

THE BEGINNINGS

The establishment of the Congregation of the Daughters of Charity can be derived from the codification of the Constitutions, the Rule of the Institute and its geographical expansion. Magdalene writes 'The Rule' of the Canossian Sisters between 1812 and 1815. In it she indicates *the sure way to arrive in Heaven ... "Here are your rules ..."* [Preface]. The text is approved by the Holy See on 23rd December 1828 and becomes a validly recognised application of the Gospel. The Rules, embraced by every Canossian Sister as a norm of life, are consequently revised to better respond to existing sensitivities. The Constitutions of 23rd December 1981, article 6, states: "[...] *we are called and empowered by the charism to contemplate Christ Crucified, and to communicate his love, seeking only the glory of the Father and the salvation of every person, through a life of consecration, of communion and of humble service.*" (Rule of Life)

Magdalene's endeavour in establishing the first houses is fruit of her active contemplation:

✚ **8 May 1808:** Verona, Via San Giuseppe, San Zeno, was a former monastery Magdalene writes to her friend Carolina Durini: *«I confess to you my dear that I would have a suitable house but, unfortunately, since there is a lot of talking about restrictions on monasteries, I would not like to take advantage of it... In all sincerity, I would like that they leave in peace the poor convents but, in this sad situation, rather than falling into the hands of godless persons, it is better, I think, that they be used for a holy cause ...».*

Magdalene of Canossa to Carolina Durini, 26 June 1805, Ep. I, p. 256.

✚ **01 August 1812**, Venice, Santa Lucia

✚ **19 July 1816**, Milan, Santo Stefano

✚ **17 September 1820**, Bergamo, Borgo Santa Caterina

✚ **21 June 1828**, Trent, Porta Nuova

The reader may think that, since Magdalene was a Marchioness, she must have had large funds available to enable her to open one house after another. In reality, Magdalene's wealth was Divine Providence whom she solicited through prayer and, above all, through her untiring effort to solicit good, wealthy people to assist the materially poor, whether by financial means or through civil action. The Canossian Houses were established thanks to the concerted efforts of many generous lay people.