



St. GASPAR BERTONI

CONFERENCES

on

The Spiritual Exercises

of

St. IGNATIUS of LOYOLA

The Autumn Seminary Retreat

Verona - September, 1810

For

NEW CONFESSORS

with Preface and Notes by

Rev. Joseph Stofella, CSS

§§§

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PREFACE
[Fr. Joseph Stofella, CSS]

1.

In the year 1810, Fr. Gaspar was 33 years old, and he had been a priest for ten years. One day - it might have been May or June of that year - he was summoned by the Bishop of Verona, His Excellency, + Innocent Liruti, a former Benedictine Abbot. The Bishop proposed to Fr. Bertoni that he should give the Fall Retreat to the Clergy in the 'Venerable' Diocesan Seminary, according to the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Fr. Bertoni then brought forward some real difficulties in accepting this mandate from his own point of view: his relatively young age, his lack of experience in such preaching - in fact, he alleged that he had never even seen the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. The Bishop, however, replied that he had had his eye on Fr. Gaspar, and that, despite the difficulties, that he should give the Retreat - he should simply trust in the Providence of God, and so on. Fr. Bertoni had no alternative than to accept the Bishop's clear wishes.¹

It was a stroke of good fortune for Fr. Bertoni, when, on returning home, he was not far from St. Firmus', where Fr. Anthony Cesari dwelled. This good man was already a well-known author at the time. Fr. Cesari noticed that Fr. Bertoni seemed a bit concerned, and so he asked Fr. Gaspar what was bothering him. Fr. Bertoni then narrated the order he had received from the Bishop and the great personal difficulties he found himself in as a result of it. He mentioned in particular that he did not even have a copy of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. Fr. Cesari responded with simplicity that he would provide a copy for Fr. Gaspar. Fr. Bertoni then studied it carefully day and night: **he even copied the entire book out by hand** in his very

¹ Many years later this virtuous prelate was remembered for his subdued and tranquil responses in such situations: *I am the Bishop, and this is what I want!* And obedience needed to be forth-coming. Bishop Liruti had been born in Friuli, in 1741. He had been a Benedictine Monk in Padua and in Rome he had among his class-mates, a certain Barnabas Chiaramonte, the future Pope Pius VII [cf. Robin Anderson, *Pope Pius VII. 1800-1823/ His Life. Times...* Rockford: TAN 2001]. The Benedictine Pope appointed a number of Benedictine Bishops to the Sees of Europe. While Bishop Liruti was in Padua, he served as science teacher, Master of Novices, Prior, Titular Abbot. Librarian, writer of jurisprudence. He became Bishop of Verona with Napoleon's approval, and took over the See on March 20, 1808. He undertook the re-organization of the Diocesan Seminary and of the Clergy. He delighted in his Diocesan Visitations, which he completed when he was well into his 80's. He had a Benedictine spirit about him, and yet suggested the Ignatian Retreat style for his priests. **Nonetheless, he remained firm in his denial of permission addressed to a number of priests of the Diocese who were desirous of entering the re-established Jesuits – such as Fr. Medici of the Oratory, Fr. Matthew Farinati and others.** [cf. Ceresatto's biography, Part IV, # 5, regarding Early Stigmatines desirous of being Jesuits]. Bishop Liruti died on August 10, 1827, and the age of 86.

[Translator's Note: this attitude toward the Bishops' wishes in matters of the Apostolic Mission, St. Gaspar later codified with the words *obsequium* cf. Rm 12:1, ff.] *Episcoporum* - a clear parallel with St. Ignatius' service of the Pope, noted especially by Fr. Lenotti]. **[Clergy renewal and that of religious life occupied a central place in St. Gaspar's own agenda in the founding of the Stigmatines].**

neat hand-writing. St. Gaspar then delivered these Retreat Conferences to the Clergy with such spirit and piety, that it produced in many of them results they had never previously experienced.²

The meditations that we present here³ are in general those which the young priest delivered in that year of grace to the priests and seminarians at the Seminary that year: even though some of these could even have been given perhaps a year or two earlier. However, this first full course of a retreat was for Fr. Bertoni the investiture in a special apostolate⁴ which in one form or another would last as long as his life did.

2.

The fact is that he had never seen the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius previously. By that is meant the actual book. However, having been earlier in his life a student of the former-Jesuits at St. Sebastian's, he had been a devout member of their Marian Congregation. He was the spiritual son of a Fr. Louis Fortis who would then be the first Father General of the eventually restored Company of Jesus⁵. As a result, young Gaspar breathed in a lived knowledge of St. Ignatius and received a real familiarity with the traditional forms of that spiritual doctrine proper to the Jesuit Founder. So, this spirituality came to him, if not actually in his infancy, certainly quite early during his formative years. Furthermore, he strove to model himself on the typical examples of one of the Saint's angelic sons: the patron of youth, St. Aloysius Gonzaga.

After graduating from St. Sebastian's, young Bertoni then enrolled in the classes at the Seminary. And there he, too, would have taken part in the periodic days of recollection and the *Spiritual Exercises* required by the rules. And it was

² This event was long over-looked. Notice of it might be found in a little notebook composed by Fr. Paul Gradinati. This **special ministry of Fr. Bertoni** was unknown to all the early biographers of Fr. Bertoni.

[**Translator's Note:** as already noted, the **Ministry to the Clergy, seminarians and priests, became one of the principal aspects of the Apostolic Mission for Stigmatines** - cf. CF ## 73; 163/4; 164; 182].

³ **Translator's Note:** the main source for translation is: MssB ## 2173-2682.

⁴ The early House Chronicles show often Stigmatine houses were used for priests, for vocation retreats – many Stigmatines have served in Seminary Professorships, Confessors and giving Retreats to Religious – cf. CF ## 67; 164

⁵ Louis Fortis was born in Verona in 1748. In 1762 [at age 14!], he entered the Company of Jesus. The Society was suppressed in 1773, so young Fortis came home to Verona, where he was ordained a priest and took up teaching at St. Sebastian's School. He left Verona again in 1794 and took part in the fragmentary and precarious efforts to have the Company restored in the Duchy of Parma and in Naples. He came back home again toward the end of 1811 in order to become once again a full-fledged member of the Company that was definitively restored in 1814. He became Provincial of the Roman Province up until 1818, and then was elected *Prepositus General* in 1820. He was a man of study and an excellent administrator and was known for his holiness. He died in 1829.

there that Gaspar came under the direction of the most vigilant Bishop of the time, His Excellency, + John Andrew Avogadro ⁶. There can be no doubt that under that most careful vigilance of the venerable Jesuit Bishop, the teaching, the discipline, the piety, could never be in disharmony with the Ignatian orientation ⁷. St. Gaspar had already received the Sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of this Bishop - he would go on to receive the Sacred Tonsure, and all the Minor and Major Orders, including Priesthood. Along with these, the specific priestly formation that Fr. Bertoni received through his seminary years, right up to the reception of the Priesthood.

3.

It is most likely from these early and sustained influences - that of keeping St. Aloysius as the ideal patron of his every apostolate among the youth ⁸ - he decided to look on Ignatius as the providential inspirer and the ideal model of his priestly life. This was only right: he chose first the spiritual son and then his Father in religious life, first the young Cleric and then the Priest. These logical choices helped to orientate the young priest along his saintly way.

As time passed, Fr. Gaspar with two of his companions, committed themselves to the study and the practice of the classic work, *The Exercise of Perfection*, of Fr. Alphonsus Rodriguez, SJ. ⁹ They were also committed to the careful perusal of another work, *The Foundation and Care of the Marian Oratories* [a work undertaken from 1802 onward]. One might also find among these papers the notes for the 'Retreat for the Clerical Vestition of one Mr. John Marani', December 1805 ¹⁰. For the following month, January 1806, we find a 'Retreat for the Brother Priests and for the Sons of the Marian Congregation, in St.

⁶ John Andrew Avogadro was a Venetian patrician, and had also been a Jesuit, and a well-known preacher. He became Bishop of Verona in 1791 and, in 1805, he resigned due to his state of exhaustion. He returned to the Company of Jesus and re-joined the Society in Naples. He later died in Padua in 1814.

⁷ **Translator's Note:** the Ignatian influence on Fr. Bertoni came to him early in his life, and remained throughout. The Congregation of Priests and Religious that he formed were to **live under the Rules of St. Ignatius**. [cf. **MP** September 15, 1808; *Epistolario*, Letter 54, August 17, 1816, pp, 130, f. – etc.]. St. Ignatius was St. Gaspar's *mirror*, upon whom he modeled his priestly existence [cf. **MP**, July 30 1808].

⁸ **Translator's Note:** along with being the **Apostle to the Clergy [and the Consecrated Life]**, St. Gaspar was early the **Apostle to the Youth** – in employing **any Ministry of the Word of God whatsoever**. [cf. **CF # 163: Media quibus hoc Institutum salutem promoveat proximorum**].

⁹ Among Fr. Gaspar's manuscripts there remain significant extracts from these reflections. The careful reader will note three different hand-writing styles – that of Fr. Bertoni, and that of Fr. Matthew Farinati, and a third hand, belonging to Fr. Cajetan Allegri. These three were called the 'Three-fold Bond' [*funiculus triplex*] of admirable harmony among them in their apostolate for the youth, as well – as is evident - in their concerted quest for perfection. However, the hand-writing that predominates in these pages is that of St. Gaspar Bertoni.

¹⁰ **MssB III, ## 3829, ff.**

Paul's of Verona, in the Oratory of the Nuns of St. Frances of Paola, for the Period of Carnival in the Year 1806¹¹. There might also be found some notes, entitled: 'For the Easter Retreat of the Year 1806, in St. Paul's of the Martian Field: Meditations.'¹² It is evident that all of these works maintain a clearly Ignatian spirit.

In his *Spiritual Diary*, Fr. Bertoni noted a very special blessing that came to him from high, during his own retreat, under the date of September 15, 1808:

*Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises. While visiting the altar of St Ignatius with my companions I felt much devotion and recollection with great inner cheerfulness and some tears - even though the visit was short. I had the feeling that the Saint was welcoming us and inviting us to work for the greater glory of God as he did. To work in the same ways: though not using all those means that he was able to use. He seemed to tell us: "Onward, soldiers of Christ! Gird yourselves with fortitude! Pick up the shield of faith, the helmet of Salvation, the sword of the divine Word and fight against the "ancient serpent". Make my spirit alive again in you and in others through you.*¹³

In so far as having the Saint's spirit come alive once more in himself, it was not just a little effort that Fr. Bertoni gave to this enterprise. A little less than two months previously, St. Gaspar had noted in this same Diary, on the Vigil of St. Ignatius, the following thought:

*For the examination of conscience one should choose a Saint of the same vocation as a mirror. In this way one finds matter for confession every day. Whatever falls short of that Saint's perfection is faulty.*¹⁴

In Fr. Bertoni's manuscripts, there may be found citations and extracts from no less than four biographies of this great Saint. One among these manuscripts is outstanding in this regard. Unfortunately, there is lacking to us the means of identifying the original author of this direct source. However, the extracts in this document flow one after another and would perhaps equal to the length of the Spiritual Diary of St. Gaspar. Both the paper used and the hand-writing seem to indicate a time in Fr. Bertoni's life that would pre-date his Spiritual Diary. This flow of thought are evidently the intended fruit of his own study and spiritual reading,

¹¹ MssB III, ## 3887, ff. and 3964, ff.

¹² At the time of Fr. Stofella's publication of these retreat notes [1957], all these documents were in the Archives of the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome.

¹³ Cf. *BERTONIANO*, Anno XVI, p. 273.

¹⁴ ibi, p. 272. cf. *Memoriale Privato*, July 30 1808.

which he made with pen in hand, for the identical scope of advancing in his spiritual life following in the foot-steps of the saint, along the ways of the Lord ¹⁵.

In this same spirit and during this same time there can be noted in St. Gaspar the increasing study and use of a flood of spiritual authors, both Italian and French, and all of them from the Company of Jesus.

For sure, Fr. Bertoni considered it to be a gift of Providence to have in his hands that 'divine book' composed by St. Ignatius, as Fr. Lenotti referred to it ¹⁶. He transcribed this word for word, as was noted elsewhere, and he bound the pages himself. The abundant use of it as time went on could clearly be seen from his finger-prints that could be noted at the bottom of not a few of the pages. And that which matters the more is that he made of it in his own flesh and blood: no more or less than the examples of the Saint. It was not without purpose that Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe did not fail to point out in his own time - even though much later and almost in passing - that enormous admiration and the dedicated commitment which Fr. Gaspar retained for the works and for the virtues of the saintly Founder of the Company of Jesus. And we should not pass over the fact that St. Gaspar had so faithfully copied this booklet within his own life. ¹⁷ However, due to this fact this aspect of Fr. Bertoni's ministry was over-looked by more than one student of his life - yet, with the passing of time it seemed to others that Fr. Gaspar was indeed another mirror and model. ¹⁸ But let us return now to this Retreat of the Fall of 1810 that Fr. Bertoni preached.

Fr. Lenotti wrote that

... Fr. Gaspar often preached these Exercises to the laity, and very many times to seminarians and priests, whether in the Seminary, as well as in the Chapel at the Stimate: and it was beautiful to hear him, and even in the midst of his many ailments and discomforts, sometimes being so sick he was unable to move around. It really was beautiful, I say, and edifying to hear him preach to the Seminarians. At times they would sit near him and formed a circle around him. This would often take place with him sitting in his chair or even stretched out on his sick-bed, he manifested a commitment that was flourishing and strong...

¹⁵ Along with this manuscript, we can note another, that add up to about 50 pages, of the Latin Biography written by Fr. John Peter Matteo, SJ, from whom we will quote up ahead in the course of this study.

¹⁶ Cf. *Miscellanea Lenotti*, in: *Summarium Additionale* Doc. 20, v. 4, p. 153. The *Spiritual Exercises* are found there in Fr. Bertoni's hand-writing. The Folder was numbered '12', at the Congregation of Saints.

¹⁷ Cf. Giacobbe, *Biography of the Servant of God*. Part I, c. 27: edition found in the *Summarium Additionale*, p. 456.

¹⁸ But this does not imply that the analogies drawn between Fr. Bertoni and for another example, St. Vincent de Paul, were not that many – as this comparison was also often drawn.

Fr. Louis Fortis also stated that he had heard it said that ‘Fr. Bertoni truly understood the *Exercises*, and he preached them in full accord with the method of St. Ignatius’.

4.

Now coming to the text at hand, the *Meditations* that we present here are a good proof of all this. Unfortunately, the hand-written notes which have come down to us would not be the final, carefully edited as St. Gaspar would usually provide. It should be noted here - that a good number of years ago our own Fr. Nello Dalle Vedove put this present copy of the Retreat together. He was thus able to reconstruct the text, **by making use of the original text of St. Ignatius**, in comparison with other sources and further research. Much is owed to the enthusiasm of this confrere of ours for his laborious undertaking that has brought this present text to light.

Therefore, our present text here does not seem to have been what would ordinarily be Fr. Bertoni’s final copy. First of all, one has the distinct impression that what we have here is almost something like the back of a tapestry. However, taking the time for a mature reflection on all this, this work assumes development and form on the lips of the preacher. However, looking back on the whole, one will quickly notice that the many points that are brought up are linked together in an excellent continuity. In some way this work is in no way altered by the connective phrases that have been inserted, or those inserts that we have allowed ourselves to place among parenthesis in the text of the *Introduction*. In some passages, where the hand-written copy does indeed seem incomplete, by indicating their source, we have taken the responsibility to find the source, and supply for the gaps that would otherwise appear. We have also translated some of the Latin phrases in the original into a modern Italian to remove an obstacle for some readers. But these are about the only additions introduced here. The personal notes without any further development on the part of Fr. Bertoni, and the sacred texts the connection of which often remains the secret of St. Gaspar himself, have been eliminated¹⁹. On the other hand, the sub-titles are our additions into the text. The effort has not even been made to assemble from the **very sparse original notes** the Final Meditation, which has this title:

The Love of God in communicating Glory to us.²⁰

As was his custom, Fr. Gaspar himself provides us with the source for this: he had consulted the work of the Ven. Fr. Ludovico Da Ponte, SJ. His own notes make this quite clear - from Fr. Da Ponte’s own *Meditations*, the 54th of the 6th Part of his Book [i.e., the last of the collection], there is this title:

¹⁹ **Translator’s Note:** e.g., MssB ## 2202-2229, about 7 full pages of text of the *Manoscritti* Bertoni [MssB] in **CS I**, from p. 114-116 are the foot-notes for the ‘Introduction’ have been eliminated. The many texts here, and perhaps others as well - meditating on *Spiritual Exercises* n. 23, prior to the First Day, ‘The End of Man’ – are not presented by Fr. Stofella.

²⁰ Cf. MssB ## 2668, ff.

Concerning the Glory in so far as this embraces the Seven Rewards that Christ Our Lord promises in the Apocalypse which bind us to them.

This is an unfortunate gap which we have been forced to leave un-filled.

5.

With regard to these sources used, one might indeed ask: are the Retreat Conferences presented here merely a copy slavishly re-produced by Fr. Bertoni? They are not: and even if they were, in their final rendition, **these pages reflect what St. Gaspar had in mind, and he has made these thoughts his own.** But none of the authors indicated by him as fonts was **specifically addressing seminarians or priests.** Furthermore, speaking in general, these citations that he has made are very often rather schematic at best and drawn up as something of a *compendium* - they are then re-shaped by scriptural or patristic texts, and the end-result would be a new doctrine entirely adapted for the audience that he had before him. Perhaps in the citation of the fonts more than anything else one will note the near scruple of Fr. Bertoni's rather delicate conscience. As for originality, there is perhaps nothing really drastically new or different from what might be found in other works of this type. I am not speaking here of the *Introduction* - which is a **word-by-word citation from St. Ignatius.** It goes on then as a **genuine compilation of texts:** some from the Jesuit author, Fr. Bartoli, others directly from St. Ignatius himself, either directly, or as he was quoted by others, and these sources are often noted by Fr. Bertoni. Through it all, there permeates the scruple of his of never distancing himself from the authentic norms established and recommended by the original author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Rather we are at times struck by the sometimes severe tone of this Spiritual Director. This leads us to keep in mind the very sublime ideal that he had of the Priesthood, and what he was ruminating in his own spirit.

And we need to recall those times. We can here refer to the recent biographies of St. Gaspar. Situations of his time might appear here and there in some of the notes. But, we can present here an official document that is expressive both in what it does say and what it does not contain. It is the concluding passage of a Pastoral Letter of Bishop Liruti, for Septuagesima Sunday for the approaching Lent. The Letter contains the Bishops thoughts regarding the Carnival period preceding Lent, and he asked that: 'This Letter be read in the Churches for the instruction of the people. It should also be put up in an open place in the Sacristies of the City and the Diocese' ²¹:

²¹ cf. the *Pastoral Letters of His Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop Innocent Liruti, Bishop of Verona, Honorable Knight, Commendator and Count, etc.* Verona 1817.

... Along with our exhortation to the Faithful people..., we bring to bear here also our own special authority, for the protection of the good example that all Men of the Church, are obliged to give to the People. And following the spirit of the holy Councils, and of our Predecessors, we decree that if any Priest ascribed to the Ecclesiastical Service, whether as a Secular, or as a Religious, in any time should attend the Carnival customs, or should attend the Theater, or the Comedies, or Balls, and should any such person cooperate in these affairs in any manner whatsoever; he, by the very fact itself would remain suspended from the divine services: And should anyone, notwithstanding this suspension [which we choose to reserve to ourselves], should dare to insert himself into the Ministry of the Holy Altars, he, according to the Ecclesiastical Regulations, would incur canonical irregularity. And any clerics in Minor Orders, who would commit any of the above prohibitions, will remain without hope of any further Ordination.

“We decree this, by declaring at the same time that while our Fear is that there might be some delinquent Ecclesiastics as described above, none of this takes away from our excellent Clergy of whom in addition to their learning, also their goodness and their well-ordered conduct are well known not only to Us and to the common opinion throughout the Diocese, but are noted in the praise of Externs. Nor can the improper life-style of a few among them who depart from the good example of the others, can take from our Clergy the honorable name that it justly possesses...

There is very little that needs now to be added by us, other than St. Gaspar Bertoni seems to have set a table for us here. We accept his invitation with a quote from Dante: ‘I have invited you to this table: now, take and eat!’ This is the invitation of the Stigmatine Founder. Let us do him honor!

For Joseph Stofella

2173**THE PRIESTS' RETREAT** ²²

'We have given the whole year to our body: let us give these days to our soul!' ²³

INTRODUCTION

1. What the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius are
[St. Ignatius defines them thus in his First Annotation:]

By the term 'Spiritual Exercises' is meant every method of examination of conscience, of meditation, of contemplation, of vocal and mental prayer, and of other spiritual activities, that will be mentioned later. For just as taking a walk, journeying on foot, and running, are bodily exercises, so we call Spiritual Exercises every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul... ²⁴

2174 Fr. Bartoli comments: The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius are not a mere collection of pious considerations, placed in good order one after another, and then gathered in a book, so that others, in making good use of them, might learn to deal in useful manner with themselves, and to converse devoutly with God. If they were just this and nothing more, they would not be said to be the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius, nor would they be anything new. The ***Spiritual Exercises*** are rather an entire and

²² Fr. Bertoni indicates as his sources for this *Introduction* two great Jesuits: **Fr. Daniel Bartoli, SJ** [1608-1685] – one of the most outstanding authors of his time – and **Fr. John Peter Pinamonti** [1632-1703]. St. Gaspar first quoted from Fr. Pinamonti's **Biography** of St. Ignatius, and then from his published ***Spiritual Exercises***, and from his ***The Religious Sister in Solitude***. Furthermore, as is self-evident, St. Gaspar also made good use of St. Ignatius' ***Spiritual Exercises***, the Saint's own text, in an Italian translation, called the *Vulgate*, or: ***The Directorium in the Exercises*** [1599], an official text proper to the Company of Jesus.

²³ From **St. Peter Chrysologus**, Sermon 12. The entire text can be read in the ***Spiritual Exercises***, and in the ***Eternal Maxims*** of **Fr. Charles Ambrose Cattaneo, SJ**. The full text reads: '*We have given the whole year to our bodies, let us give these days to the soul. Let us live only for God for a little while, we who have lived totally for this world. Let us bury all our domestic cares.*' [cf. Vol. IV, pp. 8 & 166. Milano 1903].

²⁴ Fr. Bertoni provides here only the Latin text: Fr. Stofella used the literal Italian translation from the original Spanish, with its very careful enumeration. Edition Lampada Vivente – Selecta – Milano 2nd Edition, 1953. cf. a more recent Edition: ***Esercizi Spirituali. St. Ignatius of Loyola Testo Originale e traduzione italiana di Giuliano Ruffo, SJ.*** A Cura dei Gesuiti di San Fedele a Milano. ROMA: Edizioni ADP 1991.

[Translator's Note: A classical English translation is provided by: ***The 'Spiritual Exercises' of St. Ignatius. Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph.*** **Louis J. Puhl, SJ**. Chicago: Loyola University Press. Newman Press 1951. This text is used for this work].

established method of purging, comforting and strengthening a soul, leading one from an initial detachment from the world to the ultimate union with God: this is rather a much worked over method concerning a number of principles of the faith, which, when put into practice, with the application of these means to the prescribed end, in itself, would have brought about infallible success.²⁵

2. The Dignity and Excellence of St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*.

2175 Fr. Bartoli goes on to say: this is not so much a matter of a doctrine derived from other books, but rather from personal union with the Holy Spirit, and from internal experience: lights from God which inspired St. Ignatius, and confirmed in the progress of his holiness.²⁶

3. The Efficacy of the *Spiritual Exercises*

From their infallible effect, St. Ignatius quite confidently asked for nothing other than the withdrawal for a few days, in order to draw great sinners to emendation, and to perfection those individuals of mediocre holiness.

2176 In a letter to Manuel Miona, his former Confessor in Paris, the Saint exhorted him very warmly to make these *Exercises*. In his exhortation, the saint declared: I do not know where to find, nor even to understand in this life a more helpful means to put into one's heart a zeal for their own salvation and for that of others. And so if for your own benefit not do not feel it is necessary to make use of these, may the profit that will come to you for the help of others move you to them. Indeed, the preacher can only very inadequately persuade others to that which he himself is not much persuaded. Some preachers as those thus described, do not produce the desired fruit²⁷.

4. Examples of the Effectiveness of the *Spiritual Exercises*

2177 Gabriel Lermeo, a Calvinist, seeing the extraordinary changes in people's lives achieved by these *Spiritual Exercises*, and being uncomfortable in seeing an effect without understanding its reason, called them 'witch-craft'!

The theologians of the Council of Trent received a copy of the *Spiritual Exercises* from the Jesuits in attendance: and they professed that only then did they really begin to be theologians, only then did they come to understand what had been lacking to them in wisdom, after so much disputation and teaching from their university Chairs. A certain Diego Mirone has made this known.

²⁵Fr. Daniel Bartoli, SJ, *Life of St. Ignatius* Book 1, c. 16.

²⁶*Directorium*, in: *Proemium*, 2.

²⁷Bartoli, o.c., Book 1, c. 16

2178 Peter Ortiz, Emissary of Charles V to the Pope, and a Doctor at Paris, having finished the **Exercises**, received from this experience great spiritual affections: of joy for having been able to learn in 40 days of school a philosophy that was such that in so many years of teaching had not yet come to him; he also experienced sentiments of sorrow that he had only come to this special School only after he had reached the age in which he was no longer able to carry out into practice that better way that he had learned in the **Spiritual Exercises**.

2179 Fr. Mancius, a great Dominican Theologian, esteemed more – as he said – the Theology of Fr. Villanova [who preached the **Spiritual Exercises**] in Spain over that learning of all the doctors put together in the whole world.

St. Charles Borromeo, after he had been named rather young to be a Cardinal, made them in Rome, never let any subsequent year go by without making them. And one day, Vincent, the Duke of Mantua, showed him his great library. And the Saint replied: 'I, too, have a great library, but it is all contained in one little booklet: and from it alone I learn more than I could from all the other books in this world. And he stated that this booklet was the **Spiritual Exercises** of St. Ignatius.²⁸

2180 The Holy See approved them in 1548, as *full of piety and holiness and very useful for the spiritual edification and progress of the faithful*.²⁹

5. The Hidden Treasure

There can be no wonder that if the **Spiritual Exercises** produce these wonderful effects in such a short time and with such little effort: since, since *this is the will of God, your sanctification* [cf. 1 Th 4:3], His goodness is always prepared to diffuse His gifts on His creature. **Beyond any doubt if each one would not place before Him any impediment**³⁰, but would rather dispose himself, each one would easily and in a short time be able to report many graces from God. This is precisely what the *Exercises* achieve, and they do this in an efficacious manner.³¹

So, my dear Brothers, this is the **hidden treasure** [cf. Mt 13:44] indicated to us by divine grace for which having sold everything else, or at least, having renounced it all somewhat, we ought to purchase.

6. Conditions for the Good Success of the *Spiritual Exercises*

2181 Note that the fruit of the Holy Exercises depends on two headings: on divine grace, and on our cooperation. As far as the first is concerned, prayer is needed:

²⁸ ib., c. 18

²⁹ Paul III, Papal Bull **Pastoralis Officii Cura**, as is noted in the *Proemium*, n. 6.

³⁰ This Ignatian principle was often employed by Fr. Bertoni: in his own life [cf. **Memoriale Privato** : July 15, 1809; May 18, 1811; Letter 19, **Epistolario** p. pp. 61, ff.; Letter 21, *Ep.*, p. 66; Letter 58, in *Ep.*, p. 137; Letter 80, *Ep.*, pp. 166, ff.; Letter 154, *Ep.*, p. 254.

³¹ cf. *Proemium*, n. 8.

since 'we believe nothing unless first merited through prayerful help' ³². This prayer ought to be offered with supreme reverence, since through it one is speaking either vocally, or mentally, with God and with His Saints from among whom it would be good to pick one of them as protector ³³.

As for the second prerequisite, that is, our cooperation, two other requirements surface: broadness of heart and diligence in the works accomplished.

2182

1st Condition: The Magnanimity and Generosity of Heart

It will be very profitable for the one who is to go through the *Exercises* to enter upon them with magnanimity and generosity toward his Creator and Lord and to offer Him one's entire will and liberty ³⁴, that his Divine Majesty may dispose of him and all he possesses according to His most holy will ³⁵.

a. 'Magnanimous Soul': this will spring to the fore from conceiving *the greatness of this entire undertaking* and how useful it is in itself.

'In fact it is not only what pertains to the soul, but what pertains to it in such a manner that if one brings to this enterprise all that he should, this means already to lay down those foundations for one's spiritual progress which then will be in use throughout all of one's life.

2183 From this, there should be understood with how much alacrity and with how much strength there should be brought to such a great undertaking and so sublime a matter ³⁶.

For you these *Exercises* might be the very last of your life; the reason is that your works will keep you from making others, etc., or they will just make it impossible. However, the saints always found time for their retreats.

So, each one should deliberate within himself, and make the resolution to act strongly [cf. 1Co 16:13] and to reject all impediments to divine grace, and to bring all

³² cf. St. Augustine *Concerning Ecclesiastical Dogmas*, c.26, otherwise, 56. t. 8, append. 78 F – spurious.

³³ St. Gaspar chose Jesuit Saints as his 'mirror': St. Aloysius Gonzaga [cf. Sermons Dedicated to him: n. 30: **MssB ## 794, ff.; 1572-1708**] as we have seen for his youth – and St. Ignatius of Loyola, for his priesthood [cf. **MP** July 30 1808].

³⁴ This ideal anticipates **Sp. Ex n. 234: *Suscipe*** as noted in St. Ignatius' original Spanish: ... *que yo debo de mi parte ofrecer y dar a la su divina majestad...todas mis cosas y a mi mismo con ellas...recibid toda mi libertad...todo es vuestro...* For St. Gaspar this seems summarized in his repeated ***obsequium***.

³⁵ This is simply n. 5 in St. Ignatius' 'Introductory Observations' [cf. Louis J. Puhl, SJ, o.c., p. 3]. Fr. Bertoni offers only the Latin text.

³⁶ A thought from the ***Directorium***, c. 2, n.1.

the forces of one's soul in order to cooperate with this undertaking, so that in so far as within each lies, one might be disposed to receive from the **Exercises**.³⁷

2184 This broadness of heart derives secondly from seeing just how much one should hope in God.

'Each should have, then, a soul full of great hope in the goodness and liberality of the Lord, Who seeks out also the strays, and chases after the fugitives, even more than will He receive those who are already of good spirit and He approaches these and embraces them.'

His priests are most dear to Him³⁸. As a result, trust in His infinite Clemency. It is from this there is derived the original pious desire, He will also bestow the grace and the strength to carry out the entire undertaking in a good and fruitful manner: since your sanctification is His will'. [1 Th 4:3]³⁹.

2185 b. Useful in itself: the Devil would not dare to tempt and God is generous with anyone who is generous in His regard. 'With magnanimity and generosity one offers himself, his entire will and liberty to God, so that He may dispose of him and all he possesses according to His most Holy Will'⁴⁰ What this means is that among other realities that each one should be so disposed in spirit that he willingly, rather avidly, would undertake these *Exercises* not only to enjoy their spiritual sweetness, as much as to come to understand the will of God concerning oneself, and to detach his affections from all the earthly realities, and to place this in his Creator.'

2186: This is also supremely necessary, that in addition to receiving profit in spirit, each might also be further resigned in the good pleasure of God, in those matters in which he is still free; and further, one should be prepared in soul that 'whatever he comes to understand from God what is to be done,' he should be fully decided on carrying it out. One aspect that one should not bring along would be any decision of not wanting to be separated from it.

2187 Do not place any limits on God: first, because this is simply indecent; secondly, because it is harmful, since one would then be deprived of the greater gifts, even of those which he wanted.

Furthermore, one should never place any measure or confines on the gifts of God, such as though one would want to be illumined and assisted only up to a certain measure, and not beyond. The reason for this, as has been seen, this is not only

³⁷ *Directorium*, c.11, 1.

³⁸ Fr. Bertoni's addition.

³⁹ *Directorium*, n. 3.

⁴⁰ St. Ignatius, 'Introductory Observations', n. 5. [Fr. Nello's text here does not repeat these thoughts.

[**Translator's Note** the Trinitarian, Eucharistic offering of oneself to God, in imitation of His inner Trinitarian life - is the heart of the Charism of St. Gaspar: *La sera, veggendo un'immagine della Ss. Trinita', molta riverenza e amore all tre Persone. Il Padre eterno che stava colle braccia aperte mi spiegava la sua misericordia e la facile comunicazione de' suoi doni...* [MP, August 24, 1808]; the divine mercy is shown in the easy communication of God's gifts.

indecent, that a mere creature should treat his Creator in this manner, and even more so as it proves harmful to himself: 1st, because one deprives himself of those greater goods that God was perhaps about to bestow on him; and then because this same lack of liberality and restriction and ingratitude toward God, merits that such a person should not even receive those gifts that he would want to have. What would rather dilate the bosom of one's spirit is that each should desire as much more as he could in order to be able to become joined with God, and of being as much as he could to be enriched by these celestial treasures. 'These, too, are to be observed toward God.'⁴¹

2188

c. Humility and Obedience to the Directors of the ***Exercises***.

Towards those who give the ***Exercises***, you ought to have this humility: that no matter how prudent and learned and much exercised in the ways of the Lord you may be on your own, for this time, though, do not trust in your own prudence or doctrine. Rather, become a fool in order to be truly wise [1 Co 3:18]: *As newborn babies, desire the rational milk without guile that thereby you may grow into salvation* [1 P 2:2]. Furthermore, [as for us preachers], you ought to consider us as an instrument sent to you from heaven: because the **genuine mission**⁴² that we have legitimately received in order to direct you and lead you along this path which leads to life. So, with all reverence and alacrity and confidence you ought to receive those matters which we will propose to you⁴³. ***Christ became obedient for you and humiliated even unto death on the Cross*** [Ph 2:8]. ***God gives grace to the humble*** [Jas 4:6].

2189: Obedience: is the short-cut and the sure way to perfection.

Strive to make yourself meritorious by **obeying perfectly our counsels as you would Christ**⁴⁴. Nor should you conduct any other meditations, or any other order of business, than that which is suggested to you by us. The reason is that this humility and simplicity are most pleasing to God, and ***His communion is with the simple*** [Pr 3:32]. Furthermore, this humility disposes one for great graces.

There is needed a simplicity in order not to want to know further, not to seek to find the reasons for this or that⁴⁵.

This is necessary in order to receive the more abundant fruit. Do not be in the least seeking to know that which we are to give tomorrow, but rather to follow that

⁴¹ *Directory*, n. 5.

⁴² In his ***Original Constitutions***, St. Gaspar variously described his mission: ***ministeria graviora...varia et propria ... appropriata ... quodcumque Verbi Dei ministerium*** [cf. ## 158; 163; ff; 185; 262; 267; 277].

⁴³ *ib.* and n. 7.

⁴⁴ Fr. Bertoni suggests this lofty ideal for religious obedience in his ***Original Constitutions*** [CF # 139] even as offering one's religious obedience as obeying God Himself [cf. CF # 149]. And to serve the sick as though Christ Himself [CF # 236].

⁴⁵ Fr. Bertoni will use this Ignatian principle for obedience – in not trying to seek all the motivations behind obedience [cf. CF # 150].

which is now being sought, *work strongly*, as though there was no other good for your right now.

2190 Towards one's friends and all exterior matters.

d. Advantages of Coming aside for a Retreat

St. Ignatius offers a counsel in his **Annotation 20** to those who are freer from their duties and to anyone who might desire to garner a more abundant spiritual fruit: *... ordinarily the progress made in the **Exercises** will be the greater, the more the retreatant withdraws from all friends and acquaintances, and from all worldly cares*; it is better that one should retire from his usual dwelling place and come to a house, or cell that is more secret, so that each one's coming forth might be the more free and secure for Matins, for the Mass, for Vespers, as he wills, without the accompaniment of any of those with whom he lives.

2191 From this place of retreat, among the other advantages, these three principally come to the fore:

1st, that there be excluded one's friends and associates and matters that would be less directly ordained toward the worship of God, this would merit a grace from God that would not be mediocre.

2nd, that since because of this retreat, one's intellect is less than before distracted going in different directions, but it is gathered and totally united in its thought in one matter alone, and that is, to follow one's Creator God and to provide for one's own soul, the more freely and expeditiously does one use his own natural powers, in seeking that which one so desires.

2192 3rd, to the extent that the soul finds itself more apart and solitary, that more one is prepared to seek and to touch its Creator and Lord. The more one draws more closely to him, and is all the more disposed to receive the gifts of the divine goodness, to which He disposes all. All the more is this effect perfected which at the beginning was simply approached.

2193

IInd Condition in order to make the **Exercises** well
is to employ the precise diligence in carrying out the prescribed works.

In particular, whoever wishes to receive some profit, should not read anything else other than that which is meant to be meditated upon that day, or during that particular hour; nor should he have any books in him, to remove the occasion of reading them. Just the Breviary and the other helps.

One might read a little from **The Imitation of Christ**, for these first few days. As time passes, we will indicate others. One would commit a huge deception should he study during these days.

2194: For these early days of the Retreat, one might read some book that would treat of the four Last Things. The **Confessions** of St. Augustine, and similar books. And such reading should direct the Meditation; this is done by not reading rapidly, out of avidity of knowing and finding new things ⁴⁶. Rather, the retreatant should pause and by pondering accurately the matters that he reads, and entering into these same affections.

2195 That which is said about reading, is also intended to include writing. One should not write other matters than those which pertain to prayer, i.e., some points that the Lord has communicated in the meditation, or even outside this; very briefly, though, and not profusely in the manner of a sermon. These points can be of a two-fold type: either practical, which pertain to one's actions, as a few good desires and proposals; or, those which pertain to knowing, as certain truths or lights about some matter, or virtue, e.g., about humility, disdain of the world, patience; or also in some matter of meditation, as about the Incarnation, the Passion, and similar areas; and those principally that are like axioms, and which would open the way to perceiving good and to meditate on those matters.

2196 But it ought to be noted that no one should allow himself to be carried away thus beyond the sweetness of the reading or the writing that it would take time from the necessary of examen, or that the spirit might then remain tired, or less apt to meditate. It is necessary first of all that the meditation should be saved, and that everything else be subservient to this ⁴⁷.

2197 Examen on the Meditation

7. Particular Counsels

Avoid light-headed thoughts, as these impede compunction.

Be deprived of bright light.

Be temperate in laughter ⁴⁸.

Do not raise your eyes.

External penance

An Examination on the observance of these rules.

⁴⁶ Fr. Bertoni will include this restriction in his **Original Constitutions**, under 'Studiosness': **CF ## 122, ff.]**

⁴⁷ These detailed prescriptions are from the **Directorium** c. III, 1, 2, 4, 5, 6.

⁴⁸ These seem to be reminiscent of Ignatius' **Rules of Modesty** of perhaps January 25, 1555 [cf. *Obras de S. Ignacio de Loyola*, pp. 692, ff.

2198

8. Points for Private Reflection

I propose to you two points to be meditated upon by yourselves **this evening**
49.

1st: the grace that God offers you in calling you to this retreat, and how you ought to respond to it: It is God Who calls me – This grace is not common – It could be my last.

2nd: The purpose of my retreat ought to be not just to rest, not to commit myself to study, or to write some sermon: but, it should be that of reforming my own life, of renewing myself according to the spirit of my vocation.

2199**Prayer**

Illumine me, o my God, in the deliberation and choice that I must make for this end in mind; and grant me all the helps necessary to achieve them. Since You have drawn me into solitude, make me understand the perfection to which You are calling me, and the paths that I must undertake in order to arrive there. Do not permit that this Retreat, which has served for so many sinners a means of conversion, become for me – if I do not draw any fruit from it – a subject of damnation.

2200 *Lord, what will you have me do?* [Ac 9:6] It is up to You to prescribe for me those things that I ought principally to apply myself in these days of salvation: and it is up to me, no matter what it might cost me, to remove all the obstacles that might impede me fulfilling Your orders and to further Your adorable designs, when I will have come to know them.

2201 It seems to me, O Lord, that my heart is disposed, and that beginning with this retreat I can say with that humble confidence of the Prophet: ***My heart is ready, O God*** [Ps 56:8]; ***My heart is ready*** [Ps 107: 2]. But it could be that I flatter myself, and that there are still within me my heart [secret] corners still full of self love, and of attachment to myself. Help me, O Lord, to make progress.

Once having managed to prepare this heart that wishes to be submitted to You, and that today is separated by its entanglement in creatures, if for no other reason to receive better the impressions of Your Grace and of Your Spirit.⁵⁰

§§§

⁴⁹ This seems to have been an evening conference – is this a chronological indication from Fr. Bertoni???

⁵⁰ **Translators' Note:** Fr. Stofella ends here in his editing of this Introduction to the Retreat, which in **MssB II is # 2201** – cf. **CS I, p. 114**. Two pages later, **[on p. 116]** [after the 'Introduction' End Notes], he begins with the First Day – which in **MssB II, is ## 2229, ff.** – or seven full pages of texts, biblical quotations – as Fr. Stofella alluded in the *Preface*. Therefore, **Mss B II, ##2202-2228** are not found in Fr. Stofella's work – but, **for completeness will be added here.**

2202**RE-CAPITULATION**

What the **Exercises** are – What fruit should one hope from them – In what manner should they be engaged.

1. What the **Exercises** are. They are not merely a collection of meditations, etc., but they are a genuine ordered method in order to 'purge', 'strengthen', establish' a soul. As for themselves, they have an infallible result, as they are dictated not so much by human wisdom, but by the unction of the Holy Spirit.

2. What fruit is to be expected from them. Some of the authoritative judgment concerning the fruit of the **Exercises**. The persuasion of St. Ignatius – Saints – St. Charles Borromeo – Theologians of the Council of Trent, Peter Ortiz – P. Mancius - The Church approved them in 1548.

2203 Facts: great useful in religious communities – in the homes of seculars – in the Seminaries of Ecclesiastics – the Martyrs of India – The witness of Gabriel Lermeo.

Reason: because they dispose the soul efficaciously for grace.

3. In what manner should they be engaged in. Prayer – generosity of heart.

Motives: the greatness of the enterprise, confidence in God, the advantage they bestow – the demons flinch from them.

Acts toward God: renunciation for the just; indifference of affections; place no limits on God.

Towards the Directors of the Exercises: humility, simplicity.

Towards one's Friends and human comforts: ...

Diligence in carrying them out: rules about reading and writing.

Compunction: flee light thoughts; rules regarding light, laughter; not to raise one's eyes. External Penance.

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2204**FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION**⁵¹

1. The End for which man has been created.
2. The Means for the achieving of this End.⁵²
3. The Difficulty in choosing this, or that Means.
4. Indifference, or balance.

†††

I. *Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.*

A. Patristic Texts

Gn 1:26: *Let us make man to our image and likeness.*

The text does not say here: *fiat*, which is an act of commanding; nor: *let the waters, or the earth produce*, as it reads for the animals and the plants, and so on. Nor does the text say: *Do this*, as it says concerning the Angels. Rather, the text reads: *Let us make*, it is the most Holy Trinity speaking. Here God the Father is addressing His Son and the Holy Spirit, as St. Basil notes⁵³, and Rupert interprets.

2205 Man is the excellent creature.

For God in the creation of man, as of such a great reality, deliberates and consults. Indeed, man is the first Image of the uncreated world, i.e., of the Most Holy Trinity, and the testimony of His art and wisdom, and most perfect work. Indeed man has and connects in himself the various grades of spiritual and corporal beings: hence, as Plato says, as quoted by Cornelius a Lapide, man is the 'Horizon of the Universe' because he extends beyond and joins in himself the hemisphere above, as

⁵¹ **[Translator's Note:** This is from **SpEx n. 23**, and has not been included by Fr. Stofella in CS I. It reads as follows in the Ignatian Text:]

23. *Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.*

The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they can help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance in him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short one. The same holds for all other things.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.

⁵² **[Translator's Note:** This style is quite reminiscent of Fr. Bertoni's approach in his **Compendium Rude**, the first 8 of his **Original Constitutions**. For St. Ignatius, the **Spiritual exercises** are then meant to lead to the choice of a way of life – the Jesuit **Constitutions** are one such choice.

⁵³ **In Hexameron**, Hom. 9, t. 1, 87, ff.

heaven and the Angels, as well as that below, such as the earth and brutes. St. Clement calls him 'The End of Fabrication.'⁵⁴

2206 Furthermore, through **Christ as Man**, all creatures, which likewise similarly contained in man as though in a microcosm, were deified.

- On account of man and with man, as the world is established, so **all is renewed in the Resurrection**.⁵⁵

- The supreme mystery of our faith, i.e., **the Trinity and the Unity**, is revealed first in the generation of man, and then later in his regeneration, as in Baptism was to be declared and professed. Words like: *Let us make – to our image* signify the Trinity; where as words like *God...He made...* signified unity: in the image of God.

- The animals and the plants, are **created** of water and the land; God alone formed and fixed the body of man, and endowed in it a rational soul created by Him out of nothing.

- Man is made by God, as rector and prince of all animals that he might **preside** over the whole world as though constituted its king.

- He assigned to man for his dwelling and to enjoy the **paradise of delights**.

- **Original justice**.

- His body was **immortal** out of a special gift bestowed on him, to be brought back with him to heaven from this earthly life.

- **God appeared to man** under a visible species, and spoke to him familiarly and instructed him.

2207 St. Gregory of Nyssa⁵⁶ has declared that God made this palace out of the world, as a kind of banquet hall, and set it up as a splendid dining room, placing all things at his disposal, delights as well as knowledge. And then, lastly He introduced man into this ornate setting, as its culmination, end and lord.

St. Bernard⁵⁷ asks: Was it not so that whatever was lacking to man at first, His mercy protected, His truth taught, His justice ruled, His peace favored?

Lactantius⁵⁸ asks: why did God create man? Just as the whole world was put together on account of man, so he was on account of himself, as the spectator of the works and the heavenly realities. For he alone is sentient and capable of reason and who is able to understand God, who can admire His works, perceive His virtue and power. Therefore, he alone received speech, and a tongue as the interpreter of thought, that he might be able to proclaim the majesty of his Lord.

St. Ambrose⁵⁹ notes that by right man is last, as the end of nature, man is formed for justice among all of the animate beings that are just. Rightly, therefore, he was the very last, as though he were the summary of the entire work, as the cause of the world, on account of whom all things are made, as though in him were all the

⁵⁴ Book 7, Const. Ap., c. 35. cf. Herduin, t. 1, 54 E.

⁵⁵ **Translator's Note:** it is interesting that Fr. Bertoni, with broad support, brings in the **Resurrection** in this discussion on Creation – **Protology/Eschatology**, its final aspect.

⁵⁶ *In Gen*, 2, 1 – PL 167, 247 C.

⁵⁷ Serm. 1, De Ann.. PL 183, 386 A

⁵⁸ De Ira Dei, c. 14. In Cornelius a Lapide, *In Gen. 1:15*.

⁵⁹ Letter 38, or 43 13 - t. 2, 973 E.

other elements, he lives among beasts, swims with the fish, flies over the birds, converses with the Angels, dwells on earth, and militates for heaven, ploughs through the sea, feeds on the air, worships the sun, the way-farer of the deep, the fisherman in the waves, a fowler in the air, the heir in heaven, co-heirs with Christ.

2208 [*Let us make*] *man to our own image and likeness.* [Gn 1:26]

Image here is taken for *exemplar*; as though the text read: *in our exemplar* as though the word *image* relates and presents man to His example.

Image. Here many distinguish *image* from *similitude* [likeness]: so that *image* would pertain to nature, and *likeness* to virtues. St. Basil⁶⁰ writes: Through the *image* impressed into my soul, I obtained the use of reason; and indeed I am made Christian, and indeed *similar* to God. St. Jerome⁶¹ points out: it is to be noted that this indicates only *image*, whereas the *likeness* would be completed in Baptism. St. John Chrysostom⁶² notes that the word *image* is used by reason of man's dominion: whereas *likeness* is used that we might through our human resources become like unto God by meekness, gentleness. St. Bernard⁶³ points out that the *image* could burn in *gehenna*, and not be destroyed: in burning, it would not be reduced to ashes. Whereas, regarding *likeness* it is not thus because it either remains in good, or should one sin, the soul is mutated miserably and like unto unwise brutes.

2209 The *image* of God is established in the mind of man, or, in that which man is in the supreme grade of things in which God and the Angel is. Through this, man is of an intelligent nature, and he is a rational animal. For by his reason, mind and intellect, man is supremely related to God, and thus is most similar to Him above all other creatures.

This is the natural *image*, which is perfected supernaturally with grace and reaches consummation in glory. Ep 4:23, f.: *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth.*

2210 In the body, properly speaking, there is not the *image* of God, but in it, it does in some way shine through and is resplendent, because the body of a man is the *image* of his mind. For by his standing up and his visage directed heaven-ward, indicates that the spirit is the rector of the body, begotten of heavenly origin, is *like* unto God, capable of eternity and divinity, as one who ought to look toward and yearn for the higher realities. Man is admonished by his upright stature that he is not to look down toward mere earthly realities, as the flocks and herds do, for the voluptuousness of these is of this earth, and thus the flocks and herds lie prone and on their bellies.

And this prone position has all other animals looking toward the ground.

⁶⁰ Hom. 10 of *Hexam.* cf. Hom 9, 6 – t. 1 1898 A, ff. And in the Append to *De Hominis structura*, Oratio 1, 4, ff. Ib., p. 325 F.

⁶¹ *In Ezk* 28. Book 9 – t. 5, 331 D

⁶² Hom. 9, *In Gen.* c. 3 – t. 4, 38/2 A. – St. Gaspar gave about 13 Homilies on **Genesis 1 - 2**, based on St. John Chrysostom [cf. MssB ## 4615-4852 – cf. www.st-bertoni.com

⁶³ *De Ann.* PL 183, 386 C

The mouth has endowed man with the ability to regard the sublime and even heaven itself.

And He has given that those who stand erect would lift up their visage toward the stars.⁶⁴

2211 Therefore, having been born of heaven, we have been created for heaven - this is our end, this is our purpose. If we fail in this, we are frustrated men; only in frustration have we looked toward the sky and the sun: it would have been sufficient for us to have been created brute animals, or stones on the ground, unless we become thrice and four-fold blessed. This is the constant challenge for us, as it was for St. Bernard⁶⁵: let this be the perennial stimulus for a pure and holy life: Say to yourself: Bernard, why are you here? Why do you look toward heaven? Why have you accepted a rational soul and the *image*?

In all other creatures, there is not this *image* but only the *traces, prints* of God, representing God, much like the effect represents its cause; in order for one to consider the nature of reality, its action, disposition, determination and the marvelous association of all levels of creation with each other, it is clear that these have been founded and conserved by a divine reason and wisdom.

2212 Moral Sense: God wills that all beings in some way, would be in man; and that man would as though the property of God; and therefore, He marked him with the seal of His own *image*, and did this in a most tenacious and indelible manner. This is so that as man, reflecting on himself, he would recognize his God and Creator in the *image*, and that he would come to know how he is bound to God with such a debt and with what an intimate bond he is united to Him. For man indeed does bear the *image* of God: as a son does of his Father, to Whom he owes love and piety. He is as the property of his Lord, Whom he ought to fear and reverence; Man is as the soldier of his Commander and Emperor, to Whom he ought to manifest faith and obedience. Man is as the minister and of the goods here in this world and of his Master, to Whom he ought to exhibit the right use of creatures which have been committed to his dispensation, for the perennial praise and glory of his Lord and God. In order for man to be capable of the eternity and infinite of God, and so that man might dare to hope **and seek confidently**⁶⁶ all good from Him, and he should say to Him: Fill, O Lord, in goods the desire of my soul, which You have created in your own image and made us capable of You; You allow nothing in the world to be empty of its good: would You allow this in my spirit? Therefore, fill it with Your goods, rather with Yourself, for indeed nothing else is able to satiate and fulfill its infinite capacity, except You Yourself.

2213 So, since the crime of injured majesty violates the image of a King, what crime it would be to bring about the staining in oneself of the *image* of God by sin.

⁶⁴ PL 185, 238 A.

⁶⁵ As quoted by Cornelius a Lapide, *In Gen*, 1:26.

⁶⁶ Prayer is the expression of hope – ‘we receive as much from God as we dare to hope from Him’ – St. John of the Cross.

And let him have dominion, etc. Gn 1:26. St. Basil notes ⁶⁷: O man, indeed you are an animal, born under a dominion: and why would you serve such a wretched slavery of your affections? And why do you give yourself over to sin in such a vile servitude? And why, by your own choice, would you constitute yourself in bondage and a captive of the devil? God has commanded you to hold the place of a prince among creatures: and yet, you shake yourself clear of such a responsibility, and reject it. But, are you called to be their servant? But, you are gifted with reason, the total dominatrix of every vicious affection. If you, the master, choose to serve filthy pleasure, you are called to temper this, indeed disdain it, for you are above all this established as the lord of this obscene affection: another, on the contrary, who becomes the servant of all these illicit pleasures, which are scared away from you, as by a boot.

†††

B. Biblical Texts

2214 FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION ⁶⁸

I. *Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means, to save his soul.*

Rm 6:22: But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.

Your fruit unto sanctification: [understand, this is the *end*] sanctification itself, and its continuation and increase; i.e., it is to be continuous, so that you might go from one level of sanctity to further sanctification, so that we might from day to day be sanctified the more. ⁶⁹

2215 Apoc 22:10-12: ... *Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book. For the time is at hand* [this refers to the statements already made, i.e., they do not refer to some distant future time]. *He that hurts, let him hurt still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still. Behold I come quickly and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to his works.*

⁶⁷ Hom. 10, *In Hexam.*: likewise, *De Hominis Structura*, Oratio. Book 8 – tome 1, in Append. 328 B.

⁶⁸ **Translator's Note:** There is now provided a biblical commentary on this same **n. 23** of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius, called the Introductory Observations, entitled: '**First Principle and Foundation.**'

⁶⁹ **Translator's Note:** the various levels of '**Progress**' [**on-going, continuing Formation**] are an important theme to the Stigmatine Founder: St. Gaspar dedicates Part IV, c. I in his *Original Constitutions* to this **Spiritual Progress** [cf. **CF ## 47-48**]. Chapter 2 is dedicated to **Intellectual Progress** [cf. **CF ## 49-50**]. **Apostolic Progress** may also be noted [cf. **CF ## 69-76, De Promovendis ad Sacerdotale Officium**]. **Juridical Progress** of the level of Membership culminates in one's being promoted to the '**Grade**' of **Apostolic Missionary**, by the Superior General [cf. **CF ## 158, ff.**]. The Spanish *servir* was often translated into Latin by *obsequi* – its ultimate meaning for Fr. Gaspar Bertoni seems to be that we show love to God by **serving** His Church.

There is still some space, and some time for acting either both for good and for evil; in this time, God permits to each in accord with His liberty. For I permit the one who hurts, to continue hurting; to the one who is filthy, that he be filthy still; but in time I will punish these. This is tacit irony.

2216 Qo 11:9-10: ***Rejoice, therefore, young man, in your youth, and let your heart be in that which is [delightful] good in the days of your youth, and walk in the ways of your heart*** [follow the desires of the appetite], *and in the sight of your eyes* [as that which they desire: riches, beauties, that you pursue]; *and know that for all these God will bring you to judgment.*

v. 10: ***remove anger from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh.*** [Because God will call you to judgment regarding the concupiscence of your heart and eyes, cut these short, especially anger and lust]. *For youth and pleasure are vain* [because they quickly wither and fade away].

2217 Apoc 11:14: ***He that is just,*** ... and so on. But the one who is hurting may continue to do so, just as he who is holy, needs to go on the process of sanctification. And when one's adversary and persecutor performs in an even worse way, and even more monstrously, then the just man ought to increase in holiness even more.

The one who hurts is unjust; he is to be opposed by the one who is just.

The one who acts in a filthy way [i.e.], or given over to gluttony, venereal pleasures.

The holy person is the one who practices abstinence and continence.

v.12: *Behold, I come quickly: and My reward is with Me: to render to every man according to his works.*

v.13: *I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.* [And therefore, with Me it is to assign to each one his end and reward, either blessed or wretched].

v. 14: *Blessed are they that wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb: that they may have a right to the tree of life and may enter in by the gates into the city.*

2218 Rm 6:18-20: ... *Being, then, freed from sin, we have been made servants of that justice.*

v. 19: *I speak on a human thing* [moderate, easy-going], *because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity* [tumbling down from to another even worse]: *so now yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification.* [I could demand even more with Ba 4:28: *For it was in your mind to go astray from God: so when you return again, you shall seek him out ten times as much.* However, I require an equivalence out of humanity].

v. 20: *For when you were the servants of sin, you were free men to justice: since you were practically absolved from keeping any law, you have tumbled into sins.*

2219: [Rm 6]: 21-23: v. 21: *What fruit therefore had you then in those things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of them is death.*

v. 22: *But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, you have your fruit, and so on ...*

v. 23: *For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord* - this is the stipend, the crown of justice. This grace calls out toward eternal life, because it comes forth from the root of grace, and because the passions are not very worthy of this time, for future glory. Rm 8:18⁷⁰: Just as sin leads a man to death, as though to its fitting end and wage, so grace which frees us from sin, and makes us servants of God and justice, leads to eternal life, as to its proper end.

2220: Jn 8:25: *The Beginning, Who also speak to you.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word, and so on. [Jn 1:1]. All things were made by Him, ib., v.3. By the word of the Lord, the heavens were established... Ps 32:6. Do you seek a proof of Christ Who speaks in me? 2 Co 13:3.

Apoc 3:14: *...Who is the Beginning of the creation of God [Who is the Efficient and Exemplary Cause of created realities, and especially of those re-purchased, or of the redeemed, through His death].*

Ga 6:15 – Ep 6:10 – Col 3:10: are texts where the faithful are called 'New Creature', i.e., of Christ. Ep 6 [2:10]: *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God has prepared that we should walk in them.* For the faithful, in Baptism, or in penance, are re-generated by Christ, that they become new men, and receive, as it were, a new, divine being.

§

2221 II. The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.⁷¹

Ps 8:7, ff.: *You have set man over the works of your hands You have subjected all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, moreover, the beasts also of the fields. The birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea that pass through the paths of the sea.*

Dt 4:19: *...Lest perhaps lifting up your eyes to heaven, you see the sun and the moon and all the stars of heaven, and being deceived by error you adore and serve them, which the lord your God created for the service of all the nations that are under heaven.*

2222 Gn 1:26: *Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion...* St. Ambrose writes⁷²: rightly, therefore, man is called the ultimate, as though he were the summa of the whole work, as the cause of the world, for on account of him all things were made, as in him all the other elements find a home.

...Let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth... Gn 1:26. St. Basil notes⁷³: O man, you are also an

⁷⁰ **Translator's Note:** not sure of this text, Rm 8:18, in this context: *For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us.*

⁷¹ This is the 2nd Paragraph of **SpEx n. 23: FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION** - cf. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, o.c., Louis J. Puhl, SJ. p. 12

⁷² Letter 38; or 43,19 to Horontianus – t. 2, 975 E

⁷³ Hom. 10, Ex. Otherwise, *De Hominis structura* 1, 8. t. 1, 328 B.

animal, born for command. And why, wretched one, would you serve in this slavery of the affections?

2223: That you might lead him to the end, and so on...

Ps 104: 44, ff.: ... and they possessed the labors of the people: That they might observe his justifications and seek after his law. **To love and to serve**⁷⁴.

Rm 1:20: For the invisible things of Him [i.e., His attributes] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood ... ascending in the discursive manner from the visible to the invisible].

2224 Ws 3-5: With whose beauty, if they being delighted, took them to be gods: let them know how much more the Lord of them is more beautiful than they. For the first Author of beauty made all those things. v. 4: Or, if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them that he that made them, is mightier than they. V. 5: For by the greatness of the beauty and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby [by analogy].

Ps 18:1: The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of His hands.

Is 6: 3: ...all the earth is full of His glory ...

Ps 26: 6: ... I have gone round, and have offered up in his tabernacle a sacrifice of jubilation: From whence the questions? St Augustine notes⁷⁵: By going through the universal creation. And indeed creatures cry out to you: God made me. Then, follows making use of these, or in abstaining from them, solely to the extent that these either assist or impede the pursuit of one's end⁷⁶.

§

2225 **III b.** Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short one. This same holds for all other things. Our one desire and choice should be what is more⁷⁷ conducive to the end for which we were created.

Rm 8:18: For I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed to us.

2226 Ps 72: 23: I have become as a beast before you: Like a horse and mule in which there is no intellect, Ps 31:9, nor do they have any other interest other than what is present. In seeking out the divine counsels, and yearning for the eternal, the

⁷⁴ **Translator's Note:** *Obsequi* is a Latin translation of St. Ignatius's original Spanish, *servir*. His was a mysticism of service: **to love is to serve!**

⁷⁵ In *Ps 26: Ennarr.* 2, t. 4, 124 C.

⁷⁶ **Translator's Note:** this is St. Ignatius thought, *SpEx n. 23, III a – first paragraph*.

⁷⁷ The Ignatian *magis* the key in the discernment process in the wide variety of ministries in his Apostolic Mission – cf. *CSJ, nn. 622, ff.*

temporal, sensible goods [the Psalmist confesses that he] more greatly is distant from the divine wisdom and providence than would the brute animals be distant from the knowledge of man.

Ps 72: 23: ... *And I am always with you.* By divine grace it has been done that he would not recede from God erring in faith and religion, even though in this same Psalm v. 2, he notes: ...*But my feet were almost moved: my steps had well-nigh slipped.*

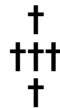
2227 Ps 72: 24: *You have held me by my right hand* [as the best of Doctors, you held me by the power, and mercy and efficacious grace]; *and by your will you have conducted me* [not by my merits, by my desires, in conforming me to Your will]: *and with your glory you have received me.* Ps 85:11: *Conduct me, O Lord, in your way.* Ps 142:10 b: ... *Your good spirit shall lead me into the right land.* *ib.*, v. 10 a: *teach me to do your will.* Is 58:8: ...*and your justice shall go before your face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather you up.*

2228 Ps 72:25: ... *For what have I in heaven? And besides You, what do I desire on earth?* One who is ardent with the cupidity of eternal goods and glory with which he said that he was assuming, began to think of celestial happiness. And he criticized himself because he was part of the herd and desired earthly realities. You are to serve the immortal riches in heaven, and yourself: and I wished from you on earth what the impious also have: money, family, pleasures!

v. 26: *For you my flesh and my heart have fainted away* [for such is the desire of adhering to God]. *You are the God of my heart*, The human race might choose its own portions; *and the God that is my portion forever*, and not just for a time.

v. 27: *For behold those that go far from you shall perish; you have destroyed all them that are disloyal to you.* For you have lost all who fornicate without you in their lives. Therefore, God is elected in part: since those who do not have God in their heart, perish; and God loses, as those who adhere to others, having violated an almost **spousal trust**⁷⁸, through a foul love.

v. 28: *But it is good for me to adhere to my Lord* [not yet the heir, by the presence He made, one adheres to Him through Hope]: *to put my hope in the Lord God.*



⁷⁸ St. Gaspar Bertoni compares **the fervent following of the Lord** toward an **Espousals**: in his Panegyric on St. Francis [cf. **MssB ## 1865-1870**, various levels of following Christ] - in his Meditations based on St. Gregory the Great, and his Exposition on **Primum Regum** - cf. **MssB 5004-5006**.

THE RETREAT TO THE PRIESTS, NEW CONFESSORS ⁷⁹

Part I:

Preliminaries

2229

The First Day Meditation 1⁸⁰

The End of Man

Prelude 1: Let us imagine God as a sea, from Whom the waters come forth, and to Whom they are to return. ***All the rivers flow into the sea ... [Qo 1:7] ⁸¹. The waters which you saw ... are peoples ... [Rv 17:15]. ⁸²***

Prelude 2: ***Send forth your light and your truth: they have conducted me, and brought me unto your holy hill, and unto your tabernacles ... [Ps 42:3] ⁸³***

2230

Point 1 The Origin and End of Man

1. Man is of God

Man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord and by this means to save his soul. ⁸⁴

Created: *And God created man to his own image. ...He made us and not we ourselves [Ps 99:3].* Therefore, we are indebted to Him, and not He to us: therefore, we should not live for ourselves, but for Him.

Created: regarding the body, which is made of mud. *And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth [Gn 2:7]. ... Why is earth and ashes proud...? [Qo 10:9]*

⁷⁹ Fr. Stofella picks up the text once again here, with **MssB ## 2229, ff.** – cf. **CS I, pp. 116, ff.**

⁸⁰ The sources for this: **Ven. Fr. Louis DaPonte, SJ** [1554-1624] and **Fr. Charles Ambrose Cattaneo** [1645-1705]. As regards Fr. DaPonte, Fr. Bertoni often made use of his celebrated ***Meditations***. As for Fr. Cattaneo, he was a well known preacher in his life-time, and his works [all published after his death] were still being used, perhaps right up to Vatican II. Fr. Bertoni often made use of his rendition of the ***Spiritual Exercises***. However, the precise quotes from both of these men are quite scarce: of Fr. DaPonte, Fr. Bertoni used his *Meditation on the End of Man* the first in his long series. Of Fr. Cattaneo, St. Gaspar used some of his thoughts, in synthesis, from his ***Meditation on what is called the Foundation [SpEx n. 23].***

⁸¹ **NB:** Fr. Stofella suggests v. 3 here – perhaps a misprint for v. 7.

⁸² **MssB # 2230** – has **Prelude 1: etc. – and these verses are found as Prelude 2.**

⁸³ Until the liturgical reform with Vatican II, this Psalm made up part of the prayers ‘at the foot of the altar’ to begin the Eucharistic celebration.

⁸⁴ **SpEx n. 23**, 1st sentence

2231: Created: regarding the soul, from nothing: *For if any man think himself to be some thing, whereas if he is nothing, he deceives himself ... [Ga 6:3].* Twenty, forty, fifty, sixty years ago, there was the world: we were not yet, nor did we possess any merit to come into being. *What do you have that you have not received ...? [1 Co 4:7].* If God were to ask back from us our rational intellect, we would remain as beasts; if He were to ask back from us our external and internal senses, we would remain merely as plants; if he were to ask back from us our vegetative life, we would be stones; if He asked our very being back, we would remain as nothing. *Why do you glory as though as if you had not received it? [1 Co 4:7].*

2. The Incongruous Situation of Pride

2232

If you would separate the precious from the vile, you shall be as my mouth... [Jr 15:19]⁸⁵. Return to God that which is of God: of ours, there would remain only nothing. If God hates the poor man who is proud, what will we say of the nothing which is then proud?

Yet, pride is a vice that is common to many clerics and priests, in these wretched times.

There is the internal pride of the intellect: by having a great opinion of oneself, to act solely in accord with one's own head, to be disobedient to the superiors and to the Church, wishing to judge by one's own judgments. *Because it is like the sin of witch-craft to rebel; and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey. [1 K 15:23].* St. Gregory the Great⁸⁶ comments:

... Pride is a sin of divinization: because by contrasting the orders of Superiors, and giving faith to the fallacies of one's own heart, by making resistance with designs against the plans of their prelates: it really seems that such ecclesiastics, having come to neglect the altar of God, they find their responses on the altars of the Demons.

It is a crime of idolatry: because no one would persist in his obstinacy of disobedience if he did not bear in his own heart considering his own ideas as an idol. In fact, one indeed does make of his own judgment an idol when he considers this the sole norm of his action. And when he indeed decides to pass from proposal to act, then it is that he almost bows down before this interior idol as though to adore it...⁸⁷

⁸⁵ **Translator's Note:** Jr 15:19 is not noted in Fr. Stofella's text here.

⁸⁶ In his weekly ministry among the Seminarians of Verona at this time of his life, St. Gaspar was providing **73 Meditations on St. Gregory's Exposition in Primum Regum [1 K(S) 1:1-16:13]**. The passage in question here: **1 K 15:23** – is considered by St. Gaspar in the course of his **Meditations 67 & 68**.

⁸⁷ **Meditation 67-68, MssB II ## 7202-7239**

2233 The Internal Pride of Heart: in order to seek one's own glory even **in the most lowly offices, such as preaching, instructing, in catechizing and in confessing**⁸⁸. How often it is that pride is what moves clerics to study!

External Pride: this is manifest in clothing, the care of one's hair, in seeking out the 'important' people in order to push oneself forward. *What agreement shall the earthen pot have with the kettle? For if they knock against the other, it shall be broken.* [Si 13:3].

A Further Example of External Pride: this is evidenced in fleeing some of the exercises, considered to be too lowly, such as teaching catechism, or hearing the confessions of children⁸⁹.

3. The Authentic Dignity of Creatures

2234

However, we can take glory: not in ourselves, but in God. ... *He that glories, may glory in the Lord* [1 Co 1:31].

We may take glory in a human body that has been so nobly designed out of matter that is so lowly, and endowed with most vibrant senses. But, take care not to abuse these members in any offense against the Creator. *Let not sin therefore, reign in your mortal body* [Rm 6:12]⁹⁰. ... ***Glorify and bear God in your body.*** [Co 6:20].

We can also glory in the human soul which *created man to his own image*: and take this glory not so much in ourselves, but in God, for the very reason that the soul dominates the insensible and sensible beings on earth: by means of the intellect and will: by knowing and loving God, just as God knows and loves Himself.

4. The Proximate End of Man is the Glory of God and One's Own Sanctification

2235

⁸⁸ **Translator's Note:** this list of ministries of the diocesan priest are then codified by St. Gaspar in his *Original Constitutions* for the Stigmatine, but to be done in accord with that particular 'Stigmatine **MODE**' epitomized by the word ***obsequium*** [CF# 1]– and then described further in **CF # 2: *Modus:...sub directione et dependentia Ordinariorum ...quibus omnino parere debeant quod attinet ad exercitium Apostolici muneris, ac licentiam prius cum facultatibus ab eis recipere, servata semper eorumdem Ordinariorum... moderatione...*** [In the Ignatian style this Apostolic Obedience was for 3 reasons: a great devotion and obedience to the Apostolic See the greater abnegation of our wills; a more certain direction of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Lenotti was convinced that the Stigmatine was obliged by the Founder, 'more **than others**' to this **MODALITY OF APOSTOLIC SERVICE of the Church**. Fr. Bertoni offers his reasons in **CF # 185: the Holy Spirit will perfect the endeavor; this is the special grace of our vocation – a **safer way**, in following the direction of the Bishop.**

⁸⁹ **Translator's Note:** paradoxically, in his *Original Constitutions*, St. Gaspar will list the **teaching of the youth** and the **unlettered** central among the ***varia et propria... graviora*** ministries of the Stigmatine [cf. **Part IX**, especially **CF ## 163-165** – cf. web-site: www.st.bertoni.com, *Original Constitutions*, commentary] – this ministry is found in every part of his plan: **CF ## 37; 51; 55; 72; 163; 165; 170; 182.**

⁹⁰ **Translators' Note:** this text – **Rm 6:12** – is **not** found in **MssB 2234**.

Man is created for this end: **to praise and reverence God his Lord.**⁹¹ This is the proximate end: the glory of God and our sanctification. *The Lord has made all things for himself* [Pr 16:4].

It is in referring all to himself that the Holiness of God consists, as He does not have any other more noble end outside of Himself.

In this consists also our holiness: i.e., in relating all that pertains to us and ourselves to the glory of God. *You have your fruit unto sanctification...* [Rm 6:22]: The 'fruit' is the ultimate, and at the same time, the most sweet which the plant produces.

2236: The glory, therefore, pertains totally to God; what is useful and sweet in acting well is our task. Indeed it is up to us to work of the peace, prosperity, tranquility in order and the prosperity of every undertaking. *Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly ... but his will is in the law of the Lord ...* [Ps 1:1, f.] *Blessed are they who fear the Lord ...* [Ps 127:1]. Indeed, this is our glory, which will follow those who do not seek it but who fear God. *Blessed is the man that fears the Lord ... Glory and wealth shall be in his house...* [Ps 111: 1 & 3].

5. The Ultimate End of Man is Eternal Life

2237

[Man is created to praise, reverence and] serve God, and by this means to save his soul.⁹²

...the end is life everlasting [Rm 6:22]. This is the life of glory for the soul: *...we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is* [1 Jn 3:2]. This will be the same beatitude with which God Himself is blessed. *... Your reward will be exceeding great.* [Gn 15:1].

The life of glory for the body will be in those glorious traits that will be had in all its senses.

And thus, St. Francis of Assisi stated: 'So great is the good that awaits me, that every suffering I have is a delight!' ⁹³ St. Ignatius could spend the entire night, staring at the sky and then the next day as well and would exclaim: 'When I look up out at the sky, then the earth is silent to me!' ⁹⁴ Hence, Ignatius would be referred to as 'The sky-gazer!'

⁹¹ ***Spiritual Exercises, n. 23 - First Principle and Foundation.***

⁹² ***SpEx n.23 – First Principle and Foundation.***

⁹³ These are words from a Canticle of the Knights of Love, that were then made his own and elevated to an even higher meaning by St. Francis of Assisi in his discourse at Montefeltro: it was a speech that he gave following which the Count Orlando di Chiusi, joined up with the Saint begging him for a rule of life. He bestowed on him the gracious gift of Monte Verna, which was part of his own property. Cf. Jorgensen, ***St. Francis of Assisi***. Turin 1919. [239, ff.].

⁹⁴ This is a pentameter of an elegy of one devoted to the Saint, a verse which is produced rather well as it is usually cited. cf. Bartoli, Book IV, n. 28: 'Alas! How silent is the earth when I gaze at the sky!' Fr. Gaspar then, in certain extracts that he had copied from the book, ***The Life and the Miracles of St. Ignatius***, by the Jesuit, **Fr. John Peter Maffei** [Mss 41], notes that even this had been a gift granted to St. Ignatius by God: 'While he pondered the sky above, all the rest of mortal creation would be silent to him, just another gift of his.' [cf. Maffei, Book I, c. 2, 11.

O! If only many more priests in our days would look out at this most noble end!

6. The Forgetfulness of the Last End leads to the Ruin of Souls.

2238

Oh, if only many more priests in our days would look at this most noble end just think how they would love this earth! Oh, then how many would dislike the theaters, the dances, the banquets, the house of the greats, their coming into the world, dressed as dandies, their wealthy possessions in the fields and in their coffers! If they would only look to the beauty of their end, how many of them would be far less willing and curious to see the beauties of the human bodies! Just imagine, clerics with girl-friends! O God! What a disorder! And even more so, if they are priests! And even with activities going on at home! But if one loves one beauty, this is so until he might find another one that is better looking. St. John Chrysostom⁹⁵ says:

2239 'If you could only see with the eyes of the body the beauty of the soul, you would even laugh at these exemplars of corporal beauty: how scarcely they accentuate that beauty and attractiveness.'

There are seen priests begging for honors and benefices, courting persons of high connections, and making themselves slaves of world opinion and of human respect in their life and in their ministries, as in preaching and hearing confessions. *Be not made the bond-slaves of men* [1 Co 7:23] – and remember the end of man.

7. Reflection and warning

2240 'Serving Him' – i.e., God – '**Whom to serve is to reign**'⁹⁶ – 'and in the end, will be saved.'

How many seculars fulfill this end better than priests and seminarians do. Their life is full of good works, while ours is full of wind and vanity. Their life is immaculate, while the life of so many ecclesiastics unfortunately is so gross⁹⁷. *Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation and to keep oneself unspotted from this world.* [Jas 1:27]. Indeed the life of those ecclesiastics therefore is so gross that some, in cleansing others with their dispensing the sacraments, especially that of Confession, stain themselves the more, much like chimney-sweeps [cf. St. John of the Cross]: and in the same Sacrament they even burden those who approach them.

2241 Unfortunately, the Church is weeping bitterly in these times, over this disorder which draws down scourges and scandalizes souls more than ever before. If this is a

⁹⁵ Ad Theod. Lapsus, 1. 14. t. 1, 13.2 D. [**Translator's Note**: there is a discrepancy here: the quote of St. John Chrysostom that concludes **MssB 2239**, refers to the preceding sentence just ended: [...until he finds one better-looking] – whereas this following sentence, and the paragraph immediately following it, are not found in the Latin Manuscript text here].

⁹⁶ This is an old theological motto taken from the previous Liturgy of the Ordination to the Subdiaconate – and also in the Post-Communion for the Mass for Peace.

⁹⁷ Fr. Gaspar had already noted this in his diary a few years before: cf. **MP, December 2, 1808**.

description of your life, withdraw from it, seminarians! Hold up, before ascending to the Sub-diaconate. ...*For it is better to marry than to burn* [1 Co 7:9]. And if there are such priests or deacons already, let them weep, weep, and with their penance let them wash these stains, and first their own, before those of others.

2242 It is better to cauterize oneself at others' expense, than to learn from one's own. And by emending in us perhaps that in which 'we have sinned out of ignorance' ⁹⁸, let us return to right order, and let us learn to live well from so many good among seculars. 'The unlearned rise up and seize the Reign of God. And we, with all our learning, where will we go?' ⁹⁹

8. Let us save our Souls

2243 It is all the more so that if we lose this end, we have no other recourse. ***For what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?*** [Mt 16:26]

This is the fatal exchange of the Devil that is all too common, flattering so many priests to preach and hear confessions, and for many clerics to devise projects of their own, thinking that they thereby are sanctifying greatly others because of their own studies. They are sure that they have rendered their penitents very good persons, and in having changed them from great sinners into great saints. *For what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world, etc., and then suffer the loss of his own soul?*

2244: They might be compared to the builders of the Ark, that while they save others they remain outside ¹⁰⁰.

In giving their entire life for others, they neglect themselves, and they put off their own confession for many months and years. And they are full of vices relying on the virtues of others. *For what profit?* Indeed this itself will make up their last judgment. *You, therefore, who teach another, you do not teach yourself: you that preach that men should not steal, you steal. You, who say that men should not commit adultery, commit adultery: you, who abhor idols, commit sacrilege. You who make your boast the Law, by transgression of the Law dishonors God* [Rm 2:21-23].

2245 Thus, the studies of so many clerics and their knowledge is changed into condemnation: *Out of your own mouth, I judge you* [Lk 19:22].

Let us save our soul: and then we will think of saving others. Let us fulfill exactly for the glory of God our exercises that lead to the salvation of the soul, and let us not be blinded by a false zeal.

Point 2 The Origin and End of Creatures

⁹⁸ From the Liturgy of Ash Wednesday

⁹⁹ St. Augustine, ***Confessions***. Book 8, c. 8, 1 - a rather free rendition of this phrase: ***The unlearned start up and take heaven by violence, and we, with all our learning, see how we wallow in flesh and blood!*** [cf. W. Watts, ***St. Augustine's Confessions***, Loeb Classical Library 1912].

¹⁰⁰ St. Augustine, Sermon. 361, 20, 19 – t. 5/2 1416 D.

1. Creatures are ordained to the Service of Man

2246

... The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created... ¹⁰¹

What gratitude is not owed to God! As many creatures as there are, there are that many benefits. *You have made him a little less than the angels, You have crowned him with glory and honor... You have subjected all things under his feet...* [Ps 8:6, ff.]. What honor! First God made the palace, when He created the world, and embellished it, and introduced into the beasts almost as servant: then, He made man and placed him in this as though in a royal palace.

2247 The creatures follow man, their master, always, in honor and in suffering. Adam sins: and the earth is cursed. Those who lived before the flood, sinned: God then buries the earth and all the animals in the waters. The world sins: God will burn all. Finally restored to his holiness and to his glory, they will follow him also the creatures, restored to a new splendor. *For the expectation of the creature awaits for the revelation of the sons of God.* [Rm 8:19].

2. The Creatures are for Man the means of rising up to God.

2248 What a subject of praise for God this is! This is the tribute that God demands of man made by Him to be the prince of the earth: *Offer to God the sacrifice of praise* [Ps 49:14]. Or, as St. Paul puts it: *Do all to the glory of God* [1 Co 10:31]. What more pleasing occupation could there be? This is the precise occupation of the priest, who, as St. Gregory the Great ¹⁰² states: 'Be exalted above all others in contemplation.'

2249 But alas! What forgetfulness of God and of His benefits is there not in modern priests! And they allow themselves to be surpassed in this even by the most uninstructed of persons. Among them, prayer is either rare, or takes up no time at all, and even worse, it is poorly done. The clerics do indeed commit themselves to their studies, but not to prayer. ¹⁰³ Rather than occupying themselves in praising God in their own hearts, the entire intention is to acquire the praise of their fellow man.

2259 They admire the works of genius and they preach about it with enthusiasm: and they neglect being exercised in the administration of the works of God. How very rare are those who meditate in our day: and they even make fun of, and treat with disdain, those spiritual minded individuals who do busy themselves in this holy exercise. **And I**

¹⁰¹ St. Ignatius, *SpEx* n. 23, II.

¹⁰² St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*. Part 2, c. 5. Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. 11, Paulist: NY/ Mahwah NJ 1950, pp.56-59

¹⁰³ Fr. Berton's concern in this regard is shown in his *Original Constitutions: CF ## 47; 66; 72; 127; 152*: balance needed: piety should not interfere with study, nor should study cool one's fervor.

will meditate on all your works... [Ps 76:13]. 'I considered Your works, and I was afraid.'¹⁰⁴

2251 **Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God and by this means, to save his soul**¹⁰⁵. *For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also, and divinity...* [Rm 1:20]. What happiness, what beatitude is that of the priest whose life is so well ordered, that he would make use of everything as a ladder to ascend to God! This is the way his life should be. ... *Walk before Me and be perfect* [Gn 17:1]. *The oath which he swore to Abraham, our father, that he would grant to us that being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we may serve him without fear, in holiness and justice before him all the days of our life* [Lk 1:73, ff.].

2252: Even insensate creatures fulfill their purpose. *By Your ordinance, the day goes on* [Ps 118:91]. Even though a man might render himself unworthy, *His rain falls upon the just and the unjust* [Mt 5:45].

3. The Abuse of Creatures

Only man can betray his end, even can make use of the means with which he ought to praise God, in order to offend Him; modern priests are the more greatly convicted as guilty of this abuse.

2253: There is the abuse of the eyes with so much dissipation; that of the tongue that is so malevolent and satirical and sarcastic regarding devotion, and so easily given over to obscene sayings. There is the abuse of the hands, feet and intelligence just to contradict; there is that of the heart, so hard with regard to God and one's neighbor; there is the abuse of food through gluttony, and of drink through drunkenness; of clothing through vanity. There is the abuse of comforts and delicacy due to negligence and laziness.

2254: There is the abuse of the faculties and wealth due to pride and avarice: and at times, there are those more avaricious in the most tenuous and shameful forms of lucre. There is noted the abuse of exterior loveliness and splendor and beauty of creatures, in order to attach oneself to the earth, those who ought to be the more concentrated on heaven. There is the abuse of those in love with the flesh, who ought to be living more in accord with the spirit. In order to court, to flirt even in the sanctuary: even with the Blood of Christ in one's hand.

In the old Church a woman confessed a fault that she had committed with a deacon, who was on the altar. Oh! If now so many voices arise against the Clerics, and even more, against Priests who are saying Mass! What shame!

†††

¹⁰⁴ Good Friday Liturgy

¹⁰⁵ St. Ignatius, **SpEx n.23**: 'The First Principle & Foundation.'

Point 3 The Proper Use of Creatures

2255

1. Only what serves to obtain the End

The Providence with which God rules creatures is a great means for salvation. *To them that love God all things work together unto good. [Rm 8:28]. But all for the sake of the Elect [Mt 24:22].* **Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short one,** says St. Ignatius ¹⁰⁶.

2256 The use of certain goods is prohibited either by God or by the Church: these must be discarded as an impediment to our end. Some do not depend on our choice, but on the expressed will of God: that is, on the Providence of God. Such as these it is necessary to receive them with submission and resignation. And some do depend on our choice: and of these it is necessary to desire and choose those which lead to the end for which we are created.

2. Theory does not serve at all if there is lacking the Practice of it.

2257 This is the great philosophy of the Christian. ¹⁰⁷ And the priest, rather than studying this philosophy in prayer, seeks it in the books of worldly authors, and even those without faith, or among heretics or schismatics. There might be a priest, who on finishing offering Mass, throws himself boldly into prohibited books, and this one who has not yet even read the good books thinks he can read bad books without any danger to himself. O how much abuse there is in those heterodox books in which there are mixed both truth and error! And thus they confuse one for the other. This is the source of so many tears of the Church in the modern ruin of so many priests who should sustain her!

2258 This philosophy is taught by the priest with his lips, and he contradicts it with his deeds. He is impatient in adversity, gives marvelous consolation to the dying and those who are in tribulation. He speaks of the disdain of the world while he seeks after the pride of wealth. He praises and exults the ignominy of the Cross ¹⁰⁸; and he protects himself from the least censures of this world. O Priests! And for how long will you make our enemies blaspheme because of you the name of God? 'Priests talk a good fight, but then they do not live it in their own lives.'

¹⁰⁶ **SpEx n. 23, III b.**

¹⁰⁷ **Translator's Note:** the next two paragraphs are inter-changed: **MssB 2258 & 2257** - are found in this reverse order in the Stofella text [cf. **CS I, p. 123**].

¹⁰⁸ In his Spiritual Journal, Fr. Bertoni early and often mentioned the value of suffering 'ignominy' for God, enduring those of Christ [**MP** September 25 & 29, 1808; February 1, 1809].

2259 Seminarians and Priests, why do you not love poverty, the ignominy that you exalt in the Gospel? It almost seems as though there is some embarrassment in imitating Christ in our days! St. Teresa of Avila ¹⁰⁹ notes that it is impossible to wish to enjoy the honors of heaven with Jesus Christ without participating here below in His dishonors.

3. It is necessary to return to Right Order

2259 Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created ¹¹⁰.

This is the right order. But for it there is needed moderation of one's passions. And in order to achieve this, there is needed mortification. This is truly the reasonable life.

2260 We have not yet even lived as Christians, let alone as priests – not even as men. It is necessary to return to right order. It is necessary to reform our lives. And this is the base for that:

- man is created for this purpose that he might love and **serve** God, and then enjoy Him eternally.
- creatures have been created for man so that they might help him to achieve this end.
- therefore man ought to be indifferent concerning adversities or prosperity; honors and dishonors, poverty and wealth, and so on. In this regard, when he is indeed in control, he ought to choose that, and only that which might contribute to the salvation of his soul.

†††

PROPOSALS ¹¹¹: ... Your face, O Lord will I still seek. One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

THANKSGIVING: *give glory to the Lord for he is good!* [Pss 104-107; 117]: in creating us, conserving us, providing us with so many means that we might enjoy him forever.

OFFERING: *Bless the Lord, o my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name* [Ps 102:1]. *I will sacrifice to you the sacrifice of praise* [Ps 115:17].

PRAYER: Direct, o Lord, my life under your guise. ¹¹²

†††

¹⁰⁹ St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*. c. 13, n. 2, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*. Vol. 2. tr. By Kiernan Kavanaugh, OCD & Otilio Rodriguez, OCD. Washington: ICS 1980, p. 86. [The words that immediately follow are not found in the Stofella text – cf. CS I, p. 123].

¹¹⁰ St. Ignatius, **SpEx 23, III c.**

¹¹¹ **Translator's Note**: these last paragraphs are not found after **MssB 2260**

¹¹² Antiphon for the First Nocturn in the Office of the Deceased.

The First Day Meditation 2

The End of the Priest ¹¹³

Prelude 1: ¹¹⁴ Let us think of ourselves as having just coming into the world, as Adam did, and to have come to know God and the obligation to love Him by means of creatures: and that He is calling us now into solitude in order to communicate to us certain plans and special orders that He has concerning us.

Prelude 2: *Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.* [1 K 3:10] ¹¹⁵.

2262

Point 1 The Priest is the Work of God

[The Priest] is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. ¹¹⁶

1. The Election to the Priesthood is a Creation

Created: *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you* [Jn 15:16]. *But by the grace of God I am what I am!* [1 Co 15:10]. *And if by grace, it is not now by [merit] works* [cf. Rm 11:6 ¹¹⁷]. To create is to make something out of nothing. There is nothing of our merit in our election, there is nothing of our own disposition: because whatever disposition we have, it is of God.

We have perhaps many demerits, sins, imperfections. How could we ever, then, take pride in that which we have received gratuitously? *If you will separate the precious from the vile, you will be as My mouth...* [Jr 15:19]. ¹¹⁸

2263 We are a real nothing: and first of all, we are sinners. And since this is our situation, we ought not to bring anything up regarding our own brothers. But, even though we are invested with such dignity, we need to stand very lowly among them. Even more, all the more should be humble, in so far as our dignity places us in

¹¹³ St. Gaspar indicates his source here: **Fr. Louis Bourdaloue**, SJ [1632-1704], and his Meditation on 'The End of the Religious.' This was his 3rd of the 1st day of his book, *Retraite Spirituelle a' l'usage des Communautés Religieuses*. Fr. Bertoni adapted, added and developed this as his own, in order to make the proper application to priests and seminarians.

¹¹⁴ In **MssB** this is blank. Fr. Stofella's text [cf. **CS I**, p. 126] takes the first sentence of Prelude 2 and makes it Prelude 1 – and for Prelude 2, Fr. Stofella has placed 1 K 9:10.

¹¹⁵ Fr. Bertoni meditates on 1 K 3:10 in his conferences to the Seminarians: Meditation 16, **MssB ## 5457-5508**.

¹¹⁶ This is an adaptation specifically to the 'Priest' of St. Ignatius' more general 'First Principle & Foundation': **SpEx 23**.

¹¹⁷ This is a theological conclusion, changing slightly the Romans text, and leaving out the last part: *...otherwise grace is no more grace...*

¹¹⁸ This text has been omitted from the Stofella text – cf. **CS I**, p. 127.

supreme danger of not corresponding to that holiness that there is demanded of us. *And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.* [Lk 12:48].

2264

2. *I have chosen you out of the world* [Jn 15:19].

This having placed us distinct from the world implies that we are no longer of the world: *I have chosen you out of the world* [Jn 15:19].

This is the first part of the end of my vocation: there are four degrees in accord with which I ought to judge myself and to confound myself for having even up to the present having corresponded so badly to my vocation: it is necessary that we are separated from the world; detached from the world; crucified to the world; dead to the world.¹¹⁹

a. I should be separated from the World

2265

We are called to be separated from the world, not so much as pertains to our dwelling and living, but rather in our spirit and sentiments. It does not suffice that we wear the habit¹²⁰ of the minister that distinguishes me from the world: it necessary rather that we have the spirit of a minister of God.

How many priests today have a spirit that is totally worldly under the very insignia of the priesthood; and how many of the laity are more committed in the world and who communicate the very spirit of the priesthood, out of their love for virtue for religion, for God and for their neighbor!. And how many priests are not ashamed even in putting on the habit and the insignia of the world [the rich, etc.]. They lay aside the crown of Christ and put on the ornamentation, the wealth and even the moustaches of the world.

¹¹⁹ All of this is in full accord with the ideal of the Jesuit is traced out by the Ignatian **Exercises**, **Rules**, and by the **Summary and Scope of the Constitutions of the Company of Jesus**: 'Men crucified to the world ... new men, i.e., despoiled of their own affections in order to be re-vested with the spirit of Jesus Christ, dead to themselves, in order to live for justice: those who, like the Apostle Paul, in fatigue, in vigils and in fasts, in chastity, in genuine charity, in the word of truth, show themselves to be authentic ministers of God; and with the weapons of a solid and perfect virtue, to the right and to the left, in glory and in abjection, amidst the honors as well as mockery, in the midst of prosperity as well as disasters, who with great strides strive to reach these ideals, and with every means of personal industry, draw others as well to the heavenly home-land, aiming always for the greater glory of God: this is the synthesis and the scope of our Institute.' Cf. **George Longhaire, SJ, A Course of Spiritual Exercises**. Rome: 1955, p. 103, footnote.

¹²⁰ **Translator's Note**: Fr. Bertoni did not legislate for any particular Stigmatine habit: it should be in accord with the more perfect clerics among whom we live [CF # 6 d]. In CF # 137, he writes: **Clothing should be simple and proper, which should bespeak poverty and at the same time, be suitable both for the ministries to be offered, as well as in accord with those among whom he works...** There is no specific Jesuit habit: cf. CSJ nn. 81, 101, 197, 577-579: it should be 'honest', accommodated to the region where one lives, and not repugnant to poverty. Fr. Bertoni would add the 'missionary' dimension.

2266 b. Detached from the World

That Priest would be most unhappy if he were indeed distinct and separated from the world by the bond of Holy Order, without being detached from it. Such a man would have neither the consolations of God, nor those of the world. He would be a mere specter of the world, as St. Bernard put it. He would really be neither secular nor cleric... he would not be a secular, because he would be separated from the world in the strength of Holy Order; but he would really not be a cleric either, because he would still belong to the world. And how many of such monsters are there today! How many of these unfortunates are there, like Tantalus!

2267 c. Crucified to the World

The world is crucified to me and I to the world. [Ga 6:14] If I still love the world and the world still loves me, if I still find pleasure in the world, and the world finds it with me, if the world, even though I am a priest, does not ever give up being in harmony with my maxims. And I am easily in accord with its (maxims), I am a priest in name only. *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.* [Ga 1:10]. To be this in effect and in truth it is necessary for me to be in the world in a state of suffering; the world should be my cross, as I will infallibly be the Cross of the world, because of the contrariety of sentiments and principles that will arise between it and me, should I really want to conduct myself as a genuine priest.

To remain at table, in conversation with bare-sleeved ladies, and to put up with them, and with them suffering the priest in their company. *The wicked shall fall in his net: I am alone until I pass.* [Ps 140:10] ¹²¹.

2268 d. Dead to the world

It is not enough to be crucified, because one could be on the cross and still be alive. It is necessary to be dead to the world, both inside and out.

Outside, it is necessary that I be in the world as a dead man. A dead man does not see, even though he has eyes – he does not touch, nor taste, nor hears, nor can he walk, he does not react, he does not move, he suffers all ¹²².

2269 However, the world to which I need to die is principally within myself: that is still far more dangerous than that outside. The world which is within me is made up of those three kinds of concupiscence explained by St. John: *concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life* [1 Jn 2:16].

Concupiscence of the Flesh: Blessed be God! O God, sadly how many of these are alive in our times! And it is this more than anything else which draws down punishments. The incontinence of priests is a scandal that is now general.

¹²¹ This brief paragraph found in **MssB 2267** is not found in Fr. Stofella's corresponding text in **CS I**, p. **128**.

¹²² cf. Rodriguez, Vol. II, tr.1, c. 23, 2.

2270 The concupiscence of the eyes: interest, o how this dominates!

The Pride of Life and singularly the pride of one's own judgment before the Church¹²³.

This world is more to be feared because it is in me, and a part of me.

A dead man, as we have seen, neither sees, nor hears, nor feels, nor speaks, nor is he in disdain, nor is he moved. So should I be dead to all my passions, to the world within as well as toward that without.

3. The Priest can only satisfy his Vocation with being a Saint

2271 His separation, detachment, crucifixion and spiritual death are of a holiness that is very elevated. But, I also have the honor and at the same time, the duty to tell you – since I have to propose to you the most precise truth – that this is only the first part of our vocation, that which we have, in some way, common with religious.

2272 The monk, too, is called to this holiness: and so is the priest. With this difference, though, that the monk satisfies his vocation, with aspiring, with tending toward this holiness: the priest does not satisfy it that way, but only with being truly perfect and holy. The former is on the way, whereas the latter is in a state of perfection.

And there is still another difference that the monk has so many means in solitude, in his vows, in his discipline, and the like: the Priest has in the world only dangers and distractions that are quite powerful and vehement.

2273 This doctrine is incontestable, because it is from St. Thomas Aquinas¹²⁴ Having supposed this doctrine my perfection and my commitment and my salvation in this state are two realities that cannot be separated.

That particular perfection which Jesus Christ has proposed to the Christians of the world as a counsel, but is therefore, for me, a commandment. *Be clean, you that are the vessels of the Lord* [Is 52:11]. *Be holy because I am holy* [Lv 11:44; 19:2, etc]. was free to be a priest, or not to be one; but, from the moment that I am one, I am no longer free to renounce the obligation that I have of being perfect.

4. The Priest who neglects being holy slips out of the Path of Salvation

2274 If this is the way it is, the path to heaven for a Priest is very narrow. It is indeed about the narrowest: 'It is a hundred times more narrow than is thought.'¹²⁵ If this is the way it is, does this man that the major part of Priests are not saved? St. John Chrysostom was not dismayed by this question and took it on directly: 'I think that there are many priests who are saved, but many others who perish.'¹²⁶ This is the way

¹²³ This was the time of Napoleon's imprisonment of Pius VIth. This would be the time of the dispersion of religious communities throughout Europe.

¹²⁴ II-II, q. 184, a. 8.

¹²⁵ A citation attributed to St. Jerome, but not verified.

¹²⁶ cf. Fr. Bertoni's **Spiritual Journal: MP January 9, 1809**

St. Augustine ¹²⁷ said to his Clergy of Hippo; and because many of them were frightened by his statement, they approached him and asked for an explanation, and the saint confirmed what he had said.

2275 And yet there are so many priests who have much concern about so many other duties, except this one that is so essential. They strive to be learned, and they should. But, they neglect being saints. And in addition to the disorder of their conduct, in addition to the danger that God could withdraw His graces, they go out of the path and from the state of the vocation in which they have been called. Now, to leave the way that God has marked out for me in the order of my salvation is the most terrible error the consequences of which are the most terrible.

2276 Blessed are you, young seminarians, who have the time to accomplish much good. You can prepare yourselves with virtue and with perfection: ***It is good for a man, when he has borne the yoke from his youth.*** [Lm 3:27] Oh! If we could only return to your age!

What good reason we have to be embarrassed and to fear seeing so many in the midst of the world more occupied than I am in the care of their own perfection, and with this, who are more perfect in their way of life than I am in mine! How much more mortified, more chaste, more humble, more charitable than an infinity of priests are! What witness this is against me! And I will remain convinced when God in His judgment will place before my eyes examples such as these!

What confusion after many years of priesthood, instead of growing in holiness to find myself as imperfect as when I was a cleric, and even when I was still in the world.

2277

Point 2

The Priest is ordained for the Salvation of Souls

1. The Priest has power over the Real Body of Christ

By His election, God not only has chosen and distinguished and separated me from the world, but He has also raised me up from the earth even to heaven, by communicating to me the power over His Real and Mystical Body of His Son.

I call God down on to the altar, and He obeys my voice. Joshua stopped the sun, and I have my God come into my own hands. What holiness is there not required for this! How pure should these hands not be! How pure those eyes, spectators of such a great Mystery! How holy that tongue, which pronounces those words! How holy that heart which receives its God! ¹²⁸

2. The Priest has power over the Mystical Body of Christ.

¹²⁷ St. Augustine, *On the day of his Ordination*; Sermons 345, 346.

¹²⁸ St. John Chrysostom, Homily 60 to the People of Antioch, in: ***The Priesthood***. Book 6, 4.

2278 *Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained* [Jn 20:22, f]. This is a power that is altogether divine. *Who can forgive sins, but God only?* [Mk 2:7]. He has thus constituted you in a state between God and men, because with God, you are men, but among men you are as gods. Priests should be heavenly men or terrestrial angels, and further, should it be possible, to better than they, since they hold an office that is higher than theirs.

2279 What a great dignity this is: but even greater is the ruin if they fall: *you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation* [1 P 2:9]. And if for some time we have lived in the darkness and in blindness of our own sins, God has awaited us in this Retreat, *and has called us out of the darkness into his marvelous light* [2 P 2:9]; and having become luminous, we give a newness to those who find themselves in the darkness of the virtue and goodness that this Lord exercised with us: *to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: to direct our feet into the way of peace.* [Lk 1:79].

2280 this is what we have to be as the duties of our vocation require it. The little esteem in which this office is held, the great facility with which it is taken up, the little holiness with which it is managed, are not only sufficient causes to bring it about that in the judgment of God there be left how to ask for the good life that such an office requires.

3. *I have chosen you that you should go and should bring forth fruit* [Jn 15:16]

We have been chosen not only for us to **serve God** ¹²⁹, but also to bring it about that our neighbors might come to praise and to fear and to **serve God**, and thus by our serving Him we are saved with them.

2281 But how can anyone make others holy if he is not that himself? 'What is imperfect cannot perfect.' How can one lift souls up out of the current of this world if he does not have his own feet solidly in great holiness? The world, the Demon wage war especially on those who take it upon themselves to save souls: *who are ready to raise up a leviathan* [Jb 3:8]. How can one be saved from his deceptions and temptations, who is not totally fortified in the most heroic virtues? These are like certain soldiers, all full of courage before the danger: but when it arises, they run away ¹³⁰.

¹²⁹ **Translator's Note:** this is the real meaning of *obsequium/obsequi* - St. Ignatius used the Spanish words: *servir/servicio/servo* [**a Mysticism of Service**] many times in his writing of the Constitutions – his Secretary, Fr. Polanco used three translations: *servire/auxiliare/obsequi* – by far, this last was the most often used.

¹³⁰ **Translator's Note:** the **military image** from the Ignatian spirituality – and the frequent referral to Dom Scupoli's *The Spiritual Combat*, Fr. Bertoni often compares the struggle to that of the **soldier**: '... take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the divine word...! **MP, September 15, 1808 – visit to St. Ignatius; Altar.** St. Gaspar also notes the example of the painted soldier [cf. **MP, March 22, 1809**].

2282 We need not only to make ourselves useful for those few souls that are around us, but **for the entire world**,¹³¹ through prayer we take on the cause for the entire world, as St. John Chrysostom stated¹³². One should seek much prayer, and the gift of prayer, as Fr. D'Avila¹³³ put it. St. Gregory the Great stated: No one may presume the priesthood, who has not acquired in prayer such familiarity with God as to be able to bend Him in his time, as Moses, Elijah, and so on, did in theirs¹³⁴. The Lord states: I am looking for a person, a man whom I would place between my fury and the sins of the people: and I have not found him.¹³⁵ St. Gregory the Great tells us about that priest who on the strength of his prayers obtained from God the return to life of the father of a family, who had died without benefit of confession because of his delay in ministering to him. 'Give him back!' This was said to the demons who were carrying away the soul of the deceased. 'Give him back, because Severus the priest has wept: by his tears the Lord has restored him!'¹³⁶

2283 that which the Priests make the least use of is prayer; indeed, they take for a ride the books about prayer and those who practice it.

4. Reparation and Proposals

Let us weep, let us weep! And, full of confusion, let us ask pardon of God and of the world. Of God, whom we have not served in conformity with the height on which He has placed us; and of the world, which we have not liberated from many evils, as was our duty; and we would have done so if we had lived as we should have.

2284 If this has penetrated us, we would have no time to lose, nor the boldness to waste aimless words, nor would we direct our eyes on high, nor would we give place to other thoughts, because our central task would keep us quite busy.

¹³¹ Fr. Bertoni's ideal for the Apostolic Mission is: *quocumque in diocesi et mundo!* CF # 5]. He envisioned confreres of other races, nations [cf. CF # 193].

¹³² St. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*. 6. 4 – t. 261.

¹³³ Blessed John of Avila, *Spiritual Letters*.

¹³⁴ '...In all that he does he sets an example so inspiring to all others...By his practice and experience of prayer he has learned already that he can obtain from the Lord what he asks for, as though it were already said to him, in particular, by the voice of experience: *When you are yet speaking, I will say: Here I am ... with what assurance can one take on the role of interceding for the people with God, without the knowledge of being in His favor by reason of the merits of one's life?* Cf. St. Gregory the Great, *Pastoral Care*. First Part c. 10. Ancient Christian Writers. Vol. 11. Washington: Newman 1978, p. 39. St. Gaspar Bertoni has fused this text with this other one from St. John Chrysostom: 'And indeed I would think that neither the confidence of Moses, nor that of Elijah could suffice for a supplication of this nature.' *ON the Priesthood*. Book 6, 4. These are the words preceding what was quoted above in note 126 here. 'For who indeed would be propitious to supplicate God for an entire city, and having mentioned a single city, what about the entire universe, for the sins of all – indeed what kind of person would there be needed for this...?'

¹³⁵ A paraphrasing of **Ezk 22:30**.

¹³⁶ St. Gregory, *Dialogues*, Book 1, c. 12.

Our task is to weep over the sufferings of the Church.¹³⁷ To perform this duty well, we need to put an end to our own pleasures, and go directly, and go with all solicitude as people who bear on their shoulders almost an impossible burden: that of our own sins, and even more, of the care for the whole world¹³⁸.

2285**COLLOQUY**

How greatly am I obliged to You, o my God, for having let me know my error in a point of time that I can still emend it! What would have happened to me, if there had not come to me in these *exercises* this very clear light, this most efficacious grace? I would have proceeded through my darkness, walking, and finally... I would be converted! But where? And in what point? In hell, as all the other unhappy sinners. There they say: *Therefore, we have erred from the way of truth [Ws 5:6]*. There they also say: *We are fools!*

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¹³⁷ Cf. the great Ignatian Principle: *Sentire cum ecclesia*. cf. Aa.Vv., *Sentire cum ecclesia. Historia – Pedagogia – Desafio Actual*. Roma: CIS 1983; cf. also Jesus Corella, SJ, *Sentir la Iglesia. Comentario a las reglas ignacianas para el sentido verdadero de Iglesia*. Mensajero-Sal Terrae 1988. cf. also Giulio Meiattini, *Sentire cum Cristo. La teologia dell'esperienza cristiana nell'opera di Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Roma: PUB: 1998.

¹³⁸ cf. Fr. D'Avila, reason 2, p. 103.

PART TWO SIN & THE REIGN OF CHRIST

SECOND DAY

Meditation 1 THREE-FOLD SIN¹³⁹

2286 Prelude 1. Imagine a most powerful prince who has uncovered in his Realm a very extended conspiracy. And then one morning very unexpectedly there would be seen hung in the public square two or three hundred of his more noble princes and senators, who would have been already supremely favored and loved: what fright would there not be among the populace! What terror would permeate throughout the state!

And indeed, God has condemned an immense multitude of Angels: He has condemned - and still condemns - to Hell an immense multitude of souls even for one single mortal sin: and still we are not afraid: ***Just Father, the world has not known You.*** [Jn 17:25]

Imagine that you this very morning are spectators before your own eyes this terrible sentence, since you, too – after so many sins – are guilty of a like conspiracy.

2287 Prelude 2. Ask God for His holy fear - ***Pierce my flesh with Your fear, for I am afraid of Your judgments*** [Ps 118:120] – to be had for sins.

Point 1. The First Sin was that of the Angels

1. The Nature of the Angels

The Angels were the high-point of creation, the most beautiful work coming from the divine hands, and reflecting the most glory on their Creator: ***And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good*** [Gn 1:31] placed in the Empyrean Heaven in the most proximate disposition for glory; as most beloved children due to their similitude in nature, precisely on the spiritual level; and they were the most wise, due to their similitude of grace: ***each one of them was the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty*** [Ezk 28:12] - and supernatural gifts: ***every precious stone was their covering*** [v. 13].

¹³⁹ The sources indicated by Fr. Bertoni are: Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ [Senior] [1624-1694] one of the more qualified writers of the Italian century in which he lived. A second source is Fr. C. A. Cattaneo, already noted above. Fr. Bertoni had before him his *Reasonings* 15 and 16 from the Second Part of Fr. Segneri's *Instructed Christian*. Of Fr. Cattaneo, St. Gaspar used some points of his *Spiritual Exercises*: analogous meditations to the themes treated here. Neither Fr. Segneri nor Fr. Cattaneo had in mind in their writing the giving of their material to priests and seminarians.

2288 2. The Sin of the Angels

These creatures which were so blessed, just a short time after having received these gifts, rebelled and declared war against their Benefactor and God, with their very gifts He had bestowed, and in that very place of peace. And the underlying reason for this war was their pride in not subjecting themselves to God: ***Your pride is brought down to hell*** [Is 14:11].

According to St. Bonaventure¹⁴⁰, the source of this rebellion was their ambition, thinking of themselves as very important; [in their being proud as peacocks, taking pleasure in their own talents ...]. The progress of their rebellion was due to their presumption, in their aspiring to realities that were more sublime than was fitting for them to do: ***And your heart was lifted up with your beauty*** [Ezk 28:17]; ***I will be like the Most High*** [Is 14:14], *by desiring as their last end that likeness of God which is bestowed by grace, they sought to have it by the power of their own nature, and not from the divine assistance according to God's ordering*¹⁴¹. The end result of all this rebellion was aversion from God, in their wanting to know all that God had in His Plan.

Therefore, every little deviation toward evil is to be feared; every little concession to pride and vanity, every disordered act of self-love St. Augustine put it this way¹⁴²: *The love of self to the point of contempt for God*; while the opposite is the ideal: *the Love of God even to the contempt of oneself*. We can easily arrive at sinning as the Angels did¹⁴³.

2289 4. Punishment of the Rebellious Angels.

The punishment meted out was terrible unexpected, without giving any time nor help: ***I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven*** [Lk 10:18]. This was meted out without any regard either for their nobility or extraordinary number. The Angels were more numerous than the sands of the sea, the leaves on the trees¹⁴⁴. The third part of these fell. Of the great number, certainly one of them could have been spared! It would have sufficed that the head of the rebellion should have been punished, as often the much feared princes of this world do. It would have been enough to eliminate one in

¹⁴⁰ *Commentary on the 4 Books of Sentences*, d. 2, a. 1, q. 1.

¹⁴¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 63, a. 3 c.

¹⁴² St. Augustine, *On the City of God*, 14, 28. t. 7, 378 D

¹⁴³ **NB:** Translator's Note: Fr. Stofella's text adds this following paragraph: it is MssB 2292:

3. The Gravity of the Sin of the Priest derives from his Likeness to the Angels. *Priests in Scripture are called Angels. Thus in the Apocalypse [cf. 1 P 2:9; Rv 1:20] the 'Angels' of the Seven Churches are the 'Chosen Race of Priests'. And in Malachi [2:7] it is read: 'the lips of the Priests shall keep knowledge; and they shall seek the Law at His mouth because He is the Lord of Hosts.' Priests are indeed taken up 'into the lot of the Lord and every day they are conducted as blessed with the Lord; they guard the knowledge of God,' and they are sealed with a sacred character in the mark of similitude with God.* (This is a text made up of the spirit of St. John Chrysostom, the Council of Trent, Mt 2:7, Ezechiel and the Apocalypse.)

Our fault, my dear Priests, makes us similar to the Angels in sin. We have imitated the fallen Angels in everything, as we bear their name.

¹⁴⁴ **NB:** Translator's Note: Fr. Stofella quotes here [CS 1, p. 136] this text: from Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Heavenly Hierarchy*, c. 9: *...they are more than the stars of the sky, as the leaves on the trees, as the blades of grass...*

then of them. But God did not give any heed either to the good they might have accomplished once they had been made repentant, nor to the evil they might have further perpetrated had they remained stubborn. Without any restriction, they lost all their goods, they acquired all these evils and all of this without end: for an eternity.

2290 5. The Malignity of even a Single Mortal Sin is inexplicable.

Therefore, the evil of a single mortal sin is beyond explanation, as is the hatred that God has for them God, Who has such a tender heart even for the little ravens, abandoned in their nest by their mothers.

A single sin sufficed to make a Demon. Ten sins would immediately change ten Seraphim into ten Devils: and what about us who have so many of them!

Divine Justice in our times has not changed its scales. A single sin of pride weighs a considerable amount: what would so many sacrileges, and dishonesty weigh?

God is merciful; and He is no less so with the Angels; and yet, just look at how He treated them.

What would heaven lose, if it should lose you, a beloved priest when He had no hesitation in allowing it to be de-populated by the Angels?

2291 Their sin was really one of thought only; and it was a single sin, without their having seen the example of previous justice, without effect, having been left without any remedy: whereas we have abused too many manifestations of His pardon. For them, there was not even a drop of the Blood of Christ: whereas for us, It has all been applied. For them, there was not even a moment's hesitation: whereas for us, the Lord has waited years and years. And how much the greater has been our fault!

Who shall not fear You? [Jr 10:7]. This attitude is so different than holding our heads high over the laity simply because we are priests! What we need is to weep, to weep! We need penance, and more penance!

2292¹⁴⁵ The priests are the Angels of Scripture. *So they are named in the Scriptures the Seven Angels of the Churches* [cf. Rv 1:20]; a chosen race ... the Priesthood [1 P 2:9]; *they are chosen into the lot of the Lord - a Chosen Race*. Council of Trent, Session 22, Concerning Reformation, c. 1. **For the lips of the Priests shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the Law at His mouth. For He is the Angel of the Lord of Hosts** [Ml 2:7]. *They are in the Sanctuary of the Lord daily.*

[Priests possess] a likeness with God because *they keep the knowledge of God* [and because of their] character.

Our fault, therefore, is similar to the Angels in sin. We have in everything imitated the Angels, just as we bear their name.

¹⁴⁵ **NB:** Translator's Note: this rather schematic paragraph has been anticipated by Fr. Stofella [cf. CS I, p. 137]. It is found above as the footnote just preceding MssB 2289.

2293 Point 2. The Second Sin is that of Adam

1. The State of Adam before his Fall

Adam was created by God a little less than the Angels [Ps 8:6], because of his many, many gifts of nature. In his soul, **God created him into His Image** [Gn 1:26], full of wisdom in all the human and divine sciences, the master of the whole world. He was enriched with sanctifying grace and this disposed him for glory – he was endowed with infused virtues both as habits and in act, with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and with original justice. For this reason his soul was subject to God, with an ease in knowing Him; his lower nature was also subject to his superior nature. He was thus free from passions, his body was subject to his soul, and these served as a help to him, and not a burden, since every passion had been removed, all tiredness and death itself. This original justice was such that it was supposed to transmit its powers to all.

How necessary it is to fear and to tremble before the graces of God! Because even with them, one can still sin.

2294 2. Adam's Sin

Adam sinned, violating a very simple precept. The reason for his fall was pride. Be on your guard, o Priest! The occasion of his fall was his love for the woman, and this was not a wrongful love. How should not the priest be afraid for his certain affections, even though still spiritual, yet toward his penitents, even those who are very holy! Who was more holy and innocent than Adam and Eve? Affections of this nature are the ruin of many priests.¹⁴⁶

2295 3. The Punishment for Adam's Sin

A terrible punishment was immediately meted out for himself and for his descendants. As regards himself, through his loss of grace, and original justice, there resulted the darkness of intellect, malice of will, passions in revolt and a recalcitrant body.

The damage to human nature: ignorance, unrestrained liberty, a weakened dominion over the beasts.

2296 The loss regarding his descendants, there were so many resulting evils, and death, and wars, and the like – in the loss of so many babies, in the damnation of so many men due remotely to the sin of Adam, in the sins and the vices which inundated them: an army of evils which he introduced into the world, this sin from the head of the human race. **Whereas by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin, death** [Rm 5:12]. And this occurred even though Adam did 900 years of penance, and Jesus Christ had brought the medicine of His own Blood. And this will go on until the

¹⁴⁶ St. Gaspar remained keenly aware of this and codified his Apostolic Missionary ideals in his *Original Constitutions*, regarding the spiritual care of Women: cf. **CF ## 4; 105; 108; 114; 290**. With this in mind, it might be helpful to remember the Saint's words in **CF # 277: In the first place, in order to conduct the office of Confessor in a perfect manner, it is often necessary to deal in a familiar manner with penitents outside of Confession...** [...necessarium saepe est cum poenitentibus etiam extra confessionem familiariiter agere ...]

end of the world and forever, if the world were to last that long; and for all eternity, for the damned.

2297 4. What great Blindness does sin bring forth for a Trifle!

If a little drop of poison could embitter the entire sea and seep into the sources and the rivers, what poison that would be! How is it possible to believe that something like this would occur in the area of faith and not become horrified at even the mention of mortal sin!

2298 The matter of Adam's disobedience in itself was in reality quite light; just that it was aggravated by the prohibition, and by the purpose of this prohibition; it was meant to be a kind of tribute because by its observance one would recognize the supreme dominion of God.

Adam dared to eat the forbidden fruit; and we unworthily dare to receive the Body of Christ. His fault was only one, and in a time that there was not seen any punishment for sin; before having received pardon on other occasions; before having promised as head of the race to keep himself faithful; before Christ would have died for sin.

2299: Point 3. The Third Mortal Sin are those of Each One

1. One Single Mortal Sin merits an Eternal Punishment

For a sin of this magnitude, and perhaps for only one such sin, many have been condemned and confined forever in hell; many, beyond number, even for very fewer and lighter sins of my own, others are eternally in torment. What would happen to me if God had not extended His mercy on me? Rather than being here to meditate on these thoughts, I would also be experiencing these punishments; instead of hope in His pardon, I would be in despair; in place of thanking God, I would be cursing Him.

No matter what the *gravity* and the malice of the sin may be, you offend God, the Creator and Lord of all¹⁴⁷ – my First Principle and Ultimate end!

2300 The eternal punishment is justly decreed against mortal sin, because it is contrary to God's infinite goodness. As Cajetan puts it¹⁴⁸: *Mortal sin is worthy of eternal penalty, in that it offends God not just in any manner, but in hostile fashion, lowering God from His Deity.* Indeed, in hell sin is never really punished enough. If God were to unleash upon a single soul for a single sin all that storm of penalties that pummels assiduously all the demons and above all who are condemned, this still would be little considering what one sin truly merits.

An infinite penalty: infinite punishment; if not in intensity, then at least in duration.

¹⁴⁷ This whole reflection is found in St. Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, First Exercise [nn. 45-54] – this particular paragraph is *SpEx* n. 52.

¹⁴⁸ Cajetan, 2-2, q. 3, 2.

2. Proposal

I will therefore, experience shame, confusion within myself, keeping in mind that many have been condemned for mortal sin, even just one, and that I having sinned so many times, have merited condemnation.

Colloquy Imagine Christ before me on the Cross.

Therefore, I will ask Him how it is that though He is the Creator, He has stooped to become man, and to pass from eternal life that He might die here in time for my sins.

I shall reflect upon myself, and ask: What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ - What should I do for Christ?

As I behold Christ in this plight, nailed to the Cross, I shall ponder on what presents itself to mind.¹⁴⁹

Our Father.

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2302

Meditation 2 Three-Fold Sin¹⁵⁰

Point 1. The Sin of the Angels¹⁵¹

1. A Fall like lightning:

Lk 10:18: I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven.

This lightning bolt, of great power, in collision and in crashing with the thunder, through the frigid clouds, each vying with the other. Thus, the demons, immediately an unexpectedly, are thrust down from heaven: for indeed the demons had not expected thus expulsion. For indeed none had been threatened as we have been

*Violently [the demons fell], because with great force, unwilling they were cast from heaven by St. Michael, and **Michael and his Angels fought with the Dragon, and the Dragon and his angels fought back, [Rv 12:7], and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven [Rv 12:8]. And that great Dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who seduces the whole world; and he was cast unto the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. [Rv 12:9].***

They fell quickly, because indeed very swiftly, as though in a moment of time. And this was done manifestly: because all the Angels witnessed it.

2303 2. Apt Comparison: *Lucifer most aptly is compared to a lightning bolt, because his fiery nature in its brilliance is represented in a most outstanding manner, as I might put it, the majesty and leadership of Lucifer, by the lightning bolts. [Indeed there is also well represented] his extraordinary power of bringing harm, for such is lightning, because it invades, breaks down, breaks apart, and incinerates whatever it strikes; this is why it bespeaks such terror and harm. Furthermore, it lasts only a short time in its state; thus, pride flashes something like the flame of lightning, and then it disappears; it falls down from the sky onto the earth, something like a bull whip.*

¹⁴⁹ A quote from *SpEx* n. 53.

¹⁵⁰ This is a bit of a repetition of above, *MssB* ## 2286-2301.

¹⁵¹ Cf. St. Ignatius, *SpEx* n. 50

Just as lightning flashing across the sky is splendid it ends on earth with a thud, in a blackened ruin, as pride does. In similar manner, Lucifer is changed from a most brilliant angel, into a demon. So, pride makes demons out of Angels; whereas humility makes Angels out of demons.

2304 3. Pride is punished: Is 14:11: *Your pride is brought down to hell, your carcass is fallen down: under thee shall the mouth be strewed, and worms shall be your covering.* V. 12: *How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who did rise in the morning?*

St. Bernard¹⁵² [states]: Why do you hasten to rise up like Lucifer, you who take glory over the stars over which even more brightly you would seem to glow? For indeed, very brief is your glorification: the Sun of Justice follows, over whom you boast in an empty simulation, by whose fervor and likewise splendor you contradict, being reduced into real nothingness. How much better was it for John the Baptist, than Lucifer, who in being the forerunner of the Sun of Justice, he strove to be more fervent rather than more resplendent! How much better will it be for you were more of an igniter than a Lucifer!

2305 Is 14:12 *How you are fallen to the earth, who did wound the nations!* V. 13: *And you said in your heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt, my throne above the stars of God, I will sit on the mountain of the Covenant, in the sides of the north* [a most frigid mountain]. Your course will be from the east to the west. The more you hasten to on high, so much the more rapidly will you fall. He has not only not remained, neither does he sit, but he has fallen; whoever does not stand, neither does he find support in the Word of God.

v. 14: *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* V. 15: *But, you shall be brought down to hell, unto the depth of the pit.*

St. Bernard¹⁵³ [says]: There is never security, my brothers, neither in heaven, nor in paradise For the Angel fell in heaven, under the very presence of the Divinity; Adam was expelled from Paradise, from that place of pleasure; Judas fell in this world, from the very **School¹⁵⁴ of the Savior**. The place does not sanctify men, but men sanctify the place. You can never allow pride to dominate in your senses, or in your speech: For from pride, all loss assumes its beginning.

2306

Point 2. The Sin of Adam¹⁵⁵

1. Need of Clothing

Gn 3:31: *And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife, garments of skins, and clothed them... You have crowned him with glory and honor [Ps 8:6]. And man when he was in honor did not understand; he is compared to senseless*

¹⁵² St. Bernard, Sermon. 3, in Is 5. Moraliter...

¹⁵³ St. Bernard, Sermon "On the Word and stip."

¹⁵⁴ **NB: Translator's note:** a favorite concept of St. Gaspar: the school of God; the school of love. For Fr. Bertoni, the Ignatian Schola Affectus, for one year is noted in his *Original Constitutions*, Part VIII, CF ##152-157.

¹⁵⁵ cf. above. MssB # 2294. [cf. St. Ignatius, *SpEx* n. 51.]

beasts, and is become like to them. [Ps 48:13]. Let us make man to our own image and likeness, and let him have dominion, etc. [Gn 1:26].

St. John Chrysostom¹⁵⁶ explains: *Let being clothed in a long garment be a monument to us, by which we are to be reminded about the many goods about which we are unaware, and let us become aware of the enormous inconvenience the human race is affected due to its disobedience.*

Origen,¹⁵⁷ explains: *Of such garments it is necessary for the sinner to be clothed, which would be the livery of mortality and fragility, which judgment each accepts in the first sin, which came from the corruption of the flesh. **In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread until you return to the earth, out of which w you were taken: for dust you are, and unto dust you shall return.** [Gn 3:18].*

2307 2. Knowledge of Good and Evil: Gn 3:22: And He said: Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil. [ib., v. 5]: ... and you shall be as Gods knowing good and evil...

St. Augustine¹⁵⁸ interprets: *So that by experience he might learn when he senses evil, that which God knew by His wisdom; and so that he might understand by its penalty that the power of the omnipotent is inevitable, to which as blessed and consenting He would not permit.*

v. 23: And the Lord sent him out of the paradise of pleasure to till the earth, from which he was taken. v. 24: And He cast out Adam...

2308 3. Penalties responding to the six sins:

- rebellion of the flesh on account of disobedience. **And when they perceived themselves to be naked, Gn 3:7. And I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself v. 10**

- by hard labor and fatigue, on account of gluttony: **In the sweat of your face, etc. v. 19.**

- by the suffering of the flesh, hunger, cold, illness, on account of stealing.

- by death, in which the soul departs from the body on account of his infidelity by which he separated himself from God: **... I will multiply your sorrows... v. 16.**

- by the deprivation of his substance which he had received, and by incineration, on account of his ingratitude.

- by the deprivation of Paradise, of heaven, by being thrust into the dark regions, on account of his pride.

The penalty for this sin: He lost himself and his descendants. Human beings are condemned either mediately, or immediately on account of this sin; its fault and penalty was handed on in such a way to all the posterity so that it might in no way be impeded, nor remitted¹⁵⁹.

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¹⁵⁶ St. John Chrysostom, *In Gen. Hom.* 18, 2. t.4, 86/1 B

¹⁵⁷ Origen, 6 in *Leviticus*

¹⁵⁸ St. Augustine, *On Genesis*, Book 2, c. 22, 23. t. 1678 f.]

¹⁵⁹ **Translators' Note:** as pointed out above, these paragraphs on: **'The Sin of the Angels** and on **'The Sin of Adam, Original Sin'** [MssB 2302-2308] are rather schematic notes, covering the same material as MssB 2386-2301, but often found in the Latin. The translation of the Latin is left in *italics* - and the Latin Vulgate is found in *italics, in bold print*.

2309**SECOND DAY****Meditation 2¹⁶⁰
OUR SINS¹⁶¹****Preparatory Prayer**

Prelude 1: Let us imagine that we see our soul in this corruptible body, as though it were in prison; and that man himself is an exile in this valley of miseries, together with the brute animals.

Prelude 2: Ask for the intense sorrow for sins and for the most abundant weeping.

Point 1**The Number and Circumstances of our Personal Sins¹⁶²**

This is a process through which we reduce to memory all the sins of our life. Let us go back in orderly fashion and look over the years and the spaces of time, one by one. I will recount to you all my years in the bitterness of my soul. [*Is 38:15*].

2310 1. The Years of our Childhood: oh, how soon it was that we began to offend God, even before really knowing Him! The life of the Spirit, which was in us, was immediately almost extinguished from the life of the senses which prevailed. Instead of developing our nascent reason to come to know God, as the habit of faith inclined it, we let ourselves be transported by vanity, and there was no longer space left for God.

2311 O happy days, when I *walked in the innocence of my heart* [*Ps 100:2*].¹⁶³ Where did that innocence fly away so soon which we had received in Baptism? All our faculties were taken over by curiosity and the passing realities of this earth, and they were no longer free to exercise those acts of faith, hope and charity. And so, right away our spirit was disordered, by turning toward this earth, whereas it had originally been ordered toward heaven.

2312 2. Our Adolescence Our adolescence was great in malice. It was not the divine law which regulated it, but the example of the world and evil companions. How much irreverence in the Churches, forgetfulness of prayer, little respect for the things of God! How much disobedience and irreverence toward our elders, lack of modesty,

¹⁶⁰ This **Meditation 2** has been edited by Ft. Stofella: cf. **CS I, pp. 140-148.**

¹⁶¹ This list of sins presented here by St. Gaspar is based upon the Meditation entitled 'The Process of One's Own Sins', by Lodovico Muratori [1672-1750], in his book entitled: *The Spiritual Exercises exposed according to the Method of Fr. Paul Segneri, SJ*, the younger [1673-1716]. He was a popular preacher and Muratori was also his editor. Fr. Stofella states that he was not able to see whether this font is the source of Fr. Bertoni's total Meditation here. [However, Fr. Bertoni is following in order the 'Second Exercise.' For our sins, cf. St. Ignatius, **SpEx n. 55. ff.**].

¹⁶² **SpEx n. 56.**

¹⁶³ In **MssB** this text is attributed to Job with no further reference.

licentiousness, laziness, scandals for other companions: ***O God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*** [Lk 18:13].

2313 3. The Years of our Youth The Lord has granted us a vocation, but with how much negligence, ingratitude have we corresponded to it! I really should, as I had been called to a state of holiness, be already holy; instead, I entered into the sanctuary already very imperfect, , perhaps already with vicious habits that had not yet been uprooted, as of anger, vanity, incontinence, and so on. [cf. Dal Monte].

2314 The early years when we exercised the Holy Orders, how much negligence in study, prayer set aside, how much vanity! The Divine Office was recited poorly, in haste, with our heads full of distractions, with many of its words chopped off.

What poor preparation for the priesthood! The saints gave themselves to their preparation with so much study, and how they trembled over it! St. Francis, after his vision regarding the transparent cruet [that was full of that clear water, shown to him by an angel with these words: 'Even more pure should the soul of the Priest be!']¹⁶⁴, refused to be a priest: and we, who are so bold, without even working for holiness.

2315 4. The Priesthood: and once we became Priests, alas! How many Masses, poorly celebrated, without preparation before, or thanksgiving afterwards, with so many omissions, without fervor, with distraction, perhaps even with some mortal sins. Thus renewing the horrible sacrilege of Judas!

Fr. John of Avila feared for a young priest who died after having celebrated a single Mass; he feared so much for that one Mass: and we, how many have we celebrated!¹⁶⁵

Our confessions, much rarer even than so many good lay people; often poorly done, without sorrow, without any firm resolutions, without the required integrity because of our relaxed consciences, due to not carefully examining our faults.

2316 The many hidden sins, are there any internal culpably forgotten? ***From my secret sins, cleanse me, O lord*** [Ps 18:13]. So many internal sins of internal temerarious judgments of pride, sinister intentions, envy, negligence.

And how many sins have there been never recognized out of culpable ignorance, or by the deceit of the devil, so easy in us priests, sometimes even believing that we render **homage**¹⁶⁶ to God with a zeal that was really indiscretion, calling our firmness what is really obstinacy, and condescendence, or weakness. How many grave sins are there still unrecognized due to our relaxed consciences.

2317 How much grumbling, envy, and then going immediately to offer Mass. How many lascivious glances, truly immodest, how much vainglory, laziness, how much

¹⁶⁴ This passage added by Fr. Stofella from an ancient Franciscan tradition, cited by many ascetical writers, but not found in Celano or St. Bonaventure and in other biographers of St. Francis, such as Jorghenson and Felder.

¹⁶⁵ This incident is noted by St. Alphonsus M. de Liguori, in his *Ascetical Works*. cf. 'Priests, listen to me!' Roma: 1943.

¹⁶⁶ One of Fr. Gaspar's favorite words: ***ossequio: service.***

failure in charity towards our neighbor. With how much ease do we judge, finding fault with the orders of our superiors, their orders, even offered as counsels, the exhortations of preachers, pastors. How much making fun of others, even making fun of piety: contradictions to the supreme degree of even good church-men, and of their truly respectful conduct, for no other reason than their way of life criticizes ours, and way of thinking to our own harm. How much scandal do we give to other church-men, and to the laity, in our manner of dressing, acting and dealing with others.

2318 Just notice where you have wasted that most precious time that God would have provided you in order to serve Him! Does it really seem that you have worked worthily, [in conformity] with your state, and that you are in accord with your being, and in harmony with your due as a creature made to the image of God redeemed with the Blood of the Savior?

2319 5. Sins in number more than the sands of the sea.

A single sin soils you: what will be said of so many sins that have been committed? You are like Job on the refuse-heap full of wounds that exude filth. *I have sinned in number more than the sands of the sea.*¹⁶⁷ This army of your sins made Christ sweat Blood: how could this not lead me to express at least my grief through tears? Let us tremble, my brothers, for our hardness, which is the too common penalty for the sins of priests. And if we should fall anew into worldly sins, o God, what misery, what fear! ***The dog is returned to his vomit*** [2 P 2:22].

2320

Point 2:

The Gravity and Loathsomeness of our Personal Sins¹⁶⁸

I will weigh the gravity of my sins, and see the loathsomeness and malice which every sin I have committed has in itself, even though it were not forbidden. St. Ignatius; *Exercises*, **Second**.¹⁶⁹

And man when he was in honor, he did not understand [Ps 48:13]. Created in the image of God, ***he has become like the senseless beasts...*** [ib.]. What a terrible interior metamorphosis of the change of men into beasts!

What fruit, therefore, had you then in those things, of which you are now ashamed? [Rm 6:21]. The holy monk said to that prostitute: Let us commit the sin here in the square!¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ Roman Breviary. Responsory for Wednesday and Saturday, for the lessons from The Books of Kings. Week III, ff. after Pentecost.

¹⁶⁸ **SpEx n. 57**

¹⁶⁹ This is a quote from the Latin translation of St. Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. Second Exercise, **Second Point**. **SpEx n. 57**.

¹⁷⁰ Simeon the Metafraste, found in the *Life of St. Ephrem*. Cited by St. Alphonsus Liguori, in his *True Spouse of Jesus Christ*. c. 16, 4. In Fr. Stofella's text here [cf. **CS I, p. 143**], he fills in this episode, evidently from St. Alphonsus' text:

...How could that be?, the woman responded, 'here in the presence of all' Aren't you ashamed?'

For what other reason would I be ashamed of sin, if not because it is fetid, loathsome and deform?

2321 The appetites prevail over reason, and the spirit has become a slave of the flesh, and of many other creatures, and of many vices, such as a royal princess becomes a slave and the servant of a vile man. ***Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin*** [Jn 8:34]. ***For by whom a man is overcome, of the same he is the slave*** [2 P 2:19]: one becomes a slave of anger, gluttony, of lust, and avarice.

2322 Each was meant to be a free spirit, born to the honor of serving one's Creator and to promote the interest of His glory, spirits that are so beautiful ***and they became abominable, as those things which they loved*** [Ho 9:10]. Therefore, from these most filthy sins they are like a mirror which reflects and receives almost in themselves the ugliness from these objects.

It is not evil to be punished, but being worthy of penalty is. If there were not a hell, what a horrible evil would sin be!

2323 2. All the more so, is this condition in a Priest. What an even greater deformity! Each one should be sublime and excellent like the sun with regard to the whole earth.¹⁷¹ Such a priest is a contradiction in terms: ***You do the same things which you judge*** [Rm 2:1]. From his most sublime state, he has fallen, not because of his own bad luck, or the malice of others, which would merit compassion, but having become disheartened by his sadness of spirit, much like an emperor who would so lower himself to gather refuse with those working in his stalls and to sweep them clean.

2324 The deformity in such a situation is increased all the more when one considers the graces which God has communicated to him, and from his character, from his knowledge, through which he knows his sins: ***You make your boast of the Law, by transgression of the Law you dishonor God*** [Rm 2:23]. From being His minister: from the altar, you descend into the mud.

2325 Should you see a wretched priest, with precious Mass vestments, profoundly honored revered by all the people, yet, not caring for his dignity and honor, in the presence of all the people who reverence him as God, suddenly go out from the

And the monk answered with holy severity: 'And should we be afraid of men, and not of God? ... Of Him, Who is present in all places, Who notices even our most secret rendezvous, and Who will once more render to each one in accord with his/her actions?

At these words, the woman cast herself at the feet of the Saint, and wept for her own sins, and from then on led a life of penance...

¹⁷¹ St. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*. Book 3, 4. t. 1, 326 E. [Fr. Stofella adds here some of the holy exegete's text in Latin:

...The priesthood is exercised on earth, says St. John Chrysostom, but it obtains the classification of the celestial orders. Therefore, it is fitting that the Priesthood be so pure in its actions as though it were already placed in the heavens among its powers...].

Church, and right in front of the Church, in the presence of God, in public, should suddenly cast himself into the mud, and make himself a companion of dirty pigs, and take up a place among them, while still retaining his lash of rebuke, the rod of a harsh guardian, you would cry out: What foolishness is this!

2326 Ah, what fury is therefore yours, o priest! Such is the spectacle that you make of yourself before God, before the Angels, and before your fellow men and women. ***We are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men*** [1 Co 4:9]. And these have not yet have not all lost good sense, and they see with horror and with tears, your failures, or the shameful signs of your falling in the lack of discipline evident in your life. And so, the world itself makes fun of you and laughs at you.

And even though some of your failings are hidden, they are not for this fact any the less shameful. And if you would like to see this proven, then do this: just imagine that the neighborhood in which you are preaching, or offering Mass came to know of your sins, or even one of them. What would then become of you? What confusion you would bear! What courage could you mount up, either to open your mouth and to exhort anyone to virtue?

2327

Point 3:

The Gravity of the Sin results from the Confrontation between the one offending¹⁷² and the One offended.

Baseness of the Offender: Just consider my own self. Who am I anyway, comparing myself to those who are to draw greater disdain than ourselves? Whom am I in comparison to all the human beings living in this city, in Italy, in Europe, on the whole earth? They do not even know that I exist, outside of my own homeland. And what are all living human beings when compared to all the Angels, and all the Saints, most noble spirits and full of glory? Indeed, what are all creatures before God? ***All nations are before Him as if they had no being at all, and are counted to Him as nothing and vanity*** [Is 40:17]. ***For the whole world before You ... is as a drop of the morning dew, that falls down upon the earth*** [Ws 11:23]. *Then I, insignificant man, what can I be?*¹⁷³

2328 *I will consider all the corruption and loathsomeness of my body*¹⁷⁴. There is nothing of being, no activity in nature, in grace; of merit; even worse, I am worse than nothing due to my sin. There is nothing of being, because I am a nothing; all that is mine would return into nothing, without God; I have nothing of merit, for which I would need habitual grace, and then the actual prevenient, concomitant, and following grace; then I need the grace of final perseverance.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² **SpEx 58**

¹⁷³ **SpEx n. 58, 3.**

¹⁷⁴ **Ib, n. 4**

¹⁷⁵ This paragraph **MssB 2328** is not found in Fr. Stofella's heavily edited text [cf. **CS I, p. 145**]. It appears further down in the page in **MssB 2330**, after the text from Jb 13:25

2329 a. **As regards the soul** I am a nothing, from which I was originally drawn, and to which in every moment I would be reduced, if God were to cease even for a moment to conserve me.

And my substance is as nothing before you. [Ps 38:6].

I would not be able to do anything, even to move an eye-lid, a finger, if God did not help me. ***For without Me you can do nothing*** [Jn 15:5].

2330 For I was conceived in sin: ***And in sins did my mother conceive me.*** [Ps 50:7], and I am born of a prevaricating root: ***Your father was an Amorrhite*** [As Adam a sinner], ***and your mother a Cethite*** [really stupid, like Eve]. [Ezk 16:3]. I was born a child of wrath, and of damnation: such is the nobility of my origin.

I am then, like that poor man of Jericho, [Lk 10:30, ff.]¹⁷⁶ all wounded in my intellect by ignorance, in my will by malice, in my lower part by concupiscence, transported hither and yon by contrary passions: ***As a leaf, that is carried away with the wind.*** [Jb 13:25]¹⁷⁷, with being over-burdened with so many sins of mine, because of which, I am worse than nothing: ***it were better for him if that man had not been born*** [Mt 26:24].

2331 This is what I am; and even worse, is what I could be because of my fickleness and weakness. I experience within myself movements and inclinations and the roots of all sins: *'For there is no sin that a human being ever committed, which could not be perpetrated by another person.'*¹⁷⁸

2332 b. **As regards the body:** Pope Innocent III ¹⁷⁹stated: 'O wretched unworthiness of the human condition, o lowly condition of human wretchedness!

Study the shrubs and trees: these of themselves produce flowers and leaves and fruit: and you bring about trash and snares and worms. At the beginning nothing more than fetid sperm, a vessel of refuse ... fodder for worms. Plants give forth a good odor and the produce good fruit: while my body, how many digestible matters it is unable to produce. Just note the matter that comes out of the nose, from the eyes, through the ears, the mouth, and through the other channels of the body. There is no stall that is more fetid than our own body, in that it produces such most filthy materials. *If you consider diligently what it is that comes out through the mouth, through the nose, and the rest of the openings of the human body, you have never seen a more base refuse heap.*¹⁸⁰ It has to be possessed by filth and return to dust. And just think: this dust, this mud, has dared to rise up against God!

¹⁷⁶ A man went down from Jericho, fell among thieves, who wounded him and left him]

¹⁷⁷ This is where Fr. Stofella [cf. CS I, p. 145. places what in Fr. Bertoni's writings is now **MssB 2328**.

¹⁷⁸ St. Augustine, *Soliloquy of the soul with God*. spurious. C. 15, near the end. T. 6, Append. 92 E.

¹⁷⁹ Pope Innocent III, *De contemptu mundi*. Book 8, c. 8.

¹⁸⁰ St. Bernard, *A Formula for an Upright Life*. C. 3.

2333**Point 4:
The Dignity of the One Offended¹⁸¹**

Who is this God against whom I have sinned: ***You have forsaken the God that begot you and have forgotten the Lord that created you. [Dt 32:18]. Is this the return you make to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is He not [your Father] ... who made you, created you? [ib., v. 6]. ... crucifying again to themselves the Son of God ... etc. [Heb 6:6]***

Think of the Goodness of God: the Creator, Conserver, the Redeemer: and then our ingratitude.

Let us consider the intrinsic beauty and amiability of God, which for anyone who ever sees it is necessitated to love Him. If the demons could see this, they, too, would have to love Him. He surpasses all of our concepts. Whatever demonstration of affection that might be mustered is a nothing in comparison with His merit.

2334 We were obliged to love Him for Himself¹⁸²; the injury heaped upon him was most horrible. It contains a supreme insult. There had to come together the divine will, His permission, and our own will, with the pleasure of a passion ***You have cast me off behind your back***¹⁸³. This is a supreme cruelty, because our action tends to disgust Him, or at least it might be interpreted this way. Even more, this would destroy Him, if this were even conceivable *out of the very contrary of charity*. In sinning, we have heaped on God all possible evil.

2335 Let us think of God's holiness, which sin infinitely horrifies and would hate the sinner. If God did not look on sin in horror, He would cease being God ***Is your fornication small?*** [Ezk 16:20].

Let us reflect on His immensity and wisdom: it is before these attributes that sin is committed. ***Your eyes are too pure to behold evil, and You cannot look on iniquity*** [Hab 1:13] – and they are forced to loom upon it.

Let us ponder His omnipotence: the sinner even makes use of this in order to sin, making it concur in the material action: ***But you have made Me to serve with your sins*** [Is 43:24].

2336 Why have you offended a God Who is so good, so great? For great purposes? No, for a nothing. What have the Saints to say about such conduct? What would the Angels have said? Even the senseless creatures, I believe would take on sense, as at the death of Christ, since I have offended the common Creator and the Crucified Christ.

¹⁸¹ **SpEx 59**

¹⁸² St. Gaspar noted a similar principle in his Spiritual Diary: **MP: September 27, 1808: We were obliged to love God even before He became man...** [In Fr. Stofella's text, many of the MssB 2334-2337 are present but in editing, the Stigmatine scholar has changed the order.]

¹⁸³ Fr. Benaglia offers as the source **3 Kings 27** – and there is no such chapter. However, Fr. Stofella suggests **Ezk 23:35**.

Point 5 A Cry of Wonder for the Divine Patience¹⁸⁴

*This is a cry of wonder accompanied by a surging emotion as I pass in review all creatures. How is it that they have permitted me to live and have sustained me in life! St. Ignatius Second Exercise.*¹⁸⁵ And this is because I have abused them, and of so many benefits as well of my Lord, in order to offend Him.

The Angels have not brandished their swords, as ministers of the divine Justice. Rather, they have even up to the present they gave guarded and served me with their suffrage. The saints, who have so loved God, feel so vividly all offenses against Him, have not cried out against me, nor made demands like an Elijah [4 K 1:10] for a fire from heaven, but rather they have interceded for me.

2338 The sky, which ought to crush me with its whirlwinds and storms, and set me on fire with its lightning, has refreshed me with its view. The sun, which ought to burn me with its heat, has ministered to me with its light. The moon, the stars have served me with their brilliant silver light. The air, which should suffocate me, has kept me alive; the fire, which should burn me up as it did in Sodom and Gomorra, has served me and warmed me. Water, too, which ought to suck me into its maelstroms, has assuaged my thirst, and so on.

2339 The birds, the animals have served me, the whole earth ought to open up underneath me, as it did for Dathan and Abiron [Nb 16:31, f.], rather has sustained me, fed me with its produce, refreshed me with its enmities. ***The eye that despises the labor of one's mother, let the ravens of the brooks pluck it out [Pr 30:17]*** a church-man has dishonored the Church. And because they had made fun of a prophet two little boys were torn apart by lions [4 K 2:24].

I am not worthy of the bread that I eat, nor of the water that I drink, nor of the air that I breathe, nor do I merit to raise my eyes up to heaven.

COLLOQUY¹⁸⁶: *I will conclude with a colloquy, extolling the Mercy of God our Lord, pouring out my thoughts to Him, and giving thanks to Him that up to this very moment He has granted me life.*

I will resolve with His grace to amend for the future. St. Ignatius, Second Exercise, at the end.

Close with an *Our Father*.

2340

Illrd: The Sin of each One¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ **SpEx 60**

¹⁸⁵ Translation of these opening lines of **SpEx 60** from: Louis J. Puhl, SJ, A New Translation based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph. Westminster MD The Newman Press 1963, p. 30.

¹⁸⁶ cf. **SpEx n. 61**

Sin is an injury perpetrated against God. We will consider 1. what this injury is; 2. the Manner with which this injury is brought about; 3. and the Purpose for which it is accomplished [In other words:] 1. What this injury is [what is it to sin]; 2. How does one sin; 3. Why, for what reason does one sin.

1. - **What sin is:** It is an injury perpetrated by the creature against God.
 - Who perpetrates this injury?
 - The perpetrator is a creature, most vile when compared to other creatures, and is most vile of him/herself, both as regard the body and as regards the soul.
 - Who is the Offended One?
 - A good and beneficent God.

2341 Qualities of the Injury: the sin is committed with disdain, both **Absolute** and **Comparative**.

Absolute Disdain: this is argued from **authority**. [Ezk 5:6]: ***She has despised My judgments.*** This is disdain of God as **Legislator and Judge**.

Si¹⁸⁸ 49:6: ***They despised the fear of God.*** This is disdain of God as **Master**.

Is 1:2: ***I have brought up children and exalted them: but they have despised Me.*** This is the disdain of God as **Father**.

Pr 1:25: ***You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my reprehensions.*** This is the disdain of God as **Friend**.

Rm 2:4: ***Or you despise the riches of His goodness.*** This is the disdain of God as **Benefactor**.

Heb 29:¹⁸⁹ ***Who has trampled the Son of God under foot, rejected polluted blood of the Covenant.*** [The disdain of God as **Redeemer**].

Absolute Disdain: now this is argued from **Reason**.

In making laws, the prince can have as his aim solely the utility of his subjects, and not for his own dignity. God cannot make a law of which He is not the last end. **Rm 2:23:** ***By transgressions of the Law, you dishonor God.***

2342 and now **Comparative Disdain:**

The sinner does disdain God in comparison with a created good. **Ho 12:7:** ***There is a deceitful balance in his hand.*** God is weighed by one measure, and the creature by another. Pilate condemned Jesus so that he would not displease Caesar. The Hebrews absolved Barabbas, in comparison to Christ. If a people should go into rebellion against its prince, in order to rule itself, this is an injury; but if it rebels in order to subject itself to a most cruel tyrant, the injury increases. **Jr 2:12, f.:** ***Be astonished, o you heavens, at this, and you gates thereof, be very desolate says the Lord. For My people have done two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water and they have dug for themselves that can hold no water.***

¹⁸⁷ These very orderly paragraphs [MssB nn.2340-2351] seem to be notes perhaps for the preceding conference, and they are not found in Fr. Stofella's edited text – cf. **CS I, pp. 149, ff.** These paragraphs present three points: The Nature of Sin, what it is - The Manner of this injury against God – Its Purpose, the reason for its being committed.

¹⁸⁸ The computerized copy here has mistaken **Eccli [Si]** for **Ezk**.

¹⁸⁹ Text not clearly identified – it should be **Heb 10:29**.

2343 Ba 3:36: *This is our God and there shall be no other accounted of in comparison with Him.* In this, the being God consists as supreme good: in meriting to be preferred to all other goods, both actual and possible. Ps 54¹⁹⁰: *All my bones* i.e., the just are firm in their esteem and preference of their Creator, and *they say: O Lord, Who is like to You?* [Different from the flesh, i.e. carnal sinners, which do not have firmness]. St. Augustine¹⁹¹.

2344 Is 40::25: *And to whom have you likened Me, or made Me equal, says the Holy One?* God seems to be asking Himself; what would the creature be preferring to Him? *You have cast me off behind your back,* [Ezk 23:35] One esteems more a dishonest appearance over the Law of God, threats, scourges. The scourging alone could terminate these sins.

One disdains God with a certain cruelty. This is to take from God on one's own the divine nature, which consists in He is an unchangeable Being and so infinitely preferable to every other. It is an infinite cruelty: Sin tends to destroy God Himself, through displeasure.

2345 Sin is an abyss. [Ps 18:13]: *From my secret sins cleanse me, o Lord.* Sin has this essentially as proper: being unknown and unknowable to every intellect, except for God alone, Who knows Himself. You not only know the thousandth part of the evil you do by sinning; but, not even all the Cherubim put together and the Seraphim; not even the Madonna, who is also Wisdom can know it. St. Thomas has stated; *Sin has a certain infinity, from the infinity of the offended divine majesty.*

2346 2. The Manner by which God is offended.

How is He offended? Under His very eyes: having Him as a Witness. The thief may manifest some fear, and even respect; the practiced crook, by robbing from us right in front of us and using force, adds roughness by his violence.

We cannot hide ourselves. [Si 23:28]: *The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun,* which penetrates even into the opaque bodies, and by night. [Ps 50:6]: *to You only have I sinned and have done evil before You.*

2347 God watches over us as a Judge and as a Father; however, by sinning He is rendered offended by the strength of His heart; one sins in spite of His grace, which He keeps, over His threats which are fearsome.

Does one no longer sin in the sight of God alone, as well as before the whole world? *I am the Judge and the Witness says the Lord* [Jr 29:23]. St. Peter Chrysologus¹⁹² states: *Whoever commits an act of villainy with the judge as a witness, lacks any excuse.*

Not being content to sin before the face of God, and to have the Angels as the witnesses of the injury rendered to Him, we have committed it before the entire world;

¹⁹⁰ This Psalm 54 Text should be Ps 34:10.

¹⁹¹ St. Augustine, In Ps 34, 14. t. 4, 437 A. f.

¹⁹² Sermon 26. PL 52, 272 C

we have raised our voice so that the entire world might hear the insult of the Creator: *A sin with clamor*. Nor is this all, but we have come into His temple, amidst the adoration of the few faithful in order to outrage Him; but we have even expelled Him, in order to make resound the blathering of the demons!

2348 3. The Purpose of the Offense: one sins really for a nothing.

God is worthy of such honor Who for any great good whatsoever ought not to be cheapened with even the slightest evil. If, with even a slight sin we could gain heaven for ourselves, for all humanity, for all the damned, it would be fitting to renounce it just the same. The reason is because even the slightest glory of the creator is to be esteemed more than an immense advantage for all creatures. The slightest offense against the Lord outweighs infinitely and infinite good for us all. Therefore, o wretched blindness of human beings, who are induced to offend God really for a nothing, where they ought not offend Him. not even for an infinite treasure!

2349 What an injustice, to esteem so little a God who is worthy of an infinite esteem!

An insult means any treatment unworthy of a worthy person. Sin treats God as though He were the most vile reality in the world.

Ezk 13:9: ***And they violated Me among My people, for a handful of barley and a piece of bread.*** This is not done for an entire loaf: but for merely a piece, and very insignificant good in its very brief being in its duration. Not even for a measure of grain: a cluster of barley, for a delight that is not only very lowly and short-lived, but one that is also experienced by the beasts. Lk 15:16: ***And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did not eat: and no man gave unto him.***

2350 *They violated*: this indicates the continuation of repeated acts. Human beings reach even this extreme, not just one time or other, due to the assault of some vehement temptation, they break the divine commandments, but they even do this customarily; and they live in sin. Pr 4:17: ***they eat the bread of wickedness and they drink the wine of iniquity.*** At this stage, the offending of God has become customary, much like eating and drinking. We have reduced it to a necessity. It is no longer necessary for the devil to promise us: ***All the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them I will give you*** [Mt 4:8, f.] – God is exchanged for a carcass!

2351 Whoever would have even a ray of knowledge, through which he might vividly conceive but a single one of the perfections which are in God, how could one even live after having offended Him?

1 Jn 4:8: ***He that loves not, knows not God.***

Ps 96:10: ***You that love the Lord hate evil!***

Gn 39:9: ***How then can I do this wicked thing and sin against God?***

2352**THIRD DAY****1st Meditation – A Repetition¹⁹³****Preparatory Prayer****Prelude 1:** As above.**Prelude 2:** As above. *Know and see that it is an evil and bitter thing for you to have left the Lord your God* [Jr 2:19].

Summary: sin is an evil *Know that it is an evil and bitter thing...* [Jr 2:19]. And we have thought of it as good! It is the greatest evil of all - unique – supreme. A supreme evil for God.

2353**Point 1****Mortal Sin is the Supreme Evil**

This is because it is an evil for God, and the greatest of all evils, and the cause of the others. 'On account of sin, adversities arise.'

Sin has introduced death into the world, and with it, all other evils – it is something like a huge army of which sin comes at the head. Pr 14:34: ***Justice exalts a nation: but, sin makes nations miserable.***

When in a crowd we are knocked about, we blame those closest to us, but it is those far away who are pushing. It is not the illnesses, the tribulations that are close to us, but it is sin that crushes us. ***Moreover, death and bloodshed, strife and sword, oppressions, famine, and afflictions, and scourges: all these things are created for the wicked*** [Si 40:9, ff.]

2354 It is the sole evil, because the others are not really authentic evils. They are not in God's intention: ***The Lord creates evil.*** Is 45:7 – nor are they in the correct use that I make of them.

Sin, on the other hand, is the supreme evil, as God is the Supreme Good; therefore, it merits the more to be detested, to the extent that God should be loved the more. ***You, that love God, hate evil.*** Ps 96:10. Whoever hates one cannot even look upon him nor hear him named; and if one does see him, without any need of persuasion, he flees him.

Sin is a supreme evil for God, because it is a formal disdain of God, by preferring for all practical purposes over God the most vile creature, even though intellectually we know that God is infinitely superior to every created being. However, to know this aggravates sin further.

2355 I should not be surprised at these four essential truths:

1. If the Angels were condemned for one single sin of pride, without remedy, and so on, and if God has not pardoned the Angels, can I promise myself that He is to pardon me?¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ This is based on the **Third Exercise, SpEx n. 62: *This is a Repetition of the First [Sp Ex n. 45] and Second [SpEx n. 55] Exercises with three Colloquies.***

¹⁹⁴ Cf. **SpEx n. 50.**

2. If for one act of disobedience, and Adam, and we who are his children, have been condemned even though God is most just. [may I under-value what sin is?]

3. The fact that in order to expiate for this disobedience, it became necessary that the Son of God would die, because there were only the humiliations of a God that would have been sufficient to expiate the sin, not the prayers of all the Saints, not the blood of the many Martyrs not the love of the Angels, not even the merits of Mary. If sin were indeed a joke would it then have meted out so badly its punishment in His beloved Son? The least punishment of a God has no proportion with the ruin of all creatures.

How many lay people, less instructed than I am, tremble at the very mention of sin: and I commit it so boldly!

4. The fact is that for one single sin many have been condemned to hell for that.

2356

Point 2

Sin is a Supreme Evil for us

Sin deprives us of grace, of virtues, of our inheritance. From being a friend, one becomes an enemy, from being a friend of His Son, one becomes a friend of the most wicked Satan. You are no longer specially protected by Him; from being an heir of Heaven, you have become guilty of hell.

It despoils the soul of all one's acquired merits Sin renders of no value the good works accomplished as long as it lasts and of all I might be able to gain for heaven.

2357 I have been reduced into this state at various times of my life, and perhaps for a long time. And I do not know if at the present moment I am there and I will always be uncertain if I am there.

Man knows not whether he is worthy of love, or hatred Qo 9:1. know that I have sinned, I do not know whether God has pardoned me I need to take measures, in order to assure myself in this matter, in so far as this is possible, with a penitent and operative life.

2358

Point 3

Great Advantages of the Priestly State

It is a life of prayer, holy ministries, the reading of the Law, being able to receive Holy Communion each day, having always to deal with God, or about God, or for God. The Divine Office [which is a unity of prayers offered to God, in order to insure their success: as a memorial written by the Sovereign Himself; it includes readings of Scripture, from the Fathers, with so many beautiful maxims and authorities.

However, for whatever advantage that I have in the ecclesiastical state, I do not discover, however, any infallible preservative against mortal sin.

2359 Priests are like Angels in heaven; they are like Adam in the earthly Paradise; they are like Judas in the Company of Christ: [and yet, the Angels sinned in heaven, Adam sinned in Paradise, and Judas sinned in the company of Christ.

Have there not been seen even within the sanctuary very scandalous falls? Are they not seen still at the present time? God has His reasons. ***The judgments of God are a great deep*** Ps 35:7. ***Wherefore, he that thinks himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall.*** 1 Co 10:12.

2360 There are certain mortal sins to which one is the more exposed. One must always manage his way through the mud, in studying, and in the confessional, without getting smeared by it; the standing necessarily at times in the midst of fire, without getting burned ... the lay person, the monk, may decline from all this: but not the priest.

Another danger: the weakness in resisting penitents, or others, whom one should. ***Seek not to be made a judge unless you have the strength to extirpate iniquities*** Si 7:6. Because of an absolution perhaps denied, one must encounter gossip, rumblings, persecutions; for declaring his opposition to a relationship, St. John the Baptist lost his head Mt 14: 1,ff.

2361 Other possible shoals: the human fear for not taking up again old vices. The accursed human respect in order not to be singular. There are vices which mask¹⁹⁵ themselves as virtues: imprudence is passed off under the name of truth; indiscretion, self-love are presented as zeal, The devil, who the more tempts priests as in an armada the enemies always focuses on seizing the captain.

2362 Mortal sin in an ecclesiastic is more grave, because it presupposes a state that is more holy. The greater distance does one fall from on high, so much the more gravely is he ruined.

The sin of the priest furthermore is difficult to emend. Human respect brings it about that even with mortal sins, still not absolved, one still might offer Mass. One sacrilege leads to another and from this springs the scandal of all the people.

2363 So, then, would it be better to remain in the world, or after becoming a priest, would it be better to abstain from being involved?

- Of course not. Certainly one should not choose the second option, because a tree without fruit is condemned to the fire, and I would thereby be damned. And the first option is not an alternative, otherwise I would say it would be better not to be a Christian, because even the sins of Christians are more grave. Or, if you wish, let us distinguish: either you are not called since you have to withdraw time, and it is certain that it would be better to withdraw entirely, as this would be the only means of being saved. Or, you have indeed been called to this state and therefore, I should not mistrust the state I am in, but only of myself in my present state. Yet, despite all the holiness of my present state: ***with fear and trembling work out your salvation*** Ph 2:12.

¹⁹⁵ Fr. Bertoni notes this in his Spiritual Journal: **MP August 9, 1808.**

2364 Colloquy: three Colloquies are to be used in the following manner: ¹⁹⁶ The first colloquy will be with Mary that she may obtain grace that we might feel an internal recognition and destination of our sins; secondly, that knowing and abhorring the perverse horror of our works, that I may amend my life according to God; thirdly, that having come to know the depravity of this world, of worldly things and of the vanity of the world from which we withdraw.

†††

¹⁹⁶ cf. **SpEx 63**. Fr. Bertoni paraphrases this paragraph.

2365**THIRD DAY****Second Meditation****HELL¹⁹⁷****Preparatory Prayer**

Prelude 1: Imagine that one could see with his eyes the length, the width, and the depth of Hell: s St. Teresa was led there by a fearsome subterranean viaduct.¹⁹⁸

Prelude 2: *'Here it will be to beg for a deep sense of the pain which the lost suffer, that if because of my fault I forget the love of the eternal Lord, at least the fear of these punishments will keep me from falling into sin.'* [St. Ignatius, Fifth Exercise].

2366**Point 1****The Vastness of the Fire**

Ponder with your imagination the vast fires of hell, and the souls as though imprisoned as burning bodies. A vastness of fire that is so great that there is no furnace that equals them. Take this into account by seeing a broad city, that is all enveloped in flames with all its buildings blazing in a single fire; or a great expanse of a broad sea, long, deep, which instead of water would have fire. ***Therefore hell enlarged her mouth...the nourishment thereof is fire and much wood*** Is 5:14; cf. also 30:33.

The Princes of this world make themselves feared by showing the gallows and the guillotine: God is not feared, by preparing such a horrid torment. What would happen to me if I, an unfortunate one, should enter there and fall in? At least I know that I would have merited it. The Lord has prepared it: ***It was prepared*** Mt 25:41. Here it is.

2367 THE DAMNED: The souls of the damned are enclosed in certain bodies as though aflame.

It is as though one were to see a city, taken over by the enemy, and closed in on every side as the fire was raging, and all were being forced to perish miserably, what a horrible scene!

A NUMBER BEYOND COUNTING: is the number of the damned ... many, many. Mt 7:13¹⁹⁹: The greater part. And what a crowd also of church-men! 'There are many more who perish!' St. John Chrysostom.²⁰⁰ If that prison had been prepared for

¹⁹⁷ [St. Ignatius notes: **SpEx 65: 'Fifth Exercise**. This is a Meditation on Hell. Besides the Preparatory Prayer and two Preludes, it contains five points and a Colloquy.'

¹⁹⁸ St. Teresa of Avila, *Autobiography*, c. 32. Washington: ICS 1987 pp. 276-284.

¹⁹⁹ *Enter by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.*

²⁰⁰ **In Act. Apost.** Hom 3, 4. t. 9, 18 A. As is known, St. Gaspar offered this thought in his own Spiritual Journal: **MP January 23, 1809: I believe that there are few priests who are saved.** This strong view is quoted here in St. Gaspar's *Spiritual Exercises*, as coming from St. John Chrysostom's Commentary on

one alone, or just for a few souls, I would still have to remain with great fear. Now, though, since it is a matter of faith that the greater part descend there²⁰¹, what fear should I not conceive!

2368 THEIR HORRIBLE FORM. And what horrible things are seen there! All would be with awe-struck eyes, with hair standing on end, with slackened mouths, with hands in their hair, as though biting their own flesh. ***Everyone shall eat the flesh of his own arm*** Is 9: 20. With their members horribly distorted: some grotesquely folded, others all akimbo, in the act of swinging out ferociously against their companions. Clutching each other like so many thorns, one above the other, like sheep heaped on each other. ***They are laid in hell like sheep*** Ps 48:15.

2369 You will find there infidels, Christians, seculars, priests, Hebrews, etc., all together, and all against each other. What a horrendous thing to see an action of arms and two ferocious nations, one against the other, quarrelling! What is more horrible than a civil war? There such a war is perpetual. And I will be in the midst of this scum... Could I not now see myself without great difficulty one day in the midst of such gangsters: what will I do then?

The most horrible aspect is to see them all invested with fire. The exhale fire from their nostrils, they vomit fire from their mouths, fire darts out of their eyes: their entire body aflame, etc.

2370 DARKNESS: This terrible flame is luminous only to bring into focus the most monstrous and horrible objects. For all practical purposes, there reigns in hell a most lugubrious and awesome night. ***Before I go and return no more, to a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death.*** [Jb 10:21, f.].

We all love the light so much that if on some days the sky is over-cast, we experience sadness and annoyance. And on those nights when one may not be able to sleep, the darkness proves to be quite burdensome. And as a dark prison inspires much horror, an underground tunnel gives us much fear. And what about that darkness that will never be enlightened even by a passing ray of sun.

Where do certain outings, hikes end for priests! How much better would the darkness of one's room have been, where one's innocence would have been protected.

2371 FEARSOME VISIONS. In all this darkness, there appear truly dismal phantasms, horrible maggots, most frightful visions. A frightening dream makes us tremble and sweat; at times, one dreams of encountering horrible views and in one's haste to flee from one danger, and from one awful phantasm, it seems that one can

the Acts of the Apostles – Fr. Stofella, in his commentary **CS IV, pp. 97**, states that Fr. Bertoni obtained this material directly from **Cornelius a Lapide** c. 3, v. 1, on the Letter of St. James.

²⁰¹ In quoting Mt 7:13-14, **CCC ## 1036, ff.** does not state that it is of faith that the majority are condemned. This inspires a holy fear of God – it proclaims also a blessed hope [**CCC # 1041**] unrepented mortal sin causes exclusion from Christ's Kingdom and eternal death. However although we can judge that an act is in itself a grave offense, we must entrust judgment of persons to the justice and mercy of God [**CCC # 1861**].

hardly walk or move about, nor even shut one's eyes. What a pain all of this is! If that be the case, what about hell itself?

2372: DEMONS. This is the most frightful aspect, as they assume terrible shapes and figures to torment us. ***The terrible ones shall go and come upon him*** [Jb 20:25].

Saint Catherine has left in her writing that rather than seeing the Devil once more, she would rather walk on a street of flaming coals, not for a day or two, but right up until the last judgment. This is how horrible such a vision is.

2373: This is what my eyes will see in hell, should I go there. And how, my eyes, could suffer objects that are so frightful for all eternity if even now you cannot bear to see a condemned man on his gallows, a person with open ulcers²⁰² in the hospital, or a dead person on his bier, or a grave broken open? It is fitting that out of pity for your eyes you resolve to deny them the possibility of being riveted on objects that would bring into your head such distasteful thoughts [priests so easily look at everything, and so without the least hesitation!], or obscene thoughts, to read from certain books. Certain priests hardly exercise any hesitation regarding such matters.

2374

Point 2

LAMENTATIONS, SHOUTS

Just listen in your imagination the crying, the shouts, the groans, the blasphemies against Christ and the saints, that rise up from hell.

From the midst of that pitch darkness just listen to the frantic lamentations, that are most desperate, and the shouts and the gnashing of teeth. How much better is it to weep now for our sins, with the hope and indeed the assurance of receiving pardon! How much better is it now to open our mouths to go to confession even in a general way and to make up for so much negligence than to shout out hereafter without any advantage.

2375 One cannot even put up for a long time with a barking dog; we can hardly put up with a suffering person who groans in a hospital a single night in bed, and who does not allow us to sleep. What will hell be like?

Who has ever heard the roar of two clashing armies and the screams of the wounded, and the shouts, and so on?

2376 BLASPHEMIES AGAINST GOD, RELIGION.

In our present situation we can hardly bear in passing to hear blasphemies of a few non-believers; we will not be able to remain in the company of such individuals for all eternity: what will it be like to hear the bitter rebukes of the demons and of the damned hurled against ecclesiastics? - 'You, who once would have had the power to expel them?' What derision, what ridicule! If sometimes we have been ridiculed and made fun of by non believers along our path, and that we have been bothered with

²⁰² **Website Note:** Fr. Bertoni would eventually become accustomed to open leg ulcers from his long years of suffering and the repeated lancing of his legs.

such a strong anger: what will it be like in hell where one would have to remain with them forever?

2377 MUTUAL ABUSE, CURSES, CRITICISM

Just imagine a rabble confined in a galley; or a prison full of wretched human beings; take from them the similitude of that which they say about one another. Just imagine the ill-humor with which those condemned hurl for the ears already burdened of those chained up in the prisons. In hell, the devil mocks the damned because such a one has listened to his satanic temptations and the accursed rages against the demon who is well equipped against him. Everyone insults his companion and is much weighed down because with one's presence in the depths, that suffering is increased for each.

2378 SHRIEKS OF DESPERATION AND OF HATRED AGAINST ONESELF

What can we say about the shouts of desperation and self-hatred? They call out for, and seek death, cursing the hour in which they were born, the father who generated them, and so on, and so on. They lash out against their companions, the gentle priests who badly absolved them, the preachers who did not rail out against them and the catechists who did not advise them.

2379 *Therefore, we have erred ... [Ws 5:6]. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honor [v. 4].* This is what now so many priests confined there are saying, they who once hypocritically deceived the devoted ones, giving the impression they were spiritual and fervent. We are here because we chose to come. We could have saved ourselves with so little: we have contributed much to our condemnation. We have lost heaven to which God had called us and for which He endowed us with so many means, and we lost it in exchange for what was truly worthless: just for a bit of selfishness, for gluttony, for negligence in our ministries, for our vanity in preaching. A certain famous religious preacher, turned up the flames almost beyond endurance all of his sermons, but they were delivered out of vanity. – We are enduring eternal penalties because of passing pleasures, for having chased after others.

2380 What will become of me? I am not even able to listen to music if it is not very much in accord with my own tastes. And even then, no matter how excellent it may be, if the piece is too long it annoys me: what will it mean, then, to listen for an eternity to that most unmelodious music of hell? – I am so ready to sin with my ears in listening to grumbling; I simply cannot remain in silence without having someone with whom to shoot the breeze: it will be necessary to adjust my hearing. In hell, will I be listening to comedies, theater music?

2381**Point 3****THE BODIES OF THE DAMNED**

Just imagine that you can pick up the smell of the smoke, the sulfur, and the oppressive odor of bilge and of corruption. Just imagine that you pick up the odor that comes forth from a corpse. If you should pass by where perhaps a horse, or a dog has been buried, one can hardly stand it. Most would not be able to stand for a long time the stench of a grave-yard where bodies are decaying: what will be the situation in hell?

Just picture a land of many thousands, all covered with the bodies of dead animals left decaying: what a stench! The bodies of the damned will be more malodorous than cadavers, and there is not a breath of air, and they are piled on top of each other. ***Their carcasses shall rise a stink*** [Is 34:3]. A body of a single accursed one, deposited even for a moment on top of the ground, would be more than sufficient to pollute it. What will happen with so many such bodies?

2382 Hell, therefore, is the sewer of the whole world in which there are gathered all the uncleanness and refuse of the earth. There is found there every possible stench to torment one's senses. What will we do, gentlemen, all of us who are really bothered even by the slightest stink? It almost terrorizes us to read how the tyrants piled up the dead bodies on top of living bodies of the Martyrs. O what torment! And in hell, we would be so treated for all eternity. This is how there we will pay dearly for just satisfying our senses here. Therefore, let us mortify them!

2383**Point 4****[Torment of Taste]**

Just partake of very bitter foods, such as bitter tears, worms of conscience. Very bitter food, drink, liquid

Hunger, thirst. ***They shall suffer hunger like dogs*** [Ps 58:7]. ***Send Lazarus*** [Lk 16:24]. The gluttony of so many Church-men, disordered drinking will have as its punishment the gall of dragons and sulfate. ***Fire and brimstone ... shall be the portion of their cup*** [Ps 10:7]. ***I will feed them with wormwood and will give them gall to drink*** [Jr 23:15]. God will produce in their taste most bitter and disgusting sensations, with every possible annoyance.

2384: Just imagine the most bitter of medicines, the most fetid and disgusting drainage from the stalls, from the sewers, from the bilge. One derives some horror from reading that St. Francis Xavier licked the ooze from the wound of a patient in the hospital²⁰³.

²⁰³ In his Franciscan Panegyrics, St. Gaspar mentioned some rather drastic penances of the Saint's time – especially in his portrayal of St. Veronica Giuliani, offensive to many modern sensibilities [cf. **MssB 2127, ff.**]. [NB: cf. recent studies on this Capuchin Mystic: Aa. Vv. **Testimonianza e messaggio di Santa Veronica Giuliani. Atti del Congresso Internazionale di studi su santa Veronica Giuliani**. Roma, Pontificio Ateneo Antonianum, 27-31 ottobre, 1982. Roma: Ed. Laurentianum - G.R.A. Km 68.800. 1983. 2 Volumes]. [The level of self-inflicted mortification as described would be considered excessive,

Reflect, o Priests, on the fact that your palate, in all that concerns eating and drinking, is never contented. Just reflect on the superfluity of your food and drink. How many poor people would manage quite well if you did not make glutton of yourselves, with those excesses that were also harmful to your health. Resolve to make so fast this week. Be content with that which in your station in life there is offered you each day at table, without complaints, remembering that ***the kingdom of God is not food and drink*** [Rm 14:17].

2385: Those fasts conducted by some penitential religious families bring us a sense of horror as to those of the ancient Fathers in the hermitage: what will we say regarding that even greater bitterness of that most bitter bread of fruitless tears, flowing from rancor? ***The iniquities of those fearing shall stand against them*** ... [Ws 4:20]. ***The worm of their conscience shall never die*** [Is 66:24]. What bitterness will there not be made felt by God and finding oneself separated forever! In seeing others who are rejoicing in heaven, and to see oneself suffering in those flames: eternity never ends: what horrible melancholy! Think of 'Never, Never' – 'always, always!'

2386:

Point 5

[Torment of the Sense of Touch]

That Supernatural Fire, created on purpose by God, stoked by a Discerning Breath. ²⁰⁴

This is the punishment of having to touch that fire from which souls are being burned.

There is the example of that gentleman; neither his wife nor his children could endure immersing the tip of their finger to draw him up out of the grease.

Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? [Is 33:14]. Just imagine those flames in all parts of the body, being able to discern especially those who have sinned the more, or delighted themselves the more. ***That they might know that by what things a man sins, by the same also he is tormented.*** [Ws 11:17]. ***As much as she glorifies herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give her ...*** [Apoc 18:7].

2387: PAIN: This will bring one to experience all sufferings. Just imagine that you experience in your bodies those sufferings which the damned experience in theirs: teeth, gout, stones, headaches, colic, nausea, nerves: fruitless attractions. Imagine the torments of evil-doers, the torments of the Martyrs, which arouse horror even to read about them.

These are unalleviated sufferings. In the Martyrs, while they were enduring bodily pain, they experienced spiritual consolation. Their hope sustained them. However, in hell one's interior is anguished and despair permeates throughout.

in the minds of many, perhaps due to the significant advances made in the Church in the modern theology of saints and the body].

²⁰⁴ [SpEx 69]

2388: This pain is inflicted and one is not able to move at all. Call to mind how St. Teresa²⁰⁵ converted that young man.

The suffering of the damned proceeds not only from the demons. These are indeed most cruel, by bringing together from that which would bring great discomfort to the obsessed, and they are seen to froth at the mouth, and writhe in their pain, etc.

While the damned are undergoing all this suffering, they are confined; while they suffer, under their view the blessed rejoice.

And will God laugh at their plight? ***He will laugh them to scorn [Ws 4:18]. I also will laugh at your destruction, and will mock when that will come to you... [Pr 1:26].***²⁰⁶

2389: O most awesome God! How terrible is Your justice! And will I not tremble at my own danger?

Think seriously about yourselves, you who would hardly dare to touch a hair-shirt, a discipline, you who can hardly tolerate a wrinkle in your sheets, the slightest discomfort due to thirst: even more, you who concede such delights to your sense of touch, even those forbidden by God, you who dress so delicately, and who every day lose so much time, where4withal to bring delights to yourselves. What would you do if your room caught on fire? Would you then have flesh of iron, a body of bronze?

2390: This is what I would counsel you out of love for your own flesh:

First: that which is forbidden by God, do not even touch it.

Second: Disregard your body in something, in order to make up for some past transgressions.

Third: exercise your body in some penance with regard food, in your manner of sleeping, in your flesh. Suffer²⁰⁷ patiently, without complaint, that which God sends you, rather than Him that you have something to suffer here below.

²⁰⁵ The computerized edition of this text has a rather different reading here from the one offered here by Fr. Stofella, and then continued here in his notes:

... ***St. Lidwina converted a great sinner by telling him that she would do penance for him provided that he as he went to sleep on his soft bed would remain stretched out upon it without moving unto the next morning. Do you think that for the wretched person that was something he could do with ease. Even after not even one half hour, he experienced such discomfort that he cried out: 'Here I am experiencing Hell!' Divine Mercy brought him them to that abyss: in the silence of the night, he began thinking of the real pains of Hell, and the morning consoled the saint with the characteristics of an authentic penitent.***

Fr. Stofella's footnote here [n. 24] offers these particulars:

St. Lidwina [1380-1433]: this saint for 33 continuous years, as Cornelius a Lapide notes, in his commentary on 1 Peter: was afflicted with continual sufferings and atrocious pain, and she conformed herself in suffering with supreme patience to Christ...

²⁰⁶ Fr. Stofella adds the citation ***Ps 2:4*** here.

²⁰⁷ Fr. Stofella places this as n. 4 [cf. CS I, p. 160]

Colloquy: [cf. St. Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* n. 71].²⁰⁸

[Meanwhile, having a colloquy with Christ, we should remember all those souls that were condemned to the punishments of hell, either because they did not want to believe in Christ's coming, or, in the cases where they did believe, they did not conform their lives to the precepts of His life, whether this (1) was before Christ came, (2) during the time in which Christ lived in this world or (3) after it. The greatest thanks shall be given to Christ Himself, because He has not permitted that I fall so utterly low, but rather He has walked with me to this day with the greatest compassion and mercy. At the end I will say one Our Father.] ²⁰⁹

2391: Hell – Part III.

Apoc.14:11: ***And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up forever and ever.*** [What may bring only momentary pleasure, is what leads one to suffer forever].
Neither do they have rest day or night.

v. 10: ***He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mingled with pure wine in the cup of his wrath, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the sight of the holy Angels and in the sight of the Lamb.*** It is mingled with pure wine: not with water; but with another pure wine, which is more powerful and inebriates even more. This wrath and the punishment of God will be mitigated with no clemency or mitigation; but will be increased the more with every desolation and suffering.

2392: v. 12: ***Here is the patience of the saints, who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*** [This means]: Since sinners will drink from the cup of the wrath of God, then will appear the fruit of faith and patience and the obedience of the saints, who fear God and Gehenna, among so many impious, temptations, persecutions, constantly until death will they keep the faith and the mandates of God. For these will be immune from plagues; and furthermore will be granted abundant rewards.

2393: The Lamb ²¹⁰ will be their Judge, and the Angels will be the spectators of their punishment, the demons will be their executors. He opposes their wine of the wrath of God with that beverage that Babylon made her lovers drink. Those who will have tasted from the cup of Babylon, will be intoxicated with the chalice of the Lord.

Apoc 14:8: ***That great Babylon...which made all the nations to drink of the wine of her fornication:*** This ²¹¹ is how Babylon made the saints and the faithful suffer in this world all sorts of wicked treatment, without falling into discouragement. This is what they hope to enjoy one day of rewards promised for their patience, and

²⁰⁸ Fr. Stofella copies here SpEx n. 71, from an Italian version of them – not found in MssB ##2391, ff. Fr. Stofella's text does not contain the next paragraphs, found in **MssB ## 2391 – 2394**. He eliminates them.

²⁰⁹ This text is copied from St. Ignatius, **SpEx n. 71** – not found in the **MssB ## 2391 – 2394**, which conclude the discussion on Hell, by paraphrasing texts from the Apocalypse: 9:2; 14:8-12, without any clear order of these verses.

²¹⁰ This paragraph, in the French of Bourdaloue, apparently has been copied from a French original.

²¹¹ This sentence is also in French – is the grammar correct here in the Founder's rendition of the French?

that they fear torments; which are prepared for those who have profaned the Name of God. The view of the eternal punishments of the wicked teaches the just to suffer patiently the evils of this life.

2394: Apoc 9:2: *And he opened the bottomless pit - and the smoke ... of the great furnace arose.*

May sinner see what are the fruits, the penalty of sins: because they will drink from the wine of wrath, i.e., from the venom of God; because this wine is mixed with the wrath of all torments without any water or even a drop of consolation; because one will be punished with fire and sulfur; which will be shameful and mocked in the sight of the saints and the Lamb. The smoke of their torments ascends forever and ever. It will never experience any repose, day or night, neither from their fiery body, nor from the worm of their conscience throughout all eternity.

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2395:**VII. THE PRODIGAL SON ²¹²****Lk 15:11²¹³: And He said: A certain man had two sons.**

The scope of this parable, as with the two preceding it, concerning the Lost Sheep and the found Drachma, is that through it, Christ shows how much good and joy there will be in heaven over one sinner doing penance, than over the ninety-nine just who do not need penance; and consequently, how wrongly the Pharisees murmured.

v.1: Now the publicans and sinners drew near to hear Him.**v. 2: And the Pharisees and the Scribes murmured, saying: this man receives sinners and eats with them.**

2396: *There are three persons of this parable: the Father, or, God Who created all; or, Christ the Man, who has redeemed and regenerated all with His Blood, and in time regenerated in Baptism. The elder brother, i.e., the just; this means those who consider themselves to be 'just, such as the Scribes and Pharisees. The Younger Brother, or the manifest and public sinners, such as the publicans and the harlots are with whom Christ ate so that He might win them over.*

2397: v.12: And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falls to me. And he divided unto them his substance.

This more youthful age is generally more free, stupid, inconstant, more prone toward gluttony and luxury.

The substance of God is free will, by which we freely live, or operate; rationality, is in other words, the power of one's activities; the grace of God, the virtues lead toward proven morals; for these are truly lost and wasted by the sinner; all the gifts of God, both of body, as well as of the spirit; both of nature as well as of grace: for all these are given to him, i.e., handed over to his power and freedom and is what the younger son asked for, no longer wanting to be governed and directed by his father, but chose to be on his own, and to be in charge of himself, to use, or to abuse, according to his own choices, the gifts of God. [St. Augustine Book 2, Questions on the Gospel 33, 1. t. 3/2, 259 B]: to live, to understand, to call to memory, to excel in a quick intelligence, all these are divine gifts, which a person accepts through free will.

2398: And he divided unto them his substance v. 12. *He gave them free will, He endowed them with the liberty of their own mind, and this was so that each one would live not under the command of God, **but in His service**²¹⁴; i.e., not out of necessity,*

²¹² Fr. Stofella notes in his Footnote n. 1, **CS I, [p. 166]** that the Founder indicates that his source for this is Bourdaloue. This exegesis may be from the Commentary of **Cornelius a Lapide**. It should be noted that **MssB ## 2395-2433** appear in Latin – and are not included by Fr. Stofella in his presentation of this retreat – cf. **CS I, pp. 162, ff.** – he begins rather with **MssB 2434, Lk 15:20**.

²¹³ The computerized text here [**MssB # 2395**] has v. 15, - it should be v. 15.

²¹⁴ Fr. Bertoni's expression here is: ***non ex imperio Dei sed obsequio suo*** - this is the spirit of his entire **Original Constitutions**, noted in CF 1: **Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum** – cf. website: www.st-bertoni.com - under 'Original Constitutions - Studies', Fr. Bertoni's Obedience [Community,

but from free will; so that virtue might have its place, so that we might keep our distance from all other lovers, while according to the example of God there might be attributed to us the proper reward for the saints and the just. **Si 15:14: God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel.** **V. 15: He added His commandments and precepts v. 16: If you will keep the commandments and perform acceptable fidelity forever, they shall preserve you.** **V. 17: He has set water and fire before you: stretch forth your hand to that which you will.** **V. 18: Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose will be given to him.**

2399: [Lk 15] v. 13: And not many days after, the younger son, gathering all together, went abroad into a far country; and there wasted his substance living riotously.

After gathering all together: by abusing the gifts of God, in order to separate himself from God.²¹⁵

He went abroad into a far country. **Jr 2:23²¹⁶: God approaching and not God from a distance.** **Ac 17:27, f.: ... although He be not far from anyone of us. For in Him, we live and move and are.** It is known not so much from the spaces of places, but with our affection of our hearts that we are either with God or that we depart from Him. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 7. t. 1, 72 D].

Into a far country: from God and from heaven. Because by sinning, a man sets out from holiness and the Reign of God into the kingdom of the devil, of sin and of Gehenna. The **far country** is the mutual forgetfulness of God [St. Augustine states]. When a man sets out from God, and distances himself from the fear of God, he expends all his divine gifts, scatters them, and dissipates them. **For behold, that they go far from You, perish** [Ps 72:27].

2400: And there he wasted all his substance: all of his gifts of nature and grace. The sinner, by indulging in impurities and libertine behavior, wastes the grace of God, charity, and virtues. He dulls his understanding, so that he does not recognize God, nor the goodness of virtue; he takes away from himself the memory of the Law and the benefits of God; he deprives his will, so that he places impurity before reason, earth before heaven, the devil before God; and in place of the habits of virtues he takes on the habits of vices and the propensity toward every evil. Thus he stands in such need of counsel, reason, a good mind and every good. **Man, when he was in honor did not understand.** [Ps 48:21].

Lastly, one the powers of one's soul and body ought to be in the service of the Creator, but thinks more of serving the creature, one's belly and pleasures, which is a spiritual fornication.

Ps 72: 27: For behold they go far from You, perish. You send all to perdition who without You fall into this fornication.

or Corporate – Apostolic and Doctrinal] – and the frequent use of *in obsequium* – in the Constitutions of St. Ignatius. The *modus* of St. Gaspar is modeled on, motivated by Christ's unique and personal relationship to His Father in the Trinity.

²¹⁵ These few words are in Italian.

²¹⁶ This does not seem to be a correct citation.

By living riotously. The Gloss: *The prodigal life enjoys pouring forth and wasting one's wealth in exterior pomp, leaving God behind, who is within one. Luxury is the enemy to the virtues, and throws away all substance of the Father and in the present, wipes it all away, and does not permit one even to think of future poverty.* [St. Jerome].

2401 [Lk 15:] v. 14: ... **And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want.**

He had accepted faculties from the father, that he might come to know his invisible goods through those which were visible, that from the beauty of creatures he might consequently come to know the Creator; he is one who sought for truth in injustice, and worshiping idols in the place of God, he consumed the universal goods of nature, and after having wasted everything, he began to be in want of virtues, having cast aside the source of all virtues. St. Jerome.

2402: *The sinner worked under this state of need of all natural and supernatural gifts, because he did not know how to make proper use of any thing, of any sense, of any power of his soul, nor memory, nor understanding, nor his will for his own well being, so that he might perceive from all of these a tasty morsel worthy of man; but rather he spent everything, as though he were totally unwise, unto his own harm and increase of Gehenna; and therefore he became as though he did not have any of these gifts, and even much worse off than this. Lastly, in lacking God in his life, he lacks everything. All these gifts depend on God, rather they are in God and dwell in Him.*

2403: There came a mighty famine in that region.

Every place where we may dwell with the Father being absent is a situation of abject poverty and need. St. Jerome. *For whoever does not have God, has nothing, even though he may be king of the entire world; however, anyone who does have God, has everything, even though he does not have wealth.*

St. Francis. *My God and my all! For God is being itself, an ocean of being; so that the very sun itself might be said, with everything else put with it, to not be at all. I am Who Am [Ex 3:14] – The Gloss: Pleasure always has hunger within it: the more one gives in to pleasure, the more is it enkindled. [Cicero, Book 1, Concerning the Republic.] Two very serious libidinous thoughts force and command an infinite number more of them, which is no way could ever be spent nor satisfied.*

2404: [Lk 15] v. 15: **And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine.**

Bereft of all nourishment, the one who as first mentioned was endowed with all sorts of goods, joined with the devil: to the principle of this world, to the prince of darkness.

To one of the citizens. *Because there are many who would flutter through this air, and by the deception of a variety of vices, they subject the human race to their slavery.*

He cleaved: *this is a laborious and dangerous slavery. Whoever adheres to it, finds himself in a snare.* St. Ambrose. *For as the sparrow, where he seeks food,*

there he finds the trap – so the unhappy sinner, where he hopes for joyful freedom, there he incurs a dangerous slavery.

And he sent him into his farm: which h is to be subjugated by the cupidity of worldly substance. Into his possession: and he thus becomes his serving boy.

2405: To feed his swine: this implies the sordid and unclean thoughts in one's mind. Just note here the wondrous metamorphosis of the sinner and of his situation, but the just castigation of his stupid freedom and vindication: He who did not want to enjoy freely with his father, thinks of being the servant and hired worker of some extern citizen; the one who does not want to be ruled by God, is compelled to serve the devil; the one who does not desire to be honored in the royal palace of his father, is sent to the farm of the rustic; he who does not want to deal with his own brothers and princes, is put to work as a servant and companion of the pigs; the one who does not choose to enjoy the bread of Angels, due to his hunger needs to partake of the husks of the swine.

2406 v. 16: And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine would eat; and no man gave unto him.

What a cruel ministry! Because this man had never lived among pigs, and is now living with them; he leads a pig's life and he is not even satisfied with pig's fare for his meals.

Diabolic food is drunkenness, luxury, fornication, and all other vices; these are not nourishing and are lascivious, and these caress by striking with the sense of voluptuousness and as soon as they appear they provoke their use. With these, the pleasure-seeking youth can never be satisfied, because the need of pleasures always has its own hunger, and once the act is completed it does not satisfy; and Satan, who does deceive one with his art and imposes on each his own yoke, and does not procure further for the abundance of vices, knowing that the sinner is already dead.

2407: With the husks: the food of the demons is the songs of the poets, worldly wisdom, the pomp of the glib persons' words. These delights blind all; even when they are achieved with supreme preparation and perfected with real effort, there is no satiety of truth, nor is any fulfillment of justice discovered. Those who are genuine procurers in quest of these things remain with the emptiness of the virtues. These are the empty are as valuable as beans, peaces and other legumes, which leave one empty within, outwardly pliant, with which the body is not much nourished, but filled, and they are more of a burden to the stomach than nourishing; These signify carnal realities and pleasures.

2408: [Lk 15]: v. 17: And returning to himself, he said: 'How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger!'

As though being aroused from drunkenness and from a deep sleep, the prodigal returned to himself. He was for all practical purposes outside of himself, and in a mental state, and delirious, and even insane; however, his vexation provided him with understanding, and his hunger instructed him how to know. St. Gregory of Nyssa. He would not return to his pristine happiness without first returning to himself that he would feel the presence of his oppressive disturbance. St. Augustine. From all those

attractions outside of himself that were illicit and seductive, he returned to his interior state through the intention of his conscience.

2409: He compared the happiness of what he had before with his later misery.

The hired servants: there are three orders of those who are saved:

- servants, those who make a good judgment out of fear. **Pierce my flesh with Your fear: for I am afraid of Your judgments** [Ps 118:120].

- mercenaries, are those who are moved with the desire of goods: **I have inclined my heart to do Your justifications for ever, for the reward** [Ps 118:112].

- sons are those who are moved by their love for God. **And I lifted up my hands to Your commandments which I loved: and I was exercised in your justification.** [Ps 118:48].

2410: Lk 15: v. 18: **I will arise and I will go to my father.**

I will arise. Because I know that I am lying down, prostrate toward vices; **I will go,** as I have withdrawn quite a bit; **I will return to my father,** as I am now languishing under the prince of the pigs in wretched misery. **I will arise** from this unhappy life, I will leave my vices behind, I will abdicate the custom of sinning, I will change my customs, I will do penance and as a suppliant I will beg of God the deliverance of my sins. **I will arise:** for my father being absent would not stand for all this; to lay down is the stance of sinners, but it is the situation of the just to stand. St. Jerome. [Epistle 21, 15. t. 1, 76 D]. A gentle disposition is in the power of the father, a free service under him, absolute protection, a joy-filled fear, a kind revenge, a rich poverty, a secure possession. He seeks this because under an outsider he had sensed a servile freedom: under his father he believes a future for himself of free service.

2411: **And I will say to him; Father I have sinned against heaven and before you.** [v. 18].

These few words would be sufficient for my salvation; I have already known the gentleness of my father, I have known his kindness; he will be merciful to me, a penitent, and coming back to a healthy mind, which in the filth of sin he did not give up wishing for me; how merciful, how pious, who is not offended in hearing the name of fathers.

Father, I have sinned, etc. This is the first confession before the Author of nature, the One Who leaps to offer mercy, the arbiter of faults. For even though God knows all, He nonetheless awaits the word of contrition. [Rm 10:10]: **For with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.** The reason is one lessens the weight of error whenever he takes it upon himself; and he excludes the leveling of accusation who by confessing anticipates the accuser. [Pr 18:17]: **The just is the first accuser of himself.**

2412: Furthermore, you wish in vain to hide that which is not hidden to anything, and without any danger you bring forth what you know to be already known. Confess even more so that Christ might intervene for you, Whom we have as our **Advocate with the Father** [1 Jn 2:1]. The Church intercedes for you and so does the people intervene; there is no shame, nor should you fail to beg: the Advocate pours forth pardon: the

Patron promises grace: the Master promises you the reconciliation of paternal grace. Believe, because it is the truth; acquiesce to it, because this is virtue. This provides the cause so that it might intervene for you, for He did not die for you totally gratuitously; the Father has every reason to overlook it all, because whatever the son wants, the father wills. St. Ambrose.

2413: *God justly demands a confession of the sinner; because the guilty one should humble himself and confess his fault, if he wants to be absolved from it; it is like the stomach, full of crude foods or bile, which is to be purged by vomiting. In a similar manner the vicious spirit full of harm needs to be purged by a confession: and through this, the penitent vomits out his sins, and eliminates every cause of illness. [Origen, Homily 2 in Ps 37]. The majesty of God has been offended by the sinner, and He demands penance as satisfaction and the reparation of His damaged honor. For penance restores honor God, for the sin committed, and glorifies God. Finally, the penitent professes to the Most Holy God that he is a sinner; therefore the confession of the sinner is an immense praise and glory for God the Creator, and equally for Christ our Savior.*

2414: I have sinned against heaven: *and most gravely, so that my sins cry out to be vindicated in heaven; they cry out to God who dwells in heaven. Because each one is being called by God in heaven, and is destined for heaven, whereas I have preferred earth over heaven, the flesh over the spirit, the earthly realities over those heavenly gifts: and this is a great injury to the heavenly realities; heaven is my homeland, whereas this earth is my temporary hospice and place of pilgrimage: therefore I have nearly lost heaven as my homeland, which I nearly squandered and lost. He has sinned against heaven whoever rejects Jerusalem, his heavenly mother. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 16. t. 1, 76 E]. I have sinned against the Angels in whom God resides, almost as he does in heaven. [St. Augustine Questions on the Gospel Book 2, 3. t. 3/2 260 B]. I have sinned against heaven because by the sin of the soul there are meant those celestial gifts of the spirit that are curtailed.*

And before You: *Who alone is the Overseer of all, from Whom neither can nothing meditated in one's heart be hidden. [St. John Chrysostom. On the Prodigal Son. 2. t. 2/22, 28/2 D – and spurious].*

[And so he said]: Having deserted the Founder of all, he had venerated the wooden idols, having loved creatures, with You looking on, with You noting all. For indeed great is the shame of the sinner, because he would dare to sin in the sign of the living and all-seeing God, Whom the sinner knows that he supremely offends Him by sin, and that He is able to vindicate the offense.

2415: [Lk 15]: v. 19: **I am not now worthy to be called your son;** *since he was one who had preferred to be the slave of idols. [St. Jerome]. He that commits sins is of the devil [1 Jn 3:8]. The dejected one should not exalt himself, so that meritoriously he might atone for sin through his humility. [St. Ambrose, In Luke, 7, 227. t. 1, 1465 E].*

*Because with such a father, I have dealt with unworthily, **make me as one of your hired servants.***

Look at your repentant son whom you have often perceived among sinful mercenaries. He has experienced distance among your sons [they are such on account of being washed clean], your friends [on account of virtue], mercenaries [on account of work] and servants [on account of fear]. I have fallen from this prior order, grant me a place on second rank, only do not reject me out of hand. For example, make me one of your least faithful, those doing penance publicly, whose daily fare are toil and tribulations.

2416: These are words of one meditating repentance in the confession of sin, but who is committed to it. He has not yet spoken to his father but has promised himself that he will say these things when the latter comes; you are to understand, then, that the words **to go to the Father** has been established in the Church through faith, where there can already a legitimate and fruitful confession. [St. Augustine].

He had said these words to himself: but it is not enough to speak them, unless you then go to the father. Where will you look for him, where will you find him? There is first of all required that you **get up**: this is, sitting down before you sleep. Ep 5:15: **Rise you that sleep, and arise from the dead.** Therefore, **arise**, and run to the Church: here is the Father, here is the Son, here is the Holy Spirit.

2417: [Lk 15]: v. 20: **And rising up he came to his father.**

Let us come to the Father, when we withdraw from the feeding of the pigs [Ezk 18:21, ff.]: as soon as you repent of your sins, you will be saved. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 18, t. 1, 77 A].

And when he was yet a long way off, i.e., even before he understood God, but yet while he was piously seeking Him [St. Augustine], **his father saw him** [for it is fittingly said that the impious and proud do not see, as they do not have this before their eyes; for it is usually said that they have before their eyes only that which they love], as **the father is moved by compassion.** [v. 20].

2418: **And when he was yet a long way off**, before he would express by words, and accomplish by deeds, that penance conceived in his spirit, and before accomplishing truly worthy actions and genuine penance he would return to his ancient Father, God, among whom all that lies ahead has already been accomplished, He saw his son; and He who is all knowing of the future, hasten to bring about his advent, and through His Word, Who had assumed flesh from the Virgin, anticipates the return of the younger brother.

Note the far-seeing mercy, and it is directed toward repentant sinners giving them swiftness; because God is accustomed to foresee in His mercy and benignity the repentance of human beings, his meditation on his confession has already placated the Father. [St. Gregory of Nyssa].

2419: **His Father saw him:** lacerated, squalid, suffering hunger, weeping.

His father was moved with compassion: from the very depths of his innards and noting the wretched state of His son, he suffered as though these were all his own.

The Father was running toward him: this was due to his excessive joy. He did not expect that he would see this wayward son of his but he took the first step; he

did not go toward him in just any old way, but he hastened, so that the vehemence of his love might appear.

The father fell upon his son's neck: *this meant that he bent toward him and humbled himself in the embrace of his arm. **And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed** [Is 53:1], which is indeed the lord Jesus Christ. [St. Augustine].*

2420: *Before he came to his own land, he entered into the home of confession.*

He fell upon his neck: *He assumed a human body; and just as John reclined on the bosom of Jesus, he who was the participant in the effect of His secrets, so also the light yoke of His commandments [made up of easy precepts] it was far more from His grace than from the sinner's merit that He embraced the younger son. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 20. t. I, 77 C].*

He runs to you, Who hears within you your treating of these secrets of your mind; and even though you are still far away, He sees you and runs toward you. He sees you within His own breast; He runs toward you as long as no one impedes Him; and He embraces you. In this embrace there are recognized clemency and a certain affection of His paternal love.

2421: ***He fell upon his neck**, so that He might raise up one who was fallen and burdened with sins, and picks one up from being stretched on earth toward heaven, in which he had been seeking its Author. Christ **falls upon your neck**, so that He might lift from your neck the yoke of slavery, and hang from there His own sweet yoke. **He fell upon his neck**, as it says in Mt 21:28: **Come to Me all you who labor, etc.**, therefore He falls in this manner if you will convert.*

And he kissed him: *[this means] that He offers consolation in the hope of indulgence from sins, for example. **I will hear what the Lord will speak in me: for He will speak peace unto His people** [Ps 84:9].*

It is the mouth that kisses, by means of which the confession of the penitent is emitted from the heart. [St. John Chrysostom]. An embrace and a kiss are signs both of pardon and reconciliation, as well as of singular love and benevolence, both of joy and exultation, by which God and the Angels marvelously rejoice over one sinner doing penance.

2422: [Lk 15]: v. 21: **And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am not now worthy to be called your son.**

*He desires through grace to become what he confesses himself to be unworthy through personal merit. He does not add what he had said earlier in his meditation: **make of me as one of your hired servants**, since he did not have bread to eat, and desired to be like the mercenary, which after the kiss of the father he most generously was already considered to be. [St. Augustine, Questions in the Gospel, Book 2, 4. t. 3//2, 260 E]. The father strongly interrupted him, wishing to lead him toward love, as he was coming out of fear.*

2423: [Lk 15]: v.22: **And the Father said to his servants [the Angels, priests, preachers who are His servants and Ministers of Reconciliation with God]: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him.**

The first garment [stole] refers to that which Adam had lost by sin; which in another parable is called the wedding garment. It is the vest of the Holy Spirit, which if one is not dressed in it, may not participate in the king's banquet. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 23. t. 1, 78 B]. it is also the habit of all the virtues.

And put a ring on his hand: this is the signet of the similitude of Christ. Ep 1:13: in whom also believing you were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise. To be put on one's hand the Scripture explains as meaning the works of justice. Ezk 16: 11: I decked you also with ornaments, and put bracelets on your hands, St. Jerome. The Pledge of the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine.

2424: And put shoes on his feet. He had lost the dignity of the Spouse and could not celebrate the Pasch with bare feet. Shoes are given to him, and anywhere a threatening serpent might invade the precincts of the entrance, and they were so that he might more securely on the scorpions and the snakes, so that he might be prepared for the gospel of peace: for no longer would he move forward according to the flesh, but only in accord with the Spirit, as this prophetic saying might indeed be applied to him. Is 52:7: How beautiful on the mountains are the feet, etc. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 25. t. 3/2. 78 E]. Through these words there is explained the proclamation of the Gospel, not to be concerned with earthly realities. [St. Augustine].

2425: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, but let us eat and make merry. v. 23.

The fatted calf, which is immolated for the salvation of the penitent, is the Savior Himself, with Whose food we are nourished every day, and we drink of His Blood. [St. Jerome, Epistle 21, 26. t. 3.2, 79 A]. **The fatted calf** is the Lord Himself according to the flesh, overwhelmed with sufferings.

And bring it hither: they bear testimony to Him and by their announcing they bring it about in removing the hunger from the innards of the needy son.

And kill the fatted calf: they insinuate approaching death. For then He is killed for each and everyone when he believes in the immolated one.

The first robe: he is robed in wisdom, which cover the naked members of the Apostle, as each one is wrapped in it. And therefore they receive the first garment, so that they might clothe their infirmity of spiritual wisdom in virtue.

The ring: is the sign of sincere faith and the expression of truth.

2426: Put shoes on his feet: this is the preaching of the Gospel, and therefore he receives the first robe. For there is another mystery that no one knows unless the one who accepts the seal of His sayings and deeds, and it is a certain strengthening of a good intention and the path, where any one strikes his foot against a stone and taken over by the devil, the office of the Lord's preaching might be neglected. This is the preparation of the Gospel directing those prepared along the pathway of heavenly realities, that we do not walk in the flesh but in the spirit.

2427: There is killed the fatted calf, that he feast on the flesh of the Lord, the very best in spiritual strength, by the grace of the Sacrament having been restored to familiarity with the mysteries. For no one, unless he should fear the Lord [**which is the beginning of wisdom:** Prov. 9:10: unless he either guards or receives the seal of the

Spirit, unless he should preach the Lord, ought to be interested in the heavenly sacraments.

Let us eat and make merry: the son provides the occasion for the celebrating father that he might show how the paternal food is our salvation, and the joy of the Father is the redemption of our sins.

2428: All these realities mean the following:

- the Joy of the Father: the exultation of God and the Angels, comes from the repentant and converted sinner.
- the sinner is restored into the same, or better state than what he had before the sin by the most clement Father.
- the first Robe: represents first grace and charity; the vesture of the Holy Spirit which certifies us with having the heredity of immortality; this is the garment of wisdom; this dignity which Adam lost.
- Ring: this is the image of God, expressed in various virtues; the seal of sincere faith; the outstanding **sign of engagement and of nuptials**²¹⁷: **And I shall espouse you to Me in faith.** [Ho 2:20]. This seal of faith by which are signified the promises in the hearts of believers.

2429: Lk 15: [v. 24]: **Because this my son was dead [through the sin of luxury] and is come to life again [through penance] was lost, and is found.**

This pertains to the same sense of the parable: **So I say to you, there will be more joy, etc.** [v. 10].

My son was dead: from what he was, he is a Christian.

And they began to be merry: This banquet is celebrated daily, each day the Father receives His son; Christ is always immolated for believers.

2430: [Lk 15]: v. 25: **Now, his elder son was in the field;** he had not gone to some distant region, but he was not in the house with his father. Being occupied by earthly activities, he was ignorant of those of the Holy Spirit. The elder brother is one who considers himself to be just, because one very quickly gets old by envy.

And when he came and drew near to the house: being inexperienced in the labor of servile work, he extended to himself the freedom of sons.

He heard music and dancing: as though we were of one heart, in harmony celebrating in spirit, in praise of God for the sinner who had been saved.

²¹⁷ The **espousals** are a frequent theme in Fr. Bertoni's heart – culminating in the community's devotion to the Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph, [celebrated January 23rd], Patrons of the Congregation.

2431: [Lk 15]: v. 26: **And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant:** He read one of the prophets, and sought in him and in some way asked whether this festival is celebrated in the Church, in which he did not see himself included [St. Augustine], tormented by envy, he was not able to grasp the father's will.

v. 27: **And he said to him: Your brother is come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe. And he was angry and he would not go in.** He demonstrated such indignation toward those who act on grace, and thus envy might move all the others.

v. 28: **His father coming out began to entreat him:** how benign and clement is this father: he asks his other son that he might share in the house of joy.

2432: [Lk 15]: v. 29: **And he answering, said to his father: Behold, for so many years do I serve you:** the father appeals for harmony: elder brother followed his chores and justice; but which is the greater justice of God, that of ignoring penitents: of receiving a reverent son?

And I have never transgressed your commandment: it is as though this elder had never violated any mandate and yet envies the salvation of his younger brother. Before God, each needs to prostrate oneself before His justice, since no one is pure before Him!

And yet you have never given me a kid: what kid do you seek, for whom the Lamb has been sent, and the Father invites you to share in the calf.

To make merry with my friends: Can there truly be any rejoicing unless, that of the Father celebrating the banquet with you?

2433: [Lk 15]: v. 30: **But as soon as this your son is come, who has devoured his substance with harlots, you have killed for him the fatted calf.** They are tortured by envy, and they do not accept that the brother who did not perish is saved.

v. 31: **But he said to him: Son, you are always with me:** [he calls him 'son' even though he does not want to join the celebration] - **you are always with me,** if you desist from envying; and **all I have is yours.** Cupidity is non-existent without anguish: and charity has nothing to do with anguish. Ph 2:21: **For all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Jesus Christ's.**

v.32: **But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is come to life again; he was lost, and is found.** He is my son, and he is your brother ... He teaches that even though we may be just, sinners are not to be rejected, nor murmured against, since they are being received by God Himself²¹⁸.



²¹⁸ This ends Fr. Bertoni's verse by verse Latin exegesis of Lk 15:11-32, most likely copied from **Cornelius a Lapide**. There follow now his formal meditation on these verses Meditation on the Prodigal Son, with his own Italian text which also follows an approved Jesuit master of the **Spiritual Exercises**.

2434:**THE FOURTH DAY****Meditation 1****The Prodigal Son – His Return** ²¹⁹**Preparatory Prayer**

Prelude 1: Imagine that you see the Prodigal Son underneath an oak tree, within sight of a drove of pigs whom he is watching over, supported by his staff, down-cast with boredom and rather disheveled and squalid, thinking over his meditated return.

Prelude 2: Ask for the grace to enter into the efficacious desire and the hope for pardon, and with a proposal already resolved and ready. ***And rising up he came to his father*** [Lk 15:20]

2435: Point 1: The primary cause of his return was the sentiment of his present state of misery.

He sees how as a rich man he has reduced himself into poverty – tell the story. And in this poverty, rather, it is real misery, it only took a few months to get to this state: he precipitated into evil.

He compares his past state with his present. Nothing could bring this about more quickly to lead us into adversity. ***How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and here I perish with hunger***, [Lk 15:17].

2436: Who is this Prodigal Son? He is the tepid priest, the one who is too laid back, the sinner.

How many goods, graces, gifts, have I not wasted! Those of the body: the best of my years. Those natural goods of my soul: intelligence, memory, a well disposed heart, loving nature, eloquence, knowledge, and the like, the many undertakings accomplished. Then those gifts of grace: virtue, good manners, dignity, power, character.

If I had only used them well, to what level of holiness would I now be on? How many noble undertakings would the Lord not have worked in me, if I had only been in harmony with His management of them all.

2437: How much my superiors had expected of me, my good parents, the Church herself? It can be said that there is no wretchedness like this Prodigal which is mine, after I have distanced myself from God and lost my first fervor. ***Do penance and to the first works***. [Apoc 2:5]. My heart has become arid, and my entire spirit of withdrawal from this world, of prayer, mortification has been extinguished in me. Where is that recollection of old, that modesty, that vigilance the fearful conscience that I used to have a while back?

²¹⁹ Fr. Stofella's rendition of this may be found in **CS I, pp. 162 - 166**. He notes that Fr. Bertoni's primary source for this meditation is: P. Bourdaloue, SJ, ***La Retraite aux Communautés Religieuses***. Fr. Bertoni's text is in Italian for the most part – so italics are not used as they were above for the translation of the Latin texts – and bold italics from translations from the Latin Vulgate, by means of the Douay version.

2438: Instead of God, not choosing to serve Him which would have meant to reign [Post-Communion from the *Mass for Peace*], have I not chosen rather to serve this world: *not willing to serve God, I am forced to serve the devil*. To such patrons I have not subjected myself by abandoning myself to myself, to my own desires, to my own passions? I should not have been nourished in the House of God, other than with the Bread of the Angels, and fed on the delicious encounters of life that was totally divine: but I now seek, as that unfortunate Prodigal, to fill myself with that foods and those husks meant for the pigs: these are in fact, merely human consolations, empty satisfactions of the chant of creatures and singularly those of this world, vain bits of knowledge, through which a man of the Church loses his spirit, the poetry the useless accounts, pompous eloquence. [St. Jerome, *Epistle to the Galatians*. Introduction, near the end. T. 7, 387, ff.. St. Augustine, *On Christian Discipline* 11 12., T. 6, 588 A, ff. - and other sources].

2439: However, I do not even have these, those human consolations, which either do not satisfy me, because my state unfortunately forbids me to have them – or it does not grant me these, even when I ask for them. And as for the useless bits of knowledge, either these do pertain to what is true, or to what is the beautiful. Created truth, created beauty, cannot fully satisfy the heart, since this has been created for uncreated truth and beauty. *You have made us for Yourself, O Lord – and our heart is restless until it rests in You* [St. Augustine, *Confessions*. Book 1. t. 1, 69 B]. And these are the very delights which do not satisfy the human heart.

2440: Not as mercenaries, the Christian secular laity raise themselves up to God, they enjoy God, and they rejoice in their sweet communications with God²²⁰ – whereas whenever I have any rapport with God, I feel nothing, have affections for nothing, and it profits me little.

However, it is by my good fortune I have now in this Retreat some recognition of my disorder, and it is also my good fortune to be not totally insensitive to this. Will I always live this way, and I will ever make the effort to come out from my usual lack of spirituality, and will I be slower to make a good Resolution that the Prodigal Son was? Have I gone off the right path as he did, and that this, therefore, is the explanation of my life; but would not this eventually lead me to be lost forever, and not return in the future with all readiness.

2441 Point 2: The Second Cause for the Return: Interior Correction and Repentance.

There is a clear contrast between the goodness of his father with the indignity of his own conduct. Before setting forth on his journey he meditated and regulated the manner of his return.

He emitted a sincere confession, without excuses and justifications: ***I will arise and go to my father and I will say to him; Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.*** [Lk 15:18].

²²⁰ Fr. Bertoni's very positive view of the spirituality of the Laity, often surpassing that of priests and the religious, is often noted in his writings to priests – and in his Spiritual Diary [cf. **MP Dec. 2, 1808**].

Against Heaven, because he had been called by God for heaven, destined for heaven, and I preferred this earth over heaven, and the flesh over the spirit [**Cornelius a Lapide** in this verse].²²¹

2442: The disdain that he had conceived of himself

He had decided upon an austerity of life and penance. ***Make me as one of Your hired servants.*** [v. 19].

What a change in a young man, who previously was totally lacking in docility, presumptuous of himself, a love of pleasures! This is how sorrow works in a penitent soul, and how much has it to accomplish in me.

2443: The comparison between the goodness of God in Himself, and generally, and particularly, that in me, and my poor correspondence to it.

There needs to be readied a sincere confession, without any self-justification.

To disdain oneself means to feel all the more my own unworthiness, even though I am in a more holy profession. [cf. Bourdalou, *Retreat* etc.] .

I need to condemn myself regarding all that there is in the ecclesiastical life that is the more tiring, that is the more austere, and make me more subject to it, etc. [cf. Bourdalou]. Those who recognize that they have been betrayed by the world, become more capable of the acts of others to serve Christ.

2444: Point 3: Confidence, The Trust of Pardon.

To my Father [Lk 15:18], He is received there with such gentleness. There is celebrated a great festival, and gifts are distributed. The same will happen to me. If a celebration is had for a penitent, the reason is because he rises up more fervent than many considered to be just.

I should not listen to the fears and the diffidence that my nature inspires into me, with which the enemies of my salvation and of my perfection would like to hold me back. I have lost the right to be a son: you no longer belong to the father.

2445: Rather than a severe, inexorable God, I will find him full of goodness and tenderness for me. I can promise myself from Him that He Himself will come to meet me, in order to facilitate for me the return that I am meditating to make toward Him. I can hope that He will grant me a ready remission from my sin and will grant me far beyond the due satisfaction that I will make. He will provide me with ever new graces in all the efforts that I will have to make, either to examine myself, or so sustain me, and to assist me to persevere. I can also hope that He will not be content to see me having returned to the life of the Church and her disciple, but He will commit Himself to come toward me and to lead me back to perfection, so that it will only be up to me to regain whatever I have lost and to achieve the order of the most perfect souls.

Many others, after having lived as I have in this relaxed state, have been able to become models of perfection and saints.

²²¹ This is Fr. Bertoni's summary of **# 2414** above.

2446: I can hope further that in the midst of all this without my even asking for His divine consolations, nor that I should even have to expect them, He will shower them upon me with a kind of profusion, and will know well how to remunerate me and provide me with the victories that I will achieve over myself, and those sacrifices that will be offered for this purpose.

What is necessary for my own advantage? And should I even hesitate for a moment over the resolution that I should make?

2447: Colloquy: [cf. Bourdalou]. You have inspired me with the resolution, You have called me: should I fear, then, that you will shut me out of Your bosom?

What can I say to you? You want deeds, but no matter what I do, all will however, be as nothing. However, I will keep my confidence in You and I will put into practice my duties with greater diligence, moved by gratitude and by love. All the more will I vindicate within myself the wrongs done against You the that I recognize that You are merciful. My penance will be both greater and better.

Please accept my weak efforts and assist them. The return will be reciprocal: you take one step, and I will take one.

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PART THREE THE HIDDEN AND PUBLIC LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

2448:

The Fourth Day Meditation 2 Contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ ²²²

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Imagine that you see Christ our Lord while He was in this world, in the act of His own Mission, passing through the Synagogues, the villages and the towns, accompanied by His poor disciples. Just who is this, etc. etc.? Imagine that you can see the places, the persons, and so on.

Prelude 2. Ask that we be not deaf, and Christ is calling out to us, but that we will be ready to follow and obey Him.

2449:

Part One

Point 1 ²²³. *I put before my eyes a human king chosen by God, to whom all Christian princes and peoples must offer **reverence and submission**.* ²²⁴ This king is powerful, wise, loving, free, faithful and just.

NOTE: this King is Chosen by God; His dominion is universal, given by God.

The qualities of this King are proven and by the divine testimony of his election, and by the experience of many years of government.

2450: Point 2: *Imagine that you hear this king addressing all his subjects: 'It is my intention to submit all regions of infidel peoples to my authority. Therefore, everyone who wishes to accompany me* ²²⁵ *should be ready for no food, clothes and other things besides those he sees me use. He should also persevere through the same daily labors, night watches, and other situations with me so that he will be a part of the victory and joy, since he stood by me in labor and difficulties.*

NOTE that he is not restricting anyone, or necessitating anyone by force. He says: *everyone who wishes to accompany me...* Once the free will of each one has been given over, the king then proposes the conditions: regarding food, etc.

2451: **NOTE** that the plan is to subject the infidels in order to save their souls.

The same food, clothing, and all other items to use will be those that the king himself will employ. Look upon him, and do whatever he is seen to do.

²²² Fr. Stofella's note here [cf. **CS I, p. 172**] points out that this is the First Meditation of the Second Week. St. Gaspar Bertoni indicates his principal source to be the Jesuit Retreat Master, Fr. John Peter Pinamonti, SJ. However, more or less the Saint quotes almost literally from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, **nn. 91- 98**.

²²³ The verbatim quotes from St. Ignatius are italicized – biblical quotes from the Vulgate

²²⁴ In Fr. Bertoni's text, the Italian words here are: *rivernza ed ossequio* - the choice this latter word is a favorite expression of his.

²²⁵ This is the **Company, Society of Jesus**.

To remain with him in his same fatigue, vigils and all else he does. One is not be asked to endure more fatigue than the king does, but neither should anyone do less. One should not exercise more vigils than he does, but neither should anyone be willing to be exposed to anything less.

2452: He does not wish merely to command. He wishes to do it all, to take the first step, and to suffer and to expose himself to the **wounds**²²⁶, to death, as a commoner would have to do.

He did not want just the honor of the victory, what was useful to achieve it, and its happiness for themselves; he certainly did not content himself in remunerating his soldiers, keeping for himself the major portion of the spoils. Rather, he wishes to share with them the honor, whatever is useful to achieve it, the happiness of ultimate victory, the kingdom, and all this in proportion to the struggles and the hardships.

2453: Point 3. Let us consider now that which the faithful subjects should respond to a most loving and liberal king.

He has a divine right to obedience: ***He that resists power...*** [Rm 13:2].

His cause is most just and holy and most glorious of supreme glory of God and of common usefulness and salvation.

The king is most loving. Therefore, in addition to the duty, there motivates you also gratitude to correspond and to content him in such right plans. He is most liberal. Therefore, not only will there not be lacking to us his help, assistance, welcome, care, and regard, but further he will reward us for the efforts and for the dangers undergone; and the courage, and virtue will certainly be rewarded and the merit will be distinct.

2454: And let us consider how ready we should be to offer ourselves to his will, seeing that he makes himself our companion²²⁷. Indeed, he is first in line for the fatigue, the dangers, and the like. Urias did not want to sleep in his own home because Joab and his companions were sleeping in the open field [2 K 11:11]. It needs further to be considered that the honor, the usefulness and the fruits of the victory will be justly divided.

2455: At the encounter, if anyone did not hear this invitation and followed up on it, *how much would he deserve to be scorned by all men*²²⁸. He would should himself to be a disloyal subject, disobedient, ungrateful, lacking in religion, vile, one who prefers his own comforts to so much common glory and good, and the eternal salvation of so many men and women. And he would be judged as a coward. Since other soldiers, are conscribed forcibly, he was out of love. He is not more exposed to the struggles and to the death of the captain, rather of the king himself. The king makes of himself a

²²⁶ Later, Fr. Bertoni would for years preach each Friday night a devotion of the **Steps of the Passion** in which the Stigmata of Christ would play an important role. There is a certain **connaturality** in the title of the Community and his life.

²²⁷ In this theme, the King makes Himself companions of those who serve Him.

²²⁸ This is a verbatim citation of SpEx n. 94].

comrade and a fellow soldier. All is justly and proportionately shared with the struggles, as the glory, the usefulness of the endeavor, the fruit of the victory and this in proportion of having more, or less so, having followed him into the cemeteries and in the struggles.

2456: A description of the march as seen by a lazy soldier.

What shame it is to see soldiers rush out all prepared, happy with their quarters, all the youth being enrolled with ardor, and in great part, the citizens abandoning their houses, farms, families, wives, etc., to march smartly in the company of their king!

And then on the day set for their departure, with the festive sounding of the trumpets and the drums playing a martial march, with the entire populace having coming out to see the pomp and ceremony, and the old men no longer able to bear arms, the women and the tender youths.

Behind the joyful war melodies of the military instruments when the king comes into sight: and all the people applaud, and it greets him with indescribable festivity.

2457: The well ordered flanks follow him made up of strapping young men, joyful and generous beyond all measure. Here is one who salutes his son, and another who embraces him as he marches by; there those who greet their spouses, and the sons who kiss their fathers. The wife weeps not so much for the pain she experiences, but of her sheer tenderness. And the old folks who arrive late, and the frivolous maidens as well as the tender urchins, find fault with their gender years or sex, because this is what impedes them from accompanying their king. And furthermore, in applauding, they raise their desires heavenward, and their well wishes for happiness, for ultimate victory, all the most sweet and festive.

2458: And he, in confusion, has enlisted in the militia, sporting the military uniform, and yet he remains lazy, full of shame in the laziness of his quarters, in hearing with embarrassment the news of the undertakings of his companions, and to see with envy and shame one of their triumphs and their abundance.

Part Two

The Comparison between the King described above and the Lord Jesus Christ In accord with that three-fold point

2459:

If that earthly king, with his war-like vocation is worthy of that **attention and service**²²⁹ bestowed on him, how much more should Christ not be.

He is the Eternal King: ***But I am appointed king by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His commandment. [Ps 2:6]. All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth. [Mt 28: 18]. King of kings and Lord of lords.*** He is the natural King, because He is the Creator together with the Father.

And of His kingdom there shall be no end. [Lk 1:33]: He cannot lose His reign.

²²⁹ The Italian here reads: ***a cui attenzione si presti e ossequio*** – this oft-used word by both St. Ignatius and St. Gaspar.

2460: Those most loving King has become man, has died for us; He is so faithful as Truth itself; He is so liberal that **He has given His entire self**²³⁰, and has communicated to us His dignity and power on earth. He is most outstanding before the entire world: ***This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased: listen to Him*** [Mt 17:5]. He is revealed by the Father, proven by His resurrection, by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, in the establishment of His Church; He is witnessed to by so many prodigies, both achieved by Himself and through His servants. He is the King Who will manifest Himself to all flesh on the day of judgment, as supreme King and Judge of the living and the dead.

2461: He invites each one to Himself with these words: This is my most just will, to vindicate to Myself the dominion over the whole world and to subdue all My enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of My Father. Therefore, whoever wants to come with Me, it is necessary that he give every effort in that the reward responds to the fatigue endured.

NOTE: This is a most just will. ***The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof*** [Ps 23:1].

He is the natural Lord of all this: ***He made us*** [Ps 99:3]. ***For you are not your own. For you are bought with a great price*** [1 Co 6:19, f.].

To subdue His enemies: for they are likewise ours.

2462: And thus to enter into the glory of His Father: not for Himself alone, but for all of us. ***I go to prepare a place for you*** [Jn 14:2]. Because we were not excluded, He, naturally being happy, wanted to make Himself into the patient temple: ***bought not Christ to have suffered these things...*** [Lk 24:26]. This was not because He needed us, but because we have need of Him.

If anyone will come after Me... [Mt 16:24] – with this judgment and glory to have been well used, promptly offering it all.

Let each struggle with Me: therefore He will distribute His grace. ***My yoke*** [Mt 11:29]. He copes with another: I and God. ***It is a great glory to follow the Lord*** [Si 23:38]. ***Jesus began to do and to teach*** [Ac 1:1]. ***That you should follow His steps*** [1 P 2:21]

2463: Therefore, the reward will respond to the fatigue. *One cannot come to great rewards unless through great labors* [St. Gregory the Great, Homily 37, at the beginning. t. 2, 353/1 AB]. ***But the very hairs of your head are numbered.*** [Mt 10:30]. This is so even to the smallest works, as well as the great ones. If I could find, he said to a holy Woman, souls who would truly give themselves to me without reserve, all that you read in the lives of the Saints accomplished in them by Me, I would do the same also with these, and I would put in their hands also miracles, because my hand is not shortened. [Is 59:1]. I am the same²³¹.

What is the reward? ***Everyone shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life ever lasting in the future*** [Mt 19:29].

²³⁰ This is the ultimate source, font and goal of St. Gaspar Bertoni's *obsequium*.

²³¹ This is an Ignatian principle, often cited in Fr. Bertoni's writings: **MP May 18, 1811; Letter 19, Feb. 1813, in: Ep p. 61, f.; Letter 21, Feb. 1813, p. 66, in: Ep p. 66.**

2464: *We will reason that no one of sane mind could be unwilling to offer and vow most passionately his total self to Christ's service [St. Ignatius. IInd Week, 2nd Point, Contemplation of the Kingdom - SpEx n. 96].* This is simply our duty, since He is Our Creator and Redeemer and is therefore our legitimate Master and can and should dispose of all things necessary and of us, without any self-interest of our own and regard for ourselves.

In thanksgiving for all His love for us.

Out of special obligations. The courtesans, some noble men the most beneficed, endowed with titles, granted feudal estates, feel themselves obliged to follow after the King once he set out on his march. The officials, the captains of the army, with the army on the march, are bound to follow the King, and go on ahead of their own squadron.

2465: This is particularly our duty, since He has forgiven us so many sins, and particularly due to the Mercy He has bestowed on us during this Retreat, after our having committed so many sins in the Sanctuary.

A further reason is to make up for the shame of our past life, emend our pursuit of infamy with some glorious action.

We also need to pay the blackmail of our enemies, of the world, of the devil and of the flesh.

This is also useful both in time and for eternity and to flee a supreme injury, i.e., the sin in the present and damnation in the future.

This is likewise so for the glory of triumph. On the day of judgment. We will be introduced into heaven with such festivity, with the acclamation of the Angels, since they will not have to be judged but will judge the others, however many we have, to follow Christ having left behind everything.

2466: It should therefore be judged that those who would want to dedicated themselves **totally to the service of Him**²³², should not offer merely the tolerance of their fatigue, but to undertake even greater and more outstanding tasks and activities, after first having eliminated the rebellion of the flesh, of the senses, of self love and love of this world: human respect, vain glory, etc. One might see here at least a distant outline of that which happened to Christ and to His Apostles, because now there is greater need than ever. [St. Teresa of Avila. *Way of Perfection*, 1, 2]. If these great undertakings are lacking, God will not suspend the scourges.

COLLOQUY: cf. St. Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises* Contemplation on the Kingdom, 3rd Point nn. 97, 98²³³.

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²³² Again, this is one of Fr. Bertoni's favorite expressions: *dedicarsi al tutto agli ossequi di lui ...*: to the total service of God.

²³³ This is the great Ignatian ideal, to be noted in St. Gaspar's *obsequium*:I *offer myself entirely to You and submit **all that is mine** to Your Will...*

2467:

FIFTH DAY
Meditation 1
The Incarnation²³⁴

Remote Preparation: to propose the meditation and to excite a vivid desire to know with greater clarity the Incarnate Word, for the sake of serving Him and joining together with Him, with ever more propensity, the more I come to realize His goodness toward me.

Preparatory Prayer:

Prelude 1. *Recall the story: How the three Divine Persons looking at the entire surface of the earth, crammed with men falling into hell, decide in the eternity of Their divinity that the Second Person would assume human nature for the salvation of humankind; therefore, when the designated time would come, the Archangel Gabriel would be sent to the Blessed Virgin Mary...* [cf. **SpEx n. 102**].

2468: Prelude 2. *Imagine that there can be seen the entire extension of the whole earth, inhabited by so many different peoples. Then the vision should focus on a specific part of the world, on the little house of the Blessed Virgin in Nazareth, in the province of Galilee.* [cf. **SpEx n. 103**].

Prelude 3. *Ask to know intimately why the Son of God became man so that I would love Him more fervently and consequently follow Him more resolutely.* [**SpEx n. 104**].

2469: Point 1. *Contemplate the persons, the beings living on the face of the earth as diverse as they are in their manners, behaviors, and actions: some are white, others black; a few enjoying peace, others troubled by war; this one crying, that one laughing; one healthy, another sick; many being born, and in turn many dying, and the almost innumerable other vexations.* [**SpEx n. 106**].

Experience compassion for their profound wretchedness; for their sin and for the eternal damnation that will come as a result of this and in which state the human race stands. There simply was not any human force that could deliver us from such an evil, since there is contained in sin an expressed injury of the Creator, and an evil that in some manner is infinite.

2470: If all the Angels were offered to us to be annihilated, not even for all eternity would they find the way to reconcile us with God. If all the creatures possible to imagine were assembled, and with their tears, fasts, penances brought forward, all would avail to nothing.

Recognize yourselves in this great desperation for salvation: slave of the demon, enemy of God, condemned to die, and so on. Humble yourselves, be grateful, be confounded in being so out of accord with a favor that is so sublime; seek among your affections the most tender, and offered it in recognition.

Ask for light to recognize so great a benefit, esteem for Him and correspondence.

²³⁴ Here Fr. Bertoni follows almost *verbatim* the words of St. Ignatius: **SpEx nn. 101-109**.

2471: Contemplate the three Divine Persons from their Divine Throne looking out at every type of humanity that there is on the face of the earth, living blindly, and as they die, they descend into hell. God had created the Angels and humanity to serve Him. A large part of these latter deceived Him, and they became sinners. He responded by manifesting to these former His terrible justice, while with the former the riches of His infinite mercy. How great is our responsibility to **serve**²³⁵ Him!

However, once He has emanated the decree of pardon, all the while with the revels He uses rigorous justice. Hence, I should not resist His Mercy, in order not to fall into the hands of His justice.

2472: I will contemplate the Blessed Virgin with the Angel who greets her. What honor God manifests in willing to be born a man and in taking on our flesh! How much should we not congratulate Mary! This is the source of our every good: what confidence should we not show! She is the only one to have been privileged from the stain of original sin, and is looked upon with such joy by God: what reverence do we not owe Mary!

2473: Point 2. Just listen to what each of these persons says.

Human beings disputing, blaspheming, insulting one another... [SpEx n. 107].

O wretched forgetfulness and blindness of human beings: they do not reflect on the supreme evils in which they are immersed, and indeed rather aggravate these without even thinking of trying to avoid them. ***In a moment they go down into hell*** [Jb 21:13]. Horrendous distraction, the cause of such disorders among human beings. ***There is none that does good*** [Ps 52:4], ***There is none that considers in the heart*** [Jr 12:11].

How much time have I dallied also in his blindness! What consequences this has brought! How much am I obliged to the Lord for having opened my eyes for me in this Retreat! There is the resolution to meditate each day, in order to distance myself from this always.

2474: The *Divine Persons speak in heaven of redeeming humanity* [cf. SpEx n.107], while human beings curses and offends them on earth. O Mercy! I have done the same.

The Divine Son says: ***Sacrifice and oblation You did not desire; but You have pierced ears for me. Burnt-offering and sin-offering You did not require. Then said I: Behold, I come...*** [Ps 39:7, ff.].

He became obedient unto death [Ph 2:8]. This obedience of the Divine Son was for me: and will I not obey Him? He obeys me even every day, when I call Him down on the altar, even though He has to come into my unworthy hands: and will I not obey the counsels of a God Who both obeys me and for me, in matters of such gravity?

²³⁵ This emphasis on **service** is an indication of St. Ignatius's and St. Gaspar's **mysticism of service**. **Service** would seem to be a better translation of **obsequium** - in that it is used as the Latin translation of the Jesuit Founder's oft-repeated **servir** in his Constitutions.

2475: The Virgin and the Angel speak of the Mystery of the Incarnation in the little chamber. ***Behold the handmaid of the Lord.*** [Lk 1:38]. Humility: this is the condition that God demands in anyone who would want Him to achieve great results, either for them or for others.

2476; Point 3. *Pay attention the actions of individuals* in the imagined scene. [SpEx n. 108].

Human beings attack, hit and kill one another and tumble down into hell. What a horrible state it is for humanity to be without grace, without the love of God and of His fellow human beings. And how much time have I spent in a state of such disorder! I was as a novice for Hell.’ What a beautiful gift it is, what order in virtue, to be in charity for God and for my neighbor! In these days, I ought to put my life in order, according to the truth that God has given me the grace to understand.

2477: The Most Holy Trinity accomplishes this work.

The Father commits to it His Omnipotence, the Son His Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit His Love.

He emptied Himself [Ph 2:7]. If a man were to reduce himself to an insect, there is still some proportion between the fine world and another level of this finite world.

Taking the form of a servant [ibi]. In view of these aspects of the lowering of a God, can I still remain so proud, while He renews this humiliation each day in my hands?

2478: Upon this stupendous humiliation and from this nothing God has drawn His greater glory and our greatness. Not only has He freed us from the torment, as do many princes, but He has made us His children, heirs of His reign. Whatever the plans of God may be on me, He has never accomplished anything great in me that did not have the nothingness of my lowliness as its principle and foundation. From whatever I would like to be something on my own, I will remain a nothing, and from the moment that I will consent to be nothing before God, I will become capable of all. This is the path along which the saints reached such a high perfection. We see that God has always chosen the more humble souls, either to bring them to extraordinary levels of holiness, or to employ them in His greater endeavors.

2479: Let us consider *how the Angel executes his mandate, and how the Virgin conducted herself most humbly, and give thanks to His Divine Majesty.* [SpEx n. 108]. This is how priests ought to conduct themselves with God, after having received Him at the altar: with as much recollection, humility, devotion. We are honored by God as the Virgin was. [cf. Fr. Avila]. Let us ponder this as priests.

COLLOQUY: [cf. St. Ignatius, SpEx n. 109].

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2480:

FIFTH DAY
Meditation 2

The Private Life of Jesus Christ

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Call to mind the story. Jesus, having gone up at the age of twelve to the Temple of Jerusalem, he remained there three days, without the knowledge of His parents, for the glory of His Divine Father. Once He was found, then, He went down with them and worked as a carpenter to the age of thirty.

2481: Prelude 2. Imagine seeing Jesus at age 12 living under obedience to Mary and St. Joseph, going up with them to the temple of Jerusalem.

Prelude 3. Ask for the light to know Jesus as the Model of the most sublime state of perfection, which is fitting for priests, and those helps in order to insist on faithfully following in His footsteps.

2482:**PART I**

Point 1. ...*going up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the place...* [Lk 2:42].

It is fitting for the priest to join with other pious faithful and to retain the good customs of the Church, and not to leave these to the laity, or to the pious women. Examples of this would be to accompany the Most Blessed Sacrament, to make the Way of the Cross, to pray the Rosary, the Passage, indulgences, and the like. So often priests simply avoid these devotions.

Jesus went up according to the custom, but not simply out of custom, but with a spirit of obedience and of love. It is necessary to make a habit out of every virtuous practice, but not to do this simply out of habit, as many among us may simply 'say' Mass; but to bring to it all the spirit that seeks out the quality of this undertaking.

2483: Point 2. ... *the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and His parents knew it not...* [v. 43].

The Child remained, to indicate that He would have willingly, on His own always have been in the House of His Heavenly Father attending to matters **in His Service**²³⁶. The priest is called to love for the Church, not for the hunt! Of certain priests it can be said: he remained in his coffee break, at his game, in conversation ...

The Child remained, to indicate how important it is for the young to become bound to these spiritual exercises. ***It is good for a man when he has borne the yoke from his youth.*** [Lm 3:27]. If they do not begin these practices as youths, seasoned ecclesiastics begin soon to drag along. It is necessary to become rejuvenated. ***To God Who gives joy to my youth*** [Ps 42:4]. Examples of this would be to accompany the Most Blessed Sacrament, to make the Way of the Cross, to pray the Rosary, the Passage, indulgences, and the like. So often priests simply avoid these devotions.

²³⁶ This is the ultimate meaning of *in obsequium*.

2484: *And His parents knew it not,* [v. 43]. *His parents being unknowing,* and therefore they did not bring forward any impediment for Him to carry out freely that which He wanted to accomplish for the glory of His heavenly Father. Some priests allow themselves to be controlled by the views of their families, in accepting offices, benefices and the like. ***Whoever does not hate his father and ...*** [Lk 14:26] – where this is presented as an impediment.

2485: *The Child remained,* to show how we ought to be detached from the flesh and blood and from those blood ties of family, in leaving them, and in having no hesitation in leaving them also saddened, when this may be necessary, in order to attend with greater diligence to those matters pertaining to the Heavenly Father, and that we should not remain with them for any more time than would be the will of God. When I suspect that my parents, or any other person in this world, are for me an impediment from that which God wills, either out of ignorance and good zeal, or through malice, it is better to leave them without saying anything to them, even though they may be afflicted by this, and even though they do all they can to win me back, by putting all of this underfoot, with my own resolved and virile spirit, in order to carry out the will of God.

2486: *Who has said to his father and to his mother: I do not know you; and to his brethren: I know you not: and their own children they have not known. These have kept Your word and observed Your covenant.* [Dt 33:9]. *He that loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.* [Mt 10:37].

All the more so if my family members, or any other person whom I ought to love in place of my father, demands of me anything that is against God and the Church. ***Immediately I condescended not to flesh and blood*** [Ga 1:16]. ***We ought to obey God rather than men*** [Ac 5:29].

2487: *The Child remained,* not being lazy, like many priests in the Churches, without ever opening their mouths, or who remain in the sacristy in empty conversations, or who do not take the trouble to hear confessions or teach catechism. They do not commit themselves to the matters of God's glory, such as His disputation with the Doctors, carried on by Him with admirable modesty, humility, discernment and zeal. These are the four virtues that ought to accompany our services in the Church.

How many immodest priests there are in Church, even on the altar, trying to move the seculars toward devotion, playing again the role of the senseless and preach themselves!

2488: How many proud clerics are there because of their studies, with no regard for their elders whom in their ignorance they reject, even though some among these might hold the truth. Even though Christ knew more than the Doctors, and yet He did not pretend to ***teach*** them, but rather 'He asked them questions and responded to them.' This is what the young ought to do, and not make judgments of their elders.

How many work without any discernment and prudence, and they do their tasks, and then even undo them, and actually do evil.

How many priests are there without any zeal at all, but work for their own self-interests! ... ***unless you become as little children, you shall not enter ...*** [Mt 18:3].

2489: *He remained for three days.* Outside of that time that he spent in the disputation, the rest of His time He had to spend in a perpetual vigil and prayer before His eternal Father, praying for the salvation of the world and for those people who entered there.

Some priests enter to preach, to accompany the dead, to hear confessions, to say Mass, to sing; but they do not enter, nor do they ever stay a while to pray, which is their supreme duty.

2490: During the nights, He remained there stretched out on the ground for His bed, and for His pillow He used a step, or part of the wall molding.

The Priest, in order to serve God, should never seek too much his own comfort and ease, as does certain beneficed of the clergy do in their own residences, with their own horses, and the like.

He would have been sustained either with those alms which some might have given Him, or He just went without eating; because regarding all that pertains to his own temporal needs He gave very little thought.

2491: Priests, however, are much concerned about these matters, without however being concerned about receiving Communion each day, nor about their preaching, nor taking care of their duties, and the like.

When they go to preach in the villages, they seek first their stipend, their lodging, their comfortable treatment. They go from house to house accepting invitations for meals, concerned about their own food, which is contrary to the Lord's saying in Lk 10:7: **... Remove not from house to house... Seek you therefore first the Kingdom of God...and all these things shall be added to you...** [Mt 6; 33].

There is the illustrious example of St. Cajetan²³⁷ and his companions in Rome.

2492: Point 3. Finally, after three days, His parents found Him and on questioning Him, He responded: **Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?** [Lk 2:49].

He is speaking here of His Heavenly Father, since I do not have any earthly father. The priest likewise has no longer any earthly father.

He teaches us that His principal occupation and His entire effort was to **attend to that which pertained to the service of His Heavenly Father** ²³⁸, without being distracted by anything else. This should be the ideal of the Priest. **Because I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me.** [Jn 6:38]. This is the way it should be for the priest.

2493: *I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is still day.* [Jn 9:4]. I should not be concerned about worldly matters, about the flesh, my own self love; I should not seek my own interests, but the interest of the glory of God and what pleases Him.

²³⁷ One of St. Gaspar's favorite saints. St. Cajetan of Thiene was the 'Saint of Divine Providence'.

²³⁸ This is the ultimate meaning of Fr. Bertoni's *in obsequium*.

To hear the **confessions especially of the uneducated**²³⁹, the uninstructed, the youth, is not all that interesting, nor does it have any attraction for us. But it does for God. As for those of women, I do not even speak²⁴⁰.

For all seek the things that are their own; not the things that are Christ's [Ph 2:21].

2494:

PART II

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

Point 1. *And He went down with them and came to Nazareth: and was subject to them.* [Lk 2:51].

The life of obedience is the path of perfection.

How many priests are there who are disobedient to their Pastors, to their directors, not to speak of them with regard to their bishops, toward the Pope, the Church whose prescriptions they are to interpret in the place of these superiors, and how everything is topsy-turvy. Benedict XIV's decision regarding the Mass even though they run into this every year on the calendar.

2495: They will then shamefacedly become slaves of some rich man, of a court, of some temporal lord, of whom they are greater than that distance regarding the heavens, of which they are the arbiters, from the earth where these others are in charge. Their liberty consists only in withdrawing their obedience from Christ, Who commands humbly through the mouth of His Vicar on earth and their Superiors, his Vicar, united in faith and charity; and setting aside such a sweet, gentle, light, glorious yoke, they assume one that is a heavy burden, one that becomes unavoidable, most heavy and shameful.

2496: All of this could be endured if only they would maintain the freedom of their judgments, and the like, but as soon as they receive it through the power of Christ who has bestowed it, they sell it for nothing. They do not dare proclaim any other view than that of their master, even though their consciences might not adhere to this, nor does their knowledge at the same time. And thus having rendered themselves free from one Master in heaven, they subject themselves to serve as slaves, with their feet in chains, so some earthly master, or rather an infernal one.

The Martyrs were patient in the face of force, freed in their spirit and in the confession of their faith, because they were free both from self-interest as well as from the love of this world and their own life.

2497: Point 2. *And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men.* [Lk 2:52].

²³⁹ In Fr. Bertoni's mind, this service [along with teaching Catechism] is one of the privileged ministries of the Apostolic Missionaries, listed among their special tasks – and several times in consecutive numbers of the **Original Constitutions** [cf. **CF ## 37; 38; 162;163; 165; 170; 182;183**].

²⁴⁰ Fr. Bertoni did, however, speak of the ministry among women: [cf. **CF ## 4; 105; 108; 114; 281; 290**].

One does seek advancement to orders and responsibilities. But where is our advancement in perfection? We have diminished in virtue from that which we were as seminarians regarding modesty, humility, commitment, diligence, study, zeal. What promises we once made, what hopes we once gave! [The same might be stated regarding prayer, recollection, learning. We knew more when we were students.

2498: [Some priests actually] *advance in ignorance and malice*. Those who were not modest as seminarians, are incontinent as priests: they become keepers of women, active in solicitation. Those who proved to be lacking in humility as seminarians, are impious as priests. Those who were little obedient to the ecclesiastical superiors as seminarians, become rebellious, schismatics toward the Church as Priests. This is what should be, and is not: ***It is good for a man when he has borne the yoke from his youth.*** [Lm 3:27]. ***He shall sit solitary and hold his peace:*** through mortification, ***because he has taken it up upon himself...*** [v. 28], eventually reaching perfection. ***No man putting his hand to the plough,*** etc. [Lk 9:62].

2499: ***with men and God*** [Lk 2:52]. Fellow human beings have to be able to notice your perfection. ... ***that they may see your good works,*** [Mt 5:16]. ***You are the light of the world...*** [Mt 5:14]. ***Providing good things not only in the sight of God*** [Rm 12:17]. Even your fellow human beings have to be able to see that you have made a retreat.

2500: Point 3. Moreover, it was noted that He worked at the carpenter's trade. [St. Ignatius. Exercises on the Mysteries of the Life of our Lord]. ***Is not this the carpenter, the son...*** [Mk 6:3].

He did this to avoid laziness, that is so dangerous for priests, and to subject Himself to the penalty of Adam: ***In the sweat of your face,*** etc. [Gn 3:19]. Some priests conduct themselves as lords, eating without the sweat of their brow, and they make others work hard as their chamberlains, as their secretaries, as their waiters, and even as their lowly chamber-maids.

Jesus did what He did out of humility, not to receive their soft treatment as do many priests, but out of necessity.

2501: He did this in order to hide Himself with an extraordinary silence, in that He was moved by a great anxiety for the salvation of souls.

Humility is the sure path 'No one should present himself as a preacher, until he has been matured in silence, and until he will have placed deep roots in humility, before manifesting himself to the public.'

Lastly, He did this to remain in silence and to profit within Himself for thirty years: and He gave only three for the benefit of others.

2502: Thus, He committed Himself to repress within us the desire to stand out, which is so natural and which leads to so many disorders. Nothing is more suited to moderate in us this yearning to stand out in the world and to distinguish ourselves, as does the example of a solitary God and voluntarily unknown to the world, because this example tears down from me all the pretexts that I might have and which self-love is so able to suggest to us. Rationalization proceeds by persuading me that all is for

the glory of God and for the salvation of my neighbor; that this is all really a necessity in the various occasions which present themselves, that what is the more fitting would demand this way of acting of me; that this line of conduct serves the more to maintain charity; that being always in society is necessary in life; and that such an excessive solitude [as the Lord's] renders us useless and impedes us from making apparent the talents we have received.

2503: These are all specious rationalizations and empty. Am I in a better state to contribute to the glory of God than Jesus Christ was?

Instead of the maxims of the worldly spirit which would inspire me, Jesus Christ has come to teach me a totally contrary pathway, i.e., the love of being unknown, and the like.

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2504:

**SIXTH DAY
FIRST MEDITATION**

THE TWO STANDARDS²⁴¹

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Seeing that *for this purpose the Son of Man appeared, that He might destroy the works of the devil.* [1 Jn 3:8]. There are in the world two parties, two vocations, two flags. The one is of Christ, the other is of the Devil. Both are calling out to all human beings, in order to gather them under his banner.

2505: Prelude 1. Represent to yourselves 'a great plain, comprising the whole region around Jerusalem, where the sovereign Commander-in-Chief of all the good is Jesus Christ; and another plain about the region of Babylon, where the chief of the enemy is Lucifer.'²⁴²

Prelude 3. '...Ask for the grace to be able to have a knowledge of the deceits of the rebel chieftan and at the same time for the help to be able to avoid them; and ask for a knowledge of the of the true life exemplified in our excellent Commander, Christ, and the grace to be able to follow Him.'²⁴³

2506: 'First Part'²⁴⁴

First Point. Imagine that you see the chief of the enemy in the vast plain about Babylon, seated on a great throne of fire and smoke, his appearance inspiring horror and terror. [*From St. Ignatius. On Two Standards. Point 1*].

Babylon implies confusion and it is the figure of the assembly of the wicked. Sin overturns, disorders, confuses the whole man, and that toward God and toward our neighbor, and toward oneself. Sin disorders a person toward God, while it constitutes one's last end to be creatures. It disorients one toward his neighbor, in so far as self-love guides him with great harm to the common good. And sin confuses one toward himself, by putting the appetite, the flesh, over the spirit, over reason.

2507: The Chief of the wicked. *He is the prince of this world* [Jn 12:31]. *He is king over all the children of pride* [Jb 41:25]. He was a rebel against His divine Majesty, and was cast out of heaven into hell, bound in chains for his eternal sentence. He is a most vile slave of divine justice.

'He is seated on a great throne of fire and smoke.' This smoke, as it is inseparable from him, accompanies him always, even on his pompous throne that he has set up for his pride on earth. This is his inheritance after having lost heaven; this is

²⁴¹ **SpEx nn. 137-148.** This famous meditation on the choice between the two flags has ancient roots: **Dt 30:15, ff.:** the choice between the two ways, life or death. St. Paul noted the spiritual combat between principalities and the evil spirits [cf. **Ep 6:11**]. The ancient classic, the *Didache* opens this way: *There are two ways: a way of life and a Way of Death, and the difference between these two Ways is great.* St. Augustine saw it between the City of God and the Secular City.

²⁴² **SpEx n. 138.**

²⁴³ **SpEx n. 139.**

²⁴⁴ **SpEx n. 140.**

his possession, his kingdom forever. After wards he will be enveloped by this darkened air [Ep 6:12] into which he will be exiled, in hell forever.

2508: 'His appearance inspiring horror.' This is how the most beautiful among the Seraphim has ended up. He went thrown down from the most delightful gardens of the highest heavens and damned to crawl along as that horrible giant snake over the dust of the earth. He bears on his forehead all the horror of his sin: having made himself like unto God, and striving to take the throne away from God. This is the horrible sin of pride, in which he still remains obstinate, and will be forever. Therefore, he is extremely unhappy, having to desire always that which he will never obtain. Rather he discovers himself in a totally contrary situation, in the most extreme humiliation, misery, wretchedness. ***The pride of them that hate You ascend continually*** [Ps 73:23].

2509: 'His appearance inspires terror.' He expresses his horrendous plans, whether to do evil and to bring about greater harm, if only he had the powers to do what he desires and yearns to do. He is indeed the greatest enemy not only of God, but also ours, ousting out of envy the first man, he has thus cast him into all kinds of evils. He is full of envy because we are destined to occupy the luminous seats left empty by him. He is with a reinforced hatred, since the son of God has made up for in so greater a manner with His grace, having snatched us from so many humiliations, from those evils he wanted for us out of his envy. He is the avowed enemy of our soul, who sorely wishes it as his own companion in every manner in punishment, and still those of the body, by perpetually agonizing for our harm, even those of the temporal realm. He might have succeeded had not the good Angels imposed a restraint upon him. And since he was not able to have his powers prevail over Christian simplicity, he strives to tempt it with terrors, and seduce it with deceptions.

2510: Point 2. 'Consider how he summons innumerable demons and scatters them, some to one city and some to another, throughout the whole world so that no province, no place, no state of life, no individual is overlooked.' [*St. Ignatius. On the Two Standards. Point 2*].²⁴⁵

'He scatters them' ***Brothers, be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour*** [1 P 5:8].

Anger. *For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.* [Ep 6:12]. [They do not sleep – they do not tire. This sphere is full of demons]. If God would only open our eyes!

2511: 'Not leaving any overlooked'. Wherever he can with open temptation and persecution, where he penetrates with his deceptions. *The devil is two- faced. He is a lion in open attack, a dragon in ambush* [St. Augustine, Pref. In Ps 69, 2, t. 4, 712 C].²⁴⁶ They do not overlook any province, place, whether frequented or in solitude,

²⁴⁵ SpEx n. 141.

²⁴⁶ *St. Augustine. Expositions of the Psalms.* Vol. 3, Pss 51-72. Hyde Park NY: New City Press 2001, p. 401.

[they seek out persons] both wealth and poor, etc. [All kinds of persons, lay people, ecclesiastics, etc., they are all exposed to his assaults].

They all met together against God [Ps 2:2]. Even though he has despaired, the devil never loses sight of his war against God, even after so many years, and despite his even greater ruin.

2512: Point 3. 'Consider the address he makes to them, how he goads them on to lay snares for men and bind them with chains. First they are to tempt them to covet riches [as Satan himself is accustomed to do in most cases] that they the more easily attain the empty honors of this world, and then come to overwhelming pride.

'The first step, then, will be riches the second honor, the third pride. From these three steps the evil one leads to all other vices.'²⁴⁷

The love of money is the root of all evil.²⁴⁸

2513 'Go, my faithful ministers, and chase after money under my banners! Do you not see that the Crucified spreads ever further his reign, and through the efforts of the most lowly fishermen he is taking over that dominion which we once had? etc. [cf. Rossignoli]. Will we allow the Cross to be erected precisely where my lessons are explained? Do you note how those men, composed of lowly mud, are going to occupy in heaven those thrones of glory, from which we, most noble spirits that we are, were expelled. Go forth now, and oppose their plans, tear down their virtuous enterprises! Where power cannot win the day deception may.

2514: 'See how he lays snares for me and binds them with chains.' [cf. St. Ignatius, The Two Standards, Point 3]. Ponder these words of Ecclesiasticus: ***For you are going in the midst of snares*** [Si 9:20]. [St. Anthony, the Abbot, in the Biography by St. Athanasias, questions himself:] 'Pay attention, before your feet he stretches out an infinite number of snares: and who will avoid them all? He has placed snares in riches, in conversations, and so on.' The world was seen by Anthony, Abbot, having been strewn everywhere with snares laid down by demons, those deceptive hunters of souls.

It is necessary to draw this to a conclusion, by coming to understand what a great trap possessions are, by which so many churchmen are ensnared. This is a very subtle trap, the interest in which hardly even lets itself be noticed in a priest. Happy is anyone who is able to extricate himself from this snare.

2515: Second Part. 'In a similar way, we are to picture to ourselves the sovereign and true Commander, Christ our Lord.'²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ SpEx n. 142.

²⁴⁸ This is found in Latin here without any indication as to its source: ***Radix omnium malorum cupiditas*** perhaps from [1 Tm 6:10]

²⁴⁹ SpEx n. 143.

Point 1. 'Consider Christ our lord, standing in a lowly place, in a great plain about the region of Jerusalem, His appearance beautiful and attractive.'²⁵⁰ [From St. Ignatius].

'In a great plain'. ***The fear of the Lord is like a paradise of blessing.*** [Si 40:28]. Virtue and the truth bear with them an intimate, solid natural pleasure. ... ***A sure mind is like a continual feast.*** [Pr 15:15]. ... ***And you shall be like a watered garden...***[Is 58:11].

2516: 'Jerusalem' means *a vision of peace*, and it is the figure of the assembly of the Elect. ***And My people shall sit in the beauty of peace*** [Is 32:18]. ***For if you had walked in the way of God, you surely had dwelt in peace forever.*** [Ba 3:13]. There is peace with God, peace and unity with one's neighbor, peace with ourselves: what harmony, what beauty!

'About the region of Jerusalem.' The Elect are close to heaven. Elias [3 K 19:13], God was passing by, the prophet was standing with his feet in His tabernacle, with his head outside, with his mantle off. Even though the just have their lower selves on earth, with their spirit they are already in heaven by means of faith.

2517: '*The Lord was standing in a lowly place.*'²⁵¹ Just note the contentedness of our supreme God, His humility. ***And My delights were to be with the children of men*** [Pr 8:31]. ***The Lord looks down on the low things...*** [Ps 112:6]. ***You are beautiful above the sons of men: grace is poured abroad in your lips...*** [Is 44:3].

Point 2. 'Consider how the Lord of all the world chooses so many persons, apostles, disciples, and other ministers, and sends them throughout the whole world to spread his sacred and salvific doctrine among all men, no matter what their state or condition.' [From St. Ignatius, his *Spiritual Exercises*, 'The Two Standards'.]²⁵²

2518: It is 'the Lord of all the world' Himself. How right it is to accept this vocation! What could ever be lacking in the house of our Master? Wherever He might send us²⁵³, we will never leave His Reign. ***The earth is the Lord's...*** etc. [Ps 23:1].

What glory there is in serving the Master of all! Whoever the Master of all obliges, nothing will ever be lacking to him, as nothing was ever lacking to the Apostles even though He sent them without purse, etc. [Lk 22:35, ff.]. Whoever has God, has everything, even though it might seem that he is poor and that he does not have anything. ***As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: as needy, yet enriching many: as having nothing and possessing all things.*** [2 Co 6:10]. 'My God and My all'.²⁵⁴ Whoever does not serve God has nothing, even though it might seem that he possesses all.

²⁵⁰ SpEx n. 144.

²⁵¹ These words are from Ignatius Latin text: SpEx n. 144.

²⁵² SpEx n. 145.

²⁵³ Fr. Bertoni would realize this 'geographical abandonment' in his *Original Constitutions* - **CF # 5: *quocumque in dioecesi et mundo.***

²⁵⁴ This phrase is in Latin, and bears Fr. Bertoni's own note: *Fioretti*.

2519: 'The Master has chosen Apostles, disciples, ministers.' ***Neither does any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called...*** [Heb 5:4]. *Whoever is chosen and is called, let him respond: I am present.*²⁵⁵ ***And he that hears, let him say: Come!*** [Rv 22:17].

This is the nobility of the Apostolic vocation which is ours. It is necessary that we faithfully correspond. ... ***For many are called but few are chosen.*** [Mt 20:16].

*'He sends them throughout the whole world.'*²⁵⁶ ... ***How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace!*** [Rm 10:15].

What could be lacking to them? ***The Lord rules me: and I shall want nothing...*** [Ps 22:1]. With such confidence, St. Francis Xavier immediately accepting his divine election to the Indian Mission, set sail with just his Breviary and the Crucifix.

2520: When we are called we should not fear our own ineptitude²⁵⁷ and ignorance. *Such is the spirit of grace: it overcomes the carnal dimensions and exhibits a more ardent effect. No one was more unlearned than Peter; no one was so lacking inexperience as Paul: and yet, the latter was inexperienced, while the former was unlearned, and they overcome 600 philosophers, the reduced innumerable rhetors to silence, penetrating through all matters by their zeal and the grace of God. For neither ignorance nor lack of experience ever impede doctrines, but only idleness and sleepiness.* [St. John Chrysostom, ***In Epist. Ad Rom., ante hom.*** 1. T. 9, 225 C, ff.]

Among all men²⁵⁸. This is our vocation: it is a matter now of fulfilling it, and of the means to accomplish this.

This is sacred and salvific doctrine. It is not like the teachings of philosophers, which proves empty, useless. But, this is a heavenly doctrine, and one which saves souls²⁵⁹.

²⁵⁵ This sentence is also in Latin – it almost seems like a rubric from the ordination ceremony for priests. However, it is followed by a citation from Rv.

²⁵⁶ This is from Ignatius' Latin: **SpEx n. 145**.

²⁵⁷ In his ***Original Constitutions***, Fr. Bertoni lists **ineptitude** among the impediments [following St. Ignatius, **CSJ n. 212**– where the word is found, Part 1, c. 1:

19. Ineptitude, or the inability to maintain regular observance, particularly in the area of chastity and obedience, are impediments to being received.

²⁵⁸ Cf. **Sp.Ex n. 145**: **Second Point: Consider how the Lord of all the world chooses so many persons, apostles, disciples, etc., and sends them throughout the whole world to spread His sacred doctrine among all men, no matter what their state and condition.** [There is described here the purpose of the Company of Jesus:

²⁵⁹ Teaching is one of the ***munera*** of the 'Professed' in St. Gaspar's Original Constitutions:

182. Their duty is to teach not only in sermons, retreats, lectures, which are both necessary and useful for eternal life - but also to explain the rudiments of faith and morals to the uneducated and to children, in the Oratories, in public catechism lessons, as well as by private instructions. For this is of great use to the Church, and therefore this ministry is highly recommended to them.

2521: Point 3: ²⁶⁰Consider the address which Christ [our Lord] makes to all His servants and friends whom He sends on this enterprise...

Servants: ... ***A Servant of Jesus Christ*** ...[cf. Rm 1:1]

Friends: of his family, domestics. ***I will not now call you servants...but ... friends*** ... [cf. Jn 15:15]. This is an indication of the affability of the Lord, Who does not speak as a Master, but as a Friend.

His servants and friends, whom He sends on this enterprise.²⁶¹.. ***separated unto the Gospel of God...*** [Rm 1:1], for the renunciation of the things of this world.

2522: That God Who has made heaven, etc., is speaking, with that omnipotent voice which created out of nothing, etc. God speaks, and creatures keep silence/ He commands: every forehead bows down, each intellect offers inclines before Him. ... ***There was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour*** [Apoc 8:1]. ...***Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears...*** [1 K 3: 9, ff.].

... Recommending to them to seek to help all. First, by attracting them to the highest spiritual poverty.²⁶² ... ***Blessed are the poor in spirit*** ... [Mt 5:3]. And therefore, should it please the Divine Majesty [and should He deign to choose them for it], even to actual poverty.²⁶³ ... ***If you wish to be perfect go sell what you have , and give to the poor...: and come follow Me...*** [cf. Mt 19:21].

2523: Secondly, they should lead them to a desire for insults and contempt²⁶⁴, from whence is born the virtue of humility. ***Blessed are you when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you...*** [cf. Mt 5:11].

What a sublime lesson, what a great truth! And how fitting it is for a churchman, obliged to perfection, to verify that which he preaches regarding the disdain of riches and of the world! – It is a woman whom she corrects regarding this, cf. St. Teresa, Autobiography. 16,7, ff.

For the for the 'Professed' the Stigmatine Founder also insisted on teaching seminarians [cf. CF ## 67; 164].

²⁶⁰ cf. *Sp.Ex*, n. 146.

²⁶¹ o.c. *SpEx* n. 146.

²⁶² lb.

²⁶³ St. Ignatius insists much on Poverty – summarizing the Jesuit apostolic mission as: ***Praedicare in Paupertate***. [cf. Gunter Switek, ***Praedicare in Paupertate. Estudios sobre el concepot de pobreza segun Ignacio de Loyola***. Roma: CIS 1972]. For Fr. Bertoni, it is summarized in his ***gratis omnino*** [cf. CF # 3, cf. ##90-104] – he insists on it in his Spiritual Diary **POVERTY** [cf. **CHRIST**]- 'real' p. experienced: Oct 22 08;- Christ's: Sep 25 08 Oct 22 08 Mar 13 09;- necessary: Jul 23 09.

²⁶⁴ Cf. *SpEx* n. 146. Fr. Bertoni with St. Ignatius, thought that experiencing the shame of Christ is a spiritual value, as he noted in his Spiritual Journal [**SHAME** [cf. **CHRIST; IGNOMINY**] - prayer for: Oct 22 08; - Christian: May 24 10

2524: Hence, there will be three steps²⁶⁵, i.e., poverty, disdain of self and humility, which are diametrically opposed to riches, to honors and to pride and these forthwith introduce all the virtues.

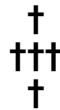
Why, then, do we take the long way around, having before us a short cut; why take the difficult way, when we have an easy path to follow; why do we go by back and winding roads, when we have before us the royal path, walked by Jesus and by His saints – why do we take the uncertain paths, or those that are at least dangers and dark, when we have the sure, clear and certain path available to us?

I am the way, the truth. [Jn14:6]. ***He that follows me walks not in darkness ...*** [cf. Jn 8:12]

2525: This lesson will be startling for you, o priests, and unheard of: but it is precisely God Himself who sends you with it in the midst of these tribulations.

Courage, priests of the Lord. We should not have less boldness in our following Christ than have the enemies of the Church in their daring to follow the devil. Their lot is to walk along difficult, arduous²⁶⁶ path, which lead them ultimately to temporal death, and what is worse, to eternal death.

COLLOQUY: see St Ignatius.²⁶⁷



²⁶⁵ ***SpEx*** n. 146

²⁶⁶ In his ***Original Constitutions*** [# 185], St. Gaspar describes the Stigmatine vocation as: ***ardua et difficilis***.

²⁶⁷ St. Ignatius provides three of them: to our Lady, with the ***Hail Mary***; to her Son, with the ***Soul of Christ***; the third, to the Father, ending with the ***Our Father***. [cf. ***SpEx*** n. 147]. In the following note [***SpEx*** n. 148], St. Ignatius writes:

This exercise will be made at midnight and again on the morning. There will be two repetitions of the same Exercise, one about the time of Mass and the other about the time of Vespers. The same three colloquies, with our Lady, with Her Son and with the Father, will close all three exercises as well as the one on the Three classes of Men, which follows an hour before supper.

2526:**SIXTH DAY
FIRST MEDITATION****THE THREE CLASSES****Preparatory Prayer**²⁶⁸

Prelude 1. The fact is that there are three distinct classes of men. Each of them has acquired ten thousand ducats, but not entirely as they should have, for the service and love of God. Now each of them wishes to have placated God and to save their own soul, by ridding themselves of any and every disordered and harmful affection, as an impediment to salvation.

2527: Prelude 2. Imagine each one of us of being all alone in a spacious field, each one with his own thoughts, and with a very vivid faith and humble prayer. Imagine that each sees with the eyes of faith God the Creator of each, and Jesus Christ His Son, your Redeemer, with all His Servants and Blessed, who are they looking at you. And you, in their presence, with humble, reverent and loving persevering faith, having a desire to know in what you might the more please God Himself and your Lord.²⁶⁹

Prelude 3. Ask for the grace to choose that which is most acceptable to God and most salutary for me in order to succeed.²⁷⁰ ***Make known to me the way I should walk...*** [cf. Ps 142:8]

2528: Point 1. The first class would like to rid themselves of the attachment they have to the sum acquired in order to be able to be reconciled with God, but this group does not place the act in all the time of life, as they are in the midst of means and trifles.²⁷¹

They do desire the ultimate end of their salvation, with applying to it the means, because of the difficulty they experience in them.

They would like to follow Christ, but they would not like to renounce all things. ***So likewise every one of you that does not renounce all that he possesses cannot be My disciple.*** [Lk 14:33].

2529: To follow Christ is the end; the means are the renunciation of everything.

To follow Christ is the tower to be built: the expenditure and the materials are the renunciation. St. Thomas Aquinas, **II-II, q. 189, a. 10, ad 3m.**²⁷²

²⁶⁸ Cf. ***SpEx*** n. 150.

²⁶⁹ Cf. ***SpEx*** n. 151.

²⁷⁰ Cf. ***SpEx*** n. 152.

²⁷¹ Cf. ***SpEx*** n. 153.

²⁷² The image of the tower to be built is found in the **Formula n. 4 of St. Ignatius. It is an image** is dear to St. Gaspar Bertoni – this is how St. Thomas Aquinas ponders it on his question on the entrance into religious life:

OBJ 3: Further, our Lord (Luke 14:28) in making a comparison with a man who has a mind to build a tower, says that he doth "first sit down and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it," lest he become an object of mockery, for that "this man began to build and was not able to finish." Now the wherewithal to build the tower, as

And if those who desire to renounce them and to moderate their disordered affections, they do not take the efficacious means in order to do this. It is much like a sick person ²⁷³ who would want health, but does not want any medicine, because of the suffering and the bitterness and the nausea these bring him.

2530: Such as these have indeed the disposition that is contrary to the divine vocation and to the commandment of renouncing all things nor will they ever acquire the health of their spirit and eternal life, because this is not acquired with only desires, but with works. ... ***By works a man is justified...*** [Jas 2:24].

Even though it seems that they might want to be saved and to get healthy, in truth they do not want this. ***The sluggard wills and wills not ...*** [Pr 13:4].

Augustine says (Ep. 243 ad Laetum), is nothing less than that "each one should renounce all his possessions." Yet it happens sometimes that many cannot do this, nor keep other religious observances; and in signification of this it is stated (1 Kings [1 Samuel] 17:39) that David could not walk in Saul's armor, for he was not used to it. Therefore it would seem that one ought not to enter religion without long deliberation beforehand and taking counsel of many.

Reply OBJ 3: The building of the tower signifies the perfection of Christian life; and the renunciation of one's possessions is the wherewithal to build this tower. Now no one doubts or deliberates about wishing to have the wherewithal, or whether he is able to build the tower if he have the wherewithal, but what does come under deliberation is whether one has the wherewithal. Again it need not be a matter of deliberation whether one ought to renounce all that one has, or whether by so doing one may be able to attain to perfection; whereas it is a matter of deliberation whether that which one is doing amounts to the renunciation of all that he has, since unless he does renounce (which is to have the wherewithal) he cannot, as the text goes on to state, be Christ's disciple, and this is to build the tower.

The misgiving of those who hesitate as to whether they may be able to attain to perfection by entering religion is shown by many examples to be unreasonable. Hence Augustine says (Confessiones viii,11): "On that side whither I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, there appeared to me the chaste dignity of continency. . . honestly alluring me to come and doubt not, and stretching forth to receive and embrace me, her holy hands full of multitudes of good examples. There were so many young men and maidens here, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and aged virgins. . . And she smiled at me with a persuasive mockery as though to say: Canst not thou what these youths and these maidens can? Or can they either in themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God?. . . Why standest thou in thyself, and so standest not? Cast thyself upon Him; fear not, He will not withdraw Himself that thou shouldst fall. Cast thyself fearlessly upon Him: He will receive and will heal thee."

The example quoted of David is not to the point, because "the arms of Saul," as a gloss on the passage observes, "are the sacraments of the Law, as being burdensome": whereas religion is the sweet yoke of Christ, for as Gregory says (Moralium iv, 33), "what burden does He lay on the shoulders of the mind, Who commands us to shun all troublesome desires, Who warns us to turn aside from the rough paths of this world?" To those indeed who take this sweet yoke upon themselves He promises the refreshment of the divine fruition and the eternal rest of their souls. To which may He Who made this promise bring us, Jesus Christ our Lord, "Who is over all things God blessed for ever. Amen."

²⁷³ St. Gaspar uses this image of illness on prayer in his Spiritual Journal: cf. **MP March 3, 1809.**

2531: St. Jerome, ib. Such a person wills the end, but does not will the means necessary for the achievement of the end. He wishes to join and to rule with Christ,, but He does not wish to follow after Christ. He will virtue in so far as this is good, but he does not wish for it in so far as it is difficult, and so he leaves it behind. *Rightly by the word 'lacy' there is denoted one who wants to reign with the Lord, and yet does not choose to suffer for him: rewards delight when they are promised, and struggles deter when they are ordered.* **St. Jerome.**

2532: See when there is work involved, whether will power suffices. St. Augustine, Letter 127, 5. T. 2, 3875 C. *One has everything who has good will²⁷⁴, but the will is not good when that which is possible is not undertaken.* Id. St. Augustine. Serm.270, alias 8, ex 50. 3. T. 5/2 Append. 446 A – spurious. *The challenge is met not with just any kind of will, and one that is low, but one that is diligent and exquisite.* [St. John Chrysostom **In Joann. Rom.** Book 3. t. 8, 3/2 C.

By similitude: the examples of Demosthenes, the hunter, the soldier. The opposite in the last analysis, is not called 'will' but only 'desire': 'I would like to, but I do not will to.'

When St. Thomas was sought out by his own sister on how she might be able to reach perfection, responded: 'Will it!' [Rodriguez. Book 1, 1, 2, 6].

2533: I will reflect over my own attitude, to see whether I am caught in this deception, that I would wish for heaven with willing the perfection of my state. These are some tendencies: yearning for perfection without virtue – virtue without practicing it – the exercise of these without the mortification of the contrary passions: humility without the necessary disdain of self, sufferings without patience, and the like. What deception this is, the most gross and fatal deception! ***There is a way that seems to a man right: and the ends thereof lead to death.*** [Pr 16:25].

This attitude seems to be that of a 'good' churchman, because he does experience good desires, and in then end such a person will be damned, because he never gets down to acting on them.

2534: Point 2. The second class²⁷⁵ would like to rid themselves of the badly ordered attachment to the sum of money, but they would like at the same time to hold on by their teeth the object that is possessed, and to draw God rather to its desire. In this case, the object is not thought of as an impediment for life and for the state that is more expedient for this class to tend directly to Him.

Indeed they would thus want the end of their own salvation, but that want to apply those means they have chosen by their own will to achieve it, but not by the will of God. They would like to follow Christ and to renounce indeed all disordered affection for all things: but the realities that are stronger to them is that they do this on the condition that they can indeed retain their affection for these other things. And

²⁷⁴ Fr. Bertonni often quotes this maxim on good will: MP Feb 22, 1809; Mar 6 & 22, 1809. Quoting the example of the sick, hunters, soldiers and Demosthenes, St. Gaspar presents them as the example of truly good will.

²⁷⁵ Cf. **SpEx** n. 154.

whenever there comes to them the occasion of sinning, God calls them interiorly, but they do not wish to do what He wills, and they are troubled.

2535: this is like that rich young man whom Christ counseled: Mt 19:21, f.: ***If you will be perfect, go sell what you have... And when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad.***

These persons are like those sick people who would like to get better and therefore to apply the medicines, but not those that the doctor would order, but those of their own taste, seeking that the doctor would approve them. So, those of the second class of men seek to draw the will of God to them, and not conform their will with that of God.²⁷⁶

2536: They are like those soldiers who would also to agree to battle for their king, but only as they would like to do, and not according to the order of the king and their captain. This is how those priests are who would like to wage battle for Christ, but not directed by their Bishops, nor according to the orders of Christ, putting themselves at the caring others when it is still time to take more care of themselves. They choose to study more when it is time to be teaching. They want to stay in that place which they like, and not in that other which is more suitable for them and for souls and for the glory of God. They do accomplish some good but they could do far more good elsewhere. Or should the field of combat be better ordered, which is not the Church militant of Christ? In the Church, the soldiers do not move except under orders from their captain. A valor that is not subordinated can lose itself and the whole army.

Thus they have a disposition that is not compatible to the divine vocation, and they run the risk of being damned, because perhaps Our Lord knows that their care consists in throwing aside the things that they possess, in order to discard those disordered affections and the many sins that proceed from them.²⁷⁷

2537: Generally, I have to believe that the remedy for my spiritual infirmities is not in these means chosen by my own blind judgment but in the orders of my heavenly Doctor. Naaman, even though he wanted to be healed from leprosy, did not, however, want to apply to it the means ordered for him by the Prophet. ***Go and wash seven times in the Jordan*** [4 K 5:10], but, he wanted to apply that means invented by his own judgment. ***I thought that he would have come out to me and standing would have invoked the name of the Lord his God and touched with his hand the place of the leprosy and healed me.*** [v. 11] And in fact, he never would have been healed, if he had not changed his view and obeyed the will of the prophet. The reason is that God had determined to save him not with that means that he had chosen, but with that other determined by Himself and which was more convenient for him.

I will reflect to see if I am in such a deception.

²⁷⁶ St. Gaspar chooses this example in defense of prayer [MP Mar 6, 1809]

²⁷⁷ Along with Fr. Bertoni's central example of the Ignatian ideal of **soldiers** of Jesus Christ [cf. MP Sept 15, 1808], St. Gaspar mentions hunters and soldiers in this connection of good will [cf. MP March 22, 1809].

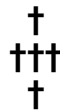
2538: Point 3. And lastly, the Third Class ²⁷⁸, wanting to rid itself of that insincere affection, is equally ready and prepared to remove, or to hold onto the thing, as seems better to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty²⁷⁹, that this class notices either through divine instinct or by the dictate of reason. And indeed leaving everything in its proper state, this third class of men thinks and seeks only, nor does it admit any other consideration in leaving aside, or holding on to what has been acquired, other than the reason and the desire of what would be the greater glory of God.

2539: These individuals are like those sick persons who commit themselves into the hands of the doctor, determined to take hold of those remedies which He would order, judging them more opportune for their health, without inclining on their part to one rather than to some other. These persons have an admirable disposition to hear the divine vocation and to receive His inspirations, confiding in the Providence of our great God. [Is 48:17]: ***... I am the Lord your God that teach you profitable things that govern you in the way your walk. ... I will give you understanding and I will instruct you in this way in which you shall go...*** [Ps 31:8]

2540: And those who allow themselves to be governed by Him, in accepting all the means that He inspires and commands, will acquire a flood of peace and a sea of health. ***O that you had hearkened to My commandments: Your peace had been as a river, and Your justice as the waves of the sea.*** [Is 48:18]

Lord, what will You have me to do? [cf. Ac 9:6] Like St. Paul on the road to Damascus.

Threefold Colloquy: See St. Ignatius.²⁸⁰



²⁷⁸ Cf. *SpEx* . n. 155.

²⁷⁹ **NB:** Translator's Note: the Italian here is: ***... che al divino ossequio piu' convenire ...*** This is a favorite word of Fr. Bertoni: ***ossequio***.

²⁸⁰ *SpEx* n. 156: **I will make use of the same three colloquies employed in the preceding contemplation on Two Standards.** [St. Ignatius also adds a Note [n. 157] here: **.It should be noted that when we feel an attachment opposed to actual poverty or a repugnance to it, when we are not indifferent to poverty and riches, it will be very helpful in order to overcome the inordinate attachment, even though corrupt nature rebel against it, to beg our Lord in the colloquies to chose us to serve Him in actual poverty. We should insist that we desire it, beg for it, plead for it, provided of course that it be for the service and praise of the divine goodness.**

St. Gaspar may reflect this in his *Original Constitutions* as: ***gratis omnino***:

3. With total gratuity, [the Apostolic Missionaries will] serve God and the Church.

2541:

**SEVENTH DAY
FIRST MEDITATION**

THE BEGINNING OF THE PUBLIC LIFE ²⁸¹

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Since Christ our Lord had reached the age of thirty years, He left Nazareth and made His way toward the Jordan where St. John the Baptist was, in order to be baptized by him and to begin this His public, or active life.

2542: Prelude 2. Imagine that you see there in Nazareth Jesus our Lord in the act of going away and taking leave of His most Holy Mother,, and almost noting Him along His journey, passing through various cities, towns and mountains and plains, reaching the verdant and solitary banks of the Jordan, where John the Baptist was who awaited Him.

Prelude 3. Ask for the grace to know Jesus Christ in His active life, the dispositions He had when he entered upon it and the virtues which He had when he began it, in order to be able them to recopy them in ourselves, and the assistance in order to achieve this for the glory of God.

2543: ... Then came Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan to John [Mt 3:13].²⁸² He detached Himself from His Mother, from His relatives, from His native place, in order to indicate that detachment that a priest must have from every thing and person, so that His charity might be universal in the exercise of his ministries.²⁸³ **Go out ... from your kindred...** [Gn 12:1]²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ There are many choices for the *Spiritual Exercises* in what for St. Ignatius is the 'Second Week' - [Sp.Ex. nn. 157; 158; 159; 163; 273; 274].

²⁸² Cf. *SpEx* n. 275.

²⁸³ Fr. Bertoni may allude to this charity for his apostolic mission, through the word *quodcumque*:

163. The 'Professed' are to be dedicated to any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever,

such as:

1. Public preaching, or instructing God's people with catechetical teaching, either through public classes, or by private tutoring;
2. Through a pious sharing of views and conversations on sacred matters, sometimes offering fraternal correction, and at other times offering encouragement for virtuous living and a greater frequency of the reception of the Sacraments.
3. This fraternal exchange will at times involve teaching others the path of perfection, and then offering the exhortation to live it.
4. The 'Professed' are to be engaged in giving Retreats.
5. They shall also promote Church organizations.
6. They will exercise a devoted dedication to the Sick, and especially to the dying.

²⁸⁴ This may be reflected in St. Gaspar *Original Constitutions* as: *quocumque* [CF # 5]:

5. [The Missionaries are] to be ready to go anywhere in the diocese and the world.

The Confessor, and any priest whatsoever, rather than detach himself from God and to go against his own conscience and soul, or to prejudice the spirit of the Most Holy Ordinations of the Church and of her divine right, each must indeed to be ready to leave behind all: ***Forget your people and your father's house...*** [cf. Ps 44:11].

2544: ***You shall not accept persons*** [Dt 16:19]. What wrong do priests commit who, in hearing confessions, very singularly make a distinctions according to their own particular interests or attachments, between the nobility and the lowly, the rich and the poor, from person to person, and when according to these affections they direct their judgments! They will bawl out with power the poor, those foreigners, and they will strive for the rich: they will not lift a finger against their own friends, and they will bring greater commitment for some rather than for others. In whatever manner might be determined, charity must be in the general intention and affection, because all equally are the children of God. Otherwise: ***Keep your money to yourself to perish with you*** [Ac 8:20] is what we will hear from our God. Otherwise that confessor will be accursed. ***Seek not to be made a judge, unless you have strength enough to extirpate iniquities.*** [Si 7:6].

2545: ***So that he might be baptized by him.*** [Mt 3:13]. *So that He might teach us, for One Who is committed for the gain of souls, he must first set out on the way through multiple humiliation.* [Cornelius a Lapide]. He placed Himself among the sinners and wished to be reputed as they.

All the good principles of sublime enterprises have to begin with humility, disposing ourselves with this so that God might avail Himself of us and render us open to the public, achieving through us results of much glory for Himself. [Is 37:31]: ... ***And that which shall be save of the house of Judah, and which is left, shall take root downward, and shall bear fruit upward.***

2546: The reason is that greater joy results over one sinner who gets up again over the ninety-nine just who do not need any penance. This is because, as St. Gregory the Great says [***In Gospel Hom.*** 34. T. 2, 335/1 C, f.], they get up again with greater grace often and more fervor than many of the just, and the whole reason is humility. These souls look on themselves with profound lowliness! They apply to themselves that saying: He merited the shame and the torments of eternal unhappiness. This makes them disdain generously the worldly honors and pleasures, and they cast themselves out of love for their Liberator among the ignominies and the fatigue, and even the torments, since to ***whom much is forgiven, much more is the Lord loved by him*** [cf. Lk 7:47].

2547: And this is why St. Francis Xavier, asked for such as these as his companions in his glorious undertaking. The other just priests stand those cold as ice, they dare nothing, they undertake very little, content with that level of justice that they have. And thus they are surpassed by the ardor of those noted above and preceded by far by them in the rewards received.

[He had Himself baptized furthermore] because Christ wished first in Himself to practice that which He wanted, so that then, others might practice it as well.

So it is that the new Confessor should first go to confession himself [following preparation and thanksgiving for confession] and also generally, if it is needed, and frequently that he might always lead others to this sacrament with fruit. Alas, some priests often hear others' confessions, but they never avail themselves of this sacrament. They do not permit penitents who may be more just than they are to receive Holy Communion without first receiving the sacramental blessing – whereas, some of these priests celebrate Mass without going to confession themselves of their lascivious glances, immodest words, murmuring, scandals, and the like.

St. Ignatius went to confession every day, as did other saints.²⁸⁵

2548: *Christ wanted to teach there the holy and perfect way to be begun by baptism. i.e., by penance, tears and the purification of the affections. And they destine it to be done most especially those who are to baptize others, i.e., to purify and to sanctify themselves.* [Cornelius a Lapide, *In Mt 3:13*]. And for anyone not having this foundation, either nothing is built up, or immediately that which has been constructed collapses by hearing confessions for so many hours with such fatigue.

2549: *For it so becomes us to fulfill all justice.*

Us: *For all of us who are teachers of others, it is only fitting that we precede them by example. Nothing, no matter how insignificant, is to be neglected.* [Cornelius a Lapide, *in Mt. 3:15*]. **Jesus began to do and to teach.** [Ac 1:1]. *This is justice that what you wish another to do, before you begin this, tht you should exhort others by your example.* [St. Ambrose, *in 3 Lc. In Luc. 2:3, 90/ t. 1, 1311 F*]. Nor therefore should it be feared that you lack the authority or the credit. *From authentic humility, sure authority is always born.* [St. Gregory the Great, *31 Moralia, 1. Cf. t. 1, 757 f.*].

2550: All Justice: *whatever is just, right, holy, and pleasing to God, nor should anything be refused no matter how humble and vile it may be, and is not prohibited by any law, but is only the object of counsel, this is every virtue.*²⁸⁶ [Cornelius a Lapide, *ib.*]. The Gloss adds here: *For all justice is humility which subjects itself to all superiors, equals and inferiors.* [Cornelius a Lapide, *ib.*]. **...Let each esteem others better than themselves.** [Ph 2:3].

²⁸⁵ In this connection it is interesting to read what Fr. Bertoni wrote in his Spiritual Journal for the feast day of St. Ignatius:

30th JULY 1808: For the examination of conscience one should choose a Saint of the same vocation as a mirror. In this way one finds matter for confession every day. Whatever falls short of that Saint's perfection is faulty.

²⁸⁶ This principle is quoted by St. Gaspar Bertoni [cf. also Jesuit Constitutions, n. 577] as his concluding **Original Constitution** on the manner of Poverty:

104. In order that each one be content with whatever is distributed to him from the common supply, he should be ready to accept the more menial and abject goods for his greater abnegation.

2551: *Humility fulfills all justice, because it resolves, rather surpasses all right and duty that a man owes to God, to his neighbor and to himself: To God, through religion; to his neighbor, through charity; it submits the body the soul; and submits the soul to God. Therefore, the humble person enjoys peace with all, the proud an only knows conflicts.* [Cornelius a Lapide].

How many arguments, jealousies among confessors for the place, for the confessional, for the penitents, for precedence, with scandal for souls. Learn, o Pries, from Christ, to give in, even to desire the lowest place.. The décor, honor, glory of the priest is humility, which means, to give in, sincerely to conquer oneself, to give what is best, to the other. [Cornelius a Lapide]. The place of the wicked is pride, the place of the good is humility [St. Gregory the Great, 3 Moralia.13. t. 1, 57/ 2 C]. **The greater you are, the more humble yourself in all things.** [Si 3:20].

2552: All Justice [means especially] *supreme justice. Indeed justice is to subject oneself to his superior; median humility is subjection to an equal; supreme justice is subjection to an inferior, as Christ to John the Baptist.* [Cornelius a Lapide]. [There is required in us such supreme justice] that we never disdain the poor sinners and to consider ourselves in our own hearts to be much worse than they are, thinking: Perhaps this poor sinner is already chosen as the good thief was, and I might be a reprobate like Judas. Perhaps this poor and imperfect woman will have the grace of martyrdom, and I may not. Humility is needed to support the rejections of others, and the affronts of the penitents themselves or from others. [St. Gregory the Great. cf. Hom 7 in the Gospel, near the end – t. 2, 240/2 f.]. *This is supreme justice and holiness, when being supreme by merit of virtue, we are least by humility.*

2553: *St. Thomas Aquinas [in life] was asked by what indication can the one who is the truly holy and perfect be recognized, and he responds: By humility, contempt of himself, in contempt of honor and praise; with tolerance for shame and criticism. If indeed, he goes on, you should see someone who when he is neglected, contemned, passed over, response with a sense of pain or indignation, to manifest a dejected face, to narrow his nose, furrow his forehead, know right away that this one is not holy, is not great, even though he might perform miracles.* [Cornelius a Lapide, In Mt, 3, 15].

2554: *He fulfills all justice who precedes all in honor, who tolerates the difficult manners of others and injuries to himself. **Bear one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ.*** [Ga 6:2]. *Indeed the one who loves those hating them, blesses those cursing him, blesses those doing wrong to him, who praises those who detract him, who honors those rejecting him, who overcomes with the ardor of charity his enemies and befriends them, who responds to injuries with benefits who with Paul who wished **to be an anathema for his** enemies [Rm 9:3] and who **becomes all things to all men that he might save all** [1 Co 9:22].* [Cornelius a Lapide, fifth.]. **Bless them that curse you.** [Lk 6:28] . **Be perfect as as also your heavenly father is perfect** [Mt 5:48].

2555: Point 3. The Holy Spirit has to be invoked in Ordinations: before receiving Orders, in order to be prepared for them; in the act of receiving them, in order to receive their fullness and so that there might not enter a sad spirit in said of the good One, of being tempted to complaining, vying with others for a better place, and the like – to avoid curiosity, discourses, excessive laughter and the like. And then, pray to the Spirit again after receiving Holy Orders for the living of the Orders.

2556: ... Jesus also being baptized and praying ... [Lk 3:21]. *By the merit of Christ's prayer and humility, heaven was opened and it is said that the Holy Spirit descended: for to prayer to those who do pray, the Holy Spirit insinuates Himself.* [Cornelius a Lapide, *In Mt*, 3:16].

Prayer is necessary for the Confessor both before and after [the exercise of his ministry]. Before, prayer is necessary in order to receive the lights – and afterwards, so that he will not be tempted.

2557: ... the heavens were opened to Him ... [Mt 3:16], by the merit of his prayer, humility and cleanliness. **Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.** [Mt 5:8]. **... to the humble, God gives grace ...** [cf. 1 P 5:5]²⁸⁷. For the person who is not humble and is not clean of heart and who does not pray, hell is broken open to embrace him and his penitents. Because he is blind, without the light of God, **both fall into the pit ...** [cf. Mt 15:14].

[**... the heavens were opened to Him...**] for the communication between heaven and the priest which is most necessary for the genuine reconciliation of the penitents. *The art of all arts is the direction of souls.* [St. Gregory the Great, *Pastorals*, l. 1. t. 1. 891/ I A].

2558: ...the Spirit of God descending as a dove ... [Mt 3:16], is attracted by prayer.

Why does He come in the guise of a dove? Because Christ came in the flesh, clean and meek as a dove, for the remitting of sins and the absolving of sinners. [St. John Chrysostom, *In Ac. Ap.* Hom 1, 5. T. 9, 6/1 B]. *Why does He descend on the Apostles in the form of fire? Because He endows them with the fervor and ardor of peaching, said St. Augustine.* [In Jo., Tract. 6, 3. T. 3/2.331 D]. Therefore, powerful zeal is befitting the one who preaches, and meekness for the one who hears confessions and reconciles.

2559: ... And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom ... [Is 11:2].

The dove is reflected in the clear waters and sees there the vulture: [this is] wisdom. The priest ought to reflect himself in the law of God **day and night** [Ps 1:2] in order to recognize sin and the deceptions of the devil. [Furthermore, the dove] *selects the better grains harvested:* [this is] *knowledge*. Discretion is necessary in the confessor in order not to confuse souls, and so on. [The dove] *takes nothing from what is not good for it, [which is] the gift of counsel.* [The confessor] should not hold on to the spiritual direction of some and deny it to other souls. [The dove] *does not damage its beak:* [and this is] the Gift of Understanding.

²⁸⁷ The Vulgate also offers **Jas 4:6** as a source for this quote

Some lacerate their beak, by twisting the canons of the Church according to their twisted way of thinking, or by their outright rejecting them, saying: there was a time this held, but these are new times. But the times are what God will judge them to be. Our Judge is He **who was, who is and who is to come**, and He will sustain always His Spouse as His own canons, and rather I would say, with even greater zeal.

2560: *The dove lacks the ability to suck and bile: [this is] the Gift of Piety;* [this explains] the gentleness of the Confessor. **He builds his nest in the rocks²⁸⁸:** [this is] the Gift of Fortitude. **He moans²⁸⁹:** [this is] the Fear of God. Compunction is necessary for the Confessor not to laugh in the Confessional, but to weep for his own sins, in seeing those of others, and also for the others; indeed we need to weep for each other. [Cornelius a Lapide, in Mt 2:253, second].

The dove is chaste, fecund, jealous. As far as taking hold of one, or allowing oneself to be taken over, do not do it. If others do this, do not imitate them: it would be a great imprudence. Much less, regarding holding on to female penitents²⁹⁰, no matter how holy they are, within one's own house. St. Vincent de Paul freed himself from all this without saying anything to his elderly house keeper.

2561: [We need to have] zeal for souls, but not jealousy.

This is My beloved Son, and so on: **listen to Him.** [Mt 3:17; 17:5].

The Confessor speaks absolving **in the Person of Christ²⁹¹**. The unction of his words acquired in prayer will bring it about that the people will listen to him and obey him as though Christ were speaking from his mouth²⁹².

²⁸⁸ The desert eagle is described as building its nest on the heights: cf. Jb 39:27; Jr 45:16. Cf. Ex 19:4; Dt 32: 10.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Is 16:11; 38:14; 59:11; Lm 2:18.

²⁹⁰ Fr. Bertoni provides extensive coverage for this ministry in his **Original Constitutins** : ## 4; 105; 108; 114; 281; 290.

²⁹¹ This is a sacramental phrase taught by St. Thomas Aquinas [and others before him], and assumed by the church: cf. B.-D. MARLIANGEAS, **Cles pour une theologie du Ministere. In Persona Christi – In Persona ecclesiae**. Theologie Historique 51, Preface de Y.M. Congar. Paris: Beauchesne 1978.

²⁹² Jesus is central to St. Gaspar's **Original Constitutions** :

JESUS CHRIST [cf. the LORD]						
- ALPHA/ OMEGA				51		
- shared drink			271			
- special love for John			217			
- knowledge of the crucified			51			
- to gain all for Him				272		
- the 'LORD'	187	191	217	221	236	271
- taught fraternal correction			196			
- Spouse of the soul			109			
- charity to J.C. increases spiritual progress			221			
- obey the superior, as J.C.			139			
- His example proposed			271			
- religious the paranymp of J.C.			109			
- serve the sick as J.C.			236			
- sole knowledge of St. Paul			51			

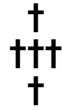
2562: ...*Then Jesus was led... into the desert ... and when He had fasted ...* [Mt 4:1, ff.]²⁹³

Solitude, prayer [constitute the] preparation for this ministry as well as a refuge and place of recovery for anyone who actually exercises this, that is so necessary.

How much harm derives from the visits, especially of the Confessor to the female penitents, or vice versa! How many deceptions for not dedicating time to prayer! ... ***You began in the Spirit: you would now be made perfection the flesh?*** [cf. Ga 3:3].

What are needed are fasting from food, in mortification of the eyes especially, and of the affections.

COLLOQUY: see St. Ignatius.



- His observance of perfection	271	
- the Model		268
- union with J.C., fruit of common life	221	228

²⁹³ cf. ***SpEx*** n. 274.

2563:

**SEVENTH DAY
SECOND MEDITATION
THREE KINDS OF HUMILITY²⁹⁴**

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1: Following after the meditation on the Standards and the Three Classes, St. Ignatius, in order to assist the election, or in the reform, proposes three grades of perfection, which he calls ‘the grace of humility’. He intercedes out of humility for the submission²⁹⁵ to the of man to that of God, in which consists the essence of humility²⁹⁶. He proposes there three grades of humility, in order to see in which you wish to locate yourself.

Prelude 2. Imagine that you see Christ walking about in the world, He Who is the Master of the World, living off alms, without any roof over His head to receive Him: ***The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the son of man ...*** [My 8:20] – who goes about saying: ***learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart...*** [cf. Mt 11:29].

Prelude 3. Ask for the grace to know His Spirit well and to obtain it.

2564: Point 1. The First Kind of Humility is: this is necessary for salvation. It consists in this that as far as possible that I so subject and humble myself to obey the Law of God so that not even if there were offered to me the will to transgress deliberately any divine and human precept which binds me under pain of mortal sin, and would make me guilty of it. [St. Ignatius, *Exerc.*, 1/7/17/33].²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ *Sp. Ex* n. 165.

²⁹⁵ To express this **submission**, St. Gaspar – following St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Ignatius – chose the ever-present **obsequium** in his writings [cf. Rm 12:1, ff.].

²⁹⁶ Fr. Bertoni treats of Humility in his ***Original Constitutions*** [following St. Thomas: II-II, q, 161, a. 6] under the Vow Chastity and Four-Fold Modesty:

121. In the acquisition of this virtue, the confreres are to exercise it through those twelve degrees which the divine Benedict has placed in his Rule, c. 7.

1. To be humble not only of heart, but also to show it in one's very person, one's eyes fixed to the ground.
2. To speak few and sensible words, and not to be loud of voice.
3. Not to be easily moved and disposed to laughter.
4. To maintain silence until one is asked.
5. To do nothing but what one is exhorted by the common rule of the monastery.
6. To believe and to acknowledge oneself more lowly than all others.
7. To think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes.
8. To confess one's sin.
9. To embrace patience by obeying under difficult and contrary circumstances.
10. To subject oneself to a superior.
11. Not to delight in fulfilling one's own desires.
12. To fear God and to be always mindful of everything that God has commanded.

²⁹⁷ Cf. *SpEx* n. 165

Consider that the first Kind of Humility, or of perfection, consists in submitting ourselves so to the law and to the will of God, that we would love more to lose goods, holiness, honor, life itself, than to violate a single one of His commandments and to lose His grace.

2565: Consider then that nothing is more reasonable than this that the creature should obey his Creator, from Whom he obtains everything, from whom the creature depends in everything, and that each should submit his will, which is wavering, corrupt and blind, to the will of God, which can do all and is wise, just and holy. And that lastly, each would prefer the glory of his God, which is in some manner, an infinite good, over his pleasure, over his honor, more than his own life, all of which in itself, is but a nothing or something so insignificant that except for very little, it is not a nothing.

2566: And this is a duty of justice. From God I have whatever is in me: the soul with its potencies, the body with its senses. Whatever is outside of me and serves for my use or for my delight Every living being depends on God in everything: in being, in life, in nourishment, in activities.

On the other hand, God is omnipotent. No one can resist Him, and He would know how to vindicate Himself. He is wise: He cannot be deceived into prescribing what I useful for me. As Just, he will remunerate my slavery: **... the just Judge will render to me ...** [2 Tm 4:8]. He is holy and is unable not to love order and rectitude.

2567: Consider that there is nothing more advantageous to man than this submission. He finds there his peace, he is attracted with this friendship and protection of God. Finally he procures there an eternal honor.

It is useful, and upright that man should act for the glory of God Who is intrinsically lovable above everything, in Himself.

... Much peace have they that love Your Law ... [Ps 118:165]. **... The Lord preserves the souls of His saints ...** [Ps 96:10]. **... Whosoever will glorify Me, him will I glorify ...** [1 K 2:30].

2568: The example of Christ. Consider that Jesus Christ has made visible with His example the sign to which this obedience to God should be extended, since He has sacrificed His own goods, His own pleasures, His rest, His own glory, His very life, which was of such an infinite merit, that He preferred, says one of the holy Fathers [St. Bernard, Letter 42], to lose His life, to lose all else, than to lose obedience. **...becoming obedient unto death,** etc. [Ph 2:8].

The divine will is the queen and the rule of all wills. **... For this is the will of God, your sanctification ...** [1 Th 4:3].

2569: The example of the Martyrs, of the saints. It is on His example that the martyrs have voluntarily undergone death, and fortified themselves against the cruel torments, rather than violate God's Law and commit even a single mortal sin. Such was Eleazar. [cf. 1 M 5:18, ff.].

It is following His example that so many saints have left the world and all that they had the most dear, for fear of being exposed to the danger of losing God.

[Such ought to be the obedience of priests to the Law of the Church.

2570: Reflection. This then is the First Kind of Humility or perfection necessary for salvation. Of this, have you always been ? Alas, if this had been so, would you have as easily committed those mortal sins, in various occasions in the past? If this kind of humility has been present to you, then thank God for it, but do not take any pride in it at all, since you are only on the first Kind, in which all Christians are obliged to be, under the penalty of damnation – and in which perhaps if you do not want to find adulation in this, you have reason for some doubt that you are still on this level.

2571: Point 1. The second manner and of greater perfection, is that with firm spirit before riches, before poverty – before honor and before shame – before the shortness of life and its length, I am equally inclined, where equal is also the occasion for divine praise and for my own salvation. It should be that under no condition whatsoever that I could ever propose to myself, or for any human happiness at all, or even for my own death, I would never make the decision to commit a single deliberate sin, even venial. [St. Ignatius 1/7/17/3].²⁹⁸

2572: Consider that the Second Kind of Humility, or of perfection, consists in submitting oneself so perfectly to God's Will that one would prefer to lose his own goods, health, honor and life itself, rather than displease God in the least matter, and commit even a single venial sin by deliberate choice.

This is only right. Consider that it is quite reasonable that a creature should be submitted in everything to its Creator, that a son be attached to the pleasure of his father, that he would prefer it to everything else, and that the child would make of His will the rule of all one's actions. It is lastly just that a man should have such a great apprehension of displeasing God that from every doing this he puts himself on guard, to do as much good as possible in little matters as well as in those more important ones. ... ***They that fear God, neglects nothing...*** [Si 2:19].

2573: Reflection: This is the Second Kind of Perfection, or Humility. This second level at least, ought to be yours, o Priests. Have you arrived there yet? St. Francis de Sales demands this of those who would receive Communion only every eight days. But this ease which you have of committing venial sin, that little commitment that you have of minimizing the occasions that lead you to commit it, that little sorrow that you feel after having committed it, demonstrate that you are still very far from this level of perfection.

2574: And this is not yet the supreme level? The reason is that one could be still in this level and be at the same time in that disposition of not raising any difficulty of enjoying those pleasures, provided that they are innocent. One has no trouble on this level of seeking riches, provided that they are legitimately acquired. One on this level could seek the esteem of men and glory, provided that these are not contrary to the glory of God.

²⁹⁸ ***SpEx***, n. 166.

Now this kind of humility does not keep one from being subject to inconveniences, because firstly it is difficult not to be attached to these goods, and this is quite contrary to freedom of heart, for a soul that would like to belong wholly to its God.

2575: Secondly, this indifference to abundance and want does not often enough keep one from committing venial faults, even with some kind of attention, which gives rise to doubting whether or not these actions might indeed be deliberate. Lastly, this second state is not precisely a state of conformity with Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that one who wants to be perfect ought to move on also to the Third Kind of Humility.

2576: Point 3. ²⁹⁹ This is the most perfect kind of humility. It consists in this. It supposes that having already acquired the first two Kinds, then whenever nothing else supervenes, and the praise of God would be equally served, I would choose a closer imitation of Christ rather to be poor with Him and thus to choose poverty, to be disdained and rejected with Him in His poverty, I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world. [St. Ignatius, *Exerc.* 1/7/17/33].

2577: Consider that the Third Kind of Perfect or of Humility consists in being in this disposition that when indeed one would not at all offend God at all in the enjoyment of riches, pleasures and honors that in the opposite state – but, through a sincere yearning to imitate Jesus Christ, by conforming oneself to a poor God, crucified, self-emptied, one prefers poverty to wealth, suffering to pleasures and humiliation to glory. This is achieved in the manner that if by an order of the divine Providence, one is committed to live in a state of greatness, there would be maintained nonetheless the secret and continuous yearning that would bear one toward poverty. And this is what is meant by having the spirit of Jesus Christ.

2578: How sublime is this level, how perfect and how excellent! But how far, o my Jesus am I from it! This horror that I feel for crosses and for humiliations, still are far too evident. This shows, then, that I do not love you genuinely, o my savior, because in the last analysis, if I really did love You, I would want to imitate You, and I would love that which You love. No, my God, You cannot be loved without crosses and humiliations. And so too these cannot be loved without loving You, as Your love is nothing other than being able to inspire in us those sentiments that are so elevated, and contrary to nature. I offer myself, o Lord, to follow You. But for this I need that You draw me despite the contradictions of my reason and of my senses.

2579: *Draw me and we will run after You.* [Sgs 1:3]. Help me, my Jesus, that I might love you so that I might love your inseparable companions: suffering, humiliation, and poverty. Help me so that my pleasure is to renounce all pleasures of this world, in order not to take glory, with your Apostle St. Paul [Ga 6:14], other than in the humiliations of Your Cross. And lastly see to it that Your poverty and Your suffering be

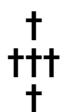
²⁹⁹ Cf. *SpEx*, n. 167.

my only wealth and they might hold for me all the space, o my adorable and my lovable Jesus.

Be you therefore perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect. [Mt 5:48].

Be zealous for the better gifts. [1 Co 12:31].

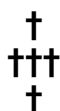
Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect: but I follow after if I may be any means apprehend ... [Ph 3:12].



2580: From the Retreat of Father Colombiere

In addition to the thousand reasons that persuade me that I ought to aspire to this with all my strength:

1. God has loved me excessively so I am not to hold myself back from now on. The mere thought of it terrifies me. How could it be, how can I not be all for God after the mercy toward me that He has employed, how can I hold myself back even the slightest after all that I have received from Him. My heart will never consent to such a choice.
2. When I see the little that I really am, and that that I could accomplish for the glory of God by committing myself entirely to His service, I am embarrassed even thinking of holding anything back.
3. There would be no security for me in taking a middle path. I recognize myself: I would fall very soon into the worst extremes.
4. There are only those who are given over entirely to God who are to wait dying with some gentleness.
5. Only such as these enjoy a gentle and peaceful life.
6. In order to accomplish much for God it is necessary to be all His. For the very little you might remove from this commitment, you deviate just a little from the resolution to do great things for your neighbor.
7. This is the state in which there is conserved a vivid faith and a firm hope, which of God are to be requested with confidence and they are infallibly obtained.
8. Saint Teresa: In Paradise if one could be discontent and unhappy, it would be for not having done all that what could have done the more for God. To have done this will be the greater consolation for a blessed soul.
9. Whoever gives himself in this manner to God with all one's heart, will never judge the others.
10. The great commandment of loving God with all one's heart, according to St. Thomas, can only be perfectly fulfilled in heaven. Further, why has God given this by extension? The reason is so that we might strive to ascend higher in his perfection in this life.



PART FOUR PASCHAL MYSTERY

2581:

EIGHTH DAY FIRST MEDITATION THE LAST SUPPER³⁰⁰

Prelude 1. Christ from Bethany sent two disciples to Jerusalem to prepare the Supper, where He with the others would come later. And there, having eaten the Paschal Lamb and furnished with the Supper, He washed their feet and communicated to all His sacrosanct Body and His Blood. Finally, He gave a Sermon, after which Judas, the Betrayer, left.

2582: Prelude 2. I will consider this above mentioned journey, both harsh and level, short or long, with its other accompanying circumstances. After this, I will imagine the place of the Supper, whether ample and decorated, and similar things.

Prelude 3. Ask for sorrow, indignation, confusion, since it is for my sins that the Supreme Lord of all, in this manner goes forward now to take on such torments.

2583: Point 1. Look at the persons who are at supper, and draw something useful for me. Jesus, the Supreme High Priest, the Son of the Eternal Father, the Monarch of the world, Creator of heaven and earth, a table with men, with poor men. O how loving is the Lord of Poverty! And how much has poverty been honored by Christ!

What an honor it is to sit down at the table of a king, with the king himself! And what would it be if He should become even our food? This is the honor of a priest, seated there each day, not so much as a companion at table, but **in the Person of Christ**. And he does not say ***your body***, but ***My body***. What life is sought in one who acts **in the most august Person of the Lord**, what nuptial garment would be required in anyone who assists at it?

2584: With Jesus, are the Apostles, and among these, Judas. O God, what a community, what differences! ***Good priests share in the meal, and bad priests share in the meal.*** [It is the same sacrament, *but with an unequal situation, or ruin of life.* And in this world, their differences are not easily discerned, O God, what a wretched state, what a terrible separation there will be in the future!

The eleven, the figure of good priests, stand present with body and spirit, with attention and reverence attending to that which the Lord was doing, and receiving that food with very great devotion, clearly differentiating it from other foods.

³⁰⁰ cf. **SpEx** n. 289.

2585: Judas, the figure of sad priests at the altar, was bodily present, but not with his spirit, which was immersed in his wicked designs. And so, he was neither attending, nor intending that which Jesus was doing. It is sin that causes distraction in priests: distraction impedes conversion and causes sin.

2586: And Judas received that bread of life without making any distinction between that and any other ordinary nourishment, as do so many priests who stand with little reverence at the table of their friends and patrons as at the altar. As a result, that bread does not help him, but is harmful.

Pr 23:1: ... **When you shall sit to eat with a prince, consider diligently what is set before you.** Be attentive and reverent!

2587: Point 2. Listen to what they say, and draw fruit from it.

Jesus: Mt 26:21 ... **One of you is about to betray Me!** *He said this to give to the hidden sinner opportunity for repentance.* [St. John Chrysostom, *In Jo.*, 71 (or 70). 2. T. 8, 237/1 B]. It may be, o priest, that up to now your sins, your scandals, have remained hidden for this purpose. Woe to you if you abuse so much mercy!

In part, he covers it, in part he uncovers it.

The wicked are always more than what it appears they are.

2588: *He did not choose to terrorize all on earth, so that He would save one.* [St. John Chrysostom, *In Mt.*, *Hom 81 (to 82)*, 1. t. 7, 473/ 2 A]. How urgent it was for the Lord for the salvation of even one of His priests! How much confidence should not spring up in us from all this!

One of you, [Mk 14:18], *who are with me everywhere, whose feet I have just washed, and to whom I have promised so much.* [St. John Chrysostom, *In Mt.*, *ib.*]. What monstrous ingratitude and seriousness there is in the sin of a priest.

2589: The bad priest has the bells rung for Mass, in order to call together the Angels, to write a death sentence against him. Heaven itself weeps for him who once again is preparing the Cross for Christ. He assembles the faithful as so many witnesses against himself on the day of his judgment. With what recklessness does he vest himself in the sacred vestments, and God vests him with His malediction, from which he would never again be able to divest himself. The priest smiles as he adjust the cincture, while heaven weeps and even trembles over this, and coldly he vests but another time and prepares the Cross, the whips for his Lord are ready, by his minister who has become a scoundrel worse than Judas.

2590: ... **And the Apostles being very much troubled began to say: Is it I, Lord?** [Mt 26:22]. *Because even though their consciences did not convince them of this sin, nonetheless, who much more accomplished the words of Christ than their consciences, especially because* [as St. Augustine says, *Serm. on the Old and New Test.* 99, 6, 6. T. 5/1, 523 C] *this is not a sin which one man committed, that some other person did not do, if there were absent the Maker by Whom mankind was made.* [Cornelius a Lapide in Mt 26:22].

2591: These are the sentiments of a good priest, when he celebrates with fear and trembling [2 Co 7:15; Ph 2:12], as he hears and sees so many souls of his brothers, sadly fallen. We must always, holding in our hand the most Holy Sacrament, to hear with fear, these words: **One of you is about to betray Me!** - knowing that all of us are most capable of that, and to respond to Him with humility: **Is it I, Lord?** With the fear of one dying urged them to ask this [cf. St. John Chrysostom, *In Mt.* Hom. 81, (or 82), 1. t. 7, 473/2 B].

It is proper of good souls to fear fault even where it is not present, because they fear sin so much because of the great love they have for God, that they would not even want to see its shadow, nor even to hear that there was a trace of it among them.

2592: Judas says: **Is it I, Lord?** [Mt 26:25]. He makes use of that same mercy that hid him and this only to hide him, not leading to his repenting. O how many priests abuse this loving Providence!

The hypocrites speak like the just in their preaching, and hearing confessions. You would think that they were humble, loving, fearing God, and this is only their pride, which hides their vices. O how many priests preach well and live badly. They speak with disdain against sin while they actually love it – they preach panegyrics on the virtues and on the Saints, who did practice them, while they themselves devalue them.

2593: O how many beautiful things do they say, and at the same time how many base things they do. They speak of heaven, and they role around in the mud. They say admirable things about perfection, and about God's love, and they love the flesh. You would think in hearing them that they are like so many Angels but if you could see their works, you would think they were so many animals.

2594: Point 3. Attend to what they do, and profit by them.

Christ communicates His Body and Blood and **His whole self**³⁰¹ to His disciples to demonstrate the greatness of His love towards the faithful. Just as our flesh in the Incarnation He hypostatically united to His Divinity, so the same flesh sacramentally with the Divinity in the Eucharist He unites to each faithful communicant, for the purpose that each recipient become a 'divine' man, and almost another Christ and God.

2595: We receive Him each day for this end, and we are not divine men, nor are we even spiritual. Indeed, priests are ashamed of such language, and it does not seem to them to be very important, especially if they are not priest orators, poets, philosophers, of noted ability, among those who stand out, men of talent. Such as these are priests of this world, worldly, men of the flesh. O wretched men! **And man when he was in honor did not understand ...** [cf. Ps 48:13]. Woe to us who do not discern the Body of the Lord [cf. 1 Co 11:29]. Of what value will so many Masses be!

³⁰¹ This is **Christ's Self-giving**, modeled on the Father's [cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16] – epitomized by St. Gaspar's repeated use of **obsequium**. [?]

2596: Meanwhile, Christ for His part, ***He loved them to the end*** [cf. Jn 13:1], *i.e., by a supreme and even extreme love, when He left to them Himself in the Eucharist, so that they might have Him always present when they turn toward Him, with Whom they enter into conversation, Whom they consult, to Whom they open up all their difficulties, temptations and tribulations, to Whom they bear the need and beg His help, for as He Himself says, Pr 8:31: **And My delights were to be with the children of men.*** [Cornelius a Lapide, *In Mt*, 26, 28, third cause].

2597: Do we have our delights with Him, or with this world? Certain priests never spend time willingly with Christ, rather they hardly even stand at the altar with Christ, not even when they have Him in hand. The colloquies with Christ they leave up to the pious ladies, whereas these priests speak of the world and with the world. And if they do speak of Christ at all, they do not do it though with Christ, nor for Christ, but just to do their duty, or out of vanity. They never consult Him with prayer, nor do they seek for His help, protection, but they are intent on procuring protection from the patronage of men, and sometimes even from the enemies of Christ. They confide more in those who do not love them, or even who hate them, rather than in the loving Christ, Who has totally poured out His human vitality.

2598: Christ has loved us in this manner for the purpose of us being nourished to love Him ardently, and indeed He insists on this. *Love is a magnet of love. Therefore, let us give all ourselves, to the One Who, since He is God, first gave His full self to us, and keeps giving as the days pass* [Cornelius a Lapide, as above], and without reserves **let us give ourselves to Him Who, without holding back anything for Himself, gives us all**³⁰². *Therefore* [as St. Cyprian states, in Book 4, Letter 6, to Thib.] in his exhortation of martyrdom: Now there is a more serious and ferocious battle that threatens, toward which by an incorrupt virtue and robust faith the soldiers of Christ have to prepare themselves, considering themselves daily that they might be able to drink the Chalice of the Blood of Christ, and that they be ready to pour out their blood for Christ.

2599: *This was the stimulus for St. Lawrence [of Panisperna!] toward the flames, St. Sebastian toward the arrows, St. Vincent toward the horses to draw and quarter him, St. Ignatius of Antioch toward the lions, and to the rest of the martyrs toward their ordeal – so that they might all return love to the love of Christ, their life for the life of Christ, and their death for the life of Christ. This was the effect of the Eucharist that it might nourish martyrs, and these might exult and triumph in it. This strength lead to joy. Therefore, once, in the time of persecution, all the Christians received communion daily, and they reserved the Eucharist at home. For this reason Christ instituted the Eucharist prior to His Passion, so that through it, it might arm the apostles for the trials that were coming to them.* [Cornelius a Lapide].

³⁰² The Pauline ideal of the Liturgy of Life [cf. commentaries on Rm 12:1, ff.] [cf. Raymond CORRIVEAU, CSsR, ***The Liturgy of Life. A Study of the Ethical Thought of St. Paul in his Letters to the Early Christian Communities.*** Paris/Montreal: Desclee/ Bellarmin 197] – and that of St. Gaspar Bertoni [***obsequium*** and Eucharistic offertory]

2600: The Apostles remain with Christ, John reposes on His breast, they listen to Him in His sermon, they follow Him to the Garden. These are the effects in the good priests of the Mass: to remain joyfully in thanksgiving with Christ, to find Christ as their repose and their contentment. They give their attention to the divine inspirations, keeping silent in them their passions and the world from the love of which the love of Christ has detached them.

To follow Christ in dangers. Neither the Apostles would have failed in their trial if they had not been found wanting in prayer. After Mass, it is necessary to remain in prayer during the day, because the devil will tempt us the more.

2601: Judas suddenly goes out from the Company of Christ, moved by the devil who had entered into him and was warned by Christ: **... That which you do, do quickly...!** [cf. Jn 13:27]. He quickly leaves, as the bad priests immediately leave Church without even thanking God.

There are two punishments for a sacrilegious communion. The Devil had entered Judas after Communion. Just see how dangerous a thing it is to abuse the divine favors and His favors and Signs of love that are the most outstanding: the Demon, permitted by God in penalty, instigates the sinner to other innumerable and most abominable sins.

2602: that which you do, do quickly! - this was to abandon him, and to wash one's hands of him totally, leaving him to his own desires and permitting their execution.

When malice abuses and resists mercy, there enters justice its sister, to vindicate it. **We would have cured Babylon but she is not healed: let us forsake her.** [Jr 51:9]. How many priests have been abandoned in these times! Alas! It is something that makes one tremble.

2603: Point 4. Pay attention to that which Christ our Lord suffers in His humanity, or desires to suffer, according to the proposed point: from whence I, too, will begin with utmost effort to excite sorrow within me, sadness and tears. And I will strive for the same in the other points that follow.

2604: Having been betrayed by a disciple who had benefited much from Him, one who was familiar to Him and privileged by Him – and after so many signs of love, and being so loved, and not taking advantage of all this, in being convinced even by clearer and new arguments of charity: washing their feet, making known to them His inmost thoughts and giving over to them His own Body. Handed over by His most cruel enemies, for the miserable sum of thirty *denarii*, He sees that He will be betrayed by so many priests He has benefited, etc. **I have brought up children and exalted them** above the rest of the people, as 'gods', **but they have despised Me** [Is 1:2]. What sorrow in that heart, what anguish!

2605: All the more in this case was the betrayal of Judas that came to Him through a great dishonor. This is how the favored pupil responds, this is what he learned in that school! He had to speak with His enemies: the whole thing was an imposture. And all the more dishonor comes to Him from the bad priests in our own times: ***For the Name of God through you is blasphemed among the Gentiles*** [Rm 2:24]. This is the situation of avaricious priests, dishonest even going to court! The whole scene is an imposture.

2606: Point 5. Just meditate on His hiding His Divinity – even though he able to, He would not lose His enemies, but allowed Himself to suffer such cruel pains to His humanity.

God could have, had He willed to, delivered Him in a thousand ways. Other times He passed through the midst of His enemies who wanted to stone Him, and they did not see Him. In the Garden, He waited for them. He could have made use of the ministry of His angels. ... ***For the wickedness of My People have I struck Him!*** [Is 53:8]. And being under the most heavy blows of the omnipotent right hand, He falls, and not only does He not assist Him, but ***God was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity*** [Is 53:10]. Not only did He not lift up the One Who had fallen, but trod Him under foot. Not only this, but He crushed Him, and not only this - but He sifted Him, leaving him in the hands of His persecutors.

2607: ***He delivered Him up for us all*** [Rm 8:32] i.e. *He permitted this to happen, did not defend Him. My God, My God, Why have you abandoned Me?* [Mt 27:46]. ***He saved others, ; Himself He cannot save.*** [Mt 27:42]. To which the Fathers respond: If He saves Himself, He will no longer save us.

The Father did not even spare His only Son but delivered Him up for us all. [Rm 8:32]. O what love, and o what ingratitude is ours! ***Since Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for her, as an oblation and a sacrifice...that He might sanctify it...*** [Ep 5:2, 25].

He continued in himself to be crucified by the impious: that He might use a hidden power, as He did not choose a manifest virtue [St. Leo, Sermon 68, or 66, *On the Passion*].

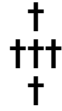
2608: So He now hides Himself and allows Himself to be handed over and crucified by us priests, in order to save the souls faithful to Him. We are as wretched as Judas, while men were redeemed by that selling of him. How many priests offer Mass for the salvation of others, and for the damnation of themselves: they absolve others and bind themselves!

2609: Point 6. Think, while He suffers such torments for my sins, what should I do or suffer for the sake of Him.

I will freely sacrifice to You, Lord [Ps 53:8], *because You were willing offered for my salvation, not for any necessity of Your own* [cf. Is 53:8]. *But, what my brothers, do we offer, or, what shall I render to God for all the things that He has rendered for me?* [cf. Ps 115:12]. *He offered for us the most precious host that He had, indeed another more precious could never be had* [cf. 1 P 1:18, ff.]. *And therefore since we do not offer what we can, let us be offering to Him the best that we*

have, tha which we are, etc. [St. Bernard, Sermon 3 On the Purification of the Blessed Mary, in Cornelius a Lapide, In Is 53:7]. He offered Himself: you, who are you? I have two possibilities, body and soul, etc. [cf. Mk 12:42]. These are more usefully offered to God than I reserve them for myself.

Colloquy to Christ. The *Our Father*.



2610:**EIGHTH DAY
Second Meditation****THE PASSION³⁰³****Prelude 1. Preparatory Prayer**

Prelude 2. After the Supper, Jesus came into the Garden of Olives, and having placed Himself in prayer, He sweat blood and began His Passion. He had been captured through the betrayal of Judas, was led to Caiphas, in the morning to Pilate, to Herod, and again to Pilate: He was sentenced through the instigation of the crowd, moved by the priests, to death. Jesus, in carrying His Cross, set out for Calvary, where between two thieves, He was crucified, without dying.

2611: Prelude 3. Imagine that you see Him, in that time of His silence, during the dark night, Jesus entered with His disciples into the Garden, and having led aside with Himself three of these, He went a bit apart from them with His face to the ground, beginning His prayer disposing Himself for the great sacrifice.

We will meditate on five points of the passion, the dolorous mysteries, **as a bundle of myrrh He shall abide between my breasts:** of intellect and will [Ct 1:12].

2612: FIRST PART

Point 1. The Prayer in the Garden. Christ enters into the Garden, at the roots of the mountain, where David also once came, **in sadness fleeing Absalom.** [2 K 15:23]. **My soul is sorrowful unto death.** [Mt 26:38]. Let us say as did those strong men who followed David [2 K 15:21]: **As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives: in whatsoever place you shall be, there will your servant be. I will not leave you** [4 K 4:30]. **And you are they who have continued with Me in My temptations,** in the affliction of the Church, **And I dispose to you,** etc. [Lk 22:28].

2613: In the Garden, Adam ruined, and Christ begins to repair the damage. There enters the New Adam into the Garden of sorrows, to repair that which the Old Adam in the garden of pleasures had ruined. He comes now to gather not a sweet fruit, but myrrh. Penance repairs the damage of the will. **Let my beloved come into her garden, there I have placed the myrrh** [Ct 5:1]. **Come and see.** Come, o soul, to apply to yourself also with your penance, the merits which I have gained for you with my suffering. **There your mother was corrupted, there she was deflowered who bore you.** [Ct 8:5], **there in integrity the Church began to be restored, and to be washed in the sweat of the blood of the Son of God.**

That the dangers are feared is not evil: suffice that one does not give in to them.

2614: The Cause of Jesus' Agony: *The interior conflict from the horror of death and from the zeal for the honor of God and the fruit of redemption.* What will be the horror of eternal death for a sinful priest?

³⁰³ cf. *SpEx*, nn. 200; 290

The apprehension of all the past sins, present and future: their multitude, enormity, the eternal damnation, the infinite injury of God. If Christ for my sins sweat blood, *it is fitting that I should at least pour out tears*. [For the Feast of the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Hymn for Vespers].

The consideration of the little fruit garnered in many. And will we convert the passion and the Blood of Christ into our own damnation?

2615: In the meantime the Apostles are sleeping, while Christ prays [Mt 26:40, 43].

This is our conduct, o priests: to sleep while Christ suffers in His members. The laziness of priests. The lack of prayer gives space to the Devil to tempt the Apostles, and they flee as the soldiers draw near to capture Christ. There is a necessity of divine grace against terror: therefore, the necessity for prayer.

2616: Peter cuts off the ear. ***He cut off his ear.*** [Mt 26:51]. Imprudent zeal, most imprudent action, the daughter of the lack of prayer. ***He followed Him afar off,*** [Mt 26:58]. This is a cooling of virtue, as prayer was lacking. To put off our proposals: ***Even though I die together with You,*** etc. [Mk 14:31]. ***Peter was warming himself,*** etc. [Jn 18:18]: his laziness, seeking his own comfort. ***Peter stood at the door, without:*** [Jn 18:16]. It is necessary to declare oneself for Him, and to stand by Christ. ***The servant-girl said:*** [Jn 18:17]. Peter denies His Master boldly to the servant-girl. *There the most firm column, has trembled at the breath of a single gentle breeze.* Who will presume to stand, since we are all reeds? Prayer, flee idleness, flee from women.

2617: Christ looks at Him [Lk 22:61]. ***And Peter, going out, wept bitterly*** [Lk 22:62]. It is not necessary after failures to despair, nor to become weakened, but to continue the path and the fervor already undertaken, as St. Peter did, for whom, as a result, his failure did not harm at all, rather helped him. ***To them that love God all things work together unto good,*** [Rm 8:28]. ***You know, O Lord, that I love You.*** [Jn 21:15].

2618: The flagellation:³⁰⁴ The Causes: the priests accuse Him. ***How can you believe who receive glory from one another?*** [Jn 5:44].

In the morning, the priests decide among themselves to *hand Christ over* to Pilate. They accuse Him out of envy. This sprang from their vainglory. This has blinded and impeded faith. While they did not want to suffer in Christ Who surpassed them in virtue, as He was far ahead of them in good and in glory of acting well – so they subjected Him to the secular tribunal. Not wanting to serve God they contented themselves in serving men, different from them in religion, and indeed enemies of the true religion.

2619: They accuse Him of subverting the people. A terrible passion in a priest is vainglory, envy: and priests do not even confess it.

Pilate recognizes His innocence, and he declares Him such and seeks every path to free Him. The seculars, the infidels themselves are often far better than a wicked priest. *The corruption of the best people is often the worst.*

³⁰⁴ cf. ***SpEx*** n. 295, Second Point.

They subvert the people because they place Christ after Barabbas: those who are meant to be guides in life become conductors to death.

2620 Pilate sends Him to Herod and he sends Him on dressed in white, that made man. And will we be so jealous of our own honor that we will not lose a point of it for Christ? The Blessed Jacoppone for the purpose of humiliating himself, used to make use of certain extravagant practices that would draw on himself laughter and even blows, etc. The Lord said to him: why do you do this – Because You have taught me this Yourself. – Now he is reputed by a priest to be in dishonor, as he confuses the world in practice, since from the pulpit he did nothing but censure him. O God, what misery! Thus, the crazy world gains honor, because there are many who still in a servile manner respect it. It would almost seem that a priest gives scandal when he criticizes the world. How blessed are these scandals, cries St. Teresa.

2621: The Second Cause: our sins.

Pilate has him scourged and then exposes Him: **Behold the Man!** [Jn 19:5]. He is all bent over from weakness. Such inclinations are many in confessors.

Pilate had protested: [Jn 18:38]: **I find no cause in Him!** The cause is in me, in my sins, in my impurities. Jesus Christ so treats His flesh, and the will priest treat his so delicately, by dressing in silk, in moderns style, in eating, in sleeping, in their rooms? O, if only that scene of **Behold the Man** - had been placed before some priest, would he recognize any similarity with himself, or rather a total difference? Let us place ourselves often before this **Behold the Man** scene, by making the way of the Cross. We thank that is we who have so reduced Him; let us pray that He might pardon us and give us the strength to overcome our bad habits: and we will be converted, as St. Teresa did.

2622: Point 3. The crowning with thorns.

He was crowned with thorns. One single thorn fixed in the paw of a lion, makes him roar in pain: what would so many thorns in the head feel like?

Just notice what yearning Christ had to suffer. Let us blush in our fleeing from sufferings, and our seeking always diversions, as do so many priests.

Christ with His crown of thorns. There are those who are ashamed to wear their tonsure, and they take care of their hair much like women. What wonderful confessors they would make!

2623: He was derided as a ludicrous king. What love He had for humiliations! And will we seek to act like despots, like superiors? The ambition for honors and dignities is the vice of priests: therefore, they contend with one another for a place of notice, in choir and so on.

And will we not suffer patiently being disregarded by the world, after this being made fun of which Christ sustained with such patience? He teaches us from this how we have to conduct ourselves when the unruly youth laugh at us, unbelievers, worldly people. And will we be so jealous of our glory. Etc.?

2624: Point 4. The carrying of his Cross.

Pilate decided to condemn Him, against his own conscience, because he heard: Jn 19:12: ***If you release this Man, you are not Caesar's friend!***

Priests absolve so many, and they re-condemn Christ out of human fear. They are induced to do things that are repugnant to conscience, because of this accursed fear. The worse then is that they seek pretexts, reasons to cover their failure and so they ruin others. Therefore, the tears of the Church betrayed by her ministers for a weakness. I how many Pilates there are. [They respond] - there's nothing wrong! This can be done, this can be done! [Even when it is illicit].

2625: Pilate condemns Him to carry the Cross. No other malefactor is made to carry his own tool of torment: but, why does he condemn Him so much against the customs? The response is given by Ps 128:3: ***The wicked have wrought my back. – If any man will come after Me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.*** [Mt 16:24].

Priests repudiate every mortification: never a time of fasting, never a self-inflicted penance, while so many people in the world, and so on ... they never overcome themselves, while they demand this from their own penitents. They flee crosses and suffering, they put aside every cross. How then do they follow Christ? No, they simply do not: all such as these are condemned.

2626: *To take up one's cross is to prepare oneself to death for Christ, mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.* [Col 3:5]. *The call is to take up every danger for the name of Christ with calm spirit, and not to be attached to this present life* [St. Basil, Longer Rule, 6, 1. t. 2, 344 D]. This is how a priest conducts himself who follows Christ.

His cross: [Mt 16:24]: The Breviary, chastity, study, hearing confessions.

Take up, not drag. How many discussions, complaints, lamentations among priests for the least fatigue!

2627: And follow Me! Many carry crosses that are much heavier to follow the world, the flesh and the devil. ***Let them follow Me,*** imitating Christ in persevering even to the extreme. Many start good undertakings, and then after a bit, they get tired, and little by little they turn back, as that incident of the 40 Martyrs [Ancient Breviary, March 10th, 5th Lesson]. ***He is not fit for the kingdom of God*** [Lk 9:5].

Is this a hard saying? [Jn 6:61]. Rather it is we who are hard, for not experiencing the love of God, which would render the cross even sweet and lovable, as it was for the Saints.

2628: Point 5. The Crucifixion.³⁰⁵

And as the serpent was lifted up in the desert. [Jn 3:14] – O priest, stung by the infernal serpent, look with attentive consideration [daily meditation] on this Crucifix. But 'one does not think about it' [a saying on the Crucifix of St. Bonaventure of Buonarroti]. Some priests think less about it than others.

³⁰⁵ cf. *SpEx*, nn. 296, 297.

2629: Moses' serpent devoured the other snakes of the magicians [Ex 7:12]. ***You did crush the heads of the dragons in the waters.*** [Ps 73:13]. [*The water*] is a bloody flood; the heads of the dragons are the seven capital sins. He destroyed pride by ignominy, avarice by supreme poverty, gluttony by honey, luxury by sufferings in one's whole body, wrath by meekness and patience, envy by the most excellent acts of charity, sloth by fervor in the work of redemption.

2630: ***And Christ died for all; that they who live may not now live to themselves but unto Him Who died for them...*** [2 Co 5:15].

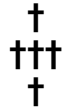
Draw Me after You [Ct 1:3].

Let us take up love for humiliations, for suffering, to be genuine priests of Christ. This is the model of our zeal for the souls of our penitents: ***This is My commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you.*** [Jn 15:12].

2631: SECOND PART

With what spirit did Christ suffer all this: See Dom Scupoli, ***The Spiritual Combat***, c. 52.

What should we do, we for whom He has suffered so much for our sake, ***Who offered Himself and handed Himself over for me .*** [Heb. 9:14; Ga 2:20]



2632:

**NINTH DAY
THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN ³⁰⁶**

Preparatory Prayer

Prelude 1. Our Lord Jesus arose on the third day to a glorious life and, after having remained on earth for forty days, appearing frequently to His own, in the end He ascended into heaven.

Prelude 2. Imagine that you see Him as He appeared to some of His disciples, so alive, luminous, and with the scars of His Wounds³⁰⁷, inviting you, too, to heaven, to where He is planning to return: ***I go to prepare a place for you.*** [Jn 14:2].

Prelude 3. To ask for the grace to participate in this immense joy of the Savior.

2633: FIRST PART

NOTE: We have begun with ‘The End of Man’, and now we return to this subject. The proximate end, we have said with St. Paul [1 Th 4:3], to be our sanctification. And **the resurrection of Christ** is precisely the Model of this. The Last End is eternal life: and in the Ascension of Christ it is made known to us precisely that eternal life is the term toward which we have to tend always.

2634: Point 1. The manner of the resurrection. The resurrection of Christ was the Model of our sanctification: ***He rose again for our justification.*** [Rm 4:25]

Christ arose by His own power. **Having presupposed the grace of Jesus Christ, as the necessary principle on which I can make as the foundation for the Mercy of the Lord**, rather than being denied, for me this view makes itself felt strongly in these days in His inspirations. This is a certain matter of what remains for me to with Him, and in this sense it depends on me to lead to the end of the work of my resurrection and sanctification.³⁰⁸

2635: For Christ it was a victory: my resurrection, will it not also be for me?

I also have my bonds that I have to break: [cf. Breviary for Holy Saturday. Response to the 4th reading]: these are my natural inclinations, my passions. I have a very heavy stone to lift up, [Mk 16:4], my worthlessness in which I have lived up until now and have rendered habitual.

2636: I also have my invisible enemies of my salvation and perfection, who watch me carefully in order to ensnare me, and many other enemies: human respect, my lack of

³⁰⁶ Cf. *SpEx*, nn. 299; 312.

³⁰⁷ St. Gaspar Bertoni taps into the **integral mystery** of the Sacred Stigmata retained in the risen body of Jesus Christ.

³⁰⁸ **NB:** Fr. Bertoni seems strongly convinced here of the Resurrection of Christ as the Exemplary cause of our resurrection – and the foundation of God’s Mercy.

sincerity, friendships, unions, certain customs, certain occasions, certain commitments and attachments which up until now I have not have the strength to overcome. In the same church the priests of worldly life, or common, or are tepid. ***A man's enemies are those of his own household.*** [Mi 7:6].

But, notwithstanding the difficulties, now that the time has come, I must not further put off for a single moment to fulfill that which I have also promised, and in these very days, to God: to become truly holy: ***For He is risen, as He said!*** [Mt 28:6].

2637: A glorious life, a new life. To be transformed into that, through the reform of the interior and the exterior, bringing about a profound change. ***As Christ is risen from the dead,... so we also may walk in newness of life*** [Rm 6:4]. I need to begin with the interior renewal which is the more difficult and important.

2638: Mortification and the exercise of virtue. Christ has risen, no longer able to suffer: [also in me there ought to be a blessed insusceptibility to all the accidents of human life: ***For you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.*** [Col 3:3]. This would add a tranquility of an unalterable spirit, an admirable peace of heart, which springs from an entire mortification of our unregulated choices and by a perfect submission to god's will.

2639: Prayer. [to the characteristic of **clarity**, there should correspond in the priest, Christian Wisdom, which elevates him beyond all that is under the senses and the created world, and leads him to look upon God in Himself. From this there results a very clear and practical knowledge of all that brings order to our sanctification and perfection.

2640: Fervor in works. To the **agility** of Christ, there would correspond readiness and the fervor of a priest in order to work for good and to please God.

A life of vivid faith. To the characteristic of **subtlety** there would correspond a life according to the spirit, and the faith independent of the senses, and from the impressions of sensible objects.

This kind of life is the effect of spiritual death.

2641: Point 3. An immortal life: ***He dies now no more.*** [Rm 6:9].

My will is changeable, but there are means to render it strong, and I will apply myself to these with diligence. Look at the principles of my repeated activities, and put order to them.

I will find my difficulties, but God will give me His help. ***Behold the hand of the Lord is not shortened.*** [Is 59:1]. Such difficulties in persevering [proceed usually from two apprehensions: that of the length [of the life that remains to be spent in mortification and] the sheer difficulty of the undertaking. As for the length of life, it has to be reflected that we are uncertain whether tomorrow we will be still alive. The difficulty, then, lies solely in the principles. God will guide these with His wisdom, omnipotence, goodness. ***Just begin the undertaking, and all is accomplished.*** [St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 10, in Ep. To the Rom.* 5. t. 9, 313/ I D].

If in the past I might have had greater courage to overcome myself, now I would be enjoying the fruit of my efforts. ***How I have labored a little, and have found much rest to myself.*** [Si 51:35].

The years are passing. There is no time to be lost.

2642: SECOND PART

Point 1. Jesus Christ, after the resurrection never appeared to all the disciples together: on that day when He ascended into heaven, He gathered them all, and willed that all should see Him ascend into heaven, because He wanted to make us know that this is our final end and the goal to which we ought to aspire. If this is *de fide*, therefore, living in accord with this, I am no longer to tend toward anything but toward heaven. I must no longer set my sights on anything and in preference to all else, on anything other than heaven. I must no longer converse but with heaven in mind.

2643: All that is above the earth and which has no relationship than to the earth, from whatever source I might come to have it, I need to remain indifferent to this earth, or rather, all else ought to be nothing for me. *Let our hearts be fixed where the genuine joys are.* [Liturgy of 4th Sunday after Easter, Prayer]. And indeed, since this earth is only a passage-way, a river that passes on without ever stopping, and leads directly toward the sea, what interest need I take in all that I reject here. I see here much agitation, grandiose displays, pomposity, fortunes, places of honor, special distinctions, diversity of tasks, that no matter how obscure these are according to the world, they only lead to exciting worldly sentiments.

2644: But, about all this I can only comment as has a saint: All this is not God: all of this is not heaven, this is not my final end. Thus, I ought to be totally insensible to all of this, and not pay any attention to it. In what innocence and freedom of heart would such a disposition bring to me! I would live as a genuine priest, because I would live as a dead man in the world,, and like those ***of whom the world was not worthy.*** [Heb 11:38].

2645: Point 2. That perfect happiness that we ought to possess in the thought of possessing God, is nothing other than a kingdom prepared for me, etc. This truth of faith is sufficient to make me abandon the whole world. This has made me already leave the world and its pleasures, and certain undertakings, since I have been *called into the sort of the Lord*. Would I not be wretched were I to busy myself in something else?

[Call to mind the reasoning] of St. Bernard's brother].

2646: Where do my reflections usually tend, my affections, my pretensions? The Angels did almost violence on the Apostles to detach them from just contemplating the sky: I am totally opposite to all that. I happy is the soul of that priest which, detached from everything else, lives solely for heaven.

2647: Point 3. The condition and path to arrive at this.

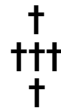
Christ entered with the **scars of His wounds**³⁰⁹: this is the price that I paid for this reign: nor can it be had for anything less. St. Teresa cries out: It is impossible, just impossible to obtain it in any other way.

What do I do for heaven? The life as a priest is a good cross. But if I do not carry out my exercises with that spirit that there should be in this, i.e., out of a motive of love for God, or for Paradise: I carry the Cross of Jesus Christ, but I do not follow Jesus Christ, nor will I ever arrive to where Jesus has now arrived.

2648: Woe to that soul who carries the Cross of Jesus Christ and yet, nonetheless, does not follow Christ! [St. Bernard]. What spirit motivates me? Without this the life of my ecclesiastical duties is no longer the way to heaven.

For whom will heaven be? For a fervent priest, more religious yet of mind and heart than merely of dress and name. Do I follow the same path that Jesus Christ took in order to reach the same term? Whatever duties I fulfill of my state in life, these are so many steps toward Heaven.

COLLOQUY: *Our Father.*



³⁰⁹ A further reference of St. Gaspar Bertoni here to the integral Stigmata.

2649:

NINTH DAY
Second Contemplation
TO OBTAIN THE LOVE OF GOD³¹⁰

St. Ignatius concludes his ***Spiritual Exercises*** with a meditation that he calls ***Spiritual Love***, to signify that this love does not consist in certain sensible enjoyments but in the most pure movements of the soul. And rightly the Saint ends with this: because his entire plan looking at nothing other than to have the soul die to itself and to sin, to make it live a new life and one that is all celestial. The end of the ***Spiritual Exercises*** must not be anything other than a perfect union with God, which we do not acquire in any other way that by loving Him with all our heart.

2650: *Before [anything else] it will be good to call attention to two points: that love ought to manifest itself in deed rather than in words; and that love consists in a mutual sharing of goods³¹¹ - as for example, knowledge, riches, honor and any good whatsoever.*

The Usual Prayer

Prelude 1. Just imagine and rather, just believe that you are standing before the Lord, the Angels and all the Saints, who intercede for me.

Prelude 2. Ask for the grace through which, knowing the greatness of the benefits already showed upon me, that I might give myself wholly to love, to worship and to the service of Him.

2651: Point 1. This is to call to mind these blessings.

Creation: He has loved you from all eternity, and consequently then there was nothing that you had that would oblige Him to love you. Therefore, either He looked on you in the nothing of nature, and since you were nothing then by nothing, there could be nothing in you that would have been worthy of love; or, He looked on you in the nothing of your grace, confused in the common mass of the children of Adam and as heir of his sin, and in this aspect as you were not yet, there was nothing in you than being worthy of hatred. And yet, He has loved you, finding in Him alone and in His goodness, the cause of loving you.

2652: It is therefore true that from the fact that God has been God He has never ceased in loving you, and in thinking of you. Alas, this is so for such a long a time as you are in this world, and that you have thought so little of God, and that perhaps you have not even yet begun to love Him.

This love that God has had for you has not been sterile or ineffective, but it came into play in time: firstly, in sending you a redeemer who could withdraw you from the tragic state of sin, and in the second place, to create you, in order to apply to you the merits of this Redeemer.

³¹⁰ Cf. ***SpEx***, nn. 230, ff.

³¹¹ These lines are from ***SpEx***, n. 230, Note.

And would we be content with just our words and affections? Furthermore this but very little and inadequate compared to the debt of our gratitude, it is subject to many deceptions. ***Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*** [1 Jn 3:18].

2653: Redemption. The Father has sent His Son.

Therefore, make a particular reflection on this benefit of Redemption. Consider how God has sent His own Beloved Son to this world to save it. ***God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son*** [Jn 3:16] *as though each man were God of God.* [S. Thomas]. *He so loved that it in some way seems that He hated Himself* [St. Bonaventure, The Stimulus of Divine Love 2, 2].

2654: The Son consecrated Himself for you.

Consider that this Man God, after the first moment of His life even to His death, so consecrated Himself for you and for your salvation, according to the order of His Father and the movement of His own love, that He did not travail for anything other than you. He became incarnate only for you, He did not work, He did not speak, He did not suffer except for you: in the last analysis, He has not lived, He did not die for any other motive than for you, not having chose that there would remain even a drop of His blood in His veins, because He had willed to shed it all for you. *He gave totally of Himself that He might purchase all of me.* [St. Bernard, Sermon on the Four-fold Debt], ***so that they who live may not live now to themselves but unto Him who has died [and rose] for us*** [2 Co 5:15].

2655: He applied to you the fruits of His Redemption.

Consider above all that He has offered for you to His Father the **Prayers of His Blood**, and although He died for all men and women, nonetheless by distinguishing you from an infinity of lost persons and among so many infidels who do not participate at all in the fruit of His death, He has prayed to His Father that the merits of His passion would be applied to you in a special manner. And it is in virtue of this prayer that there is seen the sincere sing of His special love for you that you have been called to the Catholic religion,, in preference over so many heretics who will e damned, because they had the sad lot of being born in error.

That you would not divide His love, the same is made for you both Creator and Redeemer. [St. Augustine] The Father wants all of our love, *by the right of creation*; the Son wants all our love, *by the title of Redemption*; the Holy Spirit wants it all, *in the name of justification*.

2656: Particular Benefits.

Go over again in your spirit all the particular graces that you have received in your whole life. Recognize the thousand touches of a special Providence on you, that has kept so many dangers from you that would have been too tragic for you, both in time and for eternity. Recall that He has preserved you both from sin and from the occasions of sin, or that He has not permitted that you, being committed to this, despite the designs of His Providence, and that you could have died in that tragic state, as so many others have, and even though they were much less culpable than you are, they

have become the subject of His eternal vengeance, while you are the subject of His mercies. If you are committed to the ecclesiastical state, think over again all those admirable resources of which God has made use to lead you to this, and there recognize the thousands of effects of his paternal goodness.

2657: With intimate affections, I will consider how much for my sake the most benign Lord has done and suffered – how much He has communicated to me of His treasures. He has given us His grace, parson, adoption, inheritance: ***how has He note also with Him, given us all things?*** [Rm 8:32]: faith, hope and love.

And consider that, according to his divine decree and good will, chose to Give Himself to me, to the extent He can. *He acted so that He would be loved, He gave Himself in merit, handed Himself over as nourishment, served Himself as the reward.* [St. Bernard].

2658: *Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of my self:*

*Take, Lord, and accept all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Though have given all to me. To You, O Lord, return it. All is Yours, dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is sufficient for me.*³¹²

2659: Point 2³¹³. Consider in the second place that God not being content to being given in some manner He Himself to you through so many benefits, He give Himself even each day to all creatures, giving them existence, life and all the perfections which they have. Accustom yourselves, then, to look upon God in His creatures, since He is there 'in effect', and by consequence, giving to you His creatures, He also gives Himself to you.

2660: He is in His creatures 'by essence' which is more intimate to their being than your soul is to your body. He is there 'by His power', since not only does He give them the power to operate, but He operates more than they do themselves, operating as the principal cause, in a manner that it is more God who shines there in the sun, than the sun does in itself, which warms you in that fire which is fire itself, that He nourishes you by His goodness and providence, governing these creatures, applying them to your services, directing all their actions toward you and for you. If He give s light to the sun, this is only to illumine you; if He gives warmth to the fire, this is only to warm you; if He gives enjoyment to food, this is just to nourish you.

³¹² This entire number is the Latin rendition, word for word of: ***SpEx, n. 234***. This contains the oft-quoted Ignatian Prayer, ***Suscipe***.

³¹³ *Ib.*

2661: From these three ways in which God is found in all things, you will draw three conclusions.

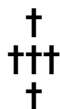
- First: if God is rendered present to you in all creatures, you should force yourselves to render yourselves present to Him in all creatures, to look to Him, and to seek for Him, even there.

- Second: You should not employ these creatures other than for the glory and service of God, and as He does not operate in them other than for you, you should not operate with them other than for Him.

- Third: When you experience the good effects of the operations of these creatures, for example, the beauty of the light, the comfort of warmth, the flavor of food, you ought to attribute all this to this God and not to creatures, and to regard that it is more like God Who benefits you, than creatures do.

2662: Thus you ought to nourish an extreme recognition of all the good that you have received, and giving thanks often to God and for you and for so many ingrates who never think of these things at all, but you ought to give much attention never to abuse any of them – either by attaching yourself to them too much, or by making more use of them as instruments of your sins. This would be supreme ingratitude: to turn the benefits of God against God Himself. Lastly, you owe to Him therefore to offer a sacrifice of these creatures themselves, depriving yourself of them out of love for Him.

Let us therefore love God, because God has first loved us. [1 Jn 4:19].



2663:

Father Colombiere, Retreat

Three truths:

1. That God is in all creatures.
2. That He is all that in them there is found that is good.
3. That He does all the good that we receive from them.

The king of glory serves me in all times with such application.

And it seems to me to see that king of glory of majesty, applied to keep us warm in those swaddling clothes, to refresh us through the air, to nourish us with those foods, to bring us joy through happy sounds, and in the delicious objects, to produce in me all the movements necessary for life and for activity.

Oh what marvels! And who am I, o my God, to be so served by You in all times with such diligence, and in all things with such dedication and love?

2664: As a governor has everything work throughout the realm for his king. In the same manner, he operates in all creatures. But all this is geared toward me, as a zealous and vigilant governor, what has everything work in all the places of the reign for his king.

And this he does for all men and women. And that which is even more admirable is that God does this for all men and women, even though no one thinks of it, except that

select soul, a few holy souls. It is necessary that at least I should think of Him and be grateful for it all.

2665: This is principally for the loving just. I imagine that as God has His glory as the final purpose of all His acts, He does all these things principally for the love of those who think of Him, and that in this, they admire His goodness, that they thank Him and that from this, they find the reason to love Him.

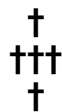
Others may rejoice in this by accident. Others receive the same goods either by accident or by good luck, as would be when a celebration would be held for a person, an evening, that a thousand other persons enjoy this same pleasure, because they happen to be in the house where the person is for whom the celebration is held. To this may be tied in what God said to st. Teresa that even if God had not made the world, for the love of her alone, He would have created it.

2666: Therefore, recollection. I reflected that the offices that God with the means of His creatures renders us, ought to hold us in a great confusion and recollection.

See who serves us. When we are served by a groom, we receive often his service, while he is in our service, he may be engaged in other things: as he speaks with another person, when he sleeps, etc. But if a qualified person lowers himself to wish to serve us, certainly this would draw our careful attention. ***Lord, do You wash my feet?*** [Jn 13:6]. This is admirable for one who has understood just a little what God is and just who we are.

2667: The occupation of God: to refer all the actions of creatures. Our occupation: to thank Him always and to praise Him.

God refers continuously being to us, life, the actions of all that He has created in the universe. This is His occupation in nature. Ours ought to be to receive always that which He sends us from all sides, and to return it all to Him, to return to Him by praising Him and thanking Him, recognizing that He is the Author of all things.



2668:**THE LAST MEDITATION****The Love of God in communicating His Glory to us³¹⁴****Preparatory Prayer**

Prelude 1. Our God isn't content in communicating Himself to us with His gifts in this life, but He wants to communicate to us His glory and beatitude in the next life. Christ our Lord in the Apocalypse declared the greatness of His glory, proposing seven rewards to those who conquer.

There are those who conquer the devil and his temptations; the flesh and its passions, the world and its vane honors; tyrants and their persecutions; themselves and their own will with all its choices, mortifying oneself constantly until death. And always keeping in proportion the reward to the victory.

2669: Prelude 2. Imagine that you see the heavens opened, as on the Lord's Day St. John in the Apocalypse, and Christ our Lord with seven crowns in hand, most splendid. And all the saints, and Mary, who give us courage, and invite us and excite us to gain it.

Prelude 3. Ask for the grace to be able to conquer with Christ, for the sake of reigning with Christ.

2670: OUTLINE of the Meditation:

1. For those who imitate the first Christians and overcome the relaxation of the world, [here awaits for them in reward] **the tree of life.**
2. Those who do not fear the worldly, they overcome i.e., the fears of the world: **such is not hurt by the second death.**
3. Those who flee the worldly and overcome the party of the world, they will have as their reward, **the hidden manna.**
4. Those who conquer the worldly, i.e., the philosophy of the world, will have **power over the nations.**
5. Those who confirm the faithful, and they overcome the dangers of the world: **is to be vested in white robes.**
6. Those who overcome the diffidence of the world, they will become **a most firm column.**
7. Those who overcome the tepidity of the world, **will be enthroned.**

2671: THE FIRST REWARD. Beatitude in the soul will pertain to those who persevere in their first fervor, of their life or of the first Christians, or return there through penance; **do the first works.** [Apoc 2:5]. **To him who overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of my God.** [Ib. v. 7]. This is the reward of those ecclesiastics who will return to the fervor of the first priests and faithful of the Church, corresponds this reward: **Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill** [Mt 5:6]

³¹⁴ Refer back here to Fr. Stofella's comments presented in his **Introduction** to this course of *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 4.

2672: *The Tree of Life*, is God, His blessed essence.

The fruits of the tree are the works that proceed God, either within Himself, such as the generation of the Word by way of knowledge, and the production of the Holy Spirit, by way of love. Or, those works outside Himself, such as Creation and the Government of the world, the sanctification and the glorification of the Blessed.

Of Life. God always lives in Himself and is the same infinite life: ***In Him was life***, Jn 1:4. He is the font of life: the life of nature, of grace, of glory and of eternal life. ***For with You is the fountain of life***. [Ps 35:10]. If these fruits are high off the ground, climb the tree, and God will help you to do it with the light of His glory: He has lowered Himself, bent down, emptied Himself in order to raise us up.

Which is in the paradise of my God [Apoc 2:7]: i.e., in heaven, where this tree produce its delights proper to God. God produces of Himself this beatitude. God is His Paradise.

Enter into the Joy of your Lord, [Mt 25:21].

2673: [We will achieve this joy] by means of the clear vision of God and the humanity of Christ. ***This is eternal life that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent***. [Jn 17:3]

If the body has its food, the mind as well as its, and it is the truth: not that created which does not take away hunger, but the eternal truth.

The fruit of this tree will be converted in so many trees of life that are nourished from it: ***we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is***. [1 Jn 3:2]. ***On both sides of the river was the Tree of Life, yielding its fruit*** [Apoc 22:2], of inexplicable joys.

This is the condition to merit the reward in which there is victory: ***You have left your first charity Be mindful, therefore, from whence you have fallen and do penance, and do the first works***, [Apoc 2:4, ff.]. [I live on earth] ***like a tree which is planed near the running waters***, [Ps 1:3]. Graces, meditating *so that you will live in heaven near the river*, [Apoc. 22:1], Glories.

2674: SECOND REWARD. Bodily beatitude for those who are faithful in all the temptations and persecutions even unto death. ***He that shall overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death***. [Apoc 2:11].

Those who let themselves be overcome by the devil or by his ministers, out through fear, or through weakness, even though they might for a time escape from the first death, they will incur the second.

2675: *Whoever conquers, will be hurt somewhat by the first death*, like the Martyrs; *but will not be hurt by the second death*. ***Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life***. [Apoc 2:10]. Therefore, to be exact, *one is not hurt neither by the first death*. This, rather, helps, because it serves as a passage into eternal life. ***The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them*** [Ws 3:1]. St. Ignatius the Martyr once wrote: *Let the brothers*, etc.

On the day of judgment [then the conquerors] will also be free of the first death of the body, rising up to a glorious life. In this, the second death has not power [cf. Apoc 2:11].

2676: THIRD REWARD. The Beatitude for those pleasures for those who resist their enemies and flee from their company.

I know where you dwell, where the seat of Satan is; and you hold fast My Name and have not denied My faith. [Apoc 2:13]. St. Polycarp could not stand the heretics. [St. Jerome, Concerning the Most Illustrious Men.17. t. 2, 843]. St. John in the bath [St. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 3,3, 4. MG 7, 853].

To him that overcomes, I will give the hidden manna and will give him a white counter, and in the counter, a new name written which no man knows but he that receives it. [Apoc 2:17].

The hidden manna. Manna. The divinity contains within itself eminently all the tastes of the senses, riches, honors, friends, and the like. *Having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste.* [Ws 16:20].

Hidden to men on earth. O how great is the multitude of Your sweetness, O Lord which you have hidden for them that fear You! [Ps 30:20]. *I confess to You, Father...because You have hidden these things form the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to little ones.* [Mt 11:23].

2677: A white counter. And this is the testimony, certainly internal, of his approbation, in order to enjoy God for all eternity, without fear of losing Him. He will receive it the day of judgment. *Come, blessed, etc. Possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* [Mt 25:34]. To those who will join up with His enemies there will be given the black stone: *Depart from Me, accursed ...* [ib. v. 41].

A New Name. [These are] *the brothers of Christ and as the coheirs of Christ. New, [because it is given] to those extracting the ancient lot because the elect does not know, whether by love, etc.* [Si 9:1] [God gives] *to him whom He predestined from eternity and in time He has called them into the lot of God.*

Which no man knows but he that receives it. [Apoc 2:17]. *This inheritance is despised by those who do not know about it, and unknown to the lovers of this world, experienced by the Faithful, who think as something outstanding which God prepares for His friends.*

2678: FOURTH REWARD. This will be given to those who overcome Jezebel [cf. Apoc 2:20], i.e., heresy with its seductive yearning and with its high philosophy. *Those who have not known the depths of Satan.* [ib., v. 24]. *I will meditate on you in the morning,* [Ps 62:7]. The sublime thoughts are still those of the heretics, of those already condemned, fomented now by the devil, in order to nourish their blindness and pride.

And he that shall overcome and keep my works unto the end, [Apoc 2:26], conserving Himself faithful to my party. *These are My works.*

For this purpose the Son of God appeared, that He might destroy the works of the devil. [1 Jn 3:8].

I will give him power over the nations, And He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and as the vessel of a potter, they shall be broken, as I have also received of My Father ... [Apoc 2: 26, ff.]. On the day of judgment, *I will receive the assessor as*

victor. *The Saints will exult in glory, and , and their swords will cut n two sides, and so forth, **Ad I will give them the splendid morning star.** [Apoc 2:28; 22:16], **they shall shine as the brightness for all eternity** [Dn 12:3; Ps 149: 5 f.].*

2679: FIFTH REWARD. Honors conceded to those who ***strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die.*** [Apoc 3:2], i.e., *the rest of the faithful people being tried in the faith.*

He that shall overcome, shall thus be clothed in white garments, [Apoc 3:5] *which is the color of joy and triumphal honor. **And I will not blot his name out of the book of life,** ibi, for honor will not be fragile, but eternal. **And I will confess his name before my father and before His Angels.** [v. 5].*

2680: SIXTH REWARD. With stability granted to those *who have kept the word of my patience.* [Apoc. 2:10], not putting aside from myself those afflictions of my Church. ***I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more.*** [v.12]. *These are those columns if the Church, and they will be most firm columns in heaven. **And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven...and my new name.** [ibi].* *Worshippers of the Father, imitators of the Son, members of the Church: who will bear these insignia in the militant Church, and they will be retained in the triumphant Church.*

2681: SEVENTH REWARD. It will be conceded to those who will conquer tepidity.

There is thus a return to the first condition. ***To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in my Throne,*** [A[pc. 3:21]

To sit: indicates quiet after travail. In the beauty of peace [Is 32:18]. ***That they may rest from their labors,*** [Apoc.14:13]. Not standing as a servant, but with majesty, as a great one in the realm.

With Me signifies with a great familiarity, as a friend.

In My Throne: with sublime honor. ***You are gods and all of you the sons of the Most High.*** [Ps 81:6], with that excellency which excited Lucifer, but he did not obtain it. ***I will ascend into heaven: I will exalt My throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant,*** [Is 14:13]. ***He has put down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted the humble.***

2682: CONCLUSION: ***He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*** [Apoc 3:22]

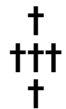
*Whoever has faith, that he might believe,,: it is a living faith, for otherwise **they have ears and hear not:*** [Ps 113(115):6].

They hear what they guard. God speaks with deeds: we respond with deeds. Just as the speaking of God is His deed, our response means to cooperate.

What the Spirit: not the devil, not the flesh, etc. *Men believe the devil, they believe the world, they believe the flesh: it is only to the God of truth that credulity is denied.*

Is saying to the Churches: first He speaks with us, we who are the first and the principals.

He who hears, let him say: Come! [Apoc. 22:17], with the voice and with example.



2683:**REMEMBRANCES FOR THE *Spiritual Exercises***For the heart:

1. Particular examen
2. General examen
3. Meditation
4. Read the Proposals every month on Retreat Day.
5. Annual [general] confession

2684: For the Mind:³¹⁵

1. **[Sp. Ex. 353:] The First Rule.** With all judgment of our own put aside, we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church.

2685:

2. **[Sp. Ex. 363.] The Eleventh.** We ought to praise both positive theology and scholastic theology. For just as it is more characteristic of the positive doctors, such as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest to stir up our affections toward loving and serving God our Lord in all things, so it is more characteristic of the scholastic teachers, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, and so on to define and explain for our times the matters necessary for salvation, and also to refute and explain all the errors and fallacies. For the scholastic teachers, being more modern, can avail themselves of an authentic understanding of Sacred Scripture and the holy positive doctors. Further still they, being enlightened and clarified by divine influence, make profitable use of the Councils, canons, and decrees of Holy Mother Church.

2686:

3. **[Sp. Ex. 365:] The Thirteenth** To keep ourselves right in all things, we ought to hold fast to this principle: What I see as white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it. For we believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Spouse, there is one same Spirit, Who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord of ours who gave the ten commandments that our holy Mother Church is guided and governed.

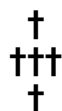
³¹⁵ **NB:** Paragraphs ## 2684-2686 are St. Ignatius' Rules, *Sentire Cum Ecclesia*, nn. 1, 11, and 13. There will be a fuller explanation in the Appendix that follows on the next page.

2687:

4. The Definition of the Council of Florence [Denz. 687]³¹⁶:

We likewise define that the holy Apostolic See, and the Roman Pontiff, hold the primacy throughout the entire world; and that the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of blessed Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and the true Vicar of Christ, and that he is the head of the entire Church, and the father and the teacher of all Christians; and that full power was given to him in blessed Peter by our Lord Jesus Christ, to feed, rule, and govern the universal Church; just as is contained in the acts of the ecumenical Councils and in the sacred canons.

5. Be subject to your Pontiff, and accept him as the parent of your soul.



³¹⁶ This is a definition taken from the Council of Florence. The English translation is from: **Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma***. Translated by Roy J. DEFERRARI, from the 30th Edition of Henry Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*. Powers Lake ND 58773

APPENDIX

ST. IGNATIUS' RULES on *Sentire cum Ecclesia* [SpEx ## 352-370]A. SENTIRE CUM ECCLESIA³¹⁷The Missionary, Doctrinal Modality of Ecclesial Obedience [cf. CF # 2]

352: [RULES³¹⁸ FOR THINKING, JUDGING AND FEELING WITH THE CHURCH³¹⁹] TO HAVE THE GENUINE ATTITUDE ³²⁰, WHICH WE OUGHT TO

³¹⁷ St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, nn. 352-370: their conclusion. [*Ignatius of Loyola. Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works. The Classics of Western Spirituality. NY. Mahwah: Paulist 1991, George Ganss, SJ, pp. 211-214. [cf. Appendix 2 for Latin rendition]*]. This is the **Missionary Modality** for Ecclesial Obedience.

³¹⁸ In Ignatian terminology: **Rules**, i.e., guidelines, directives, norms, or suggestion, to be prudently applied; but not obligations [o.c., note on p. 429, referring to n. 100 on Constitution n. 210: **Reglas**: this is the first of five sets of such directives which Ignatius terms *Rules*, in the *Exercises*: those on eating [210-217]; on discernment of spirits, I [313-317]; and II [328-336]; on distributing alms [337-344]; and on maintaining a genuine filial attitude in the Church [352-370].

Each set of these rules was given not to all retreatants, but according to the needs and desires of individuals [cf. **Directory**, c. 38, n. 1]. In all these cases it is important to attend to what he means by **rules**.

The classical Latin **regula** has many meanings: [1] a measuring rod; [2] a pattern, model, example, measure of right and wrong; [3] an obligation, or law.

In ecclesiastical Latin, **regula**, [and the Spanish, **regla**] often meant a rule imposing an obligation. However, by **rules** in the five sets mentioned, Ignatius cannot mean rules imposing an obligation, since an exercitant has no obligation even to make the **Exercises**. Therefore, he has other meanings according to contexts, such as directives, guidelines, norms, suggestions, or models, as when he wrote that **Christ is our Model and Rule**. [n. 344].

³¹⁹ This is an attempt [admittedly, with limited success] to pack the meaning of Ignatius' lengthy title into a short one for handy reference. Longstanding endeavors in the same direction have been: **Rules for Thinking with the Church** and **Rules of Orthodoxy**. They are accurate, but incomplete, for his lengthy title in SpEx 352 involves far more than the realm of thought, or correct belief.

His own title is found in three formulations which illumine one another [cf. **SpEx MHS, pp. 374-375**]. Of the three, that in the Autograph, A, best reveals his whole thought; but it receives clarifications from P and V, as will be seen in subsequent notes.

These well known and influential Rules were in the manuscript of the **Exercises**, during their revision in Rome [1539-1541], and possibly during Ignatius' stay in Paris [1528-1535]. In either case, they reflect the Church's stormy situation which he knew by experience in both periods. Many people were justly clamoring for the Church's reform. Some of them pointed out the abuses respectfully and properly, but others acted irreverently and dangerously. For example, one group, the **Illuminati** in Spain, and others like them in Paris, was practicing a pseudo-mysticism which ignored the doctrinal accuracy and scorned the precisions of Scholastic theology.

MAINTAIN IN THE CHURCH MILITANT³²¹, WE SHOULD OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES.

353: The First Rule. With all judgment of our own put aside, we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church.³²²

A second group consisted of those openly heretical, such as the *Lutheranizers* in Paris.

In a grey area in between these two groups was a third, disgruntled Catholics and humanists who often gave reason to doubt whether their faith was still genuinely Catholic. They were critical of the Church, frequently uncharitable, sarcastic, or ambiguous. Erasmus is an example, with his captivating but mordant satires and exaggerations mocking the Pope, bishops, theologians, priests and nuns. Two years before Ignatius arrived in Paris, an edition of 20,000 copies of his *Praise of Folly* was exhausted. In 1526, the Sorbonne requested Parliament to condemn his *Colloquia*. In Rome, Ignatius contended with the persecutions stirred up by Landivar and the disgusted heretics, Mainardi, Mudarra and Barreda.

Most of these practices were contrary to Ignatius' temperament and typical procedures. For him, the Church was a **mother** and a **divinely established institution**, an **embodiment of the Kingdom of Christ**. Painfully aware of her defects, he loved her nonetheless and sought her renewal – but his tactics were **quiet, positive** and **constructive**. They aimed chiefly at interior reform of individuals through **conversations** and his *Spiritual Exercises*, and eventually they blossomed into his Society of Jesus with its educational system, foreign missions, and other ministries.

He placed these rules about the Church at the very end of his *Exercises*, and in them he is not argumentative or polemical. He is content to give calm counsel. He intended the rules precisely for an exercitant who for a month had been gazing in love on Christ, contemplating his calls for help in spreading his Kingdom and his example, and was now about to return to ordinary life, perhaps among heretics, or weak Catholics. Polanco states in his *Directory* that these rules are given as antidotes 'to those things which the heretics of our time, or those showing affinity to their doctrine, are prone to attack or scorn... Moreover they serve not only to keep such an exercitant from erring in speaking privately or writing publicly in a manner other than proper, but they also help him to discern whether the statements and writings of others are departing from the Catholic Church's manner of thinking and speaking, and to advise others to be on their guard.

Many of Ignatius' topics and details are as applicable in our day as in his, but many too are rather obsolete in our vastly changed circumstances. What is most important for any person now is to catch the **underlying tenor of a loyal attitude of his, or her own, and by it guide oneself and others to live and work in loving loyalty to the Church, Christ's Spouse and our Mother.**

Here is a brief bibliography:

AaVv, *Una lectura actual de las reglas para Sentire cum Ecclesia*, ROME: CIS 1983.

CORELLA, SJ, Jose', *Sentire la Iglesia. Comentario as las reglas ignacianas para el sentido verdadero de Iglesia. Mensajero.Sal Terrae* 1988

GANSS, 'Thinking with the Church': The Spirit of Ignatius' Rules. *The Way. Supplement* 20 [1973]

³²⁰ *Sentido*: sense, reason, feeling and many other meanings, is often used by Ignatius with nuances of their own. Frequently, as here, it means cognition which is basically intellectual, but is savored so repeatedly that it becomes also deeply emotional and 'satisfies the soul'. Thus, it becomes a habitual attitude of mind, a frame of reference instinctively used to guide one's life.

³²¹ *Militant*: i.e., the Church on earth, with the human defects found in many of her popes, bishops, priests and other members.

354: The Second. ³²³ We should praise Confession to a priest, reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament once a year, and much more once a month, and still more every week, always with the required and proper conditions.

355: The Third. We should praise frequent attendance at Mass; also, chants, psalmody, and long prayers inside and outside the Church; and further, the schedules setting the times for the Divine Office as a whole, for prayers of every kind, and for all the canonical hours.

356: The Fourth. We should strongly praise religious institutes, virginity and continence, and marriage, too, but not as highly as the former.

357: The Fifth. We should praise the vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and vows to perform other works of supererogation which conduce to perfection. We should remember, too, that just as a vow is made in regard to matters which lead to evangelical perfection, so vows ought not to be made with respect to matters that withdraw one from it, such as to enter business, to get married, and the like.

358: The Sixth. We should praise relics of saints, by venerating the relics and praying to the saints. We should extol visits to stational churches, pilgrimages, indulgences for jubilees and crusades, and the lighting of candles in churches.

359: The Seventh. We should praise precepts of fast and abstinence, for example, in Lent, on Ember Days, Vigils, Fridays and Saturdays; also penances, not only interior but also exterior.

360: The Eighth. We ought to praise the ornamentations and structures of churches, also images, and their veneration according to what they represent.

361: The Ninth. Lastly, we should praise all the precepts of the Church, while keeping our mind ready to look for reasons for defending them, and not for attacking them in any way.

363: The Tenth ³²⁴. We ought to be more inclined to approve and praise the decrees, recommendations and conduct of our superiors³²⁵ than to speak against

³²² This Rule is the fundamental principle underlying all the rest. It is developed by three groups of directives, which follow, and the Rules indicate. In no other place in the *Exercises*, does Ignatius so fully reveal his concept of the Church; true Spouse of Christ, our Mother, and hierarchical. But his concept is richer still. Elsewhere he describes her as Christ's Kingdom to be spread [91-95]; the community of the faithful [177]; Roman [Sp Ex 353]. And as Christ's Mystical Body governed on earth by His Vicar, from whom all authority descends through hierarchically ordered superiors [CSJ 7, 603, 666, 736].

³²³ Group I: Rules 2-9, gives suggestions for establishing an attitude on the devotions and way of life of loyal Catholics.

them. For although some of these acts are not or were not praiseworthy, to speak against them either by preaching in public or by conversing among the ordinary people would cause more murmuring and scandal than profit. And through this the people would become angry at their officials, whether civil or spiritual. However, just as it does harm to speak evil about officials among the ordinary people while they are absent, so it can be profitable to speak of their bad conduct who can bring about a remedy.

363. The Eleventh. We ought to praise both positive theology and scholastic theology.³²⁶ For just as it is more characteristic of the positive doctors, such as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest to stir up our affections toward loving and serving God our Lord in all things, so it is more characteristic of the scholastic teachers, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, and so on to define and explain for our times the matters necessary for salvation, and also to refute and explain all the errors and fallacies. For the scholastic teachers, being more modern, can avail themselves

³²⁴ **Group II: Rules 10-12:** builds an outlook in regards to superiors in the Church, respectively in regard to jurisdiction, learning and sanctity. The fundamental principle of this group is in Rule 10: Be more inclined to praise than to blame.

³²⁵ **Mayores** means here and in other places, our superiors, the officials or authorities both ecclesiastical and civil.

³²⁶ In the 1500's many humanists and reformers were reacting against the scholastic teachers and their methods, often with scorn, and putting more stress on Scripture, sometimes taken alone, or sometimes along with the Fathers. They set scholastic and positive theology in opposition, but Ignatius saw the good in both and presented the two as complementary. Thus through his **Exercises**, [363] and his colleges and universities, a widespread influence on the teaching and study of theology. On scholastic and positive theology, cf. CSJ 366, and its note here:

Ignatius names Sts. Augustine and Gregory as positive doctors, and Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure as scholastics. Scholastic theology was classified as speculative. By inductive and deductive methods and means it sought deeper understanding of God's revelation as found in Scripture and tradition. It was **faith seeking understanding** and in the 12th and 13th centuries it was summed up through such works as the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard [1158] and the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas [+ 1274].

These works fostered devotion as well as knowledge, and presented God's whole redemptive plan. They furnished a comprehensive outlook by which persons could guide their lives. In the 1300's and 1400's, however, many scholastic teachers fell too often into a decadent dialectical of formalism. Their multiplied distinctions became irrelevant to the lives of ordinary people.

However, throughout the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, Catholic scholars took care in studying the Fathers, whom Ignatius terms the **holy and positive doctors**. [Sp Ex 363]. During his 16th century, Catholic protagonists, too, alongside the Protestants, were developing the study of Scripture, the Fathers, canon law, and other sources of Catholic belief. Their methods became known as 'positive theology', and Ignatius was among the early writers to use this term. He saw the good in both scholastic and positive theology and presented the two as complementary. This thought of his is expressed briefly in SpEx 363 and is prescribed for his colleges and universities in CSJ nn. 351, 353, 366, 446, 464, 467. Thus through his **Exercises** his attitude exerted for centuries a wide-spread influence on the teaching and the study of theology.

of an authentic understanding of Sacred Scripture and the holy positive doctors. Further still they, being enlightened and clarified by divine influence, make profitable use of the Councils, canons, and decrees of Holy Mother Church.

364: The Twelfth. We ought to be on our guard against comparing those of us who are still living with the blessed of the past.³²⁷ For no small error is made when one says, for example, 'He knows more than Augustine', or 'He is another St. Francis, or even more', or, 'He is another St. Paul in goodness, holiness and the like.'

365: The Thirteenth³²⁸ To keep ourselves right in all things, we ought to hold fast to this principle: What I see as white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it.³²⁹ For we believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Spouse, there is one same Spirit, Who governs and guides us for he salvation of our souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord of ours who gave the ten commandments that our holy Mother Church is guided and governed.

366: The Fourteenth. It is granted that there is much truth in the statement that no one can be saved without being predestined and without having faith and grace. Nevertheless great caution is necessary in our manner of speaking and teaching about all these matters.

367: The Fifteenth. We ought not to fall into a habit of speaking much about predisposition. But if somehow the topic is brought up on occasions, it should be treated in such a way that the ordinary people do not fall into an error, as sometimes when they say: 'It is already determined whether I shall be saved or damned, and this cannot now be changed by my doing good or evil.' Through this they grow listless and neglect the works which lead to good and to the spiritual advancement of their souls.

368: The Sixteenth. In the same way we should notice with caution that by speaking much and emphatically about faith, without any distinction and

³²⁷ This is a caution against premature admiration of living persons even over canonized saints. In Ignatius' experience, e.g., with Landivar, Mudarra and Barreda in Rome in 1538, some living preachers were highly esteemed for a while but were disguising their heresy.

³²⁸ **Group III, Rules 13-18 treats of doctrinal topics**, some of them controverted often passionately, and a manner of expounding them in the troubled 16th century. Again, the group begins with the fundamental principle in Rule 13, which is in substance a rephrasing of Rule I. [353].

³²⁹ **Determina**: in the meaning of *decide*. Some texts use *defines it [definierit]*. Notice that Ignatius does not state that we ought to believe that white is black. Instead he writes, *what I see, as white, I would believe to be black*; and the Latin Vulgate in 1548 translated this by *what appears to my eyes as white*. In other words, the error would be in my hasty subjective judgment and not in the Church, because the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit and cannot err in her solemn definitions. This statement seems to be an allusion to Erasmus, who had written: 'Nor would black be white if the Roman Pontiff should pronounce it so, which I know he will never do.'

explanation, we may give the people an occasion to grow listless and lazy in their works, either before or after these persons have a faith which is informed by charity.

369: The Seventeenth. Similarly, we ought not to speak so lengthily and emphatically about grace that we generate a poison harmful to freedom of the will. Hence, one may speak about faith and grace as much as possible, with God's help, for the greater praise of His Divine Majesty; but not in such ways or manners, especially in crimes as dangerous as our own, that works and free will are impaired or thought worthless.

370: The Eighteenth. It is granted that we should value above everything else the great service which is given to God because of pure love Nevertheless we should also strongly praise fear of his Divine Majesty. For not only is filial fear something pious and very holy, but so also is servile fear. Even if it brings a person nothing better or more useful, it greatly aids him or her to rise from mortal sin, and once this is accomplished, one may more easily advance to filial fear, which is wholly acceptable and pleasing to God our Lord, since it is inseparably united with love of Him.

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