the consecration of the first six Chinese bishops in Rome in 1926 are further evidence of the pope's support for the policies of Propaganda Fide. As many mission territories as possible were placed under the direct jurisdiction of that congregation, which exercised it for example through the expedient of sending apostolic delegates, so that ultimately all the Catholic missions in Africa and Asia were controlled by Propaganda Fide.¹⁷

Papal endorsement of Van Rossum's apostolic journey to Scandinavia in 1923 and the decision to hold the international eucharistic congress in Amsterdam the following year were further signs of Pius XI's esteem for the Dutch cardinal. But as previous chapters have shown, this respect crumbled rapidly from the mid-1920s onwards due to various reasons. The positive effects of Van Rossum's Scandinavian voyage were neutralised by the reactions to his apologetic brochure *Aan mijne katholieke landgenoten* in 1924, which allegedly led to the retention of Norway's anti-Jesuit law in 1925. And in the aftermath of the eucharistic congress of 1924, some suspected that the legate's provocation of orthodox Calvinists had led to the termination of the Dutch legation to the Holy See, a painful setback given the Vatican's careful courting of the various states to establishing diplomatic relations.¹⁸

Also, Van Rossum's missionary successes sometimes clashed with the policies of Secretary of State Gasparri, who increasingly claimed the most sensitive issues for himself, particularly in Asia (China and British India). Van Rossum's disregard for politics when governing the Catholic missions was seen as a liability, especially with respect to episcopal appointments. The French were frequently offended by the cardinal's actions, both in the missions and concerning the pontifical mission societies, and Gasparri had to be called upon more than once to put out the flames. In 1925, the Dutch cardinal was relieved of an important collaborator, Roncalli, after Cardi-

17 See Chapters 13 and 14; Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 170.

18 See Chapter 16.3; Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 101: At the start of Benedict XV's pontificate there were 17 countries that had diplomatic relations with the Holy See, at the end there were 27, mainly through the rise of the newly created successor states after the First World War.

nal Giovanni Tacci of the Congregazione Orientale headhunted him for a position in Bulgaria.¹⁹ And he lost terrain to the Congregation for Religious in 1926, when the transfer of missionary congregations to Propaganda Fide was halted. Pius XI also intimated at the time that Van Rossum had more than enough protectorates. The pope initially refused to inaugurate the new Collegio Urbano on the Gianicolo in person, despite Van Rossum's urgent pleas. When he ultimately did turn up unannounced instead of Secretary of State Pacelli, this was interpreted as a snub to Van Rossum.²⁰ Despite all this, Van Rossum was unexpectedly appointed to a new congregation as late as 1931. The Congregation of Rites needed a new cardinal member who spoke German. Cardinals Andreas Frühwirth and Franz Ehrle, both 86, were too old, and Laurenti made sure that Van Rossum was appointed. "Something I never thought could still happen came to pass."²¹

The pope's sudden banishment of Van Rossum's private secretary from Rome in April 1930 deeply affected the cardinal. After Drehmanns's departure, Van Rossum kept in touch with his former secretary through correspondence, initially on a weekly basis but later at longer intervals.²² Drehmanns believed that Van Rossum was the real target of the measures against him; everything they wrote to each other could still be used against the cardinal. To ensure that the curia would not find out that they were still in touch, he asked Van Rossum to send his letters through the Italian rather than the Vatican post, because otherwise they "would all be seen down below in the Office". This was perhaps overly suspicious, he acknowledged, but

19 Benigni, Zanchi, *Giovanni XXIII*, 173–174.

20 Confalonieri, *Pio XI visto da vicino*, 156–157. See also Chapter 14.6. Pius XI did not perform the solemn inauguration and blessing of the new Gregorian University on 6 November 1930 either, delegating this task to Bisleti. KDC, ROSS, 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 27 April 1931. The inauguration on the Gianicolo was commemorated a year later by the unveiling of two commemorative plaques, one in the great hall of the new building and the other in the aula magna of the schools. Eight cardinals were in attendance. *Ibid.*, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 25 April 1932. Fascists reportedly obstructed the procession on this occasion, which prompted Van Rossum to issue a protest to the Italian ambassador. See AAESS, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 430a, fasc. 346 ('Udienze del S. Padre Pio XI al card. Pacelli', 1932): audience and meeting with the ambassador of Italy, 22 April 1932.

21 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 17 February 1931. According to the correspondence, the meetings of the Congregation of Rites took place *Coram Sanctissimo*, that is, in the pope's presence, on five occasions.

22 Van Rossum's first letter is dated 26 April 1930, and his last 14 August 1932, from Karlsbad. He wrote a total of 94 letters to "dear Jozef" in these years (including one or two telegrams or visiting cards). Drehmanns's first letter to Van Rossum was on 24 April 1930 from Ingenbohl; his last was dated 11 May 1932. 27 of his letters, all addressed to "Eminence and dear Father", have been preserved, but many of them are clearly missing. They were possibly destroyed, either by Van Rossum after receiving them or by Drehmanns in September 1932, when he went through Van Rossum's papers (Drehmanns once explicitly asked Van Rossum to destroy a letter, that of 3 October 1930). Van Rossum's letters to Drehmanns and three of Drehmanns's letters to Van Rossum are in KDC, ROSS, no. 338; Drehmanns's 24 other letters to Van Rossum are in the Drehmanns family archive in Roermond.

their correspondence might irritate certain people, and “then it will be held against you”.²³ Van Rossum never made the slightest criticism of the pope in any of his letters, but neither did he ever express any enthusiasm about Pius’s pontificate either.

Marchetti-Selvaggiani, the secretary of Propaganda Fide, was created a cardinal in the summer of 1930; having just lost his private secretary, Van Rossum was now also losing his official secretary: “I will have to pass through the Red Sea in this respect again”, he wrote to his fellow Redemptorist Father Lathouwers in Amsterdam.²⁴ He does not appear to have been consulted on the choice of Marchetti-Selvaggiani’s successor Carlo Salotti. “He had long been destined [for this] by the Holy Father.” The appointment was a blow for undersecretary Cesare Pecorari, who expected to get this post himself, as Van Rossum wrote to Drehmanns on 15 June 1930. Van Rossum consecrated Salotti on 6 July 1930 and introduced him to his new job until the holidays started in mid-July. It seems that the two men were on reasonably good terms.

Van Rossum had been the president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission since 1914. The goal of this commission, established in 1902 by Leo XIII, was to encourage Catholic biblical studies, but freedom of research and the use of the historical critical method had been systematically restricted under Pius X.²⁵ The commission became an instrument of control to prevent scholars from deviating from church doctrine, and this policy was continued under Pius XI.

I have not been able to discover much about the period of Van Rossum’s presidency, nor about the issues the Pontifical Biblical Commission dealt with during this time, because the various Vatican repositories appear to have lost the archive of the commission.²⁶ The little information that is available suggests that the Biblical Commission worked together closely with the Holy Office; in a number of cases, Van Rossum left it to that congregation to issue the condemnation.²⁷ The Sulpicians’ *Manuel biblique* was placed on the Index in 1928,²⁸ and in the same year, Van Rossum

23 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 4 June 1930.

24 ENK, ANPR, no. 8538: W. van Rossum to M. Lathouwers, 13 June 1930.

25 See Chapters 7.3 and 11.4.

26 See Chapter 12.1; Montagnes, ‘La question biblique au temps de Pie XI’, 256: the archives of “the Biblical Commission remain locked away in the cabinets of the Holy Office”. See also KDC, ROSS, no. 72: C. Salotti to J. Drehmanns, 18 April 1934. Salotti mentioned that the memorandums which the cardinal wrote in his own hand for the Biblical Commission were probably included in a thick pack of paper that he remembered handing over to the commission.

27 Including the issue concerning the Sulpician Jules Touzard: ADDF, SO, *Censurae Librorum* 1920, no. 2: Parigi. Commissione Biblica. Censura di due articoli di riviste cattoliche nei quali viene snaturato il concetto della autenticità mosaica del Pentateuco; W. van Rossum to Merry del Val, 8 February 1920. The articles were condemned by the Holy Office on 20 April 1920.

28 AAS, 19(1923), 615–619, with a letter by Merry del Val; cf. Montagnes, ‘La question biblique au temps de Pie XI’, 266, note 51.

examined the theory of evolution and Henry de Dorlodot's work on Darwin.²⁹ The cardinal did not budge from the view he had published in 1888 that the world was created in six literal days of 24 hours each.³⁰ A circular letter from the Holy Office was issued on 5 May 1924 (not published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*) instructing the superiors general of religious institutes to submit teaching material to Rome for approval first and not to teach anything on exegetics that contradicted official doctrine.³¹

Deviating opinions and 'modern' methods of research remained suspect under Van Rossum's presidency. It was difficult for exegetes to do scholarly research and publish results that were at odds with official church teaching. As we have seen before, various exegetes came under fire, including, most famously, the Dominican Marie-Joseph Lagrange, director of the Biblical Institute in Jerusalem. Van Rossum was very critical of Lagrange and his ally Hummelauer. He feared that their influence in Germany was great, as he told the then nuncio Pacelli in 1919, which exposed the students to the "virus of exegetical modernism".³²

In his study of the biblical scholar Genocchi, Turvasi describes a conversation that Lagrange and Van Rossum had in Rome on 4 October 1918, in which the cardinal explained his views. Lagrange asked him what his objections were against the Dominicans in Jerusalem and their institute and journal.³³ The fundamental problem, Van Rossum replied, was that they did not take the guidelines of the Holy See as the basis for their work and that they did not defend the decisions of the Biblical Commission. For him, the doctrinal decrees of the Pontifical Biblical Commission were the foundation for and the conservative framework within which exegetical studies could and should be conducted. The fact that this interfered with scholarly research did not strike Van Rossum as problematic: on the contrary, it simply pointed scholars in the right direction. Lagrange countered that the decisions in question

29 ADDF, 50, *Censurae Librorum* 904/1923, De opera Henrici de Dorlodot: Le Darwinisme ... Voto sull'opera di Henry de Dorlodot del Card. Van Rossum e di J. B. Frey; W. van Rossum to [anon.], 9 November 1923. The accompanying report condemned de Dorlodot's work, which went further than Darwin's.

30 See also Chapter 4.3 and Guglielmo van Rossum, *Meditazioni per le Domeniche dell'Avvento e per la novena del S. Natale* (Rome 1930), 4, which shows that he still believed that the world had been created four thousand years before Christ.

31 Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie XI', 268. See also the *Enchiridion biblicum. Documenta ecclesiastica Sacram Scripturam spectantia*, Third edition, Naples-Rome 1956.

32 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1919: E. Pacelli, nuncio in Munich, to W. van Rossum, 25 March 1919: accompanied by a memorandum by L. Fonck s. j., 'Le condizioni degli studi biblici specialmente nella Germania'; W. van Rossum to E. Pacelli, 20 May 1919. See also Chapter 12.1.

33 The conversation was recorded in written notes by Van Rossum then in the archive of the Biblical Commission, consulted by Turvasi and quoted in Turvasi, *Giovanni Genocchi e la controversa modernista*, 363–365, and summarised by Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie XI'. M. J. Lagrange himself does not mention it in his memoirs, but these go no further than 1913, Lagrange, *Le Père Lagrange*.

were not infallible doctrines of the faith. Van Rossum agreed, but insisted that they were teachings of the Holy See which scholars had to accept like everyone else.

This stance by the Biblical Commission encouraged self-censorship and lethargy: Lagrange concluded in 1934 that there had been no development in Catholic exegesis in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁴ The French historian Bernard Montagnes has similarly argued that the Pontifical Biblical Commission did little or nothing between the publication of Benedict xv's encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* on 15 September 1920 and Pius xii's encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* on 22 August 1943. And *Spiritus Paraclitus* simply confirmed the existing policy of condemning the historical critical method and defending the divine authorship of Scripture.³⁵

The Pontifical Biblical Commission's lack of influence may have resulted in part from its membership. Whereas Italians dominated all other congregations and commissions of the curia, this commission of cardinals was made up only of non-Italians in 1922. Van Rossum was the chair and Merry del Val and the British Benedictine Cardinal Francis Aidan Gasquet (1846–1929) were the members. Two further *stranieri* were added to the commission in 1923: the French Jesuit Billot and the German Jesuit Franz Ehrle (1845–1934), a specialist in medieval theology. The secretary of the commission was also a foreigner. Laurent Janssens (1855–1925), a Belgian Benedictine who had been there since the beginning, was succeeded in 1925 by the French Spiritan Jean-Baptiste Frey, who retained this post until 1939. The reason for this foreign domination was possibly that debate about historical exegesis existed mainly outside Italy, for example in Germany and France, due in part to the influence of Protestant biblical studies.

The inertia of the Biblical Commission under Pius xi also resulted from this pope's reluctance to burn his fingers on the issue of historical critical exegesis. According to the later Cardinal Tisserant, Pius xi told him in 1936 that he regarded the biblical question as too complex to deal with during his pontificate: he had decided to leave it to his successor.³⁶

During the war years, Van Rossum – with Benedict xv's support – had successfully resisted attempts by the new general of the Jesuits, Włodzimierz Ledóchowski (1915–1942), to give the Rome-based, Jesuit-led Pontifical Biblical Institute or Bibli-

34 Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie xi', 263–264.

35 *Ibid.*, 255–256. See also Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 104–106. According to the biblical scholar Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 17 Van Rossum's contribution to the drafting of various decrees and of the encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* was more that of a theologian than that of a Scripture scholar.

36 Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie xi', 255; Jean Guittou, *Un siècle, une vie* (Paris 1988), 194–195. Pius xi did however set a new course: he appointed Tisserant, a friend of Lagrange's, as the new president of the commission in 1938, and Jacques Vosté O.P., a student of Lagrange's, as its secretary in 1939.

cum a greater say over policy and over the awarding of its doctoral degrees, tasks that belonged to the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Cardinal Bisleti similarly tried to encroach upon the commission's powers: as prefect of the Congregation for Seminaries and Universities he sought to align the Pontifical Biblical Commission's matriculation requirements with those of the other theological institutions. Van Rossum defended the commission's policy on the basis of the 1916 papal letter *Cum Biblia Sacra*, which he had in fact drafted himself.³⁷ But Bisleti succeeded in increasing his own influence, as he was made an *ex officio* member of the Biblical Commission on 24 September 1927, the first Italian member.³⁸

Pius XI radically curbed the Pontifical Biblical Commission's power over the Pontifical Biblical Institute in 1928, in a manner that showed little respect for Van Rossum. Giuseppe Pizzardo, substitute of the Secretariat of State, wrote to Van Rossum on 28 September 1928 that Pius XI had forgotten to tell him some important news at his last audience. As the pope did not want the cardinal to hear it from the press or the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, he had instructed Pizzardo to tell him that now the opening of the new Jesuit Gregorian University was approaching, the pope felt that this university should also have departments of Oriental and biblical studies. He had decided therefore that the existing Oriental Institute and the Biblical Institute would in future be attached to the Gregorian University. The Biblicum was to receive the right to award the higher academic degrees and the Biblical Commission's authority over the Biblicum would be abrogated.³⁹ It was a painful defeat for Van Rossum at Pius XI's hands.⁴⁰

3 Shifting alliances

Van Rossum's declining influence cannot be ascribed entirely to the unfortunate outcome of his abovementioned activities on the foreign stage. From the beginning of Pius XI's pontificate, the influence of the antimodernist or integralist faction within the curia was on the wane, and that of those who sought a compromise with Mussolini was on the rise.

37 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 1, folder 1919: memorandum [by Van Rossum, after 1924] on the conditions for access to biblical studies, in response to the 'punto di vista di Sua Eminenza il Cardinale Bisleti' that precedes it. See also Chapter 12.1.

38 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, Protocollo 1927, nos. 65002, 65035, 65087. On Bisleti, see also Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie XI', 258–259, note 18. The Frenchman Alexis Lépicié and Eugenio Pacelli were appointed members in 1932, and Bisleti succeeded Van Rossum as president of the commission in the same year.

39 ASPF, *Carte Van Rossum*, scat. 2: memorandum by G. Pizzardo for W. van Rossum, on the instructions of Pius XI, 28 September 1928.

40 Montagnes, 'La question biblique au temps de Pie XI', 258–260; Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 133–134.

Van Rossum's enduring espousal of integralism was evident for instance in his support for his Belgian confrere Auguste Philippe.⁴¹ In 1919, this Redemptorist founded the Ligue Apostolique in France, an organisation that strove to secure a more prominent place for the Catholic faith in society and that fought against the separation of church and state. Van Rossum welcomed the establishment of the Ligue by sending him a fervent letter of recommendation.⁴² The movement was not initially suspect, although its members were very much like the old integralists as regards orthodoxy and zeal. But the Ligue Apostolique came under increasing fire during the 1920s due to its links with Maurras's Action Française. Action Française had been condemned in 1914, but Pius X had never published this decision.⁴³ Pius XI made the condemnation public in 1926 in an attempt to bring about a rapprochement with the French Republic, causing great uproar and resistance among French Catholics.⁴⁴ The Ligue Apostolique's youth organisation, the Chevaliers de Saint-Michel, sympathised with Maurras's movement and even had formal ties with it. Philippe yielded to pressure in 1926 and officially distanced himself from Action Française, but the suspicions of close links remained.⁴⁵

The accusations against Philippe made Van Rossum look suspicious by association. On 19 October 1927, the cardinal wrote an enthusiastic letter about a 'Semaine catholique' that Philippe was planning to organise, expressing delight that it would be taking a stand against the perfidious plans of the enemies of the church and of the wellbeing of the people, enemies who were "abusing" the principles of the French

41 His contacts with the Katholische Internationale Presse-Agentur (KIPA, Catholic International Press Agency) from Fribourg in Switzerland similarly point in this direction. Its initiator, the antimodernist layman Dr. Ferd. Rüegg, had been in touch with Van Rossum and Drehmanns since 1920, including about a contract and the publication *Ecclesiastica*. See KDC, ROSS, no. 10. The extensive correspondence shows that KIPA keenly felt the competition of Agentia Fides, which fell directly under Propaganda Fide, despite Van Rossum's sympathy for KIPA and his support for cooperation between the two agencies (F. Rüegg to W. van Rossum, 18 and 19 December 1927). ENK, ANPR, no. 7696, also contains letters by Rüegg to Drehmanns, the last one dated 27 November 1932.

42 A. Philippe, *A Dieu et à son Christ la Société et les Nations! Les premiers fondements de l'Ordre social. Ligue apostolique*, Paris [1920]. Van Rossum's and Billot's letters of recommendation preceded those by other cardinals and bishops and ran to two and three pages respectively; other cardinals and bishops had sent only a few lines (154–155).

43 On Van Rossum's role in this, see Chapter 8.5.

44 On the backgrounds, see Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 96–97, 233–235. Prévotat, *Les catholiques et l'Action française*, 263–342, 523–530 gives a detailed discussion of Pius XI's political and religious motives for condemning Action Française. This monarchist movement was hostile to the French republic, whereas the Vatican was attempting to normalise its relations with the French government, for instance through the appointment of the nuncio Bonaventura Cerretti in Paris in May 1921 (there had been no nuncio between 1904 and 1921) and the canonisation of Joan of Arc in 1920.

45 Daniele Menozzi, 'La dottrina del regno sociale di Cristo tra autoritarismo e totalitarismo', in: Daniele Menozzi, Renato Moro (ed.), *Cattolicesimo e totalitarismo. Chiese e culture religiose tra le due guerre mondiali (Italia, Spagna, Francia)* (Brescia 2004), 17–55.

Revolution to alienate the state from the true principles of the Gospel. Philippe had the letter published in his journal *Ligue apostolique du Christ-Roi et des nations* (on 11 November 1927).⁴⁶ Two months later, *L'Année politique, française et étrangère* carried an alarmed article by Louis Canet, counsellor for religious affairs in the French ministry of foreign affairs, who quoted extensively from Van Rossum's letter and drew parallels between integralism and the 'maurrassisme' of Action Française. How could it be, Canet wrote, that just after Billot had been removed from the Sacred College, his former Dutch colleague Van Rossum was supporting and congratulating his brazen confrere Philippe? What right did this "Gallophobe" prelate have to interfere in French affairs?⁴⁷

The article angered Gasparri, who summoned Van Rossum to explain himself. According to Van Rossum, his letter to Philippe had been a private letter and it referred to Russia, not France; moreover, Philippe was an "excellent religious" and certainly no adherent of Maurras's. Gasparri told the French ambassador that Van Rossum's private comments had had a general purport and were not directed against the French government, and that Van Rossum had promised that such misunderstandings would not occur again.⁴⁸

The superior general, Murray, realised that this affair was beginning to tarnish the Redemptorists' reputation with the pope and the curia, and instructed Philippe to write an article clearly distancing himself from Action Française.⁴⁹ But Philippe instead protested to the nuncio, Maglione, against the accusations of integralism that had been made against him and the cardinal.⁵⁰ This appears to have been the end of this unfortunate affair for Van Rossum.

The integralist faction had had some leeway during Benedict XV's pontificate, as the Sodalitium Pianum was not banned until 1921. The ban prompted Benigni to defend his organisation and modus operandi in a letter to Cardinal Donato Sbarretti.⁵¹ According to Benigni, the hundred or so members of 'La Sapinière' had only one

46 AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and other Redemptorists*: W. van Rossum to A. Philippe, 19 October 1927.

47 KADOC, *Archive of the North Belgian province of the Redemptorists*, no. 339: Handwritten copy of an article by Nicolas Fontaine [= Louis Canet] under the title 'St. Siège. Action Française et "Catholiques intégraux"', in: *L'année politique française et étrangère*, 3(1928), no. 1, January 1928, 1–88. Using the same pseudonym, Canet also published N. Fontaine, *Saint-Siège, Action Française et catholiques intégraux* (Paris 1928), addressing the close links between Van Rossum and his confrere Philippe on 109–110, 195.

48 AAEES, *IV Periodo, Francia*, pos. 682, fasc. 238, f 53: W. van Rossum to P. Gasparri, 2 February 1928; f 51: P. Gasparri to the French ambassador to the Holy See, 3 February 1928.

49 KADOC, *Archive of the North Belgian province of the Redemptorists*, no. 339: F. ter Haar, consultor general, to the provincial superior of Belgium, 7 April 1928.

50 AAV, ANP, b. 488, fasc. 965 (Ligue Apostolique): A. Philippe to the nuncio, L. Maglione, 25 March 1928.

51 AAV, *Fondo Benigni*, no. 58, f 146–156: U. Benigni to Cardinal Sbarretti, prefect of the Congregation of the Council, 13 November 1921. The letter has been published in Poulat, *Intégrisme et catholicisme intégral*, 578–586.

wish, to serve the church and the pope behind the scenes.⁵² That is why they had sent almost daily reports and press releases to Cardinals Vives y Tutó, De Lai and Merry del Val about certain individuals and about the general state of the church. Van Rossum also received these messages from time to time: “having spoken to him about the Sodalitium, I [Benigni] sometimes sent him new information that could be of use to him in the exercise of his high office”.⁵³ Benigni also mentioned Laurenti, then secretary of Propaganda, as a recipient of his information.

The letters that Benigni wrote to Van Rossum that have been preserved in the *Fondo Benigni* in the Vatican Apostolic Archive date from the years 1919 to 1921.⁵⁴ Although Benedict disapproved of this ‘internal intelligence service’, Benigni continued to contact Van Rossum. The work of the historian Fiorentino, based on the reports of fascist spies in the Vatican, shows that Benigni remained in touch with the integralists even under Pius XI. But Benigni had begun to work for the fascists probably around 1923, and the integralists were inveterate opponents of this ideology.⁵⁵

Italian fascism emerged in 1919 in reaction to the rise of socialism and the fear of the Bolshevik revolutions in surrounding countries. Mussolini and 35 other fascists were elected to parliament in 1921, and Mussolini became prime minister after the March on Rome in October 1922. He sought legitimacy for his position from the Catholic church by raising clerical salaries, freeing up three million lire to repair churches, reintroducing crucifixes in classrooms, courtrooms and the Coliseum, and bailing out the Catholic Banco di Roma. He also took measures against Freema-

52 *Ibid.*, 414, 465, 552. The documents from the AAV support Benigni’s statements.

53 *Ibid.*, 581.

54 See AAV, *Fondo Benigni*, no. 49, f 383–384: U. Benigni to W. van Rossum, 30 July 1919, with information about the conflict on trade unions in Germany. He also sent him an Italian version of a black book on the Catholic church in Germany on 25 January 1920 (f 294–329), suggesting that it might interest the Holy Office or should be forwarded to “Pius X’s secretary of state”, Merry del Val (f 425); AAV, *Fondo Benigni*, no. 58: on 8 February 1921, Benigni sent him information containing conjectures about a restoration of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and France. It is not known what, if anything, Van Rossum did with this information, or whether he ever wrote to Benigni himself. The *Fondo Benigni*, no. 50, f 515, does contain a visitor’s card of Van Rossum’s addressed to Benigni dated 24 December 1920, thanking him for his Christmas greetings. He prayed that the Lord would bless Benigni’s work. AAV, *Fondo Benigni*, no. 58, f 143–145: ‘Le “mémoire Mourret” contre la Ligue Saint Pie V. Une société secrète’, does claim that the Cardinals Amette, Piffil, Mercier and Van Rossum had been “turned down” for ‘La Sapinière’: “His Eminence Cardinal Van Rossum is somewhat suspected of being favourable to Cologne.” See also Chapter 8.5.

55 Carlo M. Fiorentino, *All’ombra di Pietro. La Chiesa Cattolica e lo spionaggio fascista in Vaticano, 1929–1939* (Florence 1999), 175 and 244–245 portrays the curia as a snake pit. The reports gave a rather lurid description of relations within the curia for the benefit of Mussolini and his regime. A report for the political police dated October 1931 stated that Benigni was the grey eminence behind an international integralist party to be founded under the leadership of the curial Cardinal Tommaso Boggiani (1863–1942), who reportedly supported right-wing dictatorships and movements in Italy, Germany, France and Spain.

sonry and the anticlerical press, and persuaded his wife Rachele to receive baptism, marry him in church and have their first children christened.⁵⁶

Benedict xv had distanced himself from the fascists, but there was an influential group in the curia under Pius xi that saw many advantages to cooperation with the new regime.⁵⁷ First and foremost there was the opportunity to solve the Roman Question, which had arisen in 1870 when the Papal States were incorporated into Italy and the pope became the ‘prisoner of the Vatican’ due to his loss of territory and secular political status. A second important motive for the Vatican was that it offered a solution for the church’s dire financial situation.⁵⁸

Negotiations between Mussolini and the Vatican took place between 1926 and 1929 and resulted on 11 February 1929 in the signing of the Lateran Treaties by the secretary of state, Gasparri, and Mussolini, who thus effected the ‘Conciliazione’, the reconciliation between the Holy See and Italy. The fascists had had little confidence in Gasparri, whom they regarded as uninclined to compromise. The Vatican’s lawyer Francesco Pacelli, Eugenio’s brother, played an important role in preparing the way for the treaties, particularly with regard to the financial settlement.⁵⁹

The Lateran Treaties encompassed a treaty that established the sovereign state of Vatican City (with a surface of 44 hectares and endowed with full diplomatic rights), a financial settlement (750 million lire and 1 billion in state bonds) in compensation for the territory lost in 1870, and a concordat. The concordat guaranteed the teaching of Catholic religious education at primary and secondary schools, as well the freedom of the Catholic Action lay movement – one of the main priorities of Pius xi’s pontificate – to spread and implement the Catholic principles of faith, as long as it did not encroach on politics and was governed directly by the hierarchy of the church.⁶⁰ Pius xi was very pleased with the treaties and called Mussolini a man of Providence and a “Defender of the Faith”.⁶¹

But the signing of the treaties also provoked international criticism. It effectively implied that the Catholic church recognised the legitimacy of fascism as an acceptable ideology.⁶² Opinions within the curia were divided. The new Italian ambassador

56 Clark, *Modern Italy 1871–1995*, 254–255.

57 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 91–96.

58 Pollard, *Money and the Rise of the Modern Papacy*, 132–151.

59 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 140–142.

60 Pius xi’s first encyclical, *Ubi Arcano Dei Consilio* (Dec. 1922), was on Catholic Action. Together with his endeavours to stimulate devotion to Christ the King in *Quas Primas* (1925), these ideas formed the basis of the pope’s theocratic thought. The Catholic laity played an important role in this: laypeople were to regard Christ as their king both in the religious and in the politico-societal sphere. Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 13, 134–135 points out that the concept of Catholic Action had first been developed by Pius x.

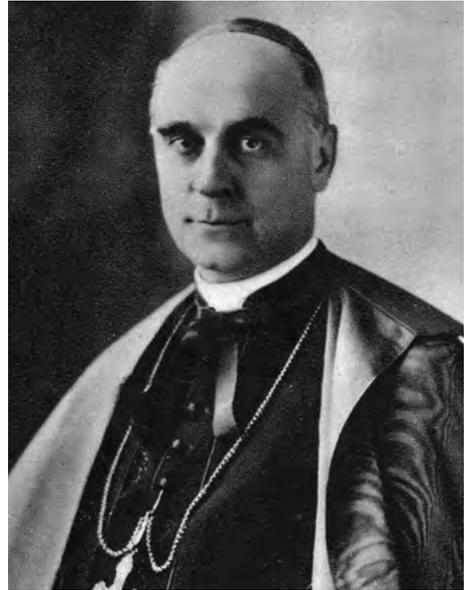
61 Clark, *Modern Italy 1871–1995*, 254–255.

62 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 151–153.

to the Holy See, de Vecchi di Val Cismon, told Mussolini that there was a curial party that was strongly critical of the 'conciliazione' and secretly campaigned against it.⁶³ Fiorentino similarly mentions the continued presence of an 'integralist faction' within the curia, under the leadership of Merry del Val, which was hostile to the Lateran Treaties. In addition to Merry del Val, he regarded Nicola Canali, assessor of the Holy Office, and Pompilj as belonging to this party.⁶⁴

Pompilj publicly expressed strong criticism of fascism and the pope's policies. According to Fiorentino, this prompted Pius XI in 1929 to seek to replace him as vicar of Rome. When this proved impossible, he supposedly tried to make life difficult for him by appointing Marchetti-Selvaggiani as his substitute, and making him president of the newly reorganised Society for the Preservation of the Faith in Rome in 1930, a post that Pompilj had previously occupied for many years.⁶⁵ As this society was now no longer a commission of cardinals, the reorganisation similarly brought Van Rossum's decade-long involvement to an end.⁶⁶

Like the other old integralists, Van Rossum opposed the negotiations with Mussolini. Although he eagerly hoped for a solution to the Roman Question, he regarded any compromise with a political regime that restricted the church's freedom of action as undesirable. In 1932, when Van



Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val



Cardinal Gaetano De Lai

⁶³ Setta (ed.), *Tra Papa, Duce e Re*, 13–15.

⁶⁴ Fiorentino, *All'ombra di Pietro*, 21–27, 170.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 64, 132–138. On relations between Pius XI and Pompilj, see also Coco, 'L'Anno Terribile', 188–190.

⁶⁶ KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 30 November 1931.

Rossum was seated beside Baudrillart at a dinner in Copenhagen on the occasion of the Scandinavian eucharistic congress, he told this French prelate that he thought Mussolini was a “complete infidel”.⁶⁷

Several important changes took place in the College of Cardinals and in the higher echelons of the curia in the 1930s. Most importantly, the secretary of state, Gasparri, was side-lined. According to Fiorentino, the influence of the old integralists was on the rise after the ‘conciliazione’, and rumours were afloat that Merry del Val would return to his old post.⁶⁸ But in fact, Eugenio Pacelli was appointed Gasparri’s successor on 7 February 1930. Merry del Val suddenly died a few weeks later, on 26 February 1930. It was not easy to find someone to succeed him in his position in the Holy Office: the intended candidate, Sbarretti, initially declined, as Van Rossum wrote to Drehmanns. Giulio Serafini was then regarded as a likely alternative, but Sbarretti eventually accepted a few months later: “it was prepared diplom[atically]”, Van Rossum told Drehmanns rather vaguely on 24 June 1930.

Then Pius XI created three new cardinals for the curia in the consistory of 30 June 1930: Giulio Serafini, the Carmelite Raffaele Rossi and Marchetti-Selvaggiani, a boyhood friend of Pacelli’s – all three Italians. As Van Rossum’s correspondence shows, there was a great deal of speculation as to the appointments they would be given, all the more so when Vincenzo Vannutelli died unexpectedly in July 1930. “He imprudently walked to the sea from the Cathedr[al] in Ostia (1 km) in episc[opal] vestments with crozier and mitre to bless the seas, and back again. The result was that he got a sunstroke which carried him to his grave. (...) We have assuredly lost in him a most remarkable figure in the Sacred College.”⁶⁹

On 4 July 1930, Sbarretti was appointed head of the Holy Office, Rossi as prefect of the Consistory and Serafini as prefect of the Congregation of the Council. As we have seen, Marchetti-Selvaggiani was made president of the Opera Pontificia per la Preservazione della Fede e per la provvista di nuove parrocchie in Roma on 5 August. The new society was given greater resources to ward off the competition of Protestant groups. Due to this position, Marchetti-Selvaggiani was received in audience by the pope twice a week, a privilege never afforded to his predecessor Pompilj.

67 Christophe (éd.), *Les carnets du cardinal Baudrillart*, vol. 6: 1932–1935, 256–257, 18 August 1932: “Cardinal Van Rossum thinks that Mussolini will wage war as soon as he can to obtain colonies, particularly in North Africa.” E. Poulat, *Catholicisme, démocratie et socialisme. Le mouvement catholique et Mgr Benigni de la naissance du socialisme à la victoire du fascisme* (Paris 1977) does not mention Van Rossum’s name once. Fascist groups in Belgium and the Netherlands unsuccessfully sought Van Rossum’s approval for their ideas. See L.M.H. Joosten, *Katholieken en fascisme in Nederland 1920–1940* (Hilversum/Antwerp 1964), 99, and A.W. Willemsen, *Het Vlaams-nationalisme. De geschiedenis van de jaren 1914–1940* (Utrecht 1969), 105.

68 Fiorentino, *All’ombra di Pietro*, 86, 140, 169–175, 242–243.

69 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 12 July 1930.

After De Lai's death in 1928 and Merry del Val's in 1930, the third old integralist Pompij died on 8 May 1931, leaving Van Rossum as the only surviving member of the old antimodernist group. It is difficult to say whether this group had many allies among the remaining cardinals of the curia, beside probably Laurenti, who sometimes called on Van Rossum at home in the evening.⁷⁰ Drehmanns regarded Alexis Lépicier, former consultor of Propaganda Fide, consecrated bishop by Van Rossum in 1924 and prefect of the Religious since 1928, Michele Lega, prefect of the Congregation of Rites, and Sbarretti as cardinals who "were on the right way".⁷¹ Van Rossum praised Salotti in his letters to Drehmanns, but perhaps mainly because he was a devotee of the Dutch Redemptorist Petrus Donders, whose cause for beatification was underway.⁷²

Van Rossum's relations with cardinals such as Lauri, Rossi, Cerretti – who incidentally also took the baths in Karlsbad – Gasparri, Frühwirth and Pacelli were mainly professional. Bisleti and Sincero of the Orientale did not merit any mention at all in Van Rossum's correspondence with Drehmanns. He does not appear to have had many personal ties with the new, up-and-coming generation of prelates and cardinals of the curia. They were almost all Italian: Marchetti-Selvaggiani, Francesco Borgongini Duca, Pizzardo, Salotti, Tedeschini, Tardini, Canali, Costantini, Alfredo Ottaviani. According to Fiorentino, several of them were strong opponents of the fascist regime, including Pizzardo, Salotti and – at least until 1930 – Marchetti-Selvaggiani, while others, like Costantini and Laurenti, were reputedly supporters of 'conciliazione'.⁷³ The reports of fascist informers in the Vatican mention Van Rossum only in passing, although they did regard him as Borgongini Duca's protector.⁷⁴

Marchetti-Selvaggiani became a member of Propaganda Fide in 1930 (and vicar of Rome a year later), but Van Rossum does not appear to have had much further contact with him. The newly appointed cardinal extended Van Rossum the courtesy

70 Menozzi, Moro, 'La dottrina del regno sociale di Cristo', 24, mentions Van Rossum's support for the Société du règne social, led by Camillo Laurenti after the First World War. This society campaigned for the cult of Christ the King as an extension of that of the Sacred Heart, had a strong focus on the missions and was approved in September 1927. Letters of congratulation were received from Vico, Van Rossum, Sbarretti, Frühwirth and Bonzano; Cerretti was the protector of the archconfraternity.

71 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 3 October 1930.

72 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 24 October and 5 November 1931. Petrus Donders (1809–1887) was declared venerable in 1913 at the start of his cause for beatification, thanks in particular to Van Rossum's intervention; see Parish archive of Kapel in 't Zand, *Special Archive of O.L.V. in 't Zand*, A.pl.2, B 12 (folder 2) b: W. van Rossum to J. Kronenburg, 7 September 1915. Donders was canonised in 1982.

73 *I Documenti diplomatici italiani. Settima serie 1922–1935*, vol. 9: 15 aprile – 31 dicembre 1930 (Rome 1975), 5–7: C. De Vecchi, Italian ambassador to the Holy See, to D. Grandi, minister of foreign affairs, 25 April 1930, calls Marchetti-Selvaggiani an anti-fascist, who opposed the Italian government in its attempt to intensify the missions and "Catholic propaganda" in Eritrea; he tried to prevent religion from being used as an imperialist instrument.

74 Fiorentino, *All'ombra di Pietro*, 33, 90–91, 141–145, 167, 210–215, 225–227, 242–243.

of lending him his car when Van Rossum's own vehicle broke down once again on 6 July 1930 – on this occasion, the incompetent driver had caused an engine fire – leaving the prefect stranded by the wayside. Marchetti-Selvaggiani had been out touring with the American prelate Considine, but Van Rossum did not know how his benefactor had subsequently returned home himself.⁷⁵

Van Rossum once had a serious clash with the influential prelate Giuseppe Pizzardo, the head of Catholic Action.⁷⁶ Pizzardo wanted to house one of his initiatives – for “late vocations” – on the top floor of the offices of Propaganda, and had secured the permission of Marchetti-Selvaggiani (then still the secretary) for this. But Van Rossum was determined to keep him out of the palazzo on Piazza di Spagna, even if this were to precipitate “another intervention from on high”. He did not want to lose his own freedom or have anyone looking over his shoulder: “I thought: once they're in, I won't be able to get rid of them anymore.”⁷⁷

Van Rossum was a true workhorse. His workdays started at four in the morning and ended at ten at night, and not a minute was wasted – he had a Calvinist work ethic.⁷⁸ He tried never to miss any of the meetings of the dicasteries of which he was a member (usually scheduled from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm), and normally prepared his briefs thoroughly. This was one of the keys to the great influence he exercised. Naturally, he did this for the general congregations of Propaganda Fide, but he seldom missed other meetings either: of the Holy Office (weekly), the Orientale, Universities and Seminaries and Rites (also weekly since 1931), and the irregular mixed congregations of Propaganda Fide and Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari on politically sensitive issues. Moreover, every week he attended the *congresso* for the day-to-day management of Propaganda business, which was moved from Tuesdays to Fridays in 1931 because it clashed with the meetings of the Congregation of Rites. Van Rossum did not refer to meetings of the Congregation for Religious in his letters to Drehmanns, even though he did sometimes mention matters that fell within the business of this congregation, nor did he write about those of the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

The archive of the Holy Office shows that Van Rossum almost never missed any of this congregation's meetings. This was unusual, as the other cardinal members were often absent, sometimes leaving Van Rossum and only two other members to

75 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 7 July 1930.

76 G. Pizzardo was appointed secretary of Affari Straordinari and head of Catholic Action in 1929. In this last capacity, he became a strong opponent of the fascist regime. According to Fiorentino, *All'ombra di Pietro*, 86–90, the fascists regarded him as the strong man behind the pope between 1925 and his creation as a cardinal in 1937, and as an important and influential advisor of Pius XI. He was reputedly a sworn enemy of Borgogini Duca, who himself was regarded as a protégé of Van Rossum's.

77 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 7 July 1930.

78 See also Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 5–8.

deal with the business. In his correspondence, Van Rossum frequently mentioned the illnesses to which his colleagues were prone: Ehrle had gone blind, Scapinelli had health problems and had “to carry a machine”,⁷⁹ Sbarretti was sick for months, suffered a lot of pain and was dependent on opium⁸⁰ and Laurenti had advanced diabetes and above all suffered “internally, scruples etc. The result is that he is anxious about everything and sees difficulties where there are none.”⁸¹ Although he often expressed the fear that these cardinals were not long for this world, in fact they all survived Van Rossum.

The cardinals’ tendency to call in sick did mean that Van Rossum’s workload was greater, as he frequently had to take over the task of presenting cases in the plenary meetings of the congregations.⁸² After the consistory of 30 June 1930, no new cardinals were created until 13 March 1933.⁸³ Sbarretti’s health in particular gave rise to concern, possibly because his prolonged absences from the Holy Office in 1930, 1931 and 1932 led to the postponement of urgent business. Van Rossum’s letters to Drehmanns show that he regularly went to visit Sbarretti or Scapinelli on their sickbeds after attending sessions; they lived in apartments in the palazzo of the Holy Office.

Van Rossum also used these sessions to transact business of his own with other members. In November 1930, he asked the major penitentiary, Cardinal Lauri, to petition the pope to take an accommodating, rather than a strictly bureaucratic, approach to a certain issue.⁸⁴ And Van Rossum managed to persuade Lauri to grant Drehmanns certain privileges even after his banishment, such as that of saying Mass on Holy Thursday. In March 1931, he had Salotti ask the pope for an honorary award for a Dutch businessman (Kreymborg) who was a benefactor of the missions.⁸⁵ His motive for making petitions to the pope through these other cardinals was possibly that he thought they stood a better chance of success with Pius XI than he did. But it was an old habit of his: as we have seen, he was happy as president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission to leave the issuing of condemnations to the Holy Office and his colleague Merry del Val. He himself preferred to stay behind the scenes. He had learned that he could avoid criticism and opposition as a *straniero* by flying under the radar. This may be one explanation for his relatively low profile in the historiography of the curia.

79 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 30 May 1932.

80 *Ibid.*, 7 November 1930.

81 *Ibid.*, 24 October 1931.

82 *Ibid.*, 11 January 1932.

83 The College of Cardinals in 1932 comprised 26 Italians and 28 non-Italians. Of the 54 cardinals, 24 lived in Rome. One had been created by Leo XIII, eight by Pius X – Van Rossum’s group – 14 by Benedict XV and 31 by Pius XI. Martin, *Les cardinaux et la curie*, 24–25.

84 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 7 November 1932.

85 *Ibid.*, 4 March 1931.

There were several cases before the Holy Office in these last years that preoccupied Van Rossum.⁸⁶ The encyclical *Casti Connubii* on matrimony was published on 31 December 1930. This addressed the hotly debated issues of eugenics and state intervention through forced sterilisation and abortion. The pope condemned these practices by contrasting them with Catholic moral teaching and defending the inalienable right of individuals and families to privacy.⁸⁷ Van Rossum wrote to Drehmanns on 28 January 1931 that he had just attended a “very busy meeting” at the Holy Office, which concluded a hectic and difficult period, and he hoped that he “could [now] catch my breath again”. But eugenics were once again on the agenda of a meeting of the consultors of the Holy Office a fortnight later. The following month, Canali told the pope that all had agreed to a draft composed by Van Rossum. On the same occasion, the pope set guidelines on how and when seminarians were to be taught about moral questions relating to matrimony. These rules would be binding on both secular and religious seminaries; the Congregation of Studies had to implement them too.⁸⁸

Van Rossum did not enjoy ceremonial public appearances. Lengthy solemn sessions with the pope and the entire College of Cardinals in full state, such as at the canonisations of June 1930, held few charms for him. He complained to Drehmanns about long consistory sessions and about losing precious time in honour of “Saint Burocratius”.⁸⁹ This can perhaps explain why, as soon as Salotti became secretary of Propaganda, the cardinal began to send his new colleague to meetings that did not suit him or he did not feel like going to, including Vannutelli’s funeral and even papal audiences. He may have put a little too much work on Salotti’s shoulders, because in November 1930 Van Rossum reported that the secretary was ill and suffering from fatigue, so that his own workload had doubled.⁹⁰

Van Rossum’s position in the College of Cardinals was strong when Pius XI was elected pope in 1922. As prefect of Propaganda Fide, he was one of the most influential cardinals, and he had a network of friendly colleagues, including De Lai, Merry

86 ADF, SO, *Decreta*, mentions an extraordinary session on Montecassino on 24 December 1930, attended by P. Gasparri, Van Rossum, Frühwirth, Lauri, Lépicier and Bisleti.

87 On the Catholic church’s attitude to eugenics and A. Gemelli O.F.M.’s notions of ‘Catholic eugenics’ during the interwar years, see Marius Turda, Aaron Gillette, *Latin Eugenics in Comparative Perspective* (London/New York 2014), 112–122. Many countries at the time permitted the forcible sterilisation of physically or mentally handicapped people. See also J. Pollard, ‘The Unpublished Encyclicals of the Pontificate of Pope Pius XI: *De Ecclesia Christi*, 1931’, in: *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 38(2017), 813–866, at 824.

88 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 28 January 1931; ADF, SO, *Decreta* 1931: 9 February 1931; audience on 12 March 1931.

89 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 21 May 1930.

90 *Ibid.*, 19 December 1930.

del Val and Pompilj, to fall back on. Although Van Rossum in all likelihood did not vote for Achille Ratti, the new pope retained him as prefect and supported his plans for the centralisation of the missions and the accompanying fundraising campaign. These plans were so successful that Pius XI was able to promote the missions as one of the main priorities of his pontificate. It was an endorsement of Van Rossum's policies, whereas the prefect himself preferred to operate out of the limelight.

And yet there are many indications that the pope began to check the Dutch cardinal's influence from the mid-1920s onwards. The rise of a group of new, young curial prelates who supported the pope's attempts to enhance his position in Mussolini's Italy through the Lateran Treaties negatively affected the position of an orthodox cardinal who was averse to fascist ideas. The death of allies in the College of Cardinals further isolated Van Rossum, who had to deal at a personal level with the sudden banishment of his private secretary by Pius XI. Van Rossum had ample grounds for being critical of the pontiff's policies. There is no evidence to suggest that he ever publicly criticised the pope, but towards the end of his life he found a surprising way to communicate his views on the curial system of government.

Van Rossum's parting shot

1 Personal situation

Even though Van Rossum's influence was on the wane during the last period of his life, he rarely complained about his situation. His correspondence with Drehmanns often contained references to his excellent health, and although he was prone to periods of fatigue, he regularly boasted about his great zest for work. He remembered 1930 as the busiest year of his life, but also as his most energetic and healthiest year. Nevertheless, his workload did catch up with him from time to time, causing his diabetes to flare up and forcing him to take rest. The Parisian doctor A. Thépénier had told him in 1926 in a letter not to worry about his illness: this kind of diabetes would not kill him, although possible complications due to a wrong diet might. In addition to a strict diet, including a lot of broth and vegetables, he had to take exercise every morning and evening and walk for an hour every day. If he adapted his diet to his age, the doctor assured him, he could live to be a hundred.¹

But since his health crisis in 1928, when only the relatively new procedure of injecting insulin had saved him, he had been extra careful of his health.² He wrote to Drehmanns on 4 March 1932 that his sugar levels had gone up a little and that he had changed his diet: he was eating only one slice of bread a day and no potatoes. Van Rossum also tried to spare his health by taking rest at fixed intervals. He often spent weekends in Propaganda Fide's country house in Castel Gandolfo.³ He also took one day a month off for recollection and went on a ten-day retreat with the Redemptorists every February, which began on a Thursday and ended on a Sunday, during which he was not to be disturbed.⁴

Van Rossum could not bear the heat and left Rome as soon as the temperature began to rise. The successive popes appear to have agreed to this readily, given that it was for medical reasons. He usually left Rome in mid-July after attending the last meetings of the Holy Office and after conferring the subdiaconate on seminarians

1 ENK, ANPR, no. 8542: medical reports on W.M. van Rossum's health, 1926 and 1932. A. Thépénier, physician, to W. van Rossum, Paris 30 January 1926, sent him a work by Labbé, *Le traitement du diabète*, in which he underlined several passages in blue, 8–9, 116–117. He recommended the book's dietary advice. See KDC, ROSS, no. 507.

2 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 106.

3 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 30 November 1931.

4 Smit, *Wilhelmus Marinus kardinaal Van Rossum*, 8.

in Castel Gandolfo. His destination was the spa in Karlsbad, where he would take the baths for about three weeks, a treatment that did wonders for his health. Afterwards, he would often take a tour, visiting various places before going to Ingenbohl in Switzerland. In 1930, for example, he combined his summer holidays with visits to Luxemburg, Paris,⁵ Caen, Lisieux and Brussels.

Drehmanns’s banishment from Rome by Pius XI gave Van Rossum another good reason to leave Italy: it allowed him to meet his former secretary and spend a number of weeks with him in the motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross in Ingenbohl. Van Rossum arranged for the Dutch Redemptorist provincial’s permission, which Drehmanns needed, and paid for Drehmanns’s travel costs. In 1930, he met Drehmanns in Brussels, and they travelled to Switzerland together.

But the Ingenbohl Sisters and other female congregations did more than accommodate the cardinal during his summer holidays to keep him healthy and happy. On Sundays, he normally dined in the convent attached to the Ingenbohl Sisters’ Quisisana clinic in Rome – the same congregation ran the spa in Karlsbad. The superior, Aniceta Regli, regularly sent Drehmanns reports on Van Rossum’s health.⁶ He spent Easter Week in Albano, with the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, whom he also visited frequently on the feasts of the Ascension and Pentecost. From Albano, he would go to Ariccia (where the noviciate of the sisters was) and the institute of the Venerini Sisters, one of the institutes whose cardinal protector he was. The various sisters themselves were regular visitors to Piazza di Spagna to discuss business, particularly the superior general of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, Marie Laurète de la Nativité de Jésus, who lived on Via Macchiavelli.⁷ In June 1932, Van Rossum presided over the chapter that elected their general government, which was attended also by sisters from Poland and the United States, and he spoke with each delegate individually. He later wrote approvingly to Drehmanns that the superior of the house on Via Macchiavelli had been elected superior general.⁸

But the Redemptorist family remained Van Rossum’s primary support network. He was in regular contact with Cornelis Damen, the dean of the Ateneo Urbano and a consultant of Propaganda Fide, who also served briefly as his private secretary before Lijdsman arrived in Rome. Similarly, Frans ter Haar, consultant general of the Redemptorists and director of the Alphonsianum, and superior general Patrick

5 He visited the archbishop and De Guébriant in Paris, and he had a meeting with A. George C.Ss.R. (a member of the former Sodalitium Pianum) in Caen or Paris.

6 KDC, ROSS, no. 132: Aniceta Regli to J. Drehmanns, 27 April, 7 May and 15 July 1930, 14 December 1931. She was pleased that Drehmanns and Van Rossum spent a few weeks together in Ingenbohl in the summer.

7 KDC, ROSS, no. 125: M. Marie Laurète C.S.F.N. to J. Drehmanns, 27 May 1930.

8 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 5 June 1932: “Mother was postulated unanimously. As I had the faculty, I confirmed the postul[ation] and accepted the Mother[’s election].”



At his desk, in his newly renovated office

Murray were frequent visitors on Piazza di Spagna. The cardinal sometimes visited Sant'Alfonso for dinners to mark jubilees or other festive occasions, and the Dutch lay brothers Egidius Wedemeyer, Martinus van Laarhoven and Stephanus Jacobs, who looked after his household, lived with him for years. To his great joy, he was once able to consecrate a Redemptorist bishop: the new vicar apostolic of Matadi, Jean Couvelier, in Brussels in the summer of 1930.⁹ He celebrated the bicentenary of the

⁹ Henri Drehmanns acted as the cardinal's gentleman during the consecration in Brussels, for which he received an honorary award from the Belgian government. Van Rossum felt that the Dutch government should have taken an example of this. KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 24 October 1930.

foundation of the Redemptoristines with Murray and Hudeček in Scala and Pagani, where he said Mass on Alphonsus's grave. And he marked the twentieth anniversary of his creation as a cardinal with a dinner in the company of Murray, Ter Haar and Damen: "on Friday: mussels, shrimps, turbot, fried eggs, cake etc. with wine and champagne". After dinner they went on "a little tour" by car outside Rome.¹⁰

In addition, Van Rossum had various contacts in the Netherlands, particularly with Drehmanns and Drehmanns's brother and sister-in-law Henri and Jeannette. He took a lively interest in their family and children as they grew up and regularly received photographs of his godson Willem, born in 1928. He also corresponded with his own relatives in Zwolle and Amsterdam.¹¹ The Dutch businessman Willem Dreesmann visited him on several occasions. Dreesmann waited on the pope in May 1930 as chamberlain of the sword and cape, which required a lot of standing to attention: "he finds it very interesting, but excessively fatiguing", Van Rossum wrote to Drehmanns. It was during this visit that Dreesmann persuaded Van Rossum to have his apartment on Piazza di Spagna renovated at Dreesmann's expense. This meant that the cardinal had to move out for a few months, but he was ultimately very pleased with the result. The apartment was ready in late December, and the papal court photographer Felici was invited in to come and take pictures. In early 1931, he proudly showed his new study and bedroom to Mother Aniceta and a number of other sisters, who marvelled at the rooms.¹²

He was not impervious to the hardship caused by the economic crisis. As we have seen, Van Rossum wrote in December 1930 that a small vacancy had opened in the archive of Propaganda Fide for an assistant to the archivist, Monticone. "I don't know how this news got out, and I am very surprised. All we need is someone to bring the books or archival documents to the visitors, so it really is a very menial little job. And yet we have had 150 applications so far, including from lawyers, people with degrees, people of a certain station. They are begging to be hired. There is a lot of misery and it is steadily increasing."¹³ The situation had deteriorated by early 1932, when there was a queue outside his door every day from early in the morning until late in the afternoon of people asking for support, and the cardinal also received many petitions from monasteries, institutions and impoverished noble families.¹⁴

For Dutch Catholics, Van Rossum remained 'their' man in Rome. He regularly met the procurator of the Dutch bishops, Bernard Eras. The cardinal's relations with the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 November 1931.

¹¹ *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*. His last letter to his half-brother was dated 25 July 1932, 66.

¹² *Ibid.*, 17 February 1931.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 19 December 1930.

¹⁴ *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 65, Rome 4 January 1932.

Dutch government were strained since his difficulties with Prime Minister Ruijs de Beerenbrouck in 1924: as has been seen, he felt snubbed in 1930 after he had “done [the government] a great service” regarding Dutch territorial claims in the colonies. An honorary award for the archivist of Propaganda Fide would have been the least they could have done.¹⁵ Relations with the Dutch bishops were not necessarily much better. The new archbishop of Utrecht, Joannes Jansen, more than once refused to endorse the awarding of decorations and honorary titles, even of some already approved by the pope.¹⁶ When the Dutch national college in Rome was inaugurated in 1931, the Dutch delegation went to see Pius XI first, then Pacelli and only then Van Rossum. But Van Rossum did invite the three bishops Jansen (of Utrecht), Aengenent (of Haarlem) and Diepen (of 's-Hertogenbosch) for dinner the next day, as well as Piet Aalberse, a former cabinet minister. Aalberse remembered this lengthy visit to Van Rossum, who talked mainly about his work at Propaganda Fide, as “convivial and interesting”.¹⁷

Several of the cardinal's close Dutch collaborators, whose careers he had launched and guided himself, came to grief in the 1920s; Drehmanns was not the only one who was dismissed. Jan Olav Smit had to be recalled from Norway in late 1928 and then found himself at the heart of a major scandal. On 24 November 1929, a Swedish nurse called Gudrun Ramstad tried to assassinate him in Saint Peter's basilica; the perpetrator was reputedly a psychologically unstable scorned lover of Smit's. He escaped unharmed, but Saint Peter's had to be closed for three days to allow for the building to be reconsecrated.¹⁸ This case came a year after the Van Asseldonk affair, which involved yet another protégé of Van Rossum's.¹⁹

Despite his busy activities for the curia, Van Rossum managed to publish a short work called *Meditazioni per le Domeniche dell'Avvento e per la novena del S. Natale* ('Meditations for the Sundays of Advent and for the Novena of the Nativity') in 1930, inspired by the writings of Alphonsus Liguori. He had it printed by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth on Via Macchiavelli, who had their own press in their novitiate in Ariccia (near Albano).²⁰ The constitutions of the Redemptoristines, which were presented to the Holy Father for approval on 12 February 1931, were similarly printed by the sisters in Ariccia.²¹

15 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 5 November 1930. There had been a conflict between the United States and the Netherlands about claims to an island in the Philippines.

See also ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 29 December 1929.

16 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 22 October 1930, for Hoogveld and Verhoeven; 12 April 1931 for Kreymborg.

17 De Valk, Kappelhof (eds.), *Dagboeken van P.J.M. Aalberse*, 566–567.

18 Poels, *Een roomse droom*, 201–203.

19 See Chapter 18.3. KDC, ROSS, no. 336: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 21 September 1928.

20 *Meditazioni per le Domeniche dell'Avvento e per la novena del S. Natale*, Rome 1930.

21 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 7 May 1931.



Surrounded by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth in Ariccia

Around Christmas 1930, Van Rossum was working on a revision of his 1914 study on the priesthood, *De essentia Sacramenti Ordinis*.²² It was published by Pustet in Rome, which asked for the corrected proofs by late September 1931. At the cardinal’s request, Drehmanns compiled the *Index rerum notabilium*; Van Rossum himself had drawn up the index of persons while checking the proofs, as he wrote on 17 October 1931. The book, which Drehmanns sent to various periodicals, appeared in 1932; Van Rossum waited impatiently for reviews. A critical review was published in May 1932 in *Civiltà Cattolica*, a prestigious and influential Jesuit magazine, which had written positively about the first edition in 1914. “Did you see the review in *Civiltà Cattolica* of my little book?”, Van Rossum asked Drehmanns. “Very Billot. It would not surprise me at all, yes, it seems very probable to me that he wrote it before he died. I sent him a copy and then received his reply to my cover letter. (...) His reply is mutually friendly up to the question [at stake], but thereafter it is the hard, intransigent Billot. He does not engage with the question itself and answers not a single argument. (...) He never

22 G.M. van Rossum, *De essentia Sacramenti Ordinis. Disquisitio historico-theologica*, Fribourg 1914 (200 p.), 2nd ed.: Rome, Pustet, 1932 (242 p.).

appreciated my work, and was always hard and hostile towards me in that regard. I think Galtier wrote at his instigation.”²³

Van Rossum’s decision to revise this work was possibly taken with the pope’s knowledge and approval. Pius XI published the encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* in 1935, in which he set out his view of the priesthood.²⁴ Although the encyclical’s main focus was on the formation and training of priests, and Van Rossum’s on the essence of the priesthood according to the Bible and Catholic tradition and doctrine, there are certain similarities between the two documents. Thus the encyclical’s references to the work of the founder of the Redemptorists, Alphonsus Liguori, are identical to those in Van Rossum’s work.²⁵

Van Rossum’s income rose during Pius XI’s pontificate. His salary had been on the increase since the First World War, from 1,200 to 2,500 lire, but under Pius XI he received 3,000 lire a month, a sum that went up even further to 3,500 lire in 1926.²⁶ The Vatican’s financial situation deteriorated after the economic stock market crash of October 1929, notwithstanding the respite that the Lateran Treaties provided.

Van Rossum had promised Wittem a large sum for its library in 1930 and generously presented his former secretary with a new typewriter, but the situation had changed considerably two years later. In 1932, Van Rossum twice thanked Drehmanns for a cheque and asked him in passing if he could obtain Mass intentions for him from diocesan priests in Limburg or elsewhere in the Netherlands – he did not wish to trouble his own congregation about this.²⁷ He did not mention what he needed the money for. The previous year, Van Rossum himself had been sending Mass intentions to the Sisters of San Piero at Drehmanns’s request, in the full knowledge that this would compromise him if it was found out.²⁸ The money was possibly for the Redemptoristines of Scala, whom he sent a large sum every year.²⁹

But Van Rossum was far from penniless. When he drew up his will in 1927, he appointed Drehmanns executor and thanked him from the depths of his heart for all he had done for him throughout the years with such dedication and without counting the cost. It is not known why he made his will at that particular point in time; in

23 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 12 and 14 May 1932.

24 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 170–173.

25 Pius XI, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii. Litterae encyclicae ... "De Sacerdotio Catholico"*, 20 December 1935, in: AAS, 28(1936), 5–53, at 41 and 43.

26 KDC, ROSS, no. 411. Van Rossum’s book of accounts with his income and expenditure, which he kept from October [1912] onwards, shows that his monthly ‘salary’ increased in the 1920s: 2000 lire in 1921, 3500 lire in 1926. The accounts became irregular after this date; the last amount to be recorded was 3700 lire in February 1928.

27 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 12 and 28 May, 5 June 1932.

28 *Ibid.*: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 16 and 22 October 1930.

29 See Chapter 18.1.

any case, he left everything to Propaganda Fide, excepting a few possessions listed on 28 March 1927, which he bequeathed to the Redemptorists, a few female congregations and relatives. The document also stipulated that the will was not to be published.³⁰

2 Crisis in the Vatican

The year 1931 promised to be a busy one for Van Rossum. The new building of the Collegio Urbano was inaugurated in April. The fortieth anniversary of the publication of *Rerum Novarum* was marked by a grand commemoration on 15 May, and the next day saw the opening of the Dutch national college (the Collegio Pontificio Olandese).³¹ In Scala, the Redemptoristines celebrated the bicentenary of their foundation, and the church commemorated the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Ephesus, which had proclaimed Mary the Mother of God. But more than anything else, 1931 was the year of a great crisis for the Holy See, as the political leaders of the traditionally Catholic countries of Italy and Spain launched an onslaught on the church's influence on society.

The Holy See had been in celebratory mood after the Lateran Treaties of 1929, but now an acrimonious conflict arose between Mussolini and the Vatican about Catholic Action in Italy, the *Azione cattolica*. The 1929 concordat stipulated that Catholic Action and its youth organisations were permitted to operate as long as they steered clear of politics. The fascists left the movement untouched until early 1931, but the success of Catholic Action, and particularly of its vocational groups, began to annoy Mussolini. The celebration of the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, which brought Catholic social leaders from across the world to Rome, fuelled the flames even further.³² On 15 May, Pius XI published the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, which presented a type of non-state corporatism under clerical guidance as the antidote to the economic crisis.

This encyclical provoked the ire of the fascists. They also supported corporatist organisations, but these had to be under the regime's strict supervision. Verbal and physical attacks on Catholic organisations began in the press and in Catholic meet-

30 KDC, ROSS, 115: W.M. van Rossum's will, 28 March 1927. Whenever a cardinal who lived in Rome died, his liturgical vessels, vestments, other paraphernalia (except his ring and pectoral cross) and any other items that were intended for liturgical use automatically became the property of the papal sacristy, regardless of how they had been acquired, except if the cardinal had bequeathed or given them to someone else (see CIC 1917, can. 1298, art. 1).

31 Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*. Bd. 4 (Munich 1939), 99: a great number of national colleges for priests were founded under Pius XI.

32 De Valk, Kappelhof (eds.), *Dagboeken van P.J.M. Aalberse*, 563–567.

ing halls, and the fascist perpetrators thought nothing of using brute violence. On Saturday 30 May 1931, Mussolini decided to shut down Catholic Action's youth and student organisations by police decree.³³

This was an extremely menacing situation for the church, and the pope convoked the College of Cardinals in an extraordinary consistory. On Monday 1 June, Van Rossum wrote to Drehmanns: "The plenaria was supposed to be held today; but last night there was a message from the Secretary of State that the Holy Father will receive the Sacred College this morning at 9.30. This is probably because of the problems that have arisen and the unbearable attitude and brute deeds of Fascism, the reports of which in the Oss[ervatore] Rom[ano] you will have read." The advice the various cardinals gave during this meeting have not been recorded. Officially they supported the pope's line, but a report of 9 April 1931 for the fascist regime mentioned that the pope's authoritarian policy was causing discontent among certain cardinals. The Italian ambassador to the Holy See feared that Pius XI would go so far as to break off relations with Italy to make a point.³⁴ The cardinals of the Holy Office discussed the distressing religious and political situation in Italy on 12 June 1931, as Pietro Gasparri reported in a letter to Pacelli.³⁵

Pius XI cancelled a number of religious ceremonies and decided to respond to the situation using his trusted method: by writing an encyclical. When Pacelli was received in audience on 2 July, the pope discussed the text of *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* with him – according to the Italian historian Coco, the text was all Pius's. Van Rossum was received in audience by the pontiff on the same day. It is not known whether the draft encyclical was discussed during this meeting, but it is likely. Audiences with other cardinals followed over the next few days, and as Pius told Pacelli on 7 July that all of them approved the document, he must have discussed it with them. The pope specifically mentioned Rossi, Sincero, Capotosti and an enthusiastic letter by Gasparri.³⁶ He did not mention Van Rossum: possibly because the latter's response had been less than positive. Van Rossum asked permission to leave Rome for the summer months during this same audience on 2 July.³⁷ Pius XI did not object, perhaps because he knew the Dutch cardinal's views and expected little support from him during the negotiations that were about to follow with the regime.

33 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 148–151.

34 Setta (ed.), *Tra Papa, Duce e Re*, 229; Fiorentino, *All'ombra di Pietro*, 217, report dated 9 April 1931.

35 Coco, 'L'Anno Terribile', 221–222; KDC, ROSS, no. 338; W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 13 June 1931. He does not mention the meeting of the Holy Office, but says, "The tension here between V[atican] and Fas[cists] continues unabated."

36 Coco, 'L'Anno Terribile', 227–228, 227, n. 427. The audiences of the three cardinals mentioned took place on 3, 4 and 6 July; the other cardinals received on these days are similarly mentioned in the files on the encyclical, although Coco's article does not refer to Van Rossum's audience on 2 July.

37 KDC, ROSS, no. 338; W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 27 June 1931.

Non Abbiamo Bisogno appeared on 5 July 1931, although it was antedated to 29 June, the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul. The encyclical was addressed to the Italian bishops but was also disseminated outside Italy. Pius XI denied all allegations that Catholic Action in Italy had engaged in politics, and demanded the free exercise of religious activities, and particularly the right to give Catholic young people a Catholic education. The pope prohibited Catholics from taking the oath of fidelity that the fascists demanded, although he understood that they often had no choice if they wished to keep their job and their livelihood, in which case they could privately make the reservation “saving the laws of God and of the Church” or “in accordance with the duties of a good Christian”. But Pius did not go so far as to condemn Mussolini and the fascist regime. “We have confident hope (...) that the Church of God, which wishes to take nothing from the State of that which belongs to the competence of the State, will cease to be asked for that which is of the Church’s competence – the education and the Christian formation of youth, as this is hers, not through human favour, but by divine mandate.”³⁸

After the publication of the encyclical, between 7 and 22 July, Pius XI received many cardinals in audience to hear their views, some of them more than once. It is not known whether Van Rossum went to see the pope again before he left Rome. Once the usual meetings of his congregations, the *congresso* and the conferring of the subdiaconate in Castel Gandolfo were over, he left for Karlsbad on 13 July. This means he did not attend the very secret consistory of 23 July 1931, during which the crises in Spain, Lithuania and Italy were discussed. 22 of the 25 cardinals of the curia attended the consistory; only Lépicier, Ragonesi and Van Rossum were absent, “as they were not in Rome”.³⁹

After this consistory, the pope warmed to the ‘intransigent party’ among the cardinals and their uncompromising attitude towards Mussolini. If the situation did not change, Pius XI told the fascist leader, he would publicly and formally condemn the doctrine of fascism. Mussolini initially refused to be intimidated, but ultimately new agreements were signed between him and the Vatican on 2 September.⁴⁰ Catholic Action was spared, although the ban on political activities was reiterated. Nor was it permitted any longer to organise sports or athletic contests; that was to be the prerogative of the fascist organisations.⁴¹

According to Pollard, the Catholic church emerged victorious from the fray. The encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* was a clear sign to the world that the church operated

38 Pius XI, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno. Lettera Enciclica, 29 Giugno 1931, per la Azione Cattolica*, in: AAS, 23(1931), 285–312, at 307 and 311.

39 Coco, ‘L’“Anno Terribile”’, 256–258.

40 Setta (ed.), *Tra Papa, Duce e Re*, 270–271, 279–280 (diary entries, 24 July and 11 August 1931).

41 Coco, ‘L’“Anno Terribile”’, 263.

independently of fascist Italy. Its superiority in the field of morality was similarly acknowledged. Divorce and abortion were banned in Italy, in accordance with the principles enunciated in the encyclical *Casti Connubii* on the family and matrimony. Further clashes with the church were avoided until 1938, when the fascist anti-Jewish racial laws were promulgated; on that occasion the church did clearly distance itself from Mussolini's policies. In the meantime, the Catholic church flourished in Italy, as did its youth movements and the Catholic student union F.U.C.I.; the number of priests and religious, and of Catholic schools and hospitals increased.⁴²

But while there was a *détente* between church and state in Italy, tensions with Spain sharply increased in September 1931. Church-state relations in Spain had been relatively warm since the beginning of the twentieth century, more so than in neighbouring Portugal and France, where republican governments supported the separation of church and state and adopted anticlerical laws (in 1910 and 1905 respectively). The 'integristi' were in the ascendancy in Spain. But the Vatican lost this reliable pillar of support in 1931, when King Alfonso XIII was deposed. The Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed in April of that year, followed by anticlerical measures, the separation of church and state and the confiscation of the property of the 'foreign' religious orders. An agreement was signed with the Vatican on 15 September 1931, but a crisis arose in October when a new, strongly anticlerical constitution was introduced in parliament; it was adopted on 9 December.⁴³ To normalise relations with the new regime somewhat, the monarchist archbishop of Sevilla, Cardinal Pedro Segura y Sáenz, was summoned to Rome. Van Rossum mentioned in early January 1932 that Segura had attended the general congregation of Propaganda Fide for the first time.⁴⁴

3 Proposals for a drastic overhaul of the curia

Van Rossum travelled from Karlsbad to Strasbourg in August 1931, where he stayed with the Alsatian Redemptorists and where Drehmanns arrived, according to the cardinal's plan, in mid-August. They then travelled together to the motherhouse of the Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer of Strasbourg in Oberbronn, one of the congregations under his patronage as cardinal protector.⁴⁵ Van Rossum's letters to Drehmanns prior to their meeting in Strasbourg contain few references to Musso-

42 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 155–158.

43 *Ibid.*, 22–23, 260–261; Guy Hermet, 'Pie XI, la République espagnole et la guerre d'Espagne', in: Achille Ratti, *Pape Pie XI*, 499–527, at 503–505.

44 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: VV. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 11 January 1932.

45 *Ibid.*, 27 June 1931.

lini and the situation in Italy. Instead, they addressed their publications at length: Van Rossum's *De essentia Sacramenti Ordinis* and Drehmanns's *Fiat voluntas tua*, a meditative work that he published anonymously through Paolo Manna in Milan. Van Rossum footed the bill for the production costs.⁴⁶ After Strasbourg, they spent more than a month in Ingenbohl.

Van Rossum did not attend the secret meeting of 23 July and was not in Rome for the denouement of the Italian and the beginning of the Spanish crisis, but no doubt he kept abreast of developments in the curia during his absence. He probably agreed with Pius XI's initial intransigence, and was disappointed that the pope ultimately signed another agreement with Mussolini. The church's impotence with regard to political developments in Spain must have been difficult to accept for him. Every year, he faithfully exchanged Christmas and Easter greetings with the Spanish king and queen.⁴⁷ It was his custom, as it was for cardinals of the curia in general, to write to the royal couple and the other Catholic royal houses. Van Rossum's monarchist leanings can also be inferred from his positive attitude to the Habsburg emperor and, in France, to Maurras and the Action Française in 1914, and from his support for his confrere Philippe and the Ligue Apostolique in the 1920s.

Van Rossum was back in Rome on 23 September 1931. In view of subsequent events, it is clear that he had used the summer months to formulate a vision and critique of the government of the church, in a pamphlet called *De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis* ('On certain things that ought to be changed in the government of the church').⁴⁸ In Ingenbohl, he had the assistance of his former private secretary, who could type up his manuscript for him. Upon his return to Rome, he would have had the opportunity to have the text printed on the presses of the Sisters of Nazareth. On the day of his return, he first went to visit the generalate and Sant'Alfonso, the Redemptorist house of studies (whose foundations were then being laid) and Mother Aniceta. He had hoped for a papal audience too, but no invitation card arrived; the pope had evidently changed his diary.⁴⁹

46 'Fiat voluntas tua!', written by "Sac. G. M. D." Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 2 May 1930; KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 19 December 1930 and 27 June 1931, complimenting him on the book, although he added that he did not think it was very easy to read for the ordinary faithful.

47 KDC, ROSS, no. 20: Alfonso XIII to W. van Rossum; the last letter is dated 8 May 1930. Van Rossum also received such letters from the Austrian imperial family and the Belgian, Bavarian and Italian royal families.

48 Hans de Valk, "Some matters that should be improved in the Government of the Church". A Remarkable Proposal for the Reform of the Roman Curia, 1931', in: *Chiesa, Papato e Curia Romana*, 183–206. De Valk is reluctant to definitively assign authorship of the document to Van Rossum, but the analysis of the content in the following pages as well as several elements previously discussed in this biography show that this attribution is justified.

49 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 23 September 1931.

Van Rossum withdrew from public life for a while during the last month of 1931. He wrote somewhat mysteriously on 30 November 1931: "It's not busy: almost no strangers come any more." He wrote a letter to Drehmanns on 5 December 1931 mentioning Saint Bernard as an example of perfect devotion to Mary. His next letter, dated 2 January 1932, explained that he had not left home for a while due to a cold.⁵⁰

On 28 December 1931, Secretary of State Pacelli received an anonymous printed document entitled *De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis*, which contained drastic proposals for the improvement of the government of the Catholic church. It was sent to him by the nuncio in Paris, Luigi Maglione.⁵¹ More than a month later, the French ambassador to the Holy See, Louis de Fontenay, also drew his government's attention to the text, which had been circulating within the Roman curia; the copy he had was a typescript ('dactylographié') of 36 pages. The Latin document was signed with the pseudonym Paulus Bernardus a S. Catharina. The text was possibly written in several stages, but the references it contains indicate that it must have been completed between mid-October and December 1931.⁵²

The document's message was clear: changes in the central government of the church were extremely urgent. It criticised the incompetence of the leadership of the church and the imperfections of its system of government and added suggestions for radical change. Criticism was good and necessary, the author claimed, as long as it remained confidential and was done respectfully and charitably, like Saint Paul had criticised Peter, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux the Roman curia and Saint Catharine of Siena the pope, whom she allegedly persuaded to return from Avignon to Rome.

The text began by outlining the deplorable current situation of the church. The church had no authority and no influence in the fields of politics, culture, mass media, the workers' movement and science. The situation in education was particu-

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 30 November and 5 December 1931, 2 January 1932. See also *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 65, Rome 4 January 1932.

⁵¹ AAESS, *Stati Ecclesiastici IV*, pos. 469, fasc. 472. The pamphlet had been sent to Maglione anonymously from Turin. It is not known who disseminated it from Turin – perhaps someone in the institute 'della Consolata per le missioni estere', which fell under Propaganda Fide. Baumgarten's copy (see note 61) had also come from Turin. The nuncio in Spain knew about the pamphlet too: AAV, *Archivio della Nunziatura di Madrid*, no. 947, f 14–17: Salvio Huix, apostolic administrator of Ibiza to F. Tedeschini, apost. nuncio in Madrid, 16 February 1932; f 13: Tedeschini to Huix, 22 February 1932; Tedeschini wrote that he was not familiar with the text and asked that it be sent to him. The Vatican Library currently holds two printed copies; one of these was registered in October 1932. Other copies can be found in the archives of the secretary of the French bishops' conference (Machelart, *Inventaire des archives*, 101) and the papers of Alexandre Leroy, superior general of the Spiritans (<http://spiritains.free.fr/qui/archives/04/104431.htm>). These copies are all of the Latin text.

⁵² De Valk, "Some matters that should be improved in the Government of the Church", 196. For the complete Latin text of the pamphlet *De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis*, see Appendix 1 in this biography.

larly alarming; this was being left to liberalism and atheism, from primary school all the way up to university level. Religion was losing the battle against socialism and communism in the West. Faith was portrayed as the enemy of modern civilisation. Catholics were being attacked, even in countries such as Italy and France, and monks and women religious were subject to scorn. This set a dreadful example for Asia and Africa, where thousands of missionaries were doing sterling work; but with the West as its example, the chances were that the governing classes in the rising nations would reject the Christian faith.

It was therefore hugely important to strengthen the position of the church and the faith. The time was ripe for this: the church enjoyed greater freedom in modern society than ever before. Modern mass media offered many chances, there was no shortage of funds and the Holy See commanded a mass of well-trained clergy, highly educated laypeople and flourishing religious communities. Everything that was needed to vindicate the church's position as the world's highest moral authority was in place. But even though it had a first-class army, the church was in fact proving a weak opponent of Satan's. The causes of this were clear: the leadership of the church was not up to its task and the government of the church was highly inefficient.

The author then launched a broadside against the leaders of the church, from the bishops up to and including the pope. The Holy See chose yes-men to be bishops, men who were not up to the challenges of modern society. They were not combative personalities who sought out confrontation, but bureaucrats who busied themselves with trivialities. It was a dangerous mistake to think that the church could be governed automatically, through church laws, rules and Roman instructions, without good leaders. In some countries, the entire episcopate was made up of the blind, the lame and the sick, who took no part in public, cultural and social life, unlike their more active Protestant counterparts. The church lived off the past, and was content to leave the present to the enemies of Christ. Worse still, many bishops actively sabotaged the activities of priests and laymen who did take a stand, and who were thus effectively doing what the bishops should be doing themselves.

The situation was even graver among the cardinals – the electors of the pope –, and particularly the cardinals of the curia. Most of them had never asked a difficult question in their life, and they had achieved their position by spending years at a desk in the Vatican, unhindered by the faintest knowledge of the world or of the universal church. Thus the prefect of the Congregation for Universities and Seminaries [Cardinal Bisleti] had never seen the inside of a university. Almost half of the cardinals, and the majority of the cardinals of the curia, were Italians, which was most undesirable. Italians had many excellent qualities, but organisational expertise was

not one of them. The few non-Italian prelates in the curia, who excelled at their job, were examples of how much better it could be.⁵³

Then the author turned to the popes. The occupants of the throne of Peter should be men of superhuman qualities, who were able to guide the immeasurable army of Christ to victory through even the most turbulent of storms. It was not enough, as had recently been the case, for one pope to distinguish himself by learning, the other by piety, a third by intelligence and a fourth by alertness: all these qualities should reside in one person.

The real responsibility for the decline of the church, mass apostasy and the Holy See's loss of influence lay with the popes. Instead of actively facing the enemy, they tried to govern through encyclicals, letters and general warnings, shored up by a primitive and archaic system of government. They had been unable to prevent the horrible world war, or the poisoning of millions of minds by liberalism, socialism and nationalism. Who read encyclicals anyway, especially given their inordinate length. And it was very well to praise Christ the King in empty cathedrals, canonise saints, publish articles in *Osservatore Romano*, address the world by radio or found Catholic universities, but none of this brought modern society any closer to Christ. What was required for that was character, decisiveness, elan and organisational talent.

It was necessary to have the right people in the right places, and that required several organisational changes. Names of promising priests should be forwarded to Rome at an early stage. The College of Cardinals and the Roman curia should become international bodies, and the number of Italian cardinals should be drastically reduced. This would also give the church the universal aspect it needed. The *loca cardinalitia* were to be abolished: only expert and worthy people should be created cardinal, and this pro rata of the number of Catholics per country.⁵⁴ When electing a new pope, the electors should no longer limit their choice to the cardinals alone. They should choose the best candidate, preferably not an Italian – the argument that the Italian government preferred to deal with an Italian pope was neither here nor there: the church was supranational and should be willing to show it – and certainly not a member of the curia, because such cardinals had only had desk jobs throughout their lives. The cardinals had always made their choice from four or five mediocre Italian

53 There were five non-Italian cardinals of the curia in 1932: in addition to Van Rossum, the Frenchman A. Lépiciér, the German F. Ehrle, the Austrian Dominican A. Frühwirth and the Spaniard P. Segura y Sáenz. Otherwise, the entire curial staff, both senior and junior, was predominantly Italian.

54 His proposal was as follows: twelve cardinals from Italy, eight from France, six from Brazil, five from Spain, Poland, Germany and the United States, three from Mexico and Czechoslovakia, two from Belgium, Ireland, Portugal, Austria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and the Netherlands, one from Canada, Argentina and Chile. Remarkably, he excluded all Eastern-rite countries and Asian and African mission territories.

papabili, whereas, somewhere in the universal church outside Rome, there was the one man whom the Holy Spirit had designated to be pope.

But even a good pope could not do much if the church's system of government was hopelessly outdated and inefficient, as was the case. To improve this, the author made three proposals: to mitigate the current autocratic aspects of the government of the church, to activate and rationalise the congregations of the curia and to introduce long-term strategy and policy.

The government of the universal church was currently effectively in the hands of the pope, the secretary of state and his deputy, who had to shoulder a superhuman workload and inevitably had to postpone even the most urgent matters. Moreover, they often operated in secret, brooked no criticism and surrounded themselves by flatterers. Autocratic government of this kind was simply not up to the complex challenges of modern society. A more collegial form of government was required, in the form of consistories and curial congregations as they had originally been intended, according to the example of the 'golden' Middle Ages. As an example of how this might work, the author pointed to religious orders and congregations, where superiors were often prohibited from taking important decisions without consulting the chapter.

It was a great weakness of the government of the church that it lacked a considered, explicit general policy. Churchmen governed from day to day, without strategy, without a programme, without coordinating their forces. Generals who led an army needed to know how strong the enemy was, what his intentions were and what dangers the army faced. This should also be how the church operated, but in fact the leadership of the church did not know what plans national governments were making and could therefore not prepare for them either. There was no programme to win the workers back, to solve the social question and the school question, to use literature, press, science, radio and film in the service of the church, to bring Protestants and schismatics back to the church and to prevent war in the Western world. The Holy See sometimes contradicted itself, for example with regard to the participation of Catholics in public life in Italy. Various curial bodies were working without coordination and sometimes at cross-purposes with each other, so that the church's immense potential was wasted instead of harnessed.

How different the governments of modern states operated. They were proactive, occupied themselves with all sectors of society, were subject to institutional and political checks, and had a positive message. In the church, by contrast, the emphasis was on church discipline and prohibitions. Reorganisation of the curia was an urgent task: the congregations should operate like the ministries of secular states and consist not only of the prefect, a secretary and several cardinal members, who were often absent or had six or seven other congregations to deal with. Every congregation should have a staff of expert officials who had the power to conduct day-

to-day business and a supervisory role over bishops, so that they could admonish and correct badly functioning or weak bishops; a lot of things could be dealt with at diocesan level. The author added that the congregations could take an example of Propaganda Fide, the only dicastery that really, actively, governed.

The document then proposed a detailed plan for a new structure of the curia, which would have only seven congregations.⁵⁵ The staff these employed had to be highly trained and international, and should meet often, including with experts from across the world. Once or twice a month there should be a Consistorium Minus, a meeting of all the heads of congregations plus the pope (who should no longer act as prefect of congregations himself) to discuss the state of affairs and debate policy. Once a year, there should be a Consistorium Maius, a 'parliament of the church', which was to be attended also by the higher staff of the congregations, the superiors of the great orders and congregations and other experts.

The pamphlet concluded that all confusion in the modern era could be traced back to the rebellion of Luther and Calvin. The bishops and popes of the time had failed to respond adequately to the challenge, and had concerned themselves with trivialities instead of reforming the things that required reform. Today, again, the loss of half of Christendom was a realistic prospect. The author therefore asked the pope to read his criticisms benevolently and implement those of them that he deemed useful to establishing the reign of Christ the King. The author's only objective was the welfare of the church, and he submitted fully to the judgement of the Holy See.

A typescript German version of *De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis* was disseminated, probably very shortly after Van Rossum's death, over his signature and bearing the statement that it was intended as a memorandum for Pius XI.⁵⁶ Although Van Rossum's papers do not contain any indication that he was in fact the

55 The plan was as follows: 1. Holy Office, 2. Internal affairs (including Consistory, Religious, the Council and Rites), 3. External affairs, 4. Propaganda Fide (including the Orientale), 5. Justice (including the tribunals), 6. De re scholari (including science and universities/seminaries) and 7. Congregatio de promovenda fide (Catholic Action on a large scale, affairs relating to society, mass media, politics). He did not mention the Secretariat of State or the diplomatic service. Van Rossum possibly felt that the increasing power of this organ of the curia should be curtailed and its competencies divided over the various other dicasteries. See Galavotti, 'Sulle riforme della curia romana nel Novecento', 868–869. Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 129, points out that Pius XI founded no new dicastery, but did establish the Ufficio Centrale d'Azione Cattolica in 1937, under Pizzardo's leadership.

56 KDC, ROSS, no. 328: 'Eingabe des Kardinals van Rossum an den Heiligen Vater. Ueber die notwendigen Verbesserungen in der Regierung der Kirche (Nach dem Manuskript)'. An identical copy can be found in the *Drehmanns family archive* in Roermond. Drehmanns was perhaps the German translator. The German version circulated among German clerics in 1943, see Hubert Wolf, Claus Arnold (eds.), *Der Rheinische Reformkreis. Dokumente zu Modernismus und Reformkatholizismus 1942–1955* (Paderborn 2001), vol. 2, 308 (in the form of a 13-page pamphlet) and among the Redemptorists in Rome in 1948 (16 pages): ENK, ANPR, no. 7696: M. van Delft to J. Drehmanns, Rome 4 October 1948. An edition of the German version can be found in the Dutch-language edition of this book: Poels, *Rode paus*, p. 670–693.

author of the document (there is no reference to it in his correspondence with Dremmanns, although his letters do show that he had the time and opportunity to write and print it in the summer and December of 1931), the content is consistent with both his ideas and his character.

Its description of the deplorable condition of the church includes a number of the cardinal's hobbyhorses: the church's lack of authority and influence, the menace of liberalism, socialism and communism, attacks on priests and religious and an emphasis on the importance of formation, education and the missions. He hated the sluggishness, bureaucracy, disorder and lack of discipline in the curia. Van Rossum attached great importance to good organisation: he had shown in his Wittem years that he was an organiser through and through. On the two occasions that he was appointed to high office in the curia, in the Penitentiary and then in Propaganda Fide, he began his term of office by implementing a reorganisation. On both occasions, his aim was to have efficient administration on the basis of clear guidelines and a clear programme. The pamphlet's recurring fulminations against the Italian character of the government also point to his authorship, as did its insistence that the non-Italian cardinals and the Congregation of Propaganda Fide were examples for the wider curia. As a dyed-in-the-wool religious priest with extensive experience of government in the Redemptorist congregation, he did not have to look far to praise the expertise and organisational structure of religious institutes. Moreover, there is a hint in the text of personal disappointment at the Dutch bishops' inertia and deference to Rome. Although it was a standard Catholic trope at the time to blame all problems of church and society on the Reformation, the fact that the pamphlet mentions Calvin and Luther in the same breath does point to Dutch authorship.

And yet contemporaries apparently did not immediately realise that Van Rossum was the author of this anonymous document. There was no doubt that whoever wrote it had thorough knowledge of the curia, but this did not necessarily imply that he worked there himself. Ambassador de Fontenay thought it had been written by a non-Italian, although probably not a German, as the style was too lucid.⁵⁷

Unlike his fellow integralists Pompilj and Merry del Val, Van Rossum never publicly criticised the curia or the pope; at least there are no records of this. It was a public secret in the curia that he resented its predominantly Italian nature and that he favoured electing a non-Italian pope. But his public silence does not imply that he was not critical of how the church was governed. Van Rossum normally enunciated criticism clearly, without compromise and without respecting persons. That had been his style in his letters to the generalate from Wittem, later in his memorandums for the Holy Office as a consultor, and even later also as prefect of Propaganda Fide.

⁵⁷ De Valk, "Some matters that should be improved in the Government of the Church", 196.

Van Rossum was not alone in holding these views – although there were few who dared to publish their opinions during Pius XI's authoritarian pontificate – and criticisms of the curia, whether emanating from the progressive or the orthodox camp, were not new either.⁵⁸ *De quibusdam rebus* derived much of its argument from older sources. The title was a reference to the *Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia* from 1537, which made important recommendations to Pope Paul III on how to deal with abuses, scandals and the Reformation. In the run-up to the reforms enacted by Pius X in 1908, solicited and unsolicited advice had been received on how to improve the government of the church, including a plea for internationalisation. Cardinal De Lai, one of Van Rossum's ideological allies, had been an important architect of that curial reform. His proposals had been discussed in 1907 in the commission for the codification of canon law, of which Van Rossum was a member.⁵⁹ De Lai had tried to continue the reform of the curia by proposing the establishment of a *Congregazione per le opere sociali* ('Congregation for social associations') which would coordinate and supervise international Catholic associational life, which currently fell under the fragmented supervision of various dicasteries. This proposal was shelved and De Lai died in 1928, but some of the underlying ideas found their way into Van Rossum's proposal for reform.⁶⁰

Calls for reform of the curia also marked the work of the German priest and historian Paul Maria Baumgarten (1860–1948), who had published several articles shortly after 1900 in which he argued for internationalisation. Baumgarten obtained a copy of *De quibusdam rebus* in early January 1932, and hastened to contact Pacelli to assure him that he was not the author.⁶¹ Another relevant document was the pamphlet *Pio X. Suoi atti e suoi intendimenti (pensieri e note di un osservatore)* ('Pius X. His acts and his intentions (thoughts and notes from an observer)'), published in 1903 by Giovanni Pierantozzi (1841–1909), an official in the Secretariat of State who was well informed

58 Setta (ed.), *Tra Papa, Duce e Re*, 13–15; François-Charles Uginet, 'Les projets de Concile général sous Pie XI et Pie XII', in: *Le deuxième Concile du Vatican (1959–1965). Actes du colloque organisé per l'École française de Rome ... 28–30 mai 1986* (Rome 1989), 65–78; there is a reference on p. 74 to an anonymous letter from Argentina in 1924. See also Yves-Marie Hilaire, 'Le Saint-Siège et la France, 1932–1939', in: *Achille Ratti, Pape Pie XI*, 765–773.

59 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1908, rubr. 1, fasc. 1A. De Lai drafted a first plan in 1907, which was discussed on four occasions in the S. C. del Concilio and the commission for the codification of canon law (in joint session). See f 18–23: G. de Lai to Pius X, 4 February 1907, *Studio sull'ordinamento delle S. Congregazioni ed uffici della S. Sede* (in De Lai's handwriting). This also contained proposals for the reorganisation of the congregations, but did not initially mention the Secretariat of State or AAEISS. See also Chapter 8, introduction.

60 Vian, 'Convergenze e divergenze nella curia romana di Pio X', 481–519, esp. 505–509. De Lai was allegedly rewarded for his attempts to reform the curia by appointment to the important post of prefect of the Consistorial Congregation (491–492).

61 De Valk, 'Some matters that should be improved in the Government of the Church', 185, 194 (note 23), 195 (note 25). Baumgarten wrote to Pacelli on 9 January 1932 that a friend of his had received a copy of *De quibusdam rebus* from Turin, where it had been posted.

about the internal workings of the curia. Many of his suggestions also appear in Van Rossum's document, including abolishing the *loca cardinalitia* and reducing the number of congregations in the curia.⁶²

Soon after his election, Pius XI deliberated on the course of the church and he asked all cardinals, archbishops and bishops for advice in 1923. His focus was on the doctrine of the church, the sacraments, canonical questions and Catholic Action;⁶³ reorganisation of the curia was not. Nor was it a theme in Pius XI's unpublished encyclical, 'On the true church of Christ'. More than his other encyclicals, *De Vera Ecclesia Christi* emphasised a form of Catholic 'totalitarianism'.⁶⁴ The document is dated 25 October 1931 on the last page, but it was probably written over the preceding years. In this document, which was based mainly on Scripture – tradition was hardly mentioned –, the pope confirmed the Catholic church's claims to spiritual and moral authority, and particularly the pope's claims to being the successor of the Apostle Peter.⁶⁵ It is not certain why the text was drafted, but Pollard suggests there was a link with the conflict with Italian fascism. The Spanish crisis may similarly have contributed to the pope's turning against *all* enemies of the church.

It is possible that Pius XI asked for suggestions, anonymous or otherwise, from the Sacred College with a view to drafting this encyclical, and that Van Rossum wrote *De quibusdam rebus* in response. But the papal encyclical was a purely doctrinal document, which contains no specific proposals to realise the spiritual and moral authority that it claims. Van Rossum perhaps regarded his own text primarily as a practical-organisational complement to Pius XI's doctrinal encyclical. Van Rossum possibly decided to publish his anonymous piece when it became evident in the course of 1931 that decisive action was not forthcoming, tensions in Spain were mounting, the curia was unable to deal with the problems, and the pope went his own way without taking advice from a critical team of experts – the Dutch cardinal did not think his curial colleagues merited that description. But if this were the case, Pius XI would have known immediately that it came from one of his advisers, and, given the content, it would not have been too difficult to guess who the author was.

It is doubtful that the pamphlet was written in response to a papal request. One of its striking features is blatant criticism of Pius XI: his penchant for writing encyclicals, the continuous creation of Italian cardinals, the cult of Christ the King (was Van Rossum thinking of the empty cathedral in Reykjavik, which had been dedicated to

62 For Pierantozzi's text, see L. Bedeschi, *Riforma religiosa e curia romana all'inizio del secolo* (Milan 1968), 73–120. For the significance of Pierantozzi's pamphlet, see also Jankowiak, *La Curie romaine*, 524–526.

63 Uginet, 'Les projets de Concile général sous Pie XI et Pie XII', 65–78.

64 Pollard, 'The Unpublished Encyclicals of the Pontificate of Pope Pius XI', 813–866.

65 Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 162–163; Idem, 'The Unpublished Encyclicals of the Pontificate of Pope Pius XI', 813–825.

Christ the King at Pius XI's request?), the Vatican's new radio station, the founding of Catholic universities: none of this was of any use if he did not drastically overhaul the Holy See's structure of government.⁶⁶

Van Rossum's critique of Pius XI's autocratic government may appear odd, because he himself had always been an advocate of centralisation in the church. But his proposals were essentially traditional. He certainly was not suggesting any doctrinal change, nor any intrinsic changes to the hierarchical structure of the church. The church's central government belonged in Rome, but a new, dynamic relationship between the centre and the periphery of the church would transform an autocratic style of government into a more collegial one. Internationalisation, rationalisation, action and strategy – those were the pamphlet's key words, but Rome should keep a firm hold of the reins, so that all powers were bundled to achieve the one goal: reconquering the world for Christ.⁶⁷

Another remarkable feature is the text's emphasis on the fact that the church cannot be governed only by rules, guidelines and prohibitions. As one of the drafters of the antimodernist oath, who never tired of stressing under all circumstances that everyone had to adhere to church teaching, Van Rossum appears to be contradicting himself here. But he also believed that the faithful should be taught, through formation and education, to choose the right path themselves. In order to realise that goal, it was necessary to have inspired church leaders and a supernatural pope: the flock of the faithful would then automatically follow.

4 Looming dismissal?

The fact that Van Rossum published *De quibusdam rebus* under a pseudonym shows that he was well aware that it would anger Pius XI and that the revelation of his authorship would lead to immediate repercussions. But Van Rossum had little to lose at this stage in his career. His influence in the curia had been steadily declining over the previous years. Various assistants had been taken from him. According to Drehmanns, rumours were abroad in mid-1930 that Van Rossum's dismissal was imminent.⁶⁸

Drehmanns noted in his spiritual diary that it was possible that Van Rossum would be dismissed at Easter (27 March) 1932. But this comment dates from October

66 For these aspects of Pius XI's policy, see Pollard, *The Papacy in the Age of Totalitarianism*, 154–161.

67 De Valk, "Some matters that should be improved in the Government of the Church", 192–193.

Famously, Pius X's motto was *Instaurare omnia in Christo*. See also Galavotti, 'Sulle riforme della curia romana nel Novecento', 868–869.

68 Roermond, *Drehmanns family archive*: J. Drehmanns to W. van Rossum, 3 May 1930.

1931 and, as a letter by Drehmanns shows, he believed that press reports at the time about the forced resignation of Archbishop František Kordač of Prague somehow boded ill for Van Rossum. In his reply to this letter, Van Rossum denied both that his resignation was imminent and that he had any involvement in the Prague affair – although Van Rossum would probably not have confirmed it even if it had been true: he wrote in early October 1931 that he could not discuss certain topics and that it was important to be very careful.⁶⁹ But at the time that the document became known to the Secretariat of State and the French and Spanish nunciatures, from December 1931 to February 1932, Van Rossum simply went about his ordinary business. He left for his annual retreat, from 4 to 14 February 1932, and returned from this “satisfied and not a bit tired”. Then there were the sessions of the congregations and his audience with the pope on 18 February, about which he gave no further details. He made no reference anywhere in his letters to the pamphlet.

Like in previous years, Van Rossum planned to leave Rome during the summer of 1932. This, too, indicates that there were no rumours yet that he was the author of *De quibusdam rebus*. It is unclear whether Pius XI had at this point been informed by Secretary of State Pacelli of the existence of the pamphlet; his audience notes do not mention it. Van Rossum told Drehmanns in early June 1932 that he had received a number of invitations which he was planning to accept, including for the Scandinavian eucharistic congress in Copenhagen and the centenary of the Tilburg Sisters of Charity. His first port of call after Rome would be Karlsbad for the spa, then Copenhagen, then Tilburg and Wittem, where he would meet Drehmanns, so that they could travel together to Ingenbohl in late August. He had apparently mentioned his plans to Pius XI during his audience on 5 June.⁷⁰

Van Rossum felt fit and healthy when he drew up this itinerary.⁷¹ But his physical condition began to deteriorate markedly when the temperature rose in Rome in early July. He wrote to Drehmanns on 5 July that he was looking forward much

69 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 4 October 1931. It is not entirely clear what Van Rossum was referring to – perhaps they were discussing whether he would present Drehmanns's book to the pope. “If Father General were to do this, that would be much better, but even then, I would not recommend doing it before Easter [27 March] '32.” Drehmanns concluded mysteriously in his spiritual diary that Van Rossum had to resign as prefect of Propaganda Fide at Easter because of the affair concerning Archbishop F. Kordač in Prague. Van Rossum had supposedly written a letter about this issue to the pope (KDC, ROSS, no. 343: Diary 2, 11 October 1931). It is not clear what Van Rossum's role in this affair could have been; he replied on 17 October 1931 that he did not understand Drehmanns's allusions (KDC, ROSS, no. 338). Schmidlin, *Papstgeschichte der neuesten Zeit*, Bd. 4, 132–134 discusses the Kordač affair, but does not mention Van Rossum. The cardinal had clashed with Kordač on missionary policy in 1926 and 1928 (see ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1078a, f 51–68; vol. 966b, f 215–219; vol. 967, f 732).

70 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to Drehmanns, 5 June 1932.

71 *Ibid.*, 28 May and 21 June 1932. He wrote to Drehmanns on 21 June that Pacelli had arranged “the telegram”; it is not clear why, but probably for the Scandinavian eucharistic congress.

to “the end”, probably of the working year. Drehmanns had made some suggestion in previous letters which Van Rossum could not entertain, “partly also due to reasons I cannot mention. I will be able to say more about this next week.” When he wrote again on 15 July, he did not refer to the issue again. He wrote that he felt more exhausted and “finito” (“finished”) than ever. When he departed for the north on 18 July 1932, he wrote to Drehmanns that he was eager to avoid tiring engagements as much as possible. As usual, however, his diary was completely full. The consecration of a new missionary bishop in the Dutch provincial house of the Scheut Fathers in Vught/Sparrendaal on 28 August was even added to his itinerary.⁷²

He felt better shortly after arriving in Karlsbad. On 31 July, he consecrated four bells for the new Redemptorist church in that town. They had to be “very beautiful and sonorous”, but, he wrote on 2 August, “the whole construction with a square tower, all very modern does not enchant me at all; but they have no choice; they are tied to the municipal government in everything”.⁷³ Around the same time, the N.S.D.A.P. emerged for the first time in Germany as the largest party at the elections for the Reichstag. Van Rossum does not mention Hitler anywhere in his correspondence but did write to his half-brother that the situation in the world was difficult. “The future is becoming ever darker.”⁷⁴

According to Drehmanns, it was at this time that Van Rossum wrote *Sint Alphonsus' Lijdensgedachten* (“Saint Alphonsus’s Thoughts on the Passion”), a small book of prayers to accompany the stations of the cross, which Drehmanns published after the cardinal’s death to promote piety among Dutch Catholics. Drehmanns observed in the preface: “He spent the last weeks of his rich life writing the pages that follow with a steady and calm hand. They are testimony to his love of the Passion of Christ, in which he was allowed such a great share. They are also a witness to his empathy and intellectual affinity with Saint Alphonsus, whom he loved with a child-like love and whom he venerated so ardently.” Drehmanns had the text published in facsimile, in “his tidy handwriting”, showing only a few deletions. The text focused on the founder’s “exercise of the stations of the cross”, which the cardinal’s mentor Petrus Oomen had taught him when he was a young Redemptorist.⁷⁵

72 *Ibid.*, 5 July and 15 July 1932.

73 *Ibid.*, 2 August 1932. The bells were dedicated to Saint Alphonsus, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and Saints Clement Hofbauer and Gerard Majella. AGHR, *Correspondence between Van Rossum and other Redemptorists*, folder 9: Father Tinkl to [Drehmanns], Karlsbad 4 August 1932. Van Rossum also blessed the first stone of a new convent of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Ingenbohl in Eger (Cheb) on 14 August.

74 *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal*, 66, Rome, 20 May and 25 July 1932.

75 W.M. van Rossum, *Sint Alphonsus' Lijdensgedachten*, Roermond-Maaseik, 1933.

Van Rossum's sugar levels were tested again before he left Karlsbad.⁷⁶ Although his physical condition was much improved, the problem had not disappeared completely. He nevertheless departed on 17 August for Berlin, where the Redemptorists had founded a community on 21 October 1931 with Adolph Brors – one of Van Rossum's rivals at the election of a new superior general in 1909 – as its superior.⁷⁷ Afterwards, he continued to Copenhagen for the Scandinavian eucharistic congress from 19 to 21 August 1932.⁷⁸ The session on the evening of 19 August, which Van Rossum addressed in his sonorous voice in French, was broadcast live on the radio; Pius XI in Rome had reportedly listened too, and had approved of the cardinal's message.⁷⁹

Intriguingly, a few days previously, Pius XI had suddenly asked for a copy of Pierantozzi's 1903 critical proposal for reform.⁸⁰ Had he finally been informed of *De quibusdam rebus*, and did he wish to study the parallels between the two pieces more closely? And did he know, or guess, who the author was? This could perhaps explain the story that was circulating even quite recently in the Dutch College in Rome and in the Redemptorist Congregation that the pope had dismissed Van Rossum a few days before he died. A message had already been dispatched to Wittem, but because Van Rossum's death just occurred, the dismissal suddenly became obsolete: it would have made a very strange impression if it had still been published. According to this story, which cannot be confirmed in the Vatican archives, the Redemptorists sent the telegram back to the nuncio and kept it a secret.⁸¹

5 Van Rossum's death

The congress in Copenhagen took a considerable toll on Van Rossum's health, as photos of the event show: the cardinal had a noticeable stoop and a weary gaze; in fact, he did not appear at all in many photos of the congress. He declined the Danish king's invitation to dinner, and departed to Amsterdam by night train on Monday

76 ENK, ANPR, no. 8542: medical reports on W.M. van Rossum's health, 1932. A 'general urine examination' by Friedrich Hochberger, Karlsbad, showed sugar levels of 0.91 on 4 August, 0.59 on 11 August and 0.34 on 16 August 1932.

77 Boland, *Dictionary*, 36. Van Rossum insisted on viewing the stained-glass windows that he had commissioned for the new Redemptorist college. Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A I 3,25. For the design of these windows, see KDC, ROSS, no. 124.

78 See Chapter 16.5.

79 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: Un salut et une bénédiction de Rome, 19 August 1932, speech in Van Rossum's hand; Poels, 'Cardinal van Rossum and Northern Europe (1919–1932)'.

80 AAESS, *Stati Ecclesiastici*, pos. 430a, fasc. 346, f 44: audience of Pacelli on 16 August 1932.

81 Conversation between M. Muskens and the author on 12 December 2008. This was confirmed by G. Enderle c.s.s.r. of the Redemptorist Historical Institute in Rome, on 11 June 2009. But the 'Fogli di Udienza' of Pacelli and the *Carte Pio XI* in the AAV contain no references to a possible dismissal (information received from Alejandro Mario Dieguez, 29 February 2020).

morning 22 August according to schedule, arriving at his destination via Berlin the following day. He stayed in the Redemptorist house on Keizersgracht, where Joseph Drehmanns was in attendance the following morning. Instead of resting, he visited the Dreesmann family in Bussum, distributed communion to the hundreds of people who had come to the Redemptorist church to see him, handed out pictures to children and received his brothers' children and grandchildren.⁸² Then he travelled to Utrecht, where he dined with the archbishop and attended a performance by Catholic youth, and then on to Nijmegen, where the Redemptorist provincialate was located at the time. He arrived there on 25 August and went to bed in a state of exhaustion immediately upon arrival. His sugar levels were much too high, as Drehmanns later told the Sisters of Ingenbohl. "If we had had insulin, we would have been able to save him."⁸³

The following day he graced the Sisters of Tilburg's centenary celebrations with his presence and met his only surviving sister. He gave a speech to the postulants and novices praising the religious life and congratulating them on their vocation, not only because of their religious state, but also because it shielded them from the difficult times they were going through due to the crisis.⁸⁴ "People in the world seek happiness; they cycle, dance, do sports, even the ladies, and think not an instant of Our Lord. After a busy day, they have an empty heart. And we, Religious! We pray, work, eat, drink, sleep, recreate, all to please Jesus. And not only that! But how care-free we live! The people worry every day, asking themselves what they will eat, how they will dress and where they will lay down their heads. But we! We are woken on time, we find breakfast ready, dinner at 12 o'clock, we go without a care to our little cell in the evening and find our bed ready. We have nothing to worry about at all when it comes to temporal things, we can give ourselves entirely to the Service of Jesus. (...) Poverty, being poor, not having anything and yet having everything at our disposal. Chastity: being and remaining pure as we are. Obedience, promptly doing what the Superior tells us. – Is not our happiness in the monastery great!"⁸⁵

That night he returned to Nijmegen, and despite his fatigue and lack of appetite – his evening meal consisted of a raw egg and wine – he travelled to the mission house of Sparrendaal the next afternoon. There, on Sunday morning 28 August, he consecrated the Scheut Father Frans Joosten – the last of the 31 bishops he

82 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: W. van Rossum to J. Drehmanns, 15 July 1932; Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A I 3, 25: 'Die letzten Lebenstage Sr. Eminenz Kardinal van Rossum'; prayer card of the Sacred Heart (300 days' indulgence), with a handwritten note by Van Rossum: "Be great in everything! Amst. 25 Aug. 1932. W.M. Card. v. Rossum".

83 Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A I 3, 25.

84 According to Van de Molengraft, *Drie begijnen*, 228 there were 71 postulants that year.

85 ENK, AZLT, no. 77: Bezoek van Z.E. Kardinaal v. Rossum aan het Moederhuis der Zrs. v. Liefde te Tilburg op Vrijdag 26 Aug. '32. Message from the superior general, Christine Borsten.



In Nebo monastery, Nijmegen, 26 August 1932. First row, left to right: Jan Kronenburg, Bernard Lijdsman, A. Wouters, provincial superior, Van Rossum

ordained.⁸⁶ He got through the ceremony with great difficulty, holding on to the altar to preserve his balance. He returned to his room immediately after Mass, ate nothing and received no guests. Around 6 in the evening he was brought to Wittem by car, but he could hardly walk when he got there and was brought straight to bed.

He insisted on saying Mass the next morning, ashen-faced and requiring constant support. He was confused, was barely able to read the gospel, could not remember the sequence of the prayers and repeated himself. He was carried back to his room after Mass. A doctor from Maastricht was called, who unfortunately arrived without insulin, Drehmanns recounted. Because his condition deteriorated hour by

⁸⁶ KDC, ROSS, no. 296.

hour, Van Rossum was driven to a hospital in Maastricht at 8 o'clock that evening in the company of Father Lijdsman. The cardinal only agreed to this when told that he would be looked after there by religious sisters (Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo). Later that evening he made his confession to Lijdsman, who administered extreme unction and gave him apostolic benediction. When asked where he would like to be buried, in Rome or Wittem, he replied straightaway that he preferred Wittem. That night around 2 o'clock, in the words of one of the sisters, Van Rossum "rendered his beautiful soul back to its Creator". Lijdsman immediately said Mass for the repose of his soul, and then informed the pope by telephone of Cardinal Van Rossum's demise.⁸⁷

The same day, Secretary of State Pacelli sent a telegram of condolence on behalf of Pius XI, who was "deeply moved".⁸⁸ Remarkably, the pope then urgently summoned Van Rossum's secretary to Rome by telegram, even before the funeral. Could this be confirmation of the story, recounted above, that a dismissal letter had been sent which had now become unnecessary?⁸⁹ In any case, Lijdsman's presence in Rome was considered pressing. He arrived there on 3 September after travelling for a day and a night. On 6 September, Lijdsman wrote to Drehmanns that Murray had not yet received the Dutch provincial's letter for some reason – he did not say what letter this was.⁹⁰

Immediately after Van Rossum's death, telegrams of condolence began to arrive at the Secretariat of State,⁹¹ Propaganda Fide and the Redemptorists from secular dignitaries around the globe. The Dutch minister of justice Donner expressed sympathies on behalf of his government, and condolences were also received from Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, through her secretary, and from the queen mother, Emma.⁹² Countless ecclesiastical dignitaries followed suit, sometimes in strikingly emotional letters, including many cardinals, archbishops and bishops, vicars and

87 'Z. Eminentie Kardinaal van Rossum op Calvariënberg', in: *Sint Carolus Klokje*, 8(1932), no. 6(Oct.), [3–10]; Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, *IAI*, A I 3, 25.

88 KDC, ROSS, no. 28, telegram dispatched on 30 August at 4.15 p.m., received in Wittem at 7.15 p.m. See also AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici* IV, pos. 430a, fasc. 346, audience of Pacelli, 30 August 1932.

89 KDC, ROSS, no. 18: A. Ottaviani, substitute of the Secretariat of State, to B. Lijdsman, telegram 1 September 1932; AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici*, pos. 430a, fasc. 346, f 53.

90 KDC, ROSS, no. 202: B. Lijdsman to J. Drehmanns, Rome 6 September 1932. *De Maasbode*, 17 October 1932, interview with B. Lijdsman. Lijdsman was reportedly received in private audience on 9 September. Pius XI reportedly expressed particular interest in the impressive funeral in Maastricht and in the obituaries in the press.

91 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1932, rubrica 256, fasc. 2, f 72–114: Card. Guglielmo van Rossum. Malattia, morte, funerali, condoglianze. Necrologia; AAEES, *Stati Ecclesiastici* IV, pos. 430a, fasc. 346: audience of Pacelli, 2 September 1932: the Bavarian minister mentioned the many things Van Rossum had done to help the German missionaries, including in difficult times. The French chargé d'affaires also came to offer his condolences.

92 KDC, ROSS, no. 28.

prefects apostolic, nuncios, abbots and superiors general of many orders and congregations, both male and female.⁹³ The *Osservatore Romano*⁹⁴ and dozens of newspapers in the Netherlands and abroad published obituaries of the cardinal, usually in very appreciative tones.⁹⁵ Over the following days, Van Rossum lay in state in a 'chappelle ardente' at Calvariënberg Hospital in Maastricht, where thousands filed past the



Brothers of Maastricht bear the cardinal's open casket, as Sisters of Charity of Saint Charles Borromeo and Redemptoristines look on, 3 September 1932

93 KDC, ROSS, see esp. nos. 28 and 338; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1200b, f 841–1121: c. 300 condolences, mainly from vicars and prefects apostolic, addressed to Salotti, the secretary of Propaganda; f 1122–1128: Giovanni Battista Delle Piane, apostolic delegate of Belgian Congo, praised Van Rossum to the skies.

94 KDC, ROSS, no. 28: Umberto Kaldewey, papal chargé d'affaires in The Hague to B. Lijdsman, 30 August 1932. Kaldewey wrote that he had already telegraphed Pacelli and asked for a report on Van Rossum's last hours and death to be sent to the Secretariat of State as soon as possible for publication in the *Osservatore Romano*. In response, J.M. Drehmanns wrote a *Relazione sull'ultima malattia e la morte dell'Em.o Cardinale Van Rossum*, which was sent to the Secretary of State under cover of a letter dated 31 August 1932. AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1932, rubrica 256, fasc. 2.

95 KDC, ROSS, no. 176. As far as I have been able to find, only J. Schmidlin published a critical obituary, as has been seen in Chapter 14.4.

coffin. Drehmanns sent an impression of the cardinal's death mask to Rome. On 3 September, the day Van Rossum would have turned 78, a solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated in Saint Servatius's church in Maastricht, with Archbishop Joannes Jansen of Utrecht officiating. The impressive funeral procession included four hundred priests, countless religious, twelve bishops and the cardinal-archbishop of Mechelen, Van Roey.⁹⁶ Catholic lay dignitaries, including Prime Minister Ruijs de Beerenbrouck and the other Catholic ministers, as well as the Van Rossum family, followed the coffin, which was covered with a glass lid and was carried through the streets by eight Brothers of Maastricht.⁹⁷

The Holy See was represented by the chargé d'affaires in The Hague, Umberto Kaldewey. The secretary and undersecretary of Propaganda Fide, Salotti and Pecorari, published an extensive, printed obituary on 31 August, which was widely distributed, including among apostolic delegates and missionary superiors. The announcement of his death was also broadcast on Vatican Radio.⁹⁸ But to Pecorari's embarrassment, no representative of Propaganda Fide attended the funeral itself – it was still the holiday season. Salotti had asked one of the local bishops to act as his representative. Given Salotti's absence, Pecorari eventually contacted the Secretariat of State in late September to arrange for a Mass for the repose of the prefect's soul to be said in Rome. It was eventually held in the second half of October.⁹⁹

As soon as the news of Van Rossum's death was received in Rome, his apartment on Piazza di Spagna was sealed, as was the custom.¹⁰⁰ It was opened again on 3 September at 10 o'clock in the morning, in the presence of Ottaviani, the substitute of the Secretariat of State, Salotti, Lijdsman, Murray and several Propaganda officials. Van Rossum's will was then brought to the Vatican, where it was opened and read by Salotti. Because Van Rossum had stipulated that the will should not be published, the newspapers reported only that the cardinal had left all his possessions to Propaganda Fide, except for a few objects and mementos that went to his family and various churches

96 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1932, rubrica 256, fasc. 2, f 117–120, 177–180: Relazione dei funerali; for images of the funeral procession (from 'Polygoonjournaal', a Dutch newsreel), see the Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid. Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A 1 3,25: 'Die letzten Lebenstage Sr. Eminenz Kardinal van Rossum'.

97 'Z. Eminentie Kardinaal van Rossum op Calvariëberg'. [3–10].

98 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1200 b, 4255/1932.

99 AAV, *Segr. di Stato*, anno 1932, rubrica 256, fasc. 2: C. Pecorari, undersecretary of Propaganda, to 'Eccellenza' [Ottaviani?], 28 September 1932, 'personale'; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1200b, f 811–821: Circolare ai Capi di Missione per la morte dell' E.mo Cardinale Guglielmo van Rossum, Prefetto, with the invitation to attend the Requiem Mass "for this chosen soul" in Rome, in the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle on 24 October 1932.

100 KDC, ROSS, no. 202: telegram from Brother Stephanus Jacobs to Wittem, 30 August 1932, 12.45 o'clock from Rome, "everything sadly sealed", in the presence of Vatican officials, Pecorari and Murray.



Crowds attending the funeral

and monasteries. The Redemptorists in Wittem received a few valuable liturgical vessels and vestments, as did Murray, Saint Alphonsus’s tomb in Pagani, the monastery of Sant’Agata dei Goti, the Roman province of the Redemptorists and the Redemptoristines of Scala. Van Rossum’s titular church was given a valuable chasuble. Mementos were bequeathed to a number of convents of women religious, such as the Sisters of Tilburg and the Sisters of Nazareth. Drehmanns selected a significant piece from the cardinal’s estate for the Sisters of Ingenbohl: the crucifix that had always stood on his desk: “I thought to myself, what could be [a] better [gift] for Sisters of the Cross than the cross.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A I 3, 25; *Theodosia* 1933, no. 1 (Jan.), 18–21.

It is evident from documents drawn up after Van Rossum's death that he had bank accounts in Rome, Amsterdam, Ingenbohl and Baltimore. After the costs of the funeral and the various promised bequests had been paid, the total remaining cash sum came to 577,259 lire.¹⁰² Of the money lodged in Amsterdam, six thousand guilders were distributed among the four children of his brothers and the five children of his stepbrother.¹⁰³ Another sum was sent to Wittem, as Van Rossum had promised in 1929, and a study grant to the Redemptorists in Bohemia for a student from the vicinity of Karlsbad.¹⁰⁴ Drehmanns arranged all this in early March 1933.¹⁰⁵

On 11 July 1933, the new prefect of Propaganda Fide, Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, thanked Drehmanns for the cheque of 68,516.64 lire, the remaining balance on Van Rossum's Dutch account. He also asked about the foundation that had been established in 1929 to mark Van Rossum's jubilee for the formation of professors for the indigenous clergy, a fund that Willem Dreesmann administered. This money had also been left to Propaganda, and he asked Drehmanns as executor to make enquiries regarding the state of the deposit and have it sent to Rome. Every penny counted for the Vatican in these years of economic crisis.

Drehmanns had been appointed executor by Van Rossum in 1927, and he received permission from the pope to return to Rome to carry out his duties – his first visit since April 1930. An inventory was drawn up of all the cardinal's belongings in Rome in Drehmanns's presence and that of Salotti, Lijdsman and two witnesses.¹⁰⁶ All the papers related to his position in the curia would normally already have been sorted and removed by curial officials at this point. Material that did not interest them was left, including his correspondence with dozens of orders and congregations and many documents in Dutch, which they probably could not read. On 5 October 1932 Lijdsman wrote to Drehmanns, who had by then returned to the Netherlands, that they were exhausted with the heavy lifting but had cleared everything and had left Rome on 1 October. In reply to a query by Drehmanns concerning various letters, Lijdsman wrote: "Everything that Salotti has taken is piled up in the hall of the Congregation, and the hall has been closed." It would all be sorted after the holidays.

102 KDC, ROSS, no. 115: Nota delle somme di proprietà dell'Eminentissimo Cardinale van Rossum.

103 *Ibid.*: W.M. van Rossum's will, 28 March 1927.

104 Drehmanns, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 107.

105 KDC, ROSS, no. 115: J. Vola to J. Drehmanns, 5 March 1933. Vola, the bursar of the Redemptorists, pointed to the uncertain times and urged Drehmanns to wind up the financial estate soon. ENK, ANPR, no. 7696 contains letters by Drehmanns that mention that Willem Dreesmann and Jan Olav Smit had expressed the desire to purchase rings and other possessions of the late cardinal.

106 KDC, ROSS, no. 202: Seduta del giorno 12 settembre 1932; ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1339, f 733–735: Nota verbale circa varie somme e valori trovati nell'appartamento del card. Van Rossum dopo la sua morte, 12 September 1932. The belongings notably included several boxes, marked 'missions', 'Mass intentions' or 'anti-slavery', containing money (c. 70,000 lire in total) and a gold pectoral cross and chain.

Medals found in Van Rossum’s rooms were distributed among the staff. “I don’t know whether those 2 bags from the drawer in the bedroom have been taken. The Brothers told me that everything had been sorted, including by you. (...) Perhaps it would have been better if you had stayed a little longer and had browsed a little more yourself.”¹⁰⁷

Drehmanns had the papers he had sorted sent to Wittem. The financial overview includes an entry for the cost of transporting 3 chests and 3 cases, weighing 648 kilos in total, from Rome to Maastricht via Switzerland on 15 November 1932.¹⁰⁸ These chests probably also contained books and other belongings of the cardinal’s. Drehmanns later used these documents for his biography of Van Rossum, but some important files were evidently missing, because he asked Salotti in early 1934 where certain letters had gone. Salotti replied that he had found a number of letters by Pius x, Benedict xv and “various sovereigns” among Van Rossum’s papers. Unfortunately, he had been ill when these papers were transferred to the various dicasteries, and he was unable to tell Drehmanns precisely what had happened to them. He only had two letters by Benedict xv, which could not be published because of their confidential nature. He added in a postscript that many other papers had been sent to the Pontifical Biblical Commission and to the monastery of Sant’Alfonso on Via Merulana.¹⁰⁹

The remainder of Van Rossum’s papers was most likely kept in the provincial archive of the Dutch Redemptorists after the publication of Drehmanns’s biography, a collection that was first catalogued there in the early 1960s by the then archivist, A. Sampers.¹¹⁰ Interestingly, these papers contained the German version but not the original Latin text of *De quibusdam rebus*. Could it be that Italian curial officials had removed the Latin version after Van Rossum’s death but not the German text, simply because they could not read it? Or perhaps Drehmanns added the German text to the archive at some later stage. A copy of the printed Latin pamphlet was added to the collection of the Vatican Library in October 1932.

107 KDC, ROSS, no. 338: B. Lijdsman to J. Drehmanns, 5 and 6 October 1932.

108 The chests reportedly contained belongings of the cardinal as well as of Drehmanns. KDC, ROSS, no. 202: B. Lijdsman to J. Drehmanns, 24 September 1932. In the same letter, Lijdsman said Carlo Salotti was rather glum because he would probably not become Van Rossum’s successor, while he preferred not to serve as secretary under Marchetti-Selvaggiani, whose name was doing the rounds at this point.

109 KDC, ROSS, no. 72: C. Salotti to J. Drehmanns, 18 April 1934.

110 See KDC, ROSS, no. 20, which mentions 26 May 1962 as the date on which a letter was opened that had been written by Queen Victoria Eugenia of Spain and had been kept in the archive.

The pamphlet was not forgotten in the Vatican.¹¹¹ It served as input for later proposals for the reform of the Roman curia, and was given to Pope John XXIII in 1959 during the preparatory phase of the Second Vatican Council. Renewing the curia's structure of government continued to be felt as an urgent problem. Only a few weeks before his death, Roncalli concluded that curial officials were still hamstrung by their "limited, parochial mentality, because they had never been outside the region of Rome: they could not view the interests of the church from a truly universal perspective".¹¹²

111 C. Costantini, secretary of Propaganda, used the pamphlet in 1939 when he was writing proposals for reform during the *sede vacante* after Pius XI's death. He expanded his proposals even further in 1949 when Pius XII considered convoking an ecumenical council. Giuseppe Butturini, *Alle origini del Concilio Vaticano secondo. Una proposta di Celso Costantini* (Pordenone 1988), 59; see also De Valk, "Some matters that should be improved in the Government of the Church".

112 Galavotti, 'Sulle riforme della curia romana nel Novecento', 876.

Retrospect

From 1895 onwards, the Redemptorist Willem van Rossum lived in Rome, where he worked in the curia for 36 years. The career he had during this period spanned four pontificates and was nothing short of brilliant. Created a cardinal in 1911, he occupied an exceptional and sometimes difficult position among his predominantly Italian fellow cardinals. His austere and unbending Dutch personality contrasted sharply with the exuberant and flexible character of his Italian entourage. The ascetical lifestyle with which he had been imbued as an orphan and later as a young Redemptorist was alien to most of his colleagues. It may well be asked whether he ever really felt at home there. And yet, even though he was an outsider, he thrived in this environment. He was a survivor and, as far as necessary, he adapted to the patterns of life that were expected of princes of the church. From 1918 onwards he lived in the sumptuous if somewhat run-down seventeenth-century Palazzo di Propaganda in the centre of Rome, beside the Spanish Steps and the Fontana della Barcaccia. It is easy to imagine that whenever he looked out his window, he would turn his gaze swiftly from the hustle and bustle of Italian secular life to rest upon Mary Immaculate atop her tall column in front of the palazzo. His devotion to her was strong, as was his devotion to Alphonsus Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists. The Dutch cardinal loved the Catholic church; he lived for this institution with its baroque devotions, its centuries-old traditions and its 'one true' doctrine of the faith.

Anyone who wishes to understand Willem van Rossum's Roman career will have to look first at certain aspects of his youth and the years of his education. When he was young, Dutch Catholics were an underprivileged segment of society, and he experienced this at first hand as a schoolboy in the predominantly Protestant town of Zwolle. Born in 1854, a year after the establishment of the hierarchy, he grew up at a time when Catholics were gradually working their way towards equal rights in a country dominated by Calvinism. Priests played an important part in this: the clericalism of the nineteenth century afforded them a leading role, not just in the religious field but in all other sectors of society.

It remains unclear precisely when Van Rossum decided to become a priest. He himself mentioned an inspiring parish mission preached by Redemptorist priests, which he had supposedly attended together with his mother. It may be doubted whether this memory was accurate: his mother died when he was nine years old,

three years after his father's death, and no Redemptorist missions were held in Zwolle during this time. But what is clear is that he came to a definite decision to become a priest while in the orphanage, and he received the support of the parish priest and the Schaezman family, the family of the then coadjutor archbishop of Utrecht. It was rare in those days for a boy from the lower middle classes to embark on a clerical career, but as his secretary and biographer Drehmanns noted, he saw his plan through by sheer force of will.

Van Rossum reputedly had a strong devotion to Mary even in the orphanage. Was this perhaps a substitute for the lack of motherly love in his life as an orphan? It is difficult to assess what impact the loss of his parents had on the young Willem, because he rarely talked about it. Some commentators ventured that life in the orphanage made him modest and humble, whereas they attributed his remote and conservative nature to the region from which he hailed. It is likely that his experiences as an orphan contributed to a certain hardness in his character, both towards himself and towards others.

Willem spent most of his adolescence at the archdiocesan minor seminary in Culemborg, which was run by capable Jesuits. Their influence on Van Rossum was unmistakable. The struggle to recover ground lost to Protestantism was the stuff of Jesuit history, and they strengthened his antipathy to the Reformation. At the same time, they nurtured in him a deep love of the pope and of the great global church with its centre in Rome. A smart and diligent student, Van Rossum learned in his rhetoric classes to reason clearly and to solve problems according to the method of the Society.

And yet he chose to join neither the order nor the archdiocese, but the Redemptorists. At the time, this congregation, whose founder Alphonsus had recently been canonised and declared a doctor of the church, was stricter than the Jesuits. In his motivation letter, Willem wrote that he felt he had to do penance for sins of the past – did he feel guilt at his parents' death or remorse at experiences during his years in the orphanage? – and that the strict observance of the doctrine of Alphonsus seemed the most appropriate way of life to him. The popularity of the congregation at the time was due mainly to its parish missions, during which the Redemptorists attempted to bring the faithful back to the straight and narrow through fire and brimstone sermons, as well as to the re-education of priests, who were believed to have strayed from the Vatican's rules in the years before the restoration of the hierarchy. In this sense, he belonged clearly to the great revival movement that was gripping both Protestants and Catholics in Europe and America. Van Rossum made a considered and specific choice, although his decision to work for the strengthening

of the Catholic faith as a Redemptorist was probably influenced by Jan Kronenburg, a friend from the same part of the country.

Once he had joined the Redemptorists, Van Rossum found a like-minded mentor in the provincial superior, Petrus Oomen. They shared a love for Alphonsus and a thirst for perfection, and they spared neither themselves nor others. Oomen marshalled Van Rossum and Kronenburg for his double strategy of raising the standard and orthodoxy of the Dutch province and of advancing Alphonsus's place in international ecclesiastical discourse. He appointed Van Rossum, then 29, professor of dogmatic theology at the major seminary in Wittem, which gave his protégé the opportunity to deepen his acquaintance with the doctrines of the founder. Van Rossum's commitment, precision and orthodoxy and his powers of persuasion were such that Oomen encouraged him to bring his work to the attention of the general government of the congregation in Rome. Successfully so, because Van Rossum quickly acquired the reputation of being an expert in the dogmatic work of the founder.

Van Rossum exerted himself to live in strict observance of the teachings of Alphonsus – in addition to the Virgin Mary this was an important pillar in his life – which he interpreted in an unbending and inflexible fashion. Consequently, he was somewhat less of a success when it came to his other functions. As prefect of students, he proved to be a strict and often unfriendly director and he was not much loved. As rector of Wittem, similarly, his cold nature was frequently in evidence, further aggravated by his lack of pastoral experience. He did excel as a fundraiser, though, and as an incisive overseer of building projects around the Wittem monastery. Not only did he preside over a renovation, albeit one regarded as disastrous from the perspective of cultural history, but he also added an impressive library to the monastery, as well as a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Redemptorist Brother Gerard Majella.

His position in the Dutch Redemptorist province became increasingly difficult. As rector of Wittem, he was effectively the highest-ranking member after the provincial superior. The latter position was, surprisingly, filled by the more diplomatic Jan Kronenburg in 1894; this, too, was probably the doing of Oomen, who had at that point been in Rome for a number of years as a counsellor to the general superior. The forceful manner in which Van Rossum attempted to persuade his fellow Redemptorists to observe the doctrine and rule of Alphonsus met with resentment. His confreres preferred a way of life that was adapted in certain ways to the Dutch context, including smoking and drinking. To a person as fastidious as Van Rossum this was unacceptable, and he ascribed their position to the undesirable influences of modern society. He believed that Redemptorists everywhere should all follow the same rules. To save his conscience, he resorted to the indignity of delating his confreres, particularly his old friend Kronenburg, to the general superior in Rome.

We must ask whether Van Rossum was acting purely from considerations of principle in bombarding the general with complaints or whether he also had more opportunistic motives. Was he perhaps deliberately undermining his own position in the Dutch province to force the general to transfer him to Rome? There he would be able to dedicate himself fully to the study of Alphonsus without having to concern himself with tasks he found less engrossing, such as popular missions and pastoral ministry. It is not impossible that Oomen, Kronenburg and Van Rossum in fact conspired to bring about this outcome. Furthermore, Oomen, who had been procurator general since 1894 and thus dealt with relations between the Redemptorists and the Vatican, knew that the Holy Office was looking for an expert on Alphonsian doctrine, as the writings of this new doctor of the church had given rise to controversy.

In any event, Van Rossum was in fact transferred to Rome and within a year he was nominated for appointment to the Holy Office, the curial department charged with defending the doctrine of the faith. The general superior praised his qualities, but did not conceal the fact that Van Rossum was unpopular. Perhaps the Holy Office regarded this as an advantage, because it might mean that he was less likely to be influenced by personal relationships in his – strictly confidential – work. For the Redemptorists, his appointment as consultor was a golden opportunity to strengthen their ties with this powerful dicastery and to enhance their position with regard to the other orders and congregations. Moreover, in his new position Van Rossum would be able to ensure that Alphonsus would be given his due place among the Fathers of the Church and the other saints, whose influence over church doctrine was paramount thanks to the efforts of scholars from older, larger orders, such as the Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans and Jesuits.

His appointment to the Holy Office was consistent with Van Rossum's drive to promote orthodoxy, but it also marked a turning point in his career. No longer would the academic study of Alphonsus be his primary occupation. This was just as well, as it is unlikely that he would ever have become a true intellectual. His interest in Alphonsus was inspired too much by the desire to promote the founder. Henceforth, his task would be to defend church doctrine in general. It would become evident during his lifetime that Alphonsus would never be able to rival the quality and influence of Thomas Aquinas in the field of dogmatic theology, where Thomas was the undisputed authority. However, the founder of the Redemptorists did acquire a strong position in moral theology.

Despite his new career, Van Rossum never ceased to consider himself a Redemptorist first. It transpired in 1909 that his confreres did not want him as their next general superior, notwithstanding the support that his candidature received from the departing general government and from Pope Pius X. His lack of flexibility and

empathy was surely the decisive factor. It did not stop him, in his various positions in the curia and even after he became a cardinal, from continuing to expound the teachings of Alphonsus, and he proved a reliable advocate for the interests of his congregation. Even as a cardinal, he tried to observe a religious daily schedule as much as possible. His days began around four in the morning and were filled more with prayer and meditation than with the demands of a social life. The male community of the Redemptorists would remain his home throughout his life. It was there that he found what Thomas Aquinas called the *amor amicitiae*, the love that is called friendship, not just with Oomen, Kronenburg and Drehmanns, but also with his other confreres. It was entirely consistent with this that he preferred to be buried in Wittem rather than Rome.

Van Rossum joined the curia at a time that the antimodernist reaction was gaining ground there. Whereas Pope Leo XIII (1878–1903) had looked out to the world, his successor Pius X (1903–1914) was preoccupied by the influence of modern science on church teaching and on society in general. In his view, the traditional doctrine of the faith and a life of devotion could raise a barrier against modernist influences, which included not only Protestantism, but also a wide range of movements such as liberalism, Christian democracy, socialism and feminism.

Van Rossum felt very much at home in this curial environment under Pius X, and he soon found the company of a growing number of like-minded clerics. The scrupulous interpretation of dogma and of the faith that he had championed in his study of the doctrine of Alphonsus was also in evidence in the policy documents and opinions he wrote for the Holy Office. He was a hard and diligent worker, who had an almost Calvinist sense of duty. His great analytical powers allowed him to formulate problems clearly, to propose well-considered opinions and defend them persuasively on the basis of the teaching of the church. He critically scrutinised not only his opponents' arguments, but also those of his allies.

These qualities attracted the attention of a number of influential men in the curia, such as the Capuchin and later Cardinal José Vives y Tutó, who, like Van Rossum, led a strictly regulated and strongly devotional religious life. Vives had close ties with Pius X and was a driving force behind Van Rossum's career. The Dutchman was appointed a consultor of the commission for the codification of canon law, a body that some believed to be the nerve centre of the struggle against modernism. At the highpoint of this rather oppressive period in the history of the church, Van Rossum meticulously studied church doctrine on the basis of Scripture, tradition and the writings of the Church Fathers, to discover who was erring and how they erred, and to devise ways to induce them to return to true doctrine, or otherwise be fittingly

punished. He was convinced that anyone who did not fully accept what the church taught was an unworthy member who should leave the church. He did believe, however, that everyone must be given an opportunity to repent of their errors; this was possibly an echo of Alphonsus's more merciful attitude. Pius X involved him in the drafting of the controversial antimodernist oath, which was imposed upon professors of theology until the 1960s.

Van Rossum's loyalty to the pope and to orthodoxy paid rich dividends, and he was created a cardinal in 1911 and appointed president of the Pontifical Biblical Commission in 1914. He had in the meantime become an influential proponent of the antimodernist strand within the Roman curia. But that did not mean he was willing to be used for the politics of insinuation and defamation that were the trademark of this school's greatest intriguer, Umberto Benigni. Benigni's faithful allies were unsure in which camp to place the Dutch cardinal. Van Rossum's fidelity was to the church, the pope and Alphonsus, and he chose his own path.

The fact that Van Rossum never openly associated himself with the group around Benigni probably saved his career under Benedict XV (1914–1922). Pius X's successor pushed back against the coterie around Benigni and put an end to the culture of fear within the church. Benedict was initially suspicious of Van Rossum, but the cardinal succeeded in convincing him of his loyalty. The Dutch government unintentionally lent a hand in accomplishing this. Even before the beginning of the First World War, the Netherlands had high hopes of becoming the leader of an international drive for peace. During the war years, it sought to form an alliance with other neutral powers, including the Vatican, whose main objective under Benedict XV was to restore world peace. These shared interests led to the appointment of a Dutch legate to the Vatican in 1915, for the first time in decades. The Holy See began to pay greater heed to the affairs of the Catholic church in the Netherlands.

During the years before and after the First World War, the relationship between Van Rossum and the Netherlands was good, and mutual services were rendered. Yet his position in his native land was quite unlike that of many other non-Italian cardinals, who often also represented the interests of their respective countries to the Holy See. In the Netherlands, the government was reluctant to allow any political involvement by this prince of the church, except of course when it suited the government's interests, such as when it seemed likely that part of the country's territory would be given to Belgium after the First World War.

But subsequently, especially under Pius XI, Van Rossum's relationship with the bishops – who were traditionally averse to Roman interference – and with government ministers, including Catholic ministers, deteriorated markedly. Van Rossum's cre-

ation as cardinal had given Catholics a growing sense of self-confidence. This was further enhanced by the fact that Catholic politicians were increasingly appointed to influential positions in the government, where they had to tread very carefully so as not to antagonise orthodox Calvinists. They were keen to avoid any expression of Catholic triumphalism. Van Rossum took a dim view of the elaborate manoeuvring that was required to spare the feelings of antipapists. His perspective had become that of a global Catholicism that was spreading its wings and was not to be impeded in its development.

Although he hailed from a country with multiple denominations, the ecumenical initiatives that were emerging at the time did not greatly interest him. He was never much given to dialogue and retained a staunchly anti-Protestant attitude throughout his life, as did most other prelates of the curia, for instance with respect to mixed marriages. To a certain extent, Van Rossum also reflected the Catholicism of his native country, where the clergy chose in 'precious obstinacy' to engage, not in confrontation or conversation, but in silent rivalry with Protestants.¹ His strategy in Scandinavia was to show that the Catholic church, the one true church, had much to offer, and hope that the Lutherans would spontaneously choose to return to the fold of Mother Church.

In 1918, while the First World War was still raging, Benedict xv placed Van Rossum, who was one of few cardinals from a neutral country, at the head of the Congregation de Propaganda Fide (the Vatican's mission department). This functionary was traditionally known as the 'red pope' because he held one of the highest posts in the Vatican. Despite the experience that Van Rossum had already acquired within this congregation, the appointment of a non-Italian was exceptional.

In this new position, Van Rossum again looked to the teaching of the church as his guiding principle, especially the original instructions and programmes from the time that Propaganda was founded, in 1622. But whereas church teaching had made him a champion of orthodox principles and strict rules – against the current of the times – in his posts in the Holy Office, the commission for the codification of canon law and the Biblical Commission, the same historical guidelines now placed him in a position of progress. On the basis of centuries-old instructions, he fashioned a groundbreaking policy that took aim against nationalism in missionary work and

1 K. Wojtyła (later Pope John Paul II) used the term 'precious obstinacy' in 1947 to characterise Dutch Catholicism: it was the result of a historically grown rivalry with the Protestants, to whom Catholics proudly and successfully wished to demonstrate the lived truth of Catholicism in daily practice. Catholicism had taken the shape it had precisely by isolating itself and emphasising clear contrasts with Protestantism. Karol Wojtyła, 'Koppig katholicisme', in: *Kerkelijke documentatie* 121, 30 (2002), 277–285.

strongly promoted the building up of indigenous churches. His vision was articulated in Benedict XV's apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* (1919) and Pius XI's encyclical *Rerum Ecclesiae* (1926).

This new course adopted by Propaganda was providential, in the sense that it corresponded very closely to the principle of national self-determination that the American President Woodrow Wilson was propagating at the peace conference in Paris. It was a precursor to the wave of decolonisation that inexorably followed after the Second World War. Yet the political constellation at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the Western powers ruling large parts of Africa and Asia through colonies and protectorates, was an important precondition for the expansion of the Catholic church, and continued to be so during Van Rossum's tenure. Western colonialism meant that the other great religions Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism were unable to prevent the invasion of Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

As a result of Van Rossum's policy, the church began to prioritise the appointment of indigenous church leaders at a time when colonial powers were not yet contemplating the transfer of their own authority to indigenous political leaders. It is striking that, by contrast with the Western views current at the time, he never seems to have doubted the leadership capabilities of Chinese or African bishops, for instance, or to have espoused any other form of racism or antisemitism – some regarded him as a friend of the Jews. All this ensured that, when the wave of decolonisation surged after the Second World War, he had created an exceptionally favourable starting position for the Catholic church in the mission territories.

His commitment to creating indigenous churches also served the strategy of centralisation in the Catholic church: churches in the mission territories should no longer be dependent on the political powers, the colonisers, but on the Holy See. The missions were imposed by Rome upon all Catholics worldwide as a more or less universal duty, and this did much to disassociate them from the atmosphere of nationalism, while at the same time strengthening a sense of supra-nationality.

Van Rossum was not only the creator of a new missionary policy for the Holy See – a new policy based on old principles – but he also implemented this policy by concrete action. As prefect of Propaganda, he turned out to be a master organiser and strategist in the pursuit of one clear goal: to bring the entire missionary project – initiative, organisation, funding, personnel management, policy targets – under centralised Roman control. A sense of urgency due to the growing activity of Protestant missionary societies certainly played a part in this. As soon as he was appointed, he set about reorganising Propaganda, turning the congregation into a more efficient body capable not only of dealing with the executive aspects of the missions

but also of setting policy. He proved very adept at learning from past experiences, including those of Protestant missionaries, and was ruthless in taking over any successful and promising organisation that could serve his purposes.

He also succeeded in interesting many religious orders and congregations – male and female – in the missions and mobilising them for it. Remarkably, he strove to give female religious who worked in the missions a position of organisational and financial independence vis-à-vis their male counterparts, although it is unlikely that he had much sympathy for the nascent feminist movement. Except for religious sisters, women were almost entirely absent from Van Rossum's life. The curia was an exclusively male preserve.

The cardinal did not realise all these achievements without a struggle. He encountered a great deal of opposition in the curia and even within his own dicastery. He was never much of a diplomat and was rarely willing to compromise. He exhibited his usual obstinacy and tenacity in his attempts to improve the way the church functioned, and he was unable to muster much sympathy for opposing views. These characteristics made him few friends, and yet he managed to forge a path for himself. Allies within the Sacred College were important for this, but because the stock of the few truly influential men could suddenly plummet as the pope's preferences changed, he pursued a strategy of not making enemies, keeping his head down and adopting an attitude of subservience. Van Rossum's education had trained him for this, from his years in the orphanage and his time with the Redemptorists onwards. He had also learned there to guard secrets that were likely to cause damage to the church, as well as how to go about realising his objectives. He usually remained in the background, allowing colleagues to float ideas to the pope or to take decisions that were formally his responsibility. As a result, these colleagues received the credit when things went well, but also did his dirty work for him when things did not go well. He had no scruples about using dubious practices, such as spying on priests deemed to have deviated from the right path. All the more so when they were promising young priests that he had taken under his wing: he certainly took to the Italian patronage system with gusto. A number of his protégés failed to live up to his high expectations, but others succeeded and became very influential members of the curia, most famously Angelo Roncalli (later Pope John XXIII).

The opposition he encountered from the curia in his attempt to build up the missions undoubtedly fuelled his irritation at the way the Vatican administration worked. Bureaucratic obstructionism, favouritism, clerical power relations and the aberrations of overzealous priests (including his own secretary), uncertainty because the pope could advance or block anything at whim, and the resulting inefficiency of gov-

ernment – all these things were so many thorns in his side. He partly blamed this on the Italian character of the curia, but during the course of the 1920s he increasingly clashed with Pius XI. In a system in which open discussion and criticism were unthinkable, he took recourse towards the end of his life to writing a devastating pamphlet in which he exposed the malpractices in the government of the church. Remarkably, he presented the governmental structure of orders and religious as an alternative, a structure in which the voice of the chapter was decisive.

De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis, which can be called his ‘spiritual testament’, initially circulated anonymously within a limited group of people, but Pius XI probably got wind of it and its authorship shortly before Van Rossum’s death. It was rumoured that the pope had decided to fire him. But Van Rossum’s criticisms were shared by many. He was an orthodox cardinal, but both progressives and traditionalists in the curia wished to bridge the gap between the church and modern society. The document was part of a rising chorus of voices in the first half of the twentieth century that regarded internationalisation and ending the Italian monopoly in the curia as the means to realising a truly universal church.

Epilogue

Willem Marinus van Rossum's memory in the Roman curia soon faded after his death. The hierarchical structure of the Catholic church ensured that the success of the missionary project was ascribed entirely to Benedict xv and Pius xi; the strategist and organiser behind their policies was relegated to the shadows. It is an intriguing question why the manuscripts of the two missionary documents *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae*, which Van Rossum's biographers Drehmanns and Smit personally consulted, can now no longer be found in the archives of Propaganda Fide. Other documents reportedly in these archives – such as diaries or diary notes by Van Rossum¹ – are no longer there either. I do not wish to imply that these documents were wilfully removed from the archives, but there is no denying that Van Rossum failed to receive the historiographical recognition he deserved as prefect of Propaganda. The anonymous pamphlet in which he hurled criticism at the pope and the curia perhaps helped to induce forgetfulness among the circles in question.

There are only a few places in Rome that still bear witness to Van Rossum's memory. As far as I was able to ascertain, there is nothing at all in the Collegio Urbano on the Gianicolo to commemorate the man who built it. There is reportedly still a portrait of him in the palazzo of Propaganda Fide on Piazza di Spagna, and another in the Penitentiary. Neither space is open to the public. His name is listed in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme on a plaque of the cardinal priests of that title, appearing between his predecessors and successors. The Redemptorist generalate today has the most Roman memorials to Van Rossum: there is a portrait and the stained-glass windows of Saints William and Marinus which once graced his private chapel on Via dello Statuto. The fine ornament of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour that Van Rossum had affixed on the corner of his apartment on Via dello Statuto and Via Pellegrino Rossi, where he lived from 1912 to 1918, is still there.

In the Netherlands, by contrast, the cardinal's death attracted a great deal of attention. He was no longer able to frustrate the agendas of this country's bishops and politicians, who therefore felt free to use him to further their own projects. More than ever before, Van Rossum became an icon for the edification of the Catholic pop-

1 Information received from Msgr Karel Kasteel, a former consultor of Propaganda Fide, during a conversation with the author in Rome on 15 November 2012. Kasteel said he once saw diaries or diary notes by Van Rossum, shown to him by N. Kowalsky, archivist of Propaganda Fide.

ulation. His anonymous pamphlet does not appear ever to have reached the Dutch bishops.

The Catholics of Amsterdam commemorated him in the Concertgebouw concert hall in January 1933. Van Rossum's cardinal's hat – the symbol par excellence of cardinalial dignity – was placed in Saint Michael's church in Zwolle that same month. That was unusual, because these hats normally went to the curial cardinals' titular church, in this case Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.

Van Rossum's tomb in Wittem soon became an attraction, almost a place of pilgrimage, as the registers of visitors testify. Every year, thousands of Catholics came to visit, many laypeople but also a great number of bishops and missionary bishops. Bishop Peter Francis Rayappa of Kumbakonam (India) came to visit "the tomb of the Saintly Cardinal" on 15 July 1934, followed a month later by the vicar apostolic of Wonsan in Korea.² The Redemptorists opened a Cardinal Van Rossum Museum in Wittem in September 1933.³

Streets and squares soon began to be named after him, for example in 's-Hertogenbosch, where a square called Veemarkt became Kardinaal van Rossumplein in March 1933. A large statue erected at the initiative of the mayor of that city was unveiled on the square on 24 June 1934, during the sixth national congress of Dutch Catholics. After the ceremony, 25,000 people marched past the statue and the assembled dignitaries, including all the Dutch bishops and the papal internuncio. In a letter dated 8 June 1934 and addressed to the internuncio, the prefect, Fumasoni-Biondi, conveyed Pius XI's satisfaction at the honour that had been bestowed "on the man who had helped him so well in promoting the holy work of the missions".⁴ He observed that it was partly due to this illustrious cardinal that so many Dutch Catholics had embraced the missionary ideal. The number of Dutch missionaries did indeed grow very strongly up to the 1960s.

After Van Rossum's death, the Redemptorists allowed Drehmanns to work on his biography, which he regarded as a step towards a possible canonisation. He asked various close collaborators to record their memories of Van Rossum, including Angelo Roncalli and Paolo Manna – the former was himself canonised in 2014 and the latter was beatified in 2001. He told the sisters in Ingenbohl, "Please also write

2 KDC, ROSS, no. 411.

3 KDC, ROSS, no. 422 contains an inventory of the museum drawn up in late 1953. The KDC archive includes many visitors' books, such as no. 421, which has the signatures of numerous high-ranking prelates. The museum reported the number of 10,067 visitors to the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (the Dutch national statistics office) for the year 1938 (ROSS, no. 423).

4 ASPF, *Nova Series*, vol. 1202, f 122: F. van Lanschot, mayor of 's-Hertogenbosch, to prefect P. Fumasoni-Biondi, 14 May 1934; f 126: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to the internuncio L. Schioppa (The Hague), 8 June 1934; f 160–163: L. Schioppa to P. Fumasoni-Biondi, 25 June 1934; f 164: P. Fumasoni-Biondi to L. Schioppa, 11 July 1934.

down the judgement that you formed of him, which will be of great help if the good Lord ever permits a cause for his canonisation [to be opened].”⁵ Roncalli thanked Drehmanns for the latter’s account of “the last moments of this saintly cardinal, whom I will always remember with sincere veneration”, but sadly could not spare the time to record his memories. Paolo Manna praised “the man of Providence” and sent him some memories of “the towering figure of this illustrious Prince of the Church”. He called his prefecture “the golden age of the modern apostolate”.⁶ There were even a few miraculous cures in the years after Van Rossum’s death.⁷ But it was all to no avail: the possibility of canonisation was never seriously considered by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints.⁸ Given the views that existed in the curia with regard to Van Rossum, this was perhaps not unexpected.

Another statue, by the Italian sculptor Enrico Quattrini, was unveiled on 22 May 1939, this time in Wittem. It bears the inscription, “Raised from poverty, he was given a place among the princes of God’s people; pious, strong and constant, he brought countless people under the sweet reign of Christ.” Almost three hundred Catholic dignitaries – bishops, abbots, superiors, politicians, professors, entrepreneurs et cetera – supported the initiative. Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi, who had succeeded Van Rossum as prefect of Propaganda Fide in 1933, travelled to Wittem for the occasion and expressed his deep devotion to his “great and unforgettable predecessor”. He also emphasised that the Netherlands topped the list of countries that supported the missions and was an example to other nations.⁹

The inauguration took place on the eve of the Second World War, which heralded a new era in world history and in the history of the church. And yet the centenary of Van Rossum’s birth was celebrated magnificently in Zwolle in 1954, to acquaint “the younger generation (...) with this great figure, who despite physical weakness achieved so much for the Church of God through true Dutch determination and a wholly sacrificial supernatural disposition”, as the director of the pontifical mission societies put it in a press release.¹⁰ The internuncio, Paolo Giobbe, represented the

5 Institutsarchiv Ingenbohl, IAI, A I 3, 25: ‘Die letzten Lebenstage Sr. Eminenz Kardinal van Rossum’.

6 KDC, ROSS, no. 124: A. Roncalli to J. Drehmanns, 21 May 1934; P. Manna to J. Drehmanns, 13 January 1935; See KDC, ROSS, no. 68: for letters from E. Mooney, C. Salotti and F. Marchetti-Selvaggiani.

7 KDC, ROSS, no. 383: ‘Gebedsverhoringen van Kardinaal van Rossum’, in: *Zondagsblad. Heilige Familie voor het RK Huisgezin*, 72(1936), 358.

8 A. Owczarski c.ss.R., member of the Dicastery for the Causes of the Saints, to V. Poels, 11 March 2019.

9 KDC, ROSS, no. 193: Circular letter to Dutch Catholics concerning a funerary monument for Cardinal Van Rossum by the Executive committee, Sept. 1933; no. 259: Orde van de plechtige onthulling van het grafmonument; *De Maasbode*, 23 May 1939; ‘Inauguratio monumenti Cardinalis van Rossum’, in: *Analecta Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris*, 18(1939), 189–193. For the Dutch missionary endeavour, see A. Camps, V. Poels, J. Willemsen, *Dutch Missionary Activities. An Oral History Project [1976–1988]*, Nijmegen 2005.

10 KDC, ROSS, no. 181–183. Press release by H.J.J. van Hussen, 20 August 1954.



*Inauguration of the statue of Van Rossum by Cardinal Pietro Fumasoni Biondi,
Wittem, 22 May 1939*

Holy See during the ceremony and Pius XII sent a message with his blessing.¹¹ Jan Olav Smit, then a canon of Saint Peter's, gave a speech entitled "Cardinal Van Rossum, a great man and a wise administrator". According to Smit, the prefect's motto in Rome could have been *Age quod agis*: whatever you do, do it well, a phrase derived from his fellow Zwolle native Thomas a Kempis. He recalled Van Rossum's iron discipline, a product of his education, his piety which kept him in constant contact with God, and his powerful and resolute administrative qualities, characterised by a "truly Dutch entrepreneurial spirit".¹² The mayor of Zwolle unveiled a commemorative plaque in the Cardinal Van Rossum House, built on the approximate site of the old orphanage.

And then silence descended upon Van Rossum's legacy. It was soon no longer regarded as self-evidently desirable to exhort Dutch Catholics to imitate Van Rossum in his piety, filial devotion to the church and missionary activity. Orthodoxy ceded its place as the primary focus of the church to dialogue with non-Catholics, an endeavour once again led by a Dutch curial cardinal, Johannes Willebrands. As secretary and later as president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity from 1960 to 1989, Willebrands embodied the very antithesis of all that Van Rossum had stood for.¹³ In the Netherlands, Van Rossum disappeared from collective memory and from Catholic historiography. But the monuments in Amsterdam (the Begijnhof), 's-Hertogenbosch, Zwolle and Wittem have so far weathered the storms of history, and still stand as silent witnesses to the most influential Dutchman in the history of the Catholic church, more influential even than Pope Adrian VI.

11 Special editions of the periodicals *Missie-actie* and *SPL* were published in 1954: 'De kardinaal der Missies' ('The Cardinal of Missions') and 'De Kardinaal der inheemse Priesters' ('The Cardinal of Indigenous Priests'), with articles by leading figures in the pontifical mission societies in Rome and the Netherlands and a number of missionary bishops.

12 Smit, *Kardinaal van Rossum*, 16–21.

13 K. Schelkens, *Johannes Willebrands. Een leven in gesprek*, Amsterdam 2020.

Appendix 1

The text of the anonymous pamphlet *De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis*, printed without place or year of publication [1931], 20 pages. There is a copy in AAEISS, *Stati Ecclesiastici* IV, pos. 469, fasc. 472. The typescript copy of a German translation in KDC, ROSS, no. 328, identifies Cardinal Van Rossum as the author. For further details, see Chapter 21.3.

De quibusdam rebus in ecclesiastico regimine emendandis

Manuscripti instar

I

De malis Ecclesiam hodie opprimentibus

Rei catholicae condicionem toto orbe terrarum circumspectanti id hodie mirabile occurrit: non deesse utique zelosissimos catholicos, laicos et clericos, atque praecellosos Episcopos, qui toto animi ardore ac mentis acumine in salutem animarum et decus Ecclesiae procurandum incumbant; fructus quoque saepe laetissimos his apostolicorum virorum conatibus succedere... Omnia tamen simul considerando Ecclesiam longe ab eo abesse, ut societatis humanae dux sit aut directrix, vitaeque sive sociali sive intellectuali hodiernae formam aut characterem suum imprimat.

Collabi religionem multis in locis cernimus; terramque ei pedetentim abripi; atheismum et haereses magnis conatibus propagari; mores christianos locum cedere iuribus libidinis palam proclamatis; animos indies a rebus sacris alienari. Ecclesia pristino suo loco glorioso iam dudum excidit, auctoritatem et popularitatem generalem amisit: non amplius magistrae vices gerit aut reginae, sed peregrinae aegre toleratae, quam inimicam esse humanae felicitatis ac progressus multi putant et aversantur. Vita moderna non Christo obedit, sed aliis omnino potestatibus; eventus summi momenti sine nobis, imo contra nos fiunt. Leges, mores, institutiones, vita familiaris, tota cultura alienis principiis ut plurimum famulantur. Publica opinio agitatione partium, diariis, libris, theatris, cinematographis, radiophonio regitur, religioni nostrae et Ecclesiae maximam partem contrariis. Quo fit ut ingens hominum multitudo indies a principiis catholicis modoque res videndi catholico alienetur.

Abreptae nobis sunt ut plurimum universitates, iam liberalismi et atheismi cathedrae ac propugnacula facta. Abrepta vita publica comitiaque legislativa, in quibus Catholici fere nusquam duces sunt, ne in statibus catholicis quidem; imo – sane mirum – in statibus catholicis minime. Abrepta cum scholis mediis et infimis passim iuventus. Abrepti homines culti theoriis falsis imbuti. Abrepta classis operaria in apertam socialismi et communismi apostasiam delapsa.

Sed etiam palam profligari religionem nostram passim videmus, imo in ipsis catholicis nationibus (modo in Italia, Gallia, Lusitania, America Meridionali, modo in Mexico, Lituania, Hispania) libertate bonisque suis spoliari, publica contumelia affici, ac persecutione propulsari; viros religiosos feminasque sanctimoniales tamquam humani generis pestem ex integris rebuspublicis eiici.

Augetur huius calamitatis gravitas eo quod innumerae Asiae atque Africae gentes nunc demum maiore cum nisu in civilitatis europeae sinum se conferre festinant, uti iam in Japone factum videmus. Quodsi isti infideles culti, nostrasque universitates europeas aut americanas et urbes frequentantes, vident catholicam religionem vel ab ipsis Europaeis nihili fere haberi: quomodo sperare licet eos religionem nostram suis in terris magni aestimaturos, eiusque propagationi fautores esse? Missionarii nostri pergunt laboriose convertere singulos infideles, imprimis illiteratos; verum cultura altior in illas terras recens invecta et invehenda, proh dolor, non christianismus erit, sed modernus ille paganismus quem Ecclesia ne in terris quidem catholicis expugnare valebat. Omissiones igitur nostrae non solum domi vehementer nocent, sed etiam evangelizationem mundi pagani penitus impediunt.

Certe missiones nostrae ubique gentium florent. Minimam tamen partem culturae classiumque dirigentium in terris illis longinquis attingunt. Deplorabile autem prorsus est, quod dum missionarii summo cum sudore quotannis aliquot dena milia hominum Christo lucrentur, eodem tempore nos in terris christianis multo plures fideles quotannis misere perdimus!

Neque tam ingentes ruinas tantamque ignominiam eo excusare licet quod tempora nostra nimis iniqua religioni sint. Id enim iactare idem esset ac contumelia Ecclesiam afficere. Nam Ecclesia a Christo omnibus temporibus adaptata et omnibus vicissitudinibus superandis par condita est. Imo tempore nostro, quamvis utique iniquissimo, non desunt momenta actioni catholicae summe utilia, qualia anteactis temporibus Ecclesia nunquam habuit; e.g. libertas agendi, loquendi, scribendi, libertas et facilitas ideas propagandi. Quae libertates anteactis saeculis multum circumscriptae erant, e.g. tyrannide principum absolutorum. Adest etiam summa facilitas organizandi multitudines, alloquendi verbo scriptoque simul decies centena milia hominum, qua facilitate profecto non solis francomurariis et socialistis uti licebat, sed etiam catholicis, dummodo serio voluissent. Adest multorum famas sitisque spiritualis, ad ea bona directa, etsi inconscie, quae nostra religio profitetur;

ruina deinde incredulitatis moderna, quae neque in seipsa bene consistere neque antevertere potuit ne ordo moralis aut socialis collaberetur. Multi, etiam inter heterodoxos, salutem a nobis exspectant. Gravior igitur erit culpa nostra, si tempore propitio uti omiserimus.

Illud etiam notatu dignum: nunquam fere Romanam Sedem tanta libertate fruitam esse tamque fecunde suo munere fungi potuisse quam hodie. Nulla enim externa vis, nulla civilis tyrannis eam impedit. Jansenismus, Gallicanismus, Josephismus aliaque haereses filiali obedientiae ac devotae submissioni erga S. Sedem locum cessere. Clerus ut plurimum optimus, familiae religiosae florentes, laici multi ad concurrendum cum Ecclesiae apostolatu anhelantes, inter quos non pauci scientia, litteris, publica auctoritate praeclari. Media agendi hodie Sanctae Sedi sese offerunt immensi valoris; praesto ei est apud multos etiam infideles magna quaedam auctoritas externa; imo non deest ei satis etiam notabilis pecuniae summa.

Non obstantibus igitur temporum iniuriis, Ecclesiam summam vitae moderna potestatem reddere possemus, imo unam omnium primam ac fere unicam, si vere vellemus et mediis ad id conducentibus eodem fervore et eadem dexteritate uteremur qua hostes Ecclesiae omnia ad se rapiunt.

Cur igitur melius non utimur viribus ac mediis a Deo concessis? Cur diabolo eiusque asseclis tantopere inferiores nos exhibemus?

De causis malorum.

Causas malorum inquirenti duo prae ceteris occurrunt fontes debilitatis nostrae: *gubernantium insufficientia et modus ipsius gubernationis defectivus*. A priori fere ita concludendum est: nam ubi exercitus maximus, virisque eximiis fortibusque insignis, constanter fere caeditur ac repellitur, vix alia potest esse cladium causa quam aut ducum impotentia aut organizatio regiminis defectiva.

Licetne iam de Ecclesiae gubernatoribus eorumque imperfectionibus loqui? Debita cum reverentia et caritate atque intra domesticos parietes non solum licet, nostra quidem opinione, et Sanctorum exemplo, sed etiam necesse est, ne malorum causis celatis aut obtectis Ecclesia medelis necessariis carere pergat. Tales observationes criticas, non publice, sed in foro interno factas, nemo sanus rebelliones vocabit. Etiam S. Paulus “restitit in faciem Petro”, quia “reprehensibilis erat”(Gal. II. 11): neque propterea rebellis dicendus est. Idem summus ille vindex iustitiae medii aevi, S. Bernardus, erga Curiam Romanam fecit: nec cessat idcirco sanctus vocari. Dum autem multorum Superiorum Ecclesiasticorum insufficientiam deflendo notamus, non negamus, imo asserimus plurimos eorum, ac fere omnes, optima certe ac sancta voluntate duci, nec semper eorum esse culpam, si officio suo, cui forte impares nati sint, aliquando etiam graviter deficiant.

His praemissis ad singula veniamus.

II

De gubernantibus

Summe dolendum nobis inprimis videtur quod Ecclesia hodie raro admodum *Episcopos* habet omni ex parte muneri suo pares. Nemo non videt quam multa in singulis dioecesibus, maxime in maioribus, ab unius Episcopi dotibus (zelo, prudentia, dexteritate, scientia, sanctitate, agilitate, fortitudine, affabilitate) pendeant. Actum est hodie de dioecesi cui debilis vel mediocris vel passivus Antistes praeest. Incassum optimi viri in ea dioecesi desudant, si res maximi momenti quaeque ab uno Episcopo bene ordinari possunt, male diriguntur vel etiam summae necessitates misere negliguntur. Tanta vero est gravitas negotiorum hodie humeris Episcopi incumbentium ut, nisi ille vir sit mente ac cultura, agendi dexteritate et circumspectione omnino superior, vix mediocriter satisfacere possit.

Jam notabilis pars Episcoporum qui hodie sunt, in quibusdam nationibus, non mediocres tantum sunt, sed proh dolor, multum infra mediocritatem haerent. His Episcopus pius est et S. Sedi fidelissimus, sed rerum ignarus et administrationis incapax; ille doctus, sed piger, ignavus et commoditatibus ac vanitati deditus; iste zelosus, sed omni sensu practico ac dexteritate privatus, et ita porro. Innumera inde mala toti actioni Ecclesiae promanare quis non videt?

Gravius etiam id est quod ultimis temporibus mos ille invaluisse videtur, in eligendis Episcopis non adeo magnas dotes quaerendi, non “personalitates” (ut aiunt) dioecesibus praeficiendi, sed magis homines tranquilla quadam et submissa indole atque monachali fere obedientia unice notabiles, qui nihil nisi iussa exsequi sperentur, nihil per se moliri, nihil videre, nunquam suis pedibus insistere, a mundo eiusque problematis procul omnino abesse. Tales Episcopi certe nunquam S. Sedi difficultatem movebunt; sed nihil etiam agent. Burocratismo et rebus minimis immersi sese in sacristias retrahent, viventque in alio fere mundo quam quem convertere deberent.

Et tolerabilius tantum malum videretur, si Episcopi tales parvo numero essent. At vero saepe in integris nationibus vix unus alterve Antistes est qui eximius sit. Aliquando autem totus Episcopatus alicuius nationis ita est compositus, veluti si coeorum, claudorum et infirmorum omne genus esset refugium. Hi in vita publica, culturali, sociali illius gentis vix ullam partem habent, atque in his omnibus longe a ministellis Protestantium superantur. Saepe Episcopi nostri saxa dixeris immobilia; ab omni activitate sunt alieni, nihil de problematis intricatis intelligentes, nihil iniantes, nulla mala auferentes aut corrigentes; homines quibuscum de rebus practi-

cis apostolatus contemporanei ne tractare quidem possis; quique omnia corrumpant quaecunque manu tetigerint. Et iam multum est si saltem ab aliis coepta non inepte impediunt, atque benigne eis benedicant qui eorum loco laborant. Nonne triste simul ac ridiculum est, fere totam actionem sociale, culturale, propagandisticam et defensivam catholicam certarum regionum fere unice a privatis fieri, a sacerdotibus ac laicis, numquam vero ab Episcopis; atque his fere magis invitis, quippe quorum quietem et tranquillam digestionem turbare minime liceat. Eo iam his locis perventum est, ut non Apostoli fideles, sed fideles laici Apostolos omni arte et fraude ad agendum pro religione movere studeant ac conspirent!

Quid mirum si deinde vel pueri mulieresque de Episcopis suis saepe nonnisi cum contemptu loquantur? Si homines optimi animo deiiciantur, frustra auxilium aut regimen ab iis expetentes quos primos in proelio esse oportebat! Quid si publica opinio hos Episcopos saepe tamquam “minus habentes”, vel bonos sed ineptos senes deridet? Quodque multo gravius est: ob talium Episcoporum insufficientiam tota res et activitas catholica per totas regiones misere languet et putrescit; ingentibus Ecclesiae necessitatibus fortiter obviam non itur, sive cum de auctoritate Ecclesiae aut religionis fovenda agitur, sive de vocationibus sacerdotalibus augendis, sive de novis parochiis erigendis, sive de caritate erga egenos organizanda, sive de miseriis domiciliorum levandis, sive de prelo catholico forti et victorioso condendo vel evolviendo, et de publica opinione formanda, sive de civilibus iuribus Ecclesiae tutandis. Quid mirum denique, ut uno verbo omnia complectamur, si id fit quod de Ecclesia Hispaniae quidam dixit: *Ecclesiam ex antiquitate sua vivere, praesentia vero inimicis Christi relinquere...?*

Anteactis saeculis Ecclesia plurima detrimenta inde passa est quod reges aliique laici Episcopos elegerunt ac quasi intruserunt. Verum num nostri temporis Episcopi a S. Sede nominati semper meliores sunt intrusis illis? Sunt certe magis pii, magis ecclesiastici, magis submissi: imo si mavis, etiam magis monachales quam illi. Sed non sunt *personalitates* ut erant plurimi ex illis. Atqui formae quidem ac sanctae regulae in ecclesiastico regimine, ut necessariae sunt, sic non multum per se valent sine magnis personalitatibus qui eis vitam dent ac vigorem. Error perniciosus est putare Ecclesiam automatismo quodam canonum ac regularum aut iussionum Romanarum bene regi posse, sine eximiis gubernatoribus.

Iam si oculos in altum tollimus, proh dolor, etiam ibi mirabilia quandoque conspiciamus. In supremum Ecclesiae senatum, *Cardinalium* inquam numerum, saepe assumi videmus viros quos nequaquam ad id natos diceres ut principes Ecclesiae vocitarentur. Homines quorum unicus fere valor, unicum meritum est: nunquam quaestiones movisse, sed tacuisse et tranquille sedisse. Hic inopinato ac casu in gratiam S. Sedis intravit. Ille Nuncius erat et quamquam satis perperam hoc munere functus

erat, automaticè sacra purpura dignus declarabatur. Iste “maestro di Camera” fuerat, receptionibus et caerimoniis praesidebat, iamque ideo aptus renunciatus est ad id ut vel S. Congregationi Universitatum et Seminariorum Praefectum ageret, quamvis nunquam Universitatem ab intus vidisset. Alius Cardinalis factus est, quia strenue per totam vitam acta fabricavit in aliqua Congregatione. Quid mirum si tales viri nec mundum noscant satis, nec modum videant quo mundi cursus mutetur.

Media fere pars Cardinalium praeterea Itali sunt, veluti si solos Italos Spiritus Sanctus dignos invenerit ut eos tamquam S. Pontificis et proximos consultores et electores illustraret. Qui quidem mos intelligi fortasse potuit illis temporibus, cum exteris Cardinalibus venire in Urbem perdifficile erat; hodie vero est damnum Ecclesiae, ac contumelia et iniustitia reliquae parti Ecclesiae constanter inusta. Notatu certe dignum est paucos illos curiales Cardinales, qui hodie Non-Itali sunt, reliquis satis antecellere, sive mentis eorum culturam sive res praeclare ab eis gestas respicias.

Quod autem ad ipsos S. Pontifices attinet, Deo sint laudes, etiam ultimis temporibus Romana Sedes multis eximiisque Pontificum clarissimorum virtutibus ornabatur, inter quos multi Leonem XIII summis viris aequant qui unquam in Petri Cathedra floruerint. Verum enimvero vix negabitur in tam excelsa sede tamque turbulentis temporibus non esse satis, ut Pontificum alter scientia, alter pietate, tertius prudentia, quartus diligentia excellat, sed omnibus his dotibus simul fulgere atque summo gradu eminere eos oportet quibus totius Ecclesiae salus ac prosperitas tanto gradu affiditur. Viros conscendere hanc Petri Cathedram oportet omnino et sub omni ratione prorsus eximios ac fere dixerim: suprahumanos, qui immensam hanc Christi aciem tot procellas inter feliciter ad victoriam perducant.

Iam tales Pontifices hodiedum desiderantur. Id quod pius ille doctissimusque historiographus, Ludov. Pastor, in *Historia Paparum* habet: toto saeculo XVIII bonos praelatos Ecclesiae praefuisse, sed *nullum Papam magnum*, proh dolor, etiam saeculo ultimo satis convenit, si forte Leonem XIII excipias. *Longo enim Paparum satis mediocrium numero tribuendum est quod Ecclesia adeo de pristino suo gradu decidit* atque a vita publica ac privata dirigenda tam penitus recessit, ut saeculum praeteritum et nostrum iure vocaveris periodum summae ingentium multitudinum apostasiae.

Quid inquam Papae aevi nostri valuerunt ad repellendum tantae apostasiae excidium, praeter lamenta et satis steriles per se encyclicas? Quam facile Mazziniani et Garibaldiani non solum Romam ac Statum Pontificium Papae eripere, sed mentes centenorum milium etiam inter catholicos ab Ecclesia alienare potuerunt! Quam cito francomurarii rerum omnium potiti sunt et religionem in nationibus etiam pure catholicis fere suffocarunt! Quam impune socialismus orbem terrarum invasit et classes operarias, nullo serio obice ab Ecclesia interiecto, in apostasiam abripuit! Quid Papae valebant ad ultimum illud bellum, tam immane tantumque religioni ac

moribus nocivum, non dico leniendum utcumque, ac theoretice condemnandum: sed efficaciter impediendum, aut certe citissime finiendum? Quaeenam seria, vigorosa, ordinata et efficax actio successit iteratae invitationi et exhortationi Pontificum, sive quod attinet ad actionem catholicam methodice ubique instaurandam, sive ad instructionem iuventutis christianam in tuto collocandam, sive ad casta connubia fovenda, sive ad operariorum salutem et totius societatis aequilibrium sociale obtinendum? Quam misere in nostra hac Italia “actio” illa “catholica”, de qua tot verba fiunt, prostrata iacet, maxime in media et meridionali parte huius ditionis; neque dicas tantum post fascium victoriam! Quam primitiva ac patriarchalis est ratio gubernandi per antiquatas illas S. Congregationum methodos, atque per encyclicas, per se sapientissimas utique, sed ad efficaciter gubernandum prorsus insufficientes! Neque certe inter tot mala tantamque defectionem reformandis rebus quisquam fortem manum admovet!

Quodsi Roma desiit vere centrum esse activum totius mundi; quodsi non solum novas gentes (ut quondam) non lucratur Christo sed etiam veteres amittit; quodsi magnae istae huius aevi quaestiones sine religione, imo contra eam solvuntur; quodsi ipsa illa Catholicorum activitas qua religio defenditur et propagatur, saepe sine ulla S. Sedis incitatione et adiutorio volvitur; quodsi in genere loquendo Pontifices ultimorum saeculorum sensim sine sensu omnem fere influxum in historiae ac culturae cursum perdiderunt: huius rei ratio non ultima ea est quod hi Pontifices boni et pii certe praelati erant, sed non semper magni Papae. In statera historiae mensurati, leviores inventi sunt; non utique sua semper culpa, erant enim sanctae voluntatis, imo aliquando Martyrum ardore sese muneri suo devoventes; sed quia non ad id nati sunt ut tantis officii sui oneribus, hoc historico tempore, sint aequales.

Roma hodie praeest magis quam gubernat; benedicit et condemnat magis quam regit. Peregrinos Romam adventantes suaviter alloqui, novos dies festos instituere, novas preces iaculatorias indulgentiis ditare, novas praefationes ac novas (et chilo-metricas) breviarii lectiones componere, sanctos canonizare, seminaria aliqua vel parochias condere: certe summe laudabilia sunt. Nemo tamen dixerit his rebus mundum gubernari, aut vitam atheam rechristianizari. Christum Regem novo festo novisque hymnis in cathedralibus vacuis ac presbyteriis derelictis acclamare, non est idem atque Eius regnum revera instaurare, et vitam ac civilitatem hodiernam ad Eum vere reducere. Contendere verbis et scriptis in *Osservatore Romano* (quod organum vix legitur) martialibus articulis non est idem ac problema preli solvere, aut publicam opinionem religioni subiicere. Verba dicere toti orbi terrarum per radiophonium, erat felix omnino eventus, sed non potest dici hac una radiophonica oratione ingens illud problema solutum (vel etiam attactum) esse radiophonii, aliorumque modernorum ideas diffundendi organorum. Tandem Universitatibus catholicis quamvis laudabilibus non est solutum problema universitatum ac vitae scientificae.

Ex iis quae diximus sequitur summo conatu enitendum esse: *ut ad summum pontificatum summi omnino viri eligantur*. Iam si oculos ad modum quo Pontifices hodie ad Petri Sedem eliguntur convertimus, hunc modum vitiatum omnino, ac paene dixerim: *flagitiosum* revera sentimus. Ubi enim de viro uno omnium inter 350 millones catholicorum aptissimo ad summi huius oneris apicem eligendo agitur, revera diligentissime dispiciendum foret inter centenos et millenos illos sacerdotes qui per totum orbem terrarum dignissimos ac dexterrimos sese in diversis sacri apostolatus officiis exhibuerunt, atque unus omnium praecellentissimus ad totius Ecclesiae gubernacula summa cum diligentia seligendus. At quidnam reapse fit? S. Pontifex practice eligitur a Cardinalibus Italis et ex Cardinalibus Italis, id est: in summa ex illis 3, 4 vel 5 Cardinalibus Italis qui “papabiles” vocari solent. Non-Itali enim practice iam eo a papatu excluduntur quod maior fere Cardinalium pars semper Itali sunt et hi nonnisi Italum eligunt (nam homines sumus, nostram quisque gentem aliis praeferentes); deinde etiam eo quod Non-Italos, etiamsi optimi prorsus sunt, maior pars Cardinalium nequaquam novit atque sic neque eligere inter eos potest. Ex Cardinalibus vero Italis ii qui “curiales” vocantur, plures a priori minus apti ad papatum cognoscuntur, quod nihil fere per vitam egerunt aut viderunt nisi Romanam aliquam cancellariam, suntque – paucis exceptis – praelati sine ullo nomine vel praestantia. Manent igitur fere soli ii qui Nunciorum munere vel Subsecretarii quondam functi sunt et aliqui Archiepiscopi Italiae; sed etiam ex his practice ii excluduntur qui aetate sunt nimis proveci. Itaque revera inter solos 3 vel 5 homines fit electio. Quid mirum, si rarissime illae dotes simul omnes, quibus ornari huius aevi Papas oporteret, inter tam paucos inveniuntur? Si practice electio inter solos mediocres fit? Cum tamen praeclari fortasse viri atque his multo maiores, tam ingenii acumine quam organizandi donis ornati, in reliquo Ecclesiae corpore latescant! Cur hi omnes a papatu a priori excluduntur? Cur eos Romae nemo cognoscit, nemo curat? Cur conclave eo modo fit ut Cardinales electores de his omnibus cogitandi ne tempus quidem habeant? Nonne flagitii instar est contra Spiritum Sanctum ea electionis ratio qua tam leviter via obtruditur eximiis omnino viris, ad gubernandum natis, et a Providentia Ecclesiae benigne concessis?

Neque dicatur vigentem eligendi modum antiquissimum esse; vix enim quatuor saeculis ante vigere coepit. Saeculis illis florentissimis XII et XIII Cathedra Petri tam insignibus Pontificibus tamque multis ornabatur ac vere fulgebat quales nullum ullius aevi regnum tam brevi tempore habuit. Electio autem illo tempore alio profecto modo fiebat: non inter Cardinales solos, neque inter solos Italos Pontifex eligebatur.

Ipsa deinde illa consuetudo nullum Papam eligendi nisi Italum, prorsus aboleri iam dudum debuit. Nullo enim solido fundamento nititur, nisi quis dicere velit aut Italos solos talento gubernandi aut organizandi esse praeditos, aut Spiritum

Sanctum solos Italos illustrare posse. Perpetuum hoc opprobrium reliquo corpori Ecclesiae inuritur, veluti si omnes aliae nationes simul sumptae minus in Ecclesia valerent solis Italis. Italismum istum adversarii nostri saepe contra veram Ecclesiae universalitatem obiiciunt. Nec sine ratione. Hoc etiam modo ii praecise a gubernio Ecclesiae arcentur quibus hodie summe est in Ecclesia opus: talentis organizatorii; haec enim Italis, ceterum egregiis donis dotatis, generatim satis deesse omnibus compertum est.

Si vero obiicias Pontificem nostratem facilius a gubernio nostro acceptari, respondeo non debere Ecclesiam adeo a gubernio aliquo pendere ut haec ratio omnibus aliis, bonoque ipsius Ecclesiae, praevaleat: econtra sic magis perspicuum fore Ecclesiam ac papatum non nationis alicuius esse appendicem, sed totius orbis supremum Pastorem; imo Pontificem exterum aliquando etiam magis a gubernio reveritum iri credimus, cum iste hoc casu ab alienis etiam populis magis sustentandus sit.

Defectivo igitur isti *S. Pontificem eligendi modo* medendum erit vias inquirendo, ut electio magis serio fiat, serio dispiciendo et serio investigando, ut unus omnium prorsus optimus eligatur Pontifex; neve electio inter solos Praesules Italos fiat. Ad quod conducet considerare ea quae infra, cap. III exponentur, et curare ut Congregationes Romanae atque Officia et Commissiones centrales magis activa gubernii ecclesiastici organa fiant inque eas maior numerus sacerdotum peritorum ex diversis gentibus cooptetur, ut universalem decet Ecclesiam. Inde iam sperare licebit mox complures Romae adfuturos viros eximios, ex variis nationibus ortos, qui cum occasione habituri sint ostendendi omnibus quid sciant quidque valeant, mox bene omnibus, etiam Cardinalibus, noti erunt; atque ita mox maior erit etiam numerus aptorum tam ad cardinalatum quam deinde etiam eligibilium ad papatum.

Cardinales in conclave congressi per certum aliquod tempus (e.g. per mensem vel hebdomadam) seriam prius investigationem ac ruminationem de omnibus vere papabilibus instituant, conscientia eorum aliorumque graviter onerata, ne simoniace, vel fractionum persuasionibus ducti in ea re procedant.

Episcoporum quoque electio reformanda erit ita, ut in optimis praesulibus discernendis cum S. Sede etiam dioeceses ipsae atque Episcopi illius nationis scite concurrant.

Imperfectissimus omnino modus Episcopos eligendi ille nobis apparet: quando S. Sedes immediate eligit, vel quod idem est, quando Nuncii vel Delegati apostolici Episcopos S. Sedi eligendos secreto proponunt. Quomodo enim Nuncius ille vel Delegatus, vix ab anno uno alterove in certa aliqua terra degens, rerum hominumque, aliquando etiam linguae illius ditionis ignarus, suo marte diiudicare homines poterit? Melior est eligendi modus ille quo consultores dioecesani aliiqui informatores apti (etiam religiosi) quotannis de omnibus episcopabilibus informationes mittunt Episcopis, hi suam opinionem addunt, et sic informationes Romam mit-

tunt: deinde S. Sedes Episcopus eligit. Optimum tamen videtur, si vacante sede aliqua S. Sedes acceptis, ut supra dictum est, informationibus, ternos seligit candidatos ex quibus *Capitulum* illius dioecesis de qua agitur, vel consultores dioecesani, unum eligunt: qui deinde a S. Sede nominetur. Locus enim dandus omnino videtur etiam Capitulo locali vel consultoribus quippe qui optime rerum hominumque adiuncta noverint, quorumque plurimum intersit bona electio: neque tamen soli Capitulo committenda tota electio, ne dioecesanismus exaggeratus foveatur. Hoc modo principium illud nocivum facilius vitabitur quo non personalitates eliguntur, sed homines saepe debiles et passivi.

Praeterea via ac ratio quaerenda erit ut *sufficiens copia adsit eligendorum* seu ad episcopatum aptorum. Ad quem finem utile fortasse foret non solum informationes de omnibus utcunque aptis (e.g. singulis trienniis) Romam mittere, sed etiam discrete ac prudenter monere eos de quibus informationes collectae sunt de defectibus illis qui in eis ab informatoribus notati sunt et qui eorum electioni adversantur. Sic enim fiet ut multi tempestive commoniti emendent sese, aptique melius ad episcopatum formentur, nec tam parvus sit numerus eorum ex quibus electio fieri possit. Informationes certo schemate proposito fiant, aptas quaestiones de singulis dotibus et virtutibus viri, de quo agitur, continente.

Quod vero ad *Cardinalium electionem* attinet, humillime rogandus erit S. Pontifex ut inprimis suppressere vel coarctare dignetur sic dicta “loca cardinalitia” ex quibus profecti necessario semper cardinales evadunt, sive id mereantur sive non: etiam ii qui nihil per vitam egerunt nisi acta composuerunt vel caeremoniis et receptionibus praefuerunt, vel Nuncii bene aut male fuerunt. In Cardinalium numerum nemo cooptandus est nisi vere princeps sit Ecclesiae, tam scientia et rerum experientia quam sanctitate et zelo insignis: qui tam alte tamque sapienter omnes Ecclesiae necessitates et activitates cognoscat ut et peritis consiliis S. Sedem iuvare, et bene Pontificem aptissimum eligere, et ipse ad Pontificatum evehi aliquando possit.

Cardinales creare certe S. Pontificis ius est exclusivum. Verum ut antiquitus factum est, etiam hoc iure – saltem in genere – sapientius utitur Pontifex, si senatus sui consilium antea exquirat. Nam si vel infallibilibus ex cathedra definitionibus studia anteire oportet atque investigationes diligentissimas, multo magis utile videtur administrativas illas electiones non decernere nullius fere exquisito consilio. Non enim de decore aliquo conferendo hic agitur, sed de amplissimis gravissimisque officiis, imo de totius Ecclesiae summa salute, quae nequaquam viris mediocribus confidenda est.

Tandem Cardinales ex omnibus nationibus sumendi erunt, sequendo potissimum in singulis gentibus numerum meritumque catholicorum; et multorum in singulis regionibus virorum sapientium exquisitis consiliis. Sic fere erunt Cardina-

les creandi ex Italia 12, ex Gallia 8, ex Brasilia 6, ex Hispania, Polonia, Germania, Statibus Americae 5 – 5, ex Mexico ac Cechoslovachia 3 – 3, ex Belgio, Hibernia, Lusitania, Austria, Jugoslavia, Hungaria, Neerlandia 2 – 2, ex Canada, Argentina, Chilo etc. 1 – 1.

N. B. De Cardinalium activitate amplianda vide in III capite.

III

De regiminis ecclesiastici formis insufficientibus

Vitia ac defectus regiminis ecclesiastici partim ex personarum imperfectione oriuntur: partim vero ex *formis gubernii defectivis maleque organizatis*. Ea enim est humanarum rerum conditio ut tam innumeris negotiis ac difficilibus decernendis ac dirigendis viri vel summo talento praediti natura ipsa non sufficiant, nisi per institutiones atque organismos bene dispositos iuventur: quae si abfuerint, vel optimi gubernatores serius ocus necessario deficient. Quapropter etiam gubernia civilia non solis magnis viris nituntur, sed magis etiam institutionibus firmis et forma regiminis bene organizata.

Ecclesia quoque semper id curavit ut regimine sibi divinitus collato, tam in centro quam in dioecesibus, felici quodam organizatoque modo utatur. Proh dolor tamen, etiam in modo ecclesiastici gubernii errores irreperere possunt, eo magis nocivi quo maior esse debet vis et auctoritas huius gubernii.

Talia sunt incommoda: autocratismus, defectus magnae programmatis actionis, officia gubernativa non bene disposita et organizata.

De autocratismo.

Ex sacrata illa auctoritate qua Christus Dominus hierarchiam suae Ecclesiae insignivit, facile aliqui ad falsam illam conclusionem erroremque inducuntur, veluti si auctoritate illa sancta, spretis humanae sapientiae (ac simul divinae) fulcimentis, prudentumque consiliis, autocratico quodam modo fuerit utendum. Iam Ecclesia ab Apostolorum temporibus alio penitus modo processit. Nam sacras synodos cogere solebat; postea Romae Cardinales senatus facti sunt Ecclesiae: etiam mos invaluit Consistoria singulis mensibus aut etiam saepius convocare Cardinalium, aliorumque qui adiuvere S. Sedem prudenti consilio poterant. Aureis illis Ecclesiae saeculis, XII et XIII, omnia fere negotia gubernii ecclesiastici Consistoriis solvebantur, ita ut regimen Ecclesiae formam monarchicam simul atque aristocraticam sibi sociasse non iniuria dixeris. Episcopus hodie Ius Canonicum synodos dioecesanarum idem cogere iubet. Quae omnia clare ostendunt S. Ecclesiae mentem.

Iam hodie multi dolent quod gubernantes ecclesiasticos consultatoria hac regiminis forma uti rarius videant. Consistoria enim nostri aevi et perraro fiunt, et cum fiunt, merae solemnitates sunt. Cum autem etiam organa gubernativa Romana, Sacrae videlicet Congregationes, maximam partem talia sint ut rebus actualis momenti discutiendis vix sint accommodata, inde fit ut res tales summi momenti generatim unicae ponderationi et decisioni ipsius Summi Pontificis, aut Secretarii Status, aut Substituti huius, relinquuntur. Jam tot tamque diversas quaestiones summi momenti bene perspicere et dirimere certe res est quae unius aut paucorum hominum acumen, etiamsi sapientissimorum et in plurimis rebus versatissimorum, manifesto superet. Non infitiamur posse aliquando occurrere negotia quae omnino in secreto praeparanda sint: attamen haec rarissima exceptio erit, non regula. Hac ratione omnia in una manu concentrandi multa etiam urgentissima negotia nimis differuntur vel necessario etiam oblivioni dantur, reliqua vero incidentaliter magis et obiter ordinantur; non adeo raro etiam graves omnino errores committuntur (ex. g. cogitemus de editione Vulgatae a Sixto V autocratice adornata, vel de veterum hymnorum Breviarii corruptione ab Urbano VIII introducta; ut recentiora exempla, maiorisque momenti, taceamus).

Hunc autocratismum centralem imitati multi Episcopi vix unquam veri nominis consultationes cum suo clero vel consultoribus dioecesanis – nisi cum familiaribus suis – habent; plurimi etiam synodum dioecesanam cogere detrectant, vel eam instituunt merae formalitatis instar.

Huius autocratismi ratio est partim historica: systema illud absolutismi principum quod ante aliquot saecula ubique viguit quodque Ecclesia, conservatrix, inconscie hodie dum imitatur. Ratio vero partim psychologica est: commoditas gubernantium. Facilius enim est solipsismo cuidam indulgere, sibi que sufficere, quam querelas audire, et novis semper difficultatibus curisque cruciari. Commodius etiam est vulnera defectusque, suamque fortasse impotentiam celare: ac queritantes, terrore disciplinari incusso, sacrae obeditionis virtute ad silendum adigere, quam problemata revera solvere aut omissiones serio emendare. Autocratismus ille non immerito criterium debilitatis internae dicitur: et ab iis potissimum exercetur qui malunt viris sese circumdare minoris talenti, meris iussorum exsecutoribus, quam iis favere qui talentis praediti ac fortes rerum arduarum propugnatores sunt. Hi facile personae ingratae fiunt certis Superioribus, adultores vero et servi personae gratae.

Effectus autem huius autocratismi sunt: nullam criticam tolerare; neque edoceri velle, nisi ab adulatoribus; ac proinde nunquam res ac necessitates Ecclesiae penitus cognoscere: plurima mala non corrigere, imo ne advertere quidem: subditos assuescere ut adulatorio quodam et parum sincero modo cum Superioribus agant, omnia eorum gesta laudent, mala taceant, omnibus rebus serviliter conniveant.

Cum deinde hic sit saepe gradus ad Parnassum, non raro adulatores isti prae aliis, dignioribus, promoventur et ad summa officia evehuntur; ipsi quoque male et autocratically gubernaturi et Ecclesiam ruinis impleturi. Autocratismus damnorum plurimorum est fons in Ecclesia; econtra Ecclesia tum fuit vigoris plenissima cum longissime ab autocratismo aberat.

In quibusdam monasticis ordinibus per regulas cavetur, ne Superior unquam res graviores inconsulto Capitulo vel Capitularibus decernat. Sapientissime id quidem. Si simile quid servaretur in toto gubernio ecclesiastico, fieri vix posset ut summi abusus summaeque omissiones aliquando per saecula impune protrahantur, tam in dioecibus, quam in centrali regimine, et in universa Ecclesia. An salus Ecclesiae res est minoris momenti quam monasterii alicuius securitas?

De defectu programmatis actionis.

Alterum incommodum regiminis ecclesiastici hodierni est: defectus certi alicuius et praefixi programmatis agendorum.

Ille qui exercitum contra hostes ducit, prae ceteris scire debet, quanam sint hostium conamina ac vires: quanam certaminis pericula: quanam denique ratione ita sibi omnia disponenda sint ut hostium vim et astutiam reapse vincat.

Habetne Ecclesia hodie tale actionis programma seu stratagemata, bene elaboratum et toti actioni praefixum? Vix ac ne vix quidem. Incidentaliter et occasionaliter omnia fiunt, seu potius pauca fiunt, sine ordine praefixo, sine praemeditata organizatione virium et agendorum; modo nimis italico. Exorta aliquando tempestate (ut nunc est persecutio in Hispania) lamentamur, protestamur, raptim remedia tarda quaerimus. Sed num serio quisquam cogitavit de praepediendis et a longe praecavendis persecutionibus religiosis in singulis nationibus? Num certam agendi rationem nobis praefiximus ad detegendas et impediendas adversariorum machinationes, ad eorum conamina in publica opinione – non solum in periodicis devotis – denuncianda et retundenda? Num habemus certum aliquod programma ad operarios socialismo et communismo imbutos Ecclesiae conciliandos? Ad francomurarios repellendos? Ad quaestionem sociale, scholare etc. magno stylo solvendam? Ad bellas litteras, diaria, litteraturam scientifico-popularem, radiophonium et cinematographa rei catholicae ubique utilia reddenda? Ad Protestantem et Schismaticos ad Ecclesiam reducendos? Ad bella a christiana republica efficaciter avertenda? – Nihil horum habemus. Vivimus de die in diem. Singuli singula quaedam incipiunt et moliuntur: auctoritates autem ecclesiasticae magis normas generales et fere potius negativas nobis offerunt: id magis curantes quid *ne* fiat quam quid *fiat*. Saepe diversimode singuli agunt et sibi contrarie; unus quidem sic, alter vero sic. Etiam Episcopi modo sic, modo sic. Ipsa S. Sedes modo talem, modo aliam, dare directivam

videtur; cuius rei exempla in Italia vidimus, quando ibi de participatione in vita publica agebatur.

Ecclesia immensum quendam virium thesaurum habet in suis asseclis, sacerdotibus, laicis, religiosis familiis, viris, feminis. Immenso amore ac zelo plurimi in actionem catholicam et apostolatam incumbere desiderant. Viri saepe praeclaro ingenio praediti litterisque eximie culti. Sed zelus iste ac labor diffluit, dispergitur. Ubinam est activitas catholica universalis, omnia complectens, omnibus necessitatibus providens, omnia pericula praeventens, internationali quadam cooperatione munita? Quandonam et ubinam de talibus rebus in Ecclesia utiles discussiones fiunt? Habetne Ecclesia programma certum sociale, culturale, politicum; bene elaboratum, bene propagatum? Habetne forum quoddam supremum omnibus his necessitatibus providens, vires disponens, agenda dirigens?

Nihil horum habet.

De defectibus organismi gubernatorii.

Si gubernium centrale ecclesiasticum, maxime illud quod Romae in sacris Congregationibus existit, cum organizatione guberniorum saecularium comparamus, complura inter haec invenimus discrimina satis magni momenti, neque semper in favorem gubernii ecclesiastici.

Sic *primo*: Gubernia saecularia non declarationes tantum dant doctrinae ac iuris, nec interrogata aut interpellata tantum agunt, sed *active* omnino in res ordinandas, inspiciendas, urgendas, exsequendas insurgunt. E contra S. Congregationes, etiam quae non doctrinales sunt, magis passive se habent, excepta una aliave (ut e.g. Congreg. de Propaganda Fide, quae vere active gubernat). – *Secundo*: Gubernia civilia *omnia* complectuntur quae ad salutem decusque reipublicae necessaria vel utilia videntur. Contra, S. Congregationes in certas tantum res fovendas incumbunt, plurimaeque summi momenti negotia extra rhombum iacent omnium Congregationum. – *Tertio*: Gubernia civilia serio et cum ordine *laborant*. Habent distincta Ministeria distinctis inter se rebus invigilantia, quibus singuli Ministri vel Secretarii peritissimi praeficiuntur. Singula etiam Ministeria in varias Sectiones sunt divisa, iterum peritis ac responsabilibus Subsecretariis vel Consiliariis subiectas, cum satis magno numero officialium quibus singulis singulae agendorum provinciae assignantur, quique omnes strenue laborare coguntur. Contra, in S. Congregationibus fere tantum Secretarius cum aliquot officialibus (et Consultores exteri) laborant, idque lente admodum et commode (Roma “aeterna”), ita ut in officio aliquarum S. Congregationum, praeter aliquot scribas, neminem interdum invenias, nisi per unam alteramve horam. – *Quarto*: Gubernia statalia variis institutionibus subiacent quae activitatem eorum *examinant*: tribunali supremo administrationis et compu-

tationum, atque ipsi parlamento. E contra, S. Congregationes sine ordinata aliqua superrevisione laborant.¹

Iam regimini Ecclesiae certe non sunt omnia necessario imitanda quae in guberniis civilibus habentur; alia enim est eius et horum natura. Attamen vix dubium est quin multa ab his discere etiam centrali Ecclesiae regimini utilissimum foret.

Sic prae ceteris curandum esset ut non solum pauca quaedam ex communibus Ecclesiae negotiis, sed omnia – nisi quae S. Pontifex sibi ipsi reservaverit – a convenienti S. Congregatione praeparantur et moveantur. Secus enim omissiones vitari et ordo servari vix possunt.

Hodie activum Ecclesiae gubernium centrale, si a sat paucis negotiis abstrahas quae Congregationibus propria sunt, non fit nisi casu: per singulares S. Pontificis exhortationes vel iussiones; si vero de generali aliqua necessitate agitur, per encyclicas litteras. Iam haec methodus natura sua imperfecta esse facile evincitur. Quid enim iuvat iussa monitaque dare nisi etiam ratio exigatur executionis? Quaenam est civilis respublica quae solis encyclicis regatur? Litterae enim illae apostolicae perbelles sunt, sed fere nemo eas legit, maxime si perlongae sint: neque per se sufficientiunt vel aptae sunt ad actiones sibi conformes immediate inaugurandas et ad finem deducendas: neque omnes quaestiones alicuius momenti encyclicis attinguntur: neque in eis ultra principia academice prolata progredi licet. Quid legem ferre prodest, quid exhortari, quid litteras scribere, nisi adsint organa executionem urgentia, imo activitatem ipsam inaugurantia et ordinantia?

Non solum autem leges urgere debet bonum gubernium, sed aliis etiam viis activitatem salutarem evolvere, ad omnimodum profectum civium promovendum, atque ad vires reipublicae internas et externas augendas. Sic etiam in Ecclesia non est satis disciplinam ecclesiasticam inculcare, libros prohibere malos, poenis dyscolos plectere, novas indulgentias concedere, cohortationes edere, similia; verum

1 Defectus ordinati laboris satis illustratur tristi illo, ne dicam scandaloso modo quo cura animarum in ipsa Urbe Roma iam a decenniis exercebatur, seu potius misere neglegebatur. Romae ne ideam quidem habere parochi videntur modi illius organizati quo cura animarum e.g. a clero germanico, neerlandico, americano exercetur. Tristes deinde huius incuriae fructus! Sunt Romae parochiae 30-40.000 catholicos complectentes, ex quibus dominico die vix 200-300 animae missae intersunt, aut tempore paschali ad communionem accedunt: nec parochiae istae ulla methodo modernae organizataeque pastorationis utuntur. Etiam Taurini, Mediolani, Venetiis vix 10 catholici per centum Ecclesiam regulariter frequentant. Quodsi coram oculis ipsius S. Pontificis tam horrendae omissiones passim fiunt ac per decennia impune protrahuntur, an mirandum est si in multo complexiore illa problematum mole quibus universae Ecclesiae sors opprimitur fructus meliores non maturescunt? – Quid quod ante Annum Sanctum, cum Expositioni Missionariae initium daretur, apparuit in tota Congregatione de Propaganda Fide ne statisticos quidem numeros de statu missionum modo ordinato compositos fuisse! – Quid quod S. Sedes ne officium quidem preli (bureau de presse) habet, quo tamen omnia gubernia hodierna multum utuntur et quo etiam S. Sedi opus esset, tam ad cognoscendum et cotidie attente sequendum quidquid de Ecclesia et de S. Sede in magnis diariis totius orbis terrarum scribitur, quam ad spargendas notitias gubernio ecclesiastico utiles in toto mundo; nec in paucis diariis ecclesiasticis solis. Quantum vel hoc ultimo anno tale officium S. Sedi profuisset!

practicis omnino viis confovere, imo si opus est inaugurare totam illam activitatem oportet qua fideles in fide firmentur, indifferentes et infideles ad Ecclesiam alliciantur, hostium conatus elidantur. Hoc autem non fit nisi activitate catholica multiplici, constanti, universali, ex uno centro directa et animata. Quodsi activitas catholica plurimis in locis atque in integris nationibus vix ac ne vix quidem proficit, huius rei ratio non ultima in illa deplorabili S. Sedis passivitate invenitur quae ex defectu organismi ad gubernium apti sponte sequitur.

Transeundum igitur omnino esse videtur ad activum et organizatum regiminis ecclesiastici modum, ita videlicet ut *Congregationes Romanae* (simili modo ac Ministeria statuum civilium) *organica ratione necessitatibus provideant*, remedia malis admoveant, activitatem serio evolvant, et quae ad particulares Ecclesiae necessitates hodiernas complendas utilia esse videntur, partim praescribant, partim consulant, quidque ulterius fiat in id invigilent.

Ad hunc autem finem ipsas *S. Congregationes reorganizare et in meliorem ordinem referre* oportebit.

Organizatio enim harum Congregationum hodie non respicit omnes necessitates, neque una ideatione est delineata aut constituta, sed de casu in casum, historica quadam agglomeratione magis dixerim quam evolutione, formata. Duae ex illis principium territoriale sequuntur (Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, Orientalis); duae doctrinam et internam disciplinam generalissime respiciunt (Congregatio Officii, Concilii); tres specialibus institutis sunt praefixae (Consistorii, Seminariorum, Religiosorum); tres sacris functionibus deditae (Sacramentorum, Rituum, Caeremonialis); unica sola omnia alia comprehendit, maxime relationem cum statibus civilibus (Negotia Extraordinaria). Ipsa haec divisio confusionem quandam prodit principiorum divisionis, defectumque ostendit boni ordinis. Innumera etiam negotia ad bonum Ecclesiae spectantia, quae ex centro unico foveri, adiuvari, moveri, organizari, superinvisi oporteret, hodie ad nullum forum pertinent Romanum.

De reorganizandis Congregationibus.

Huius reorganizationis capita haec fere fuerint:

1 – Curia Romana habeat *Congregationes similes Ministeriis statuum civilium*, i.e. logice bene distinctas: nec consistentes solum Praefecto, Secretario et aliquot Cardinalibus consultoribus (partim absentibus, partim in 6 vel 7 aliis Congregationibus aequae occupatis), cum aliquot subalternis officialibus nulla potestate ordinaria vestitis; sed consistentes corpore necessario officialium peritorum et conveniente potestate ornatorum. Neque Congregationes solum quaestiones sibi casu propositas dirimant, sed sint vere activa gubernii centralis organa: neque solum

imperent seu auctoritative decernant, sed etiam res suaviter intuent, moveant, activitates inspicient, omnia scrutentur, consiliis, exhortatione adiuvent; omnibus rebus invigilent, malis in tota Ecclesia mederi studeant. Singulis Congregationibus praesit Praefectus, et unus vel duo Secretarii; singulis laborum sectionibus praesint Praesides Sectionum, cum potestate ordinaria, submissi tamen omnes Praefecto. Hi autem, sicut et subalterni officiales, ex diversis nationibus assumantur. Papa nullius Congregationis sit Praefectus, sed omnium supremus rector, quocum Praefecti, tam privatim quam maxime in Consistoriis hebdomadariis vel mensilibus, omnia negotia alicuius momenti conferant.

2 –Sint autem Congregationes hae:

- (1) *Congregatio S. Officii* – fere ut nunc est.
- (2) *Congregatio administrationis internae*, cuius Sectiones sint: a) Sectio Episcoporum et dioeceseon (nunc: Consistorialis, et partim Negotiorum Extraord.), b) Disciplinae ecclesiasticae (nunc: Concilii), c) Religiosorum (nunc: Congregatio negotiis religiosorum sodalium praeposita), d) Rei sacramentariae et ss. Rituum (nunc: 2 Congregationes).
- (3) *Congregatio rerum extemarum* (nunc: pro Negotiis extraordinariis), relationes respiciens ad status civiles.
- (4) *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, cuius Sectio specialis erit: Sectio orientalis.
- (5) *Congregatio Iustitiae et gratiarum*, cui subsint omnia tribunalia; quaeque invigilet omnibus officiis in quibus gratiae dantur. Huic Congregationi subsit etiam Codicis declaratio.
- (6) *Congregatio de Re scholari*, cuius pars seu Sectio erit illa, quae nunc est Congregatio de Seminariis et Universitatibus studiorum; praeterea alias Sectiones sub se habebit totam rem scholarem totius orbis curantes, et negotia circa instructionem ac culturam altiore respicientes.
- (7) *Congregatio de Promovenda Fide*, seu activitatis socialis catholicorum; cuius Sectiones erunt: a) Actio apologetica et propagandistica (prelum etc.), b) Actio socialis strictius dicta, c) Apostolatus laicorum seu actiones catholicae nationales, d) Actio in vita publica, e) Actio catholica internationalis, defensionis et progressus, f) Actio oeconomica (e.g. defendendae proprietatis ecclesiasticae, simul Camera apostolica, et quae correspondeat ministerio financiarum in statibus civilibus).

Tribunalibus autem addendum erit *Supremum Tribunal Invigilantiae*, cui ius et officium competet omnia officia centralia et ipsas Congregationes superinvisere et ut rite laborent, inspicere: item *Supremum Tribunal Administrationis*, ad dirimendas lites circa administrationem ecclesiasticam exortas.

Si vero nimia videretur haec Congregationum Romanarum reorganizatio, id certo fieri oporteret ut relictis Congregationibus quales nunc sunt adderetur una, nova, quam Congregationem vel etiam *Commissionem* dicerem *actionis catholicae*, vel si mavis: Congregationem de *Promovenda Fide*. Ex hac autem omnes activitates defensionis ac propagationis religiosae, veluti ex activo quodam centro, vigorem atque auxilia sumant; sintque in ea apte divisae Sectiones, pro omnibus illis rebus quae hodie a nulla S. Congregatione proprie moventur, cum Secretariis peritis et officialibus, ut supra.

3 – Praeterea habeat gubernium centrale Ecclesiae *senatum activum* ad latus Summi Pontificis, hoc fere modo:

- a) Habeatur singulis annis *Consistorium maius* Romae, etiam per plures dies, quod fere parlamentum Ecclesiae sit, etsi mero iure consultativo: praesideat Cardinalis a S. Pontifice ad hoc designatus: huius sessionibus S. Pontifex quandoque sibi placuerit etiam Ipse praesens erit. Huius Consistorii membra sint praeter Cardinales curiales et (si venire potuerint) exteros: supremi Officialia Congregationum aliorumque officiorum, capita aliquorum Ordinum religiosorum maiorum, aliique a S. Pontifice ad hoc nominati vel ab ipso Consistorio electi et a Pontifice probati. Agant de omnibus rebus, maxime ubi quid emendandum apparet. Hoc modo innumerae res Officialibus Congregationum in mentem adducentur quae secus oblivioni darentur.
- b) Habeatur singulis mensibus vel etiam hebdomadis *Consistorium minus*, ubi Pontifex cum Congregationum Praefectis agat.
- c) Habeatur in unaquaque Congregatione *Consistorium Congregationis*, cum Cardinalibus illius Congregationis et supremis eiusdem Congregationis officialibus.
- d) Simili quodam modo etiam Episcopi singularum dioeceseon *consultationes dioecesanis* saepe habeant, vota que et consilia suorum libenter audiant.

4 – Activum hoc Ecclesiae gubernium non solum in id incumbet, ut viri optimi in Episcopos eligantur, sed etiam vigilabit ut electi, eorumque activitas, a recto tramite non declinent. Quare gubernium istud non solum contra errores in fide et moribus procedere debet, sed etiam contra ineptos vel incurios Episcopos, ne in dioecesibus propter unius praesulis inediam omnia per annos et decennia misere languescant. Si in administratione statuum vel exercituum officiales inepti saepe intra 24 horas munere suo levantur et meliores eis sufficiuntur, cur solum in militia Christi ineptissimus quisque saepe ad tardam usque senectutem dux esse toleratur? Etiam boni Episcopi magis meliusque laborare satagent, si sciverint rationem sibi reddendam esse de activitate sua, eiusque fructibus: auxilia et consilia sibi semper pro necessitate offerri a viris expertis: et actionem

suam partem esse unitae alicuius et magnificae catholicae activitatis. Sic iam sperare licebit fore ut novus vigor ex vitali hoc centro in totum corpus Ecclesiae diffundatur, novaeque et uberrimae segetes in messe dominica maturescant.

N.B. Hoc gubernium magis activum plures etiam vias inveniet ad informationes accipiendas de vita religiosa in singulis gentibus, quam si eas S. Sedes unice a Nunciis vel ab uno alterove Episcopo, sibi confidentiali, hauriat, vel ex relationibus ipsorum Episcoporum de quibus agitur. Hodie si Nuncius vel confidentialis ille Episcopus minus recte res diiudicant, proh dolor, etiam S. Sedes, etiam per longius tempus, falso omnino de rerum conditione informatur.

Obiiciet fortasse aliquis: timendum esse ne hoc modo *centralismus* quidam nimius in Ecclesiam introducatur. Si enim gubernatio romana aequae se in singulas res intromiserit ac gubernia civilia, actum erit de tam necessaria libertate agendi, actum de Episcoporum iure gubernativo divinitus constituto; sed etiam de ipso bono regimine: ex unico enim centro omnia dispicere et dirigere velle insipientissimum foret. Iam enim multi nimiam in Ecclesia centralizationem deplorant atque eam autocratiae aequiparant.

Attamen Sedi Romanae certe ius competit in universam Ecclesiam quodammodo regendam, maxime cum de rebus agatur quae non unam alteramve dioecesin, sed multas simul attinent, atque nonnisi communi multorum (aut omnium) nisu ad felicem exitum perducuntur. Praeter haec communia negotia ad gubernium centrale necessario pertinet etiam invigilare ut omnia recte fiant ab Episcopis, omnes bene suo officio fungantur, negligentes moneantur, diligentes collaudentur, auxilia omnibus praebeantur.

Regimen igitur centrale non debet omnia per se curare, sed utique debet omnibus necessitatibus communibus apte prospicere (quod hodie non fit nisi quoad pauca), communibus conatibus harmonice evolvendis praesidere, initia dare magnis illis conaminibus quae singularum dioeceseon vires superant: Episcopis vero constanter invigilare, eosque ad id adigere ut rem suam invicte et bene faciant.

- 5 – Sicut in centro, ita *etiam in dioecesibus* modus gubernandi ecclesiasticus saepe satis defectivus, primitivus ac patriarchalis est. Episcopi utique cancellariam habent rebus ordinariis administrandis, res autem extraordinarias totamque activitatem modernam catholicam suae dioecesis vel per se ipsos dirigunt vel omnino non curant, per se ipsos omnia facere impotentes, organa vero quibus iuventur non habentes. Sic quaestiones gravissimae et negotia summi momenti saepe perfunctorie admodum fiunt, vix audito peritorum consilio, nec methodica praeparatione praemissa; vel etiam simpliciter negliguntur, nisi a privatis hominibus agenda suscipiantur. Saepe in dioecesibus vel in integris etiam

nationibus actiones catholicae summi momenti ac summae necessitatis non a gubernio dioecesano moventur vel incipiunt; fiunt casu et sine ordine aut mutua harmonia; multumque iam est si administratio dioecesana bene laborantes non impediatur. Ubi vero catholici privati nihil moliuntur, res (sociales, culturales, apologeticae, catecheticae, preli etc.) infectae saepe manent, atque per decennia oblivioni dantur.

Nonne ita erit in Hispania, Mexico, alibi? Numerosa aderat hierarchia, nec tamen quisquam malis immensis et omissionibus decennialibus remedia attulit. Ubi vero nec centrale Ecclesiae gubernium ordinato aliquo modo in id invigilat, ne in dioecesibus graves illae omissiones serpere pergant, lacunae non complentur et catastrophae serius ocius necessario accidunt.

Quare in singulis dioecesibus et *consultationes* ordinariae urgendae sunt, et *commissiones* responsables singulis activitatis generibus praeponendae.

- 6 – Modus tandem quaerendus erit ne Episcopi, quamvis *viribus fracti et senectute confecti*, atque adeo ad secundae infantiae aetatem delapsi, mordicus tamen sedi suae inhaereant, aegerrimeque officio renuncient cui dudum impares facti sunt.

Conclusio

Saeculo XVI funestissima Lutheri et Calvini rebellio innumeros homines ab Ecclesia separavit, atque adeo vulnera huic inflixit nunquam forte sananda. Fere omnes enim perturbationes hodiernae, usque ad communismum et atheismum, ad hanc rebellionem tamquam ad fontem reducuntur. Unde autem rebellio ista tanta vi tamque tremendo cum exitu innumeros hominum animos sibi adsciscere valuit? Procul dubio ideo quod Episcopi illius aevi, atque ipsi Romani Pontifices, loco suo multo inferiores erant, neque ea quae reformanda certe erant reformare, quamvis rogati atque saepe invitati, festinabant. Quot lacrymae, quot catastrophae propter omissiones illas Julii II, Leonis X, Clementis VII acciderunt, ut alios taceam! Dum alter Papa aedificia exstruxit, alter versibus delectabatur, alter Florentiam familiae suae vi recuperare tentavit, atque frustra boni omnes iam a saeculo necessariam Ecclesiae reformationem advocaverunt: media fere Europa, ac postea America et Australia, ab Ecclesiae unitate separatae sunt!

Verum enimvero tempora nostra simillima profecto sunt illis Lutheri temporibus. Nunc quoque agitur de media christianitate perdenda. Peccata et omissiones a Praesulibus nunc commissae non minoris apostasiae erunt seminaria et ruinarum causa quam erat haereticorum illorum defectio. Omnia igitur tentanda sunt ut omissiones et peccata cito emendentur, atque ulterior aevi nostri a fide defectio impediatur.

Cum autem certe Praesules nostri, et maxime ipse Sanctissimus Dominus noster, prorsus anhelent Ecclesiae prosperitatem, plenique sint apostolicae omnino voluntatis et desiderii mala ab Ecclesia avertendi, id unum optandum est: ut tristissima Ecclesiae condicione cognita atque perpensis remediorum generibus, valide ac fortiter in res emendandas ac instaurandas procedant.

Supplici igitur prece eos “quos Spiritus Sanctus posuit regere Ecclesiam Dei”, et maxime S. Pontificem regni Christi tantopere studiosum, salutisque Ecclesiae pervigilem custodem oramus, atque per viscera Christi obtestamur, ut quae Eis hisce submittimus, benigne examinare et quae in eis vera ac bona videbuntur exsequi dignentur.

Scribentibus nobis nihil aliud ob oculos versabatur, quam Ecclesiae bonum. Si autem erraverimus, iam in antecessum veniam rogamus et S. Sedis iudicio humillime nos nostramque lucubrationem submittimus.

Ut in omnibus honorificetur Deus!

Paulus Bernardus a S. Catharina.

Appendix 2

Publications by Willem Marinus van Rossum

1885

- *Dissertatio adumbrata de Praedestinatione J. Chr. Auctore s.p.n. Alph. ex Italo in Latinum versa*, Wittem 1885 [lithographic edition].
- Reprint with Italian and Latin versions: *Dissertatio de Praedestinatione D.N. Jesu Christi auctore S. Alphonso Maria de Liguorio ecclesiae doctore. Nunc primum edita cum versione Latina, introductione et adnotationibus rev. patris W.M. van Rossum C.ss.R.*, Rome 1896.
- A third impression followed in *Alphonsus Liguoris Opera Dogmatica*, edited by Aloysius Walter, vol. 2 (Rome 1903), appendix II, 731–754.

1890

- *Hexameron seu Officium sex dierum*, Wittem 1888 [lithographic edition].
Second impression: Wittem 1890.

1896/97

- ‘Brieven van den zeereerw. pater W. van Rossum’, in: *De volksmissionaris*, 18(1896/97), 36–40, 84–89, 142–144.

1897

- *Commentarius de Judicio Sacramentali Joannis Baptistae Pighi S. Theol. Doct. ad trutinam vocatus*, Rome 1897.
- Second impression: also Rome 1897.

1899

- ‘Tractatus de SS. Eucharistia’, in: Franciscus J. Harte; F.X. Schoupe, *Dictata theologico-dogmatica. Ad usum stricte privatum RR. FF. studentium Collegii Wittemiensis C.ss.R.* (Gulpen 1898/99), vol. 2, 490–573.

1903

- 'Brief van den Zeereerw. Pater W.M. van Rossum CSSR, Consultor van het H. Officie, over de merkwaardige gebeurtenissen dezer dagen te Rome', 13 August 1903, in: *De volksmissionaris*, 24(1902/03), 436–445.

1904

- *S. Alphonsus M. de Ligorio et Immaculata Conceptio B. Mariae Virginis*, Rome 1904.

1908

- 'Uit Rome. Brief van den Zeereerwaarden pater W. van Rossum', in: *De volksmissionaris*, 29(1907/08), 165–167.

1913

- 'Begrüßungsansprache des Kardinal-Legaten van Rossum' and 'Schlusswort', in: *Bericht über den XXII. internationalen Eucharistischen Kongress Wien, 12 bis. 15 September 1912* (Vienna 1913), 94–100, 707–712.
- 'Discorso... recitato nella festa annuale di beneficenza per l'Opera primaria della Preservazione della Fide l'8 Maggio 1913', in: *Fides. Bolletino Mensile*, 13(1913), no. 7, 1–4.
- Dutch translation: 'Een merkwaardige redevoering van W.M. kardinaal van Rossum', in: *De volksmissionaris*, 34(1912/13), 297–304.

1914

- *De essentia Sacramenti Ordinis. Disquisitio historico-theologica*, Freiburg 1914. Second edition: Rome 1932.

1918

- 'Brief van Zijne Eminentie W.M. Kardinaal van Rossum aan den Hoogeerw. pater procurator van het Gezelschap van Maria over *De ware godsvrucht tot de H. Maagd*', in: *Onze missionarissen en missiehuizen. Orgaan der Aartsbroederschap van Maria, Koningin der harten*, 10(1918), no. 1(Jan.), 4–5.
- 'Twee brieven van Z. Em. Kardinaal van Rossum', in: *Apostolische priesterbond*, 1(1917/18), 78–80.

1920

- 'Brief van zijne Eminentie, kardinaal G. M. van Rossum, beschermheer der orde, aan den generaal abt van Premonstreit, bij het achtste eeuwfeest dezer orde', in: *Het offer. Maandschrift gewijd aan den eeredienst van het Heilig Sacrament*, 29(1920), 65–66.

1922

- ‘Hoogvereerend schrijven van Zijn Eminentie Kard. van Rossum over onze Hollandsche afdeeling van het werk der Priesters der Aanbedding en het Eucharistisch Priesterverbond’, 6 May 1922, in: *SS. Eucharistia*, 18(1922), 81.

1923

- *Aan mijne katholieke landgenooten*, Rotterdam 1923.
- German translation: *Die religiöse Lage der Katholiken in den nordischen Ländern*, Munich 1924.
- Italian translation: ‘Viaggio nei Paesi del Nord’, in: *Vita e pensiero. Rassegna italiana di coltura*, 10(1924), 65–77, 129–139.
- ‘Aan R. P. de Louw, Procure der Witte Paters, Boxtel’, 11 October 1923, in: *Sint Antonius-Bode. Godsdienschtig maandschrift voor het katholieke volk*, 19(1923), 183.

1924

- ‘Brief van Zijne Eminentie W.M. Kard. van Rossum’, in: *De Standaard van Maria. Orgaan der geestelijke leer van den Zaligen L.M. de Montfort*, 4(1924), 33–34.

1925

- ‘Een dubbel belangrijk schrijven van Zijne Eminentie Kardinaal van Rossum’, in: *Bijlage van het missiewerk. Orgaan van den Priester-Missiebond*, 7(1925), appendix no. 1, 13–16.
- *Office du Cœur Eucharistique de Jésus. Fête liturgique le jeudi après l’octave de la Fête-Dieu* [Latin and French], Mechelen 1925.
- ‘Rede van Kardinaal van Rossum’ and ‘Rede van Z. Em. den Kardinaal Legaat’, in: *Gedenkboek van het xxviiie Internationaal Eucharistisch Congres, gehouden te Amsterdam van 22 tot 27 juli 1924* (Amsterdam 1925), 75–79, 774–777.
- See also: ‘Rede van den Kardinaal-Legaat’, in: *Het offer. Maandschrift gewijd aan den eeredienst van het Heilig Sacrament*, 33(1924), 193–198.
- ‘Schrijven van W.M. Kard. van Rossum aan Th. M.P. Bekkers, Nationaal Directeur Sint Petrus Liefdewerk’, 10 October 1925, in: *De organisatie der missieactie. Een opwekkend woord tot de R.K. Pastoors in Nederland namens Zijne Eminentie Kardinaal W.M. van Rossum. Aangeboden door den Priester-Missiebond [’s-Hertogenbosch 1925]*, 2.

1929

- 'Brief van kardinaal W.M. van Rossum aan het hoofdbestuur van het St. Melania-werk' and 'Gebed opgesteld door zijn Emin. W.M. Kardinaal Van Rossum', in: *St. Melania-blad*, appendix to 3(1929/30), no. 3(Aug./Sept.).
- 'L'opera di Pio XI per le missioni', in: *Vita e pensiero. Rassegna italiana di coltura*, 15(1929), 392–394.
- 'Schrijven van Z.Em. Kardinaal W.M. van Rossum aan Mgr. Prof. Dr. J. Hoogveld, voorzitter der Vereeniging "Petrus Canisius"', 17 June 1929, in: *Verslagboek van de Apologet. Vereeniging Petrus Canisius 1904–1929*, [n.p. 1929]], 11–12.
- 'Toespraak van Z. Em. Kardinaal van Rossum', in: *De Tijd*, 85(1929), no. 25098(4 Sept.), 2.

1930

- *Meditazioni per le domeniche dell'Avvento e per la novena del S. Natale*, Rome 1930.

Posthumous publications:

1933

- 'Brieven van Kardinaal van Rossum aan zijn familie', in: *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van Zwolle's grooten kardinaal* [Zwolle 1933], 10–66.
- *Sint Alfonsus' lijdensgedachten*, Roermond/Maaseik 1933.

1934

- 'Kardinaal van Rossum en de L.Vr. in 't Zand', in: *Het pelgrimsblad van O.L. Vrouw in 't Zand*, Roermond, 8(1934), 18–19, 23, 32, 34–35, 38–39, 42–43.

Abbreviations

- AA *Congregatio Augustinianorum ab Assumptione* (Assumptionists)
AAEES *Archivio della Congregazione degli Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari*
AANY *Archive of the Archdiocese of New York*
AAS *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*
AAV *Archivio Apostolico Vaticano*
ADDF *Archivio del Dicastero per la Dottrina della Fede*
AGHR *Archivum Generale Historicum Redemptoristarum*
AMFHA *Archief van de Missiezusters Franciscanessen van de H. Antonius* (Archive of the Franciscan Missionaries of Saint Anthony)
ANP *Archivio della Nunziatura di Parigi*
ANPR *Archief van de Nederlandse Provincie der Redemptoristen* (Archive of the Dutch Redemptorist Province)
ANSI *Archivum Neerlandicum Societatis Iesu*
ASPF *Archivio Storico di Propaganda Fide*
ASRS *Archivio Storico della Segreteria di Stato: Sezione per i rapporti con gli Stati e le Organizzazioni Internazionali*
ASS *Acta Sanctae Sedis*
AZLT *Archief Zusters van Liefde Tilburg* (Archive of the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg)
- CDG *Chronica Domus Generalis*
CIC *Codex Iuris Canonici*
CICM *Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae* (Scheut Missionaries)
CM *Congregatio Missionis* (Lazarists)
CO *Collectie Overijssel* (Overijssel Collection)
CPS *Congregatio Pretiosi Sanguinis* (Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood)
CSSP *Congregatio Sancti Spiritus* (Holy Ghost Fathers, Spiritans)
CSSR *Congregatio Sanctissimi Redemptoris* (Redemptorists)
- DIP G. Pelliccia, G. Rocca, *Dizionario degli istituti di perfezione*, Rome 1974–2003
DNK *Documentatieblad voor de Nederlandse Kerkgeschiedenis na 1800* (Documentation Journal for Dutch Church History since 1800)

| | |
|-----------|---|
| ENK | <i>Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven</i> (Heritage Centre for Religious Life in the Netherlands) |
| GAMSC | <i>General Archive of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart</i> |
| GASRMA | <i>General Archive of the Société des Religieuses Missionnaires d’Afrique</i> (White Sisters) |
| HDA | <i>’s-Hertogenbosch Diocesan Archives</i> |
| HUA | <i>Het Utrechts Archief</i> (The Utrecht Archives) |
| KADOC | <i>Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving</i> (Documentation and Research Centre on Religion, Culture and Society) |
| KDC | <i>Katholiek Documentatiecentrum</i> (Catholic Documentation Centre) |
| MEP | <i>Missions Étrangères de Paris</i> |
| MHPN-CSsR | <i>Monumenta Historica Provinciae Neerlandicae CSsR</i> |
| MSC | <i>Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis Jesu</i> (Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) |
| NCWC | <i>National Catholic Welfare Council</i> |
| NHA | <i>Noord-Hollands Archief</i> (North Holland Archives) |
| OFM | <i>Ordo Fratrum Minorum</i> (Franciscans) |
| OFMCAP | <i>Ordo Fratrum Minorum Capuccinorum</i> (Capuchins) |
| OFMCONV | <i>Ordo Fratrum Minorum Conventualium</i> (Conventual Franciscans) |
| OMI | <i>Congregatio Missionariorum Oblatorum Beatae Mariae Virgini Immaculatae</i> (Oblates of Mary Immaculate) |
| OP | <i>Ordo Praedicatorum</i> (Dominicans) |
| OPRAEM | <i>Ordo Praemonstratensis</i> (Norbertines) |
| OSB | <i>Ordo Sancti Benedicti</i> (Benedictines) |
| OSC | <i>Ordo Sanctae Crucis</i> (Crosier Fathers) |
| OSM | <i>Ordo Servorum Mariae</i> (Servites) |
| OSSR | <i>Ordo Sanctissimi Redemptoris</i> (Redemptoristines) |

- PMW *Archief van de Pauselijke Missiewerken in Nederland* (Archive of the Pontifical Mission Societies in the Netherlands)
- RDA *Reykjavik Diocesan Archives*
- ROSS *Archivalia W.M. van Rossum* (W.M. van Rossum Papers)
- RUIJ *Archief C.J.M. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck* (C.J.M. Ruijs de Beerenbrouck Papers)
- SCJ *Congregatio Sacerdotum a Sacro Corde Jesu* (Sacred Heart Fathers)
- SHCSR *Spicilegium Historicum Congregationis Ss.mi Redemptoris*
- SJ *Societas Jesu* (Jesuits)
- SM *Societas Mariae* (Marists)
- SMA *Societas Missionum ad Afros* (Society of African Missions, SMA Fathers)
- SO *Sanctum Officium*
- SPA *Society of Saint Peter the Apostle*
- SSCC *Congregatio Sacrorum Cordium* (Picpus Fathers)
- SVD *Societas Verbi Divini* (Divine Word Missionaries)
- UCM *Unio Cleri de Missionibus* (Missionary Union of the Clergy)

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Arriving in Rome from the Netherlands in 1895, the Catholic priest and Redemptorist Willem van Rossum (1854–1932) rose quickly through the ranks of the curia. In many ways an outsider, he made a resounding success of his career. His zeal in the fight against the ‘virus of modernism’ earned him a cardinal’s hat in 1911, and he was appointed prefect of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide in 1918. As ‘red pope’ or head of the Vatican’s mission department, Van Rossum led a hard-fought and ultimately successful campaign to separate missionary policy, fundraising and staffing from Western nationalism, and concentrate control over the worldwide missionary project at supranational level in Rome. He was the driving force behind two programmatic documents on the missions by Popes Benedict XV and Pius XI, which promoted the building up of indigenous churches and the educating of native clergy, thus helping to create a favourable position for the Catholic church during the subsequent wave of decolonisation. In the meantime, Van Rossum continued to decry Italian dominance in the church as well as the curia’s inefficiencies, for instance in a vituperative pamphlet that he wrote shortly before his death. This scholarly biography of Willem van Rossum rescues this great strategist behind the ‘popes of the missions’ from oblivion, and throws fascinating light on the history of the Catholic church and the Roman curia from the late nineteenth century until far into the twentieth.

VEFIE POELS (1958–2022) was affiliated for more than 35 years with the Catholic Documentation Centre (KDC) at Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands, where she was a researcher and deputy director. Her research focused mainly on the history of Dutch religious, particularly missionaries. This biography of Cardinal Willem van Rossum was her magnum opus; the Dutch edition was published in 2021.

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