



SECOND PART

«To progress a little every day»

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SOCIETY OF ST PAUL

«To progress a little every day»

(second part)

Maggiorino Vigolungo was born in Benevello (Cuneo) on 6 May 1904 of **Francesco Vigolungo** and **Secondina Caldelara**, who had six children. Two days later, at baptism, he was given the name of **Maggiore Secondo** (because he was born in May and in honour of the patron of the parish of San Secondo). But everyone will call him Maggiorino. His education was cared for by his father, a balanced and strong-willed man, and by his very pious mother and completed by the parish priest **Father Luigi Brovia** and by the nuns he attended in the parish with his sisters. He was a very cheerful, active child, always ready to ask for forgiveness, if he had bickered with his peers, so much so that in the village those who knew him said that he was «*very good of heart*» and were «*charmed by his goodness*». He studied well because he was of quick and receptive intelligence, yet he showed himself «*always respectful and reserved*». At the age of five, when he was asked: «*What will you do when you grow old?*», he responded: «*I want to be a saint*».

Father James Alberione, who had just started the so-called «*Typographical School of the Little Worker*», which later became the *Pious Society of Saint Paul* (PSSP), and who went to Benevello on Sunday where Maggiorino lived, to help the old parish priest and spending as well the summer period, met and admired, as an expert connoisseur and curator of souls, Maggiorino who – as attested by Primo Maestro himself – «*began to confess to me at the age of seven, first once a month and then often; between seven and eight years he also began to receive Holy Communion*», that with the passage of time he received more and more frequently. Ever since then – just at about seven years – this Servant of God in moments of interval went to church to make a brief visit to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and prayed in such a devout attitude and made good impression to the parish priest and the nuns. He took care to avoid the noise of the children, the meetings with some vulgar elements of the countryside and when he heard bad words, he would blush, lower his eyes and go away immediately. He is therefore considered by all, superiors and peers, a model boy. Father Alberione, therefore, noting that he was really a good and pure boy, very serious for his age and who tended to perfect himself, continued to follow him in a particular way, cultivating the precious qualities existing in him: «*In his spiritual work, he had set himself the goal of progressing every day. Suggested by me – says Fr. Alberione – the proposition turned out to be: “**To progress a little every day**”. He worked on this proposition, renewing it every morning*».

For over five years, our Founder prepared him weekly for the future priestly life and apostolate of the Good Press, to which Maggiorino aspired with all his strength, being well aware of the usefulness of this apostolic work. This proves that he was a truly spiritually formed young man who knew and did what was necessary for the good of his soul and that of the Christian faithful. He overcame some family difficulties, as his sister Sister Maria Delfina remembers: «*Maggiorino, one day, while he was at table with his family in Benevello, spoke warmly of what the Theologian had preached in the parish church. The boy was really shaken, and those feelings he could not keep them inside. His father did not understand certain things. If his son had said he wanted to become a priest, it would have been simpler; but what did a printing school have to do with it? And above all, what did the religious vocation have to do with the press? Papa concluded that it was necessary to hear better from the parish priest Father Luigi. The permission eventually came. Maggiorino followed the fiery conversations in which the Theologian tried to explain the future of the foundation, like him and only he could dream of it*».

Maggiorino at the age of 12 entered the «*Typographical School of the Little Worker*» on 15 October. Then, after the first vows emitted in the year 1918, was definitively transformed as the «*Pious Society of Saint Paul*», that Father Alberione himself refers to in the different “*Reports*” which he directed to the Bishop of Alba, Mons. Re. He found there the suitable environment for

his progress in virtues; and, although he felt the separation from the family, he accepted it with strength to follow the vocation to which he clearly felt called: *«The triple vocation of the religious, priest and apostle of the Good Press will henceforth be his great ideal to which he will dedicate himself with unspeakable love and generous efforts».*

His formators. As soon as he entered the future **PSSP**, he began his new life of study, work, perfection in virtues and ascent to holiness with great commitment. Under the direction of Father Alberione, whom he had chosen as spiritual director and towards whom he had unlimited trust, he understood more and more the ideal to which he had consecrated himself and put into practice all his intellectual, spiritual and moral energies to achieve it. In the 1st and 2nd year of high school, he had two great formators of souls, who instructed him well and guided him in the ascent of the virtues: they are **Blessed Timothy Giaccardo**, first priest of the PSSP, and the Servant of God **Can. Francesco Chiesa**. Under these imminent guides, Maggiorino perfected himself as much as ever. In fact, he is remembered by his superiors this way: *«The high tension of will, which he always had in all his duties, even the most ordinary».* The fact that *«while working he was praying and in prayer he showed an enviable ardour of spirit»*; that *«for his diligence and thoroughness he distinguished himself from the other companions»*; so that *«with his example and his words he also elicited enthusiasm among his companions»*. It is known that *«he wanted to be the first one also in his spiritual commitment»*; in fact, at the end of the last Spiritual Exercises, so he wrote: *«I want my soul to be in love with Jesus. No more confessions and sins, but confession that is a definitive resurrection: I must advance in virtue until death».*

What is striking in this boy is his willpower that he put in all his actions: *«I want to be a saint»*; *«I want to be an Apostle»*. And these were not unrealistic expressions, but they were firm, decisive intentions with which Maggiorino, supported by the grace of God and helped by the direction of his formators and superiors, advanced into the path of perfection and grace.

Spiritual growth and heroic exercise of virtues. Maggiorino, although born and educated in a model family, *he was not born a saint*. He also had his faults like all children. It can certainly be said that for at least seven years (from seven years to death) Maggiorino was fully aware of the path of man towards the virtues: a going toward this end that he followed day-by-day, ever more intense to reach perfection. The Holy See, in the *Note about the canonical procedure of the Causes of Beatification and Canonization*, speaks of the heroism of life that a candidate for beatification or canonization must have done: *«3. The bishop of the diocese where the person for whom beatification is requested is to begin the preliminary investigation. The promoter group (Actor Causae): diocese, parish, religious congregation, association, through the postulator asks the bishop to open the preliminary investigation. The bishop, having obtained the nulla osta of the Holy See, constitutes a special diocesan Tribunal. Before the Tribunal, witnesses are called to report concrete facts about the exercise, considered heroic, of the Christian virtues, namely, the theological virtues: faith, hope and charity, and of the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, and others specific to one's own state of life. Furthermore, all documents concerning the candidate must be collected. From this moment he is entitled to the title of Servant of God».* (Updated on 11 March 2001).

Father Alberione, speaking on this theme, affirms: *«I believe that he exercised the theological virtues in a very distinct degree. Equally it must be said of the cardinal virtues and morals of which, I would particularly say, humility and obedience».* The Primo Maestro in the biography written by him (*The Servant of God. MAGGIORINO VIGOLUNGO. Young apostle of social communication*. Pauline Publishing, Rome 1987), devotes a whole chapter (pp. 49-71) to describe the virtues of Maggiorino. We can outline **the spiritual journey of Maggiorino**, to reconstruct what is possible with the testimonies of people and researches that have been made.

A **first period** in which the will predominates to free itself from defects; a **second period of perfection**: «*To progress a little every day*»; a **third conclusive period** of complete abandonment in God, followed by an indifference before a possible cure or death.

Conclusion: I quote a meditation by the Founder, who without a doubt Maggiorino listened to and willingly encouraged him to become an Apostle of the Good Press: «*You will have saints despite the special difficulties you will encounter; you will learn how to study even with fewer hours and yet you will be Priests and educated and also distinct writers; you will own many houses, many machines, etc. despite that we have no money, indeed some deficits; you will have many vocations, a little from all the continents, despite the fact that you are now few, indeed very few; you will expand in many nations, although now our borders are those of our diocese of Alba; you will be approved by the Church, despite the fact that they now speak badly of you and disapprove you; our press will reach many nations, although now everything is restricted as territory*» (in Fr. Stefano Igino Silvestrelli: *Brigand no! Biographical Profile of Maggiorino Vigolungo. Venerable. Publishing House of Nazareth 1988. p. 95*).

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PRAYER

O Father, I thank you for having called the young Maggiorino Vigolungo to spread the Word through the "Good Press". You have infused in him a lively desire for holiness and a great love for the apostolate of social communication as to offer his life for it. I beg you to glorify this apostle in your Church, as a joy and a model of children and young people, so that his examples may influence in a Christian way their choices in these times characterized by global and multimedia communication. Through the intercession of Maggiorino, grant, dear Father, the grace I now ask ...

Glory to the Father...