

THE MINISTRY of the WORD OF GOD

in St. GASPAR BERTONI



An ECHO of St. IGNATIUS of LOYOLA

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Divine Mercy Sunday, 2017

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PRESENTATION:**The Apostolic Missionary Mandate**

You have one Teacher, Christ, the Lord, and He is in heaven ... [Mt 23:8, ff.]

It is not you who will be speaking, it is the Holy Spirit [cf. Mk 13:11]

For the Holy Spirit will teach at that moment what to say... [Lk 12:12]

I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you... [Jn 14:25, f.]

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PART ONE – BIBLICAL

A. JESUS AS WISDOM¹

1. Jn is distinguished by presenting Jesus as the Father's Exegete, Revealer, descending to offer the Way, the Truth and the life. The evangelist has capitalized on an identification of Jesus as personified Divine Wisdom, as is evident in the OT. Jesus is the fulfillment of the OT of exodus, Moses, David and Solomon – He is the ultimate fulfillment of OT Prophecy, and the entire Tradition that runs through the Wisdom Literature. Wisdom covers a wide spectrum of material and proves to be the most cosmopolitan of all the traditions - sharing with Egypt, Sumeria, Babylon. Later, the Wisdom writers were perhaps the most open to Hellenism,

2. James is a Christian Wisdom Book – dealing with practical ethics. It is the Wisdom Sages that provide the concept of the *Logos*. Generally in the OT, Wisdom is a female figure and there are many poems dedicated to her in the OT.² In this view, Lady Wisdom existed with God from all eternity – from the beginning, before the 'constitution of this world' [cf. Pr 8:22, f.; Si 24:9; Ws 6:22]. More than in comparison: Jesus was with the father before the world existed [cf. 17:5] – Wisdom, like the *karakter* of Hebrews [cf. 1:1, ff.] is a pure emanation of the Glory of the Almighty [cf. Ws 7: 25]. Thus, Jesus shares the father's glory which He manifests to humanity [cf. Ws 7:26] –she is preferable to all other light [cf. Ws 7:10, 29] – for Jn, God is Light [cf. 1 Jn 1:5] – thus Jesus who proceeds forth from God is the Light of the World [cf. Jn 1:4, f.; 8:12; 9:5] – and in the end, will replace all natural light [cf. Rv 16:23].

3. Wisdom descends from the heavens to be with humanity [cf. Pr 8:31; Si 24:8; Ba 3:37; Ws 9:10; Jas 3:15]. Thus is the trajectory also of Jesus [cf. Jn 1:14; 3:31; 6:38; 16:28]. The final return of Jesus to the Father is a parallel also in the OT. The purpose of Wisdom is to teach of the things above [cf. Jb 116, f.; Ws 9:16-28] – to communicate the truth [cf. Pr 8:7; Ws 6:22] – to give instructions on what pleases God and on how to do His Will [cf. Ws 8:4; 9:9, f.]. This will lead human beings to life [cf. Pr 4:13; 8:32-35; Si 4:12; 9:9, f.]. This will open up immortality [cf. [cf. Ws 6:18, f.]. All of this is what Jesus does in a perfect manner. The *I Am* statements of Jesus echo the OT Wisdom speaking in the first person singular. The Symbols of Wisdom are food [bread] and drink [water, wine] – she invites all to eat and drink [cf. Pr 9:2-5; Si 24:19-21; Is 55:1-3] – Jesus uses this symbolism for His revelation [cf. Jn 6:35, 51 ff.; 4:13, f.].

4. Wisdom is not satisfied handing out her gifts – but seeks to invite believers to come to her [cf. Pr 1:20, ff.; 8:1-4; Ws 6:16]. This is the Johannine Jesus being

¹ Raymond E. Brown, SS, *The Anchor Bible. The Gospel according to John [1-12]*. Introduction, Translation and notes. Garden City NY; Doubleday 1966, Introduction pp. CXII-CXXVII, *passim*.

² cf. Jb 28; Pr 1-9; Ba 3:9-4:4; Si 1; 4: 11-19; 6:18-31; 14:20-15:10; 24; Ws 1-9.

predicted – He walks along, seeking for Faithful Followers, Disciples [cf. Jn 1:36-38, 43] – seeks them out [cf. 7:28, 37] – crying out His invitation: *Come, follow Me!* Wisdom instructs her Disciples [cf. Ws 6:17-19] – they are her beloved children [cf. Pr 8:32, f.; Si 4:11; 6:18]. In Jn, Jesus calls His Disciples His children [cf. Jn 13:33]. Wisdom tests these disciples, forms them [cf. Si 6:20-26], until they love her [cf. Pr 8:17; Si 4:12; Ws 6:17, f.] – and they become the Friends of God [cf. Ws 7:14, 27]. Jesus urges His Disciples with His Words and Deeds [cf. Jn 15:3; 17:17], and tests them [cf. Jn 6:67] until they are indeed His Beloved Friends [cf. Jn 15:15; 16:27]. There are always those who will reject wisdom [cf. Pr 1:24-25; Ba 3:12; Is 52:2] – Jesus has this experience with those who reject Him [cf. Jn 8:46; 10:25]. Jn 6:63 shows the bankruptcy of mere human wisdom – the flesh is useless, only the Spirit can give life. Some will seek and find Wisdom [cf. Pr 8:17; Si 6:27; Ws 6:12] – others refuse to do so – and some day it will be too late [cf. Pr 1:28]. This is Jesus' effect on humanity [cf. Jn 7:34; 8:21; 13:33]. [Some of these parallels will be found with the Paraclete – cf. below].

5. Jn sharpens the historical perspective of Incarnate Wisdom, much more so than in the OT poems. The Wisdom concept is much invigorated by incorporating it into salvation history. This is found in the late OT wisdom books [cf. Si 24:23; Ba 4:1] – as these identify wisdom with the *torah* and Ws 10 illustrates the activity of Wisdom in the lives of Adam, Moses. Jn carries this OT Wisdom identification much further – seeing in Jesus the supreme example of Divine Wisdom active in history, and indeed Divine Wisdom itself.

6. Jesus indeed was a prophet – but displays a number of central characteristics. Synoptic passages are very close to the Wisdom found in Jn: Lk 21:15, Jesus promises wisdom enabling them to speak in their time. Lk 11:49 there is a saying of the 'Wisdom of God' – Mt 23:34 attributes this to Jesus Himself. Jesus is exalted over the Wisdom of the renowned Solomon [cf. Lk 11:31; Mt 12:42] Mk 10:24, finds Jesus addressing his burly apostles as children – the theme of Jesus coming into this world to call human beings is found in also three Syn. [vg. Mk 2:17, par.] as a Sage. He was most often addressed as Teacher – He gathered Disciples; He was questioned about the *torah* – He spoke in proverbs and parables. In later writings, the tendency is to emphasize even more the wisdom nature of Jesus' statements: Mt and Lk generalize the statements and make them wisdom sayings with a universal application: so, it is quite broadly accepted that the sapiential emphasis goes back to a relatively early stage in the formation of the gospel tradition. Jesus' teaching shows a certain continuity with the ethical and moral teachings of the sages of old.

7. A few NT passages in the Syn are very close to the wisdom strain in Jn. Lk 21:15, for example, Jesus promises to give the disciples that wisdom necessary to speak. Lk 11:49 speaks the Wisdom of God which is attributed to Jesus Himself in Mt 23:34] Jesus addresses His burly apostles as children [cf. Mk 10:24], paralleling Jn and

the OT Wisdom. Jesus has come into this world as Wisdom to call out to humanity [cf. Mk2:17, par.] the Wisdom style may be noted: *Everyone who comes to Me ...* - echoes Jn [5:40; 6:35, 45].

8. The most important such parallel in the Syn. is the Johannine Logion – Jesus is the revealer, the Son Who enables believers to know the Father [cf. Mt 11:25-27; Lk 10:21, f.]. Some theorize that this is more eschatological than sapiential in the original. There is enough Syn evidence to make one understand that the identification of Jesus with personified Wisdom was not the original creation of Jn.

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B. JESUS AS TEACHER

INTRODUCTION

The Crucified-Risen Lord: Illuminator and Educator³

[1] One of the diffused ideas of Patristic Soteriology, which thrusts its roots deeply into the NT theological conceptions, especially with Jn, is that of salvation by way of illumination. This is a view of soteriology which places its accent on the gift of New Knowledge, a sapiential understanding, which the work of divine revelation through the Word of God, diffuses into this world, particularly through human beings, determining deliverance from evil, ignorance and from the darkness of sin, seen as the communication of a truth which consists in moral rectitude in harmony with the observance of the Law.

[2] The *Didache* [9:3; 10:2] notes that God has saved us, especially by giving us a New Knowledge, the life and knowledge of faith and immortality through Jesus Christ, His Servant. Jesus is the *Illuminator*, Who offers us an immortal way of knowing, by redeeming us from the darkness of error and idolatry [2 Clem 4-7]. Through Christ, God has manifested to us the truth and the heavenly life. In 1 Clem [21:8] this immortal knowledge is imparted to humanity by Jesus Christ through His pedagogical activity through which he opens up the pathway to imitation and participation in His own Truth, delivering humanity from the darkness of error and death. Ignatius of Antioch, emphasizing against the Docetists the realism of His flesh Which has suffered for our sins and which the father in His goodness has raised up again [Smyrna 7], affirms the importance of the imitation of Christ, which does not consist solely in the observance of the moral law, but in the conformation, transformation of the believer into His Passion and Death Rom 6:3, Smyrna 4:2] and in His resurrection, which has

³ Marcello Bordonì *Gesù di Nazaret. Signore e Cristo. Saggio di Cristologia sistematica. 3. Il Cristo annunciato dalla Chiesa.* Herder/Lateran pp. 278-284, *passim*.

taken place as the prototype of that of all believers. In the Paschal Event, there does not emerge so much the idea of an expiatory sacrifice, but rather that of an example, a prototype, which inspires one to repentance and gives the grace to repent.

[3] In the group of apologists, soteriology is seen more from the perspective of the liberation of humanity from ignorance and error: their insistence on the Logos-Christology shows, in the Coming of Christ, the fulfillment of the illuminating action of the Word-Truth, which provides humanity with the salvific knowledge which delivers all from ignorance and from error in which the world had been enveloped by the demons. Thus, they show a certain synthesis between the soteriological inheritance of Jn, the Judaic speculations on the Word of God and those of the Hellenistic culture on the Logos. St. Justin shows how humanity, having forgotten the truth and being enveloped in ignorance and error, due to the Devil, experiences the urgency of re-discovering the light which comes from the Logos Who had become man. In Him there is resplendent the interest in the truth. Jesus Christ is therefore, the Mediator of Divine Revelation: *Logos and Nomos*.

[4] Among the more authoritative examples of the second century of this soteriology by illumination there is distinguished the thought of Irenaeus of Lyons. For him, it is to the knowledge of the faith that is derived from *revelation*, in the Johannine presentation, to which there is attributed a salvific function. In the unity of the divine Plan of salvation understood as a grandiose pedagogical process – God recomposes in humanity his image corrupted by sin, by educating each to a more elevated freedom and to a greater similarity with Him. The fulfillment of this work of revelation is realized through the flesh of Christ through which there is attained the knowledge of the Son and the manifestation of the Father.

[5] The Incarnation is the greatest theophany, through which the divinity becomes visible and tangible, in consenting to the knowledge of salvific faith. This however, as has already been noted at the beginning is seen as a temporal process culminating in the Passion and then in the exultation of this flesh. Soteriology as pedagogy appears as a process, inseparable from the Christology of Eschatology. In his anti-Gnostic polemic, Irenaeus in a particular manner gives emphasis to the flesh of Christ, that is able to undergo suffering – through this flesh the *impassible God*, suffers – offering to us a salutary instruction. The teacher who instructs about suffering would not be an authentic master if He only suffered in appearance. If He did not really suffer in truth, He would not have been the Font of any grace.

[6] The Truth of Salvation is fulfilled in the Truth of the Passion of His flesh. For Irenaeus, *pascha/pathos* are one reality and together they indicate the complexity of the suffering life of the Savior, as well as hinting at His Resurrection [cf. Rm 4:25] that redeem the world. There is emphasis on the unity of the Paschal Mystery. In this

mystery, there is also achieved redemption through revelation, the passing over from the invisible to the visible, already based on the integral mystery of the Incarnation. It is the Divine word Himself, which, according to His invisible condition, is spread throughout this universe, and then embraces its breadth and length and the heights and depths. The Crucifixion of the Son of God has thus been consummated in this manner, in these dimensions, as the Sign of the Cross has been made over the entire universe. Becoming visible in this way, the universe is thus drawn into His Paschal Mystery for the purpose of showing, thanks to its visible form, the action that He exercises in the invisible. Irenaeus' Christology therefore provides much space for a Soteriology by means of education, pedagogy and revelation – a Johannine model: this is worked out through the visibility of His flesh, which in the possibility of the Cross and in the exultation in the Resurrection, all reveals the divine glory.

[7] In this line of the Soteriology of Revelation is developed also at the beginning of the 3rd century in the thought of Hippolytus of Rome. For him, this mystery of God's Mercy is developed in an *economic* background in which the salvation of humanity takes place through the knowledge of God, by revelation, through the Law and the Prophets, until the moment of the appearance of the Word in this world, in order to teach all the truth in His assumed human flesh. This is the truth, also for Tertullian which the Christ has irradiated to humanity through His proclamation of the New Law and through His teachings which illuminate - Baptism is thus illumination. In this way, our death has been annulled by the Lord's Passion and our life re-established by His Resurrection.

[8] However, it is above all the Alexandrian School especially through Clement and Origen, there is much developed the theme of Christ the Illuminator and the *Pedagogue*. For Clement, in fact the salvific role of Jesus Christ is explained in that He is the Master, Rabbi, Who dispenses to humanity the authentic wisdom that leads to contemplation. It is so far that He is Master, that He is also Doctor of humanity, healing all – a role still attributed to the Eucharist: *say only the Word and my soul will be healed!* Thus, Jesus brings to human beings the illumination of Wisdom toward immortality. This is the path of Christ-Mystic of Redemption, in that by way of illumination, humanity has access to immortality. As a result, Clement does not develop the Paschal Event to any unique extent.

Even greater importance is attributed to the illuminating action of the Pasch by Origen. He, too, as Clement develops the Soteriological-mysticism according to which the Eternal *Logos*, speaking in a bodily form, authoritatively convokes to Himself those who are in the flesh in order to transform them to a likeness of the Word, in order to be able to exalt them in a manner that they might contemplate Him as He was before He became flesh. It is in contemplation that Origen sees the culmination of salvation. Thus, he comments in his writing on John's Gospel: blessed indeed are they who no

longer have any need of the Son of God, either as a Doctor Who heals the sick, nor even as a Redeemer: but who need Him as Wisdom, Word and Justice.

Beginning with this insight, the Passion of Jesus in itself is seen more as an event as the path which leads humanity, through a purified intelligence, is raised up over nature towards the contemplation of God Who deifies the redeemed. It is in this spiritual embrace of the Eternal Word with humanity that the genuine mystery of the Cross appears. The Divine Word, in fact, in order to purify our fallen flesh, into His purity – in order to transform our carnal body into His *pneumatic and incorruptible body*. He thus enflamed the material world with the spiritual fire of His holocaust and has elevated it to the sky. It was necessary for that wood to enkindle that fire, since the Passion of Christ in the flesh was fixed to wood. However, when he was suspended on the wood, the economy of the flesh came to an end. Since He arose, through His resurrection from among the dead, and went to heaven, where He directed His nature of fire. In truth, the holocaust of His flesh offered on the wood of the Cross has united earthly realities to those of heaven, the human to the divine. It is for this reason that the *kenosis* of Christ is full of wisdom and in it the illumination of God's revealing power appears at its greatest. For Origen, it is necessary to have the courage to say that the goodness of Christ is manifested in a greater manner, more divine and more in accord with the image of the Father, when paradoxically He humbles Himself in obedience even unto death and unto the death on the Cross, rather than if He had conserved as a good not to be surrendered, His quality with God, and refused to become a Servant for the salvation of the world.

The motive for the redemption by illumination which enjoyed a special development in the Alexandrian world, never was then absent from Patristic thought over the years, this aspect of redemption only served to fathom the more and to develop the soteriological theme presenting biblical revelation, in the Wisdom Literature and in Jn's theology. God saves humanity by enabling every person to have access to the Light-Wisdom of His Truth - however, this was not reduced to mere intellectual contemplation. This is a rich path in harmony with the TORAH-Truth ideal which in the NT is manifested also as Grace and Truth [Jn 1:17] which shines forth in the visible countenance of Jesus Christ, and is especially manifested as the Splendor of Glory in the exaltation of the Holy Cross. The progressive contemplation of the Light-Truth implies therefore a purification of humanity which only painfully is liberated from the darkness of error and in the Resurrection provides access to immortality. Thus, each person is called to be conducted into the Light, but only through the Cross toward Glory.

In the development of these ideals, originally biblical, Patristic thought made abundant use of that important Greek cultural conception: *paideia*. By means of this word, the classical world expressed human self-comprehension and which responds to

the fundamental question: how can any person arrive at his/her genuine and authentic being, true humanity and freedom? The life of *paideia* consists in the research, the life-long quest for a normative type of truth [known as the *paideutic type*] not assumed from the world of shadows of sense experience, but from the intellectual-spiritual world in which there is found the authentic truth of reality. Have discovered this model of perfection [known as the *paradigm*], each of the faithful is projected toward His imitation [*mimesis*]. This is not merely some moral imitation, as much as it is looked upon as assimilation into the normative prototype contemplated in the ICON/IMAGE. This Greek model of the *paideia* thus expresses a soteriological process of deliverance, liberation, which finds development in the study and imitation of the Eternal Logos. As a microcosm, each human being bears within the normative image and the purpose of the *paideia* which is meant to issue forth from his/her deepest self. However, due to humanity's subjection to the world of shadows and to the contemplation of matter, each person needs to be re-educated in order to discover the ultimate Truth of the Logos which is borne within.

This soteriological model from classical culture constituted for Christian antiquity an important comprehensive instrument for the elucidation of the meaning of salvation being presented as the *paideia of Jesus Christ*. Here the Church finds herself in the presence of a genuine and true cultural mediation, for an insertion of Christianity into a cultural system and into an image of history already constituted. The value of this intellectual model taken in the totality of all its component parts, rests on the fact that this is in its cultural origins that cannot be reduced to any simple moral redemption, or moral pedagogy in the modern sense. There is a profound unity between imitation/ assimilation that impedes any such reduction, by its facilitating the approach of that point of view according to which Christ is not primarily one more Teacher of Morality, but rather He is the Savior Who by means of the revelation which he brings presents the divine Proto-type Who works out the image of God in human beings and there brings a new dynamic-ontological participation of the human mind in truth.

It is true that Christian antiquity has usefully interpreted the sense of redemption in Jesus Christ in the pre-existing form of *Greek paideia*. However, there should not be misunderstood the rather notable corrections which precisely this same Christian original experience regarding salvation that the newness of Christianity brought to bear on the Greek model. The Christian experience broke the very framework of the cultural conception itself of the Hellenic *paideia*. Indeed, in Greek ontology the aspiration of humanity for the divine was considered rooted originally and naturally only in the spiritual substance of humanity. However, Patristic thought, in harmony with the *tradition of the faith*, shows rather its conditioning toward the transcendent and the free divine plan – lead each beyond oneself toward salvation - which has always been riveted in gratuity and novelty.

A further limitation of the model provided by the *Greek paideia* has been a certain anthropological dualism because of which the education of humanity coincides with liberation from the terrestrial and corporeal phenomenological realm surrendering more to the advantage of the quest for eternal values, opposed to the limitations of time, and resplendent in a world beyond time and history. The Patristic point of view, also here, in harmony with the NT sees the *paideia of Jesus Christ* under the light of a *liberating struggle*. This is not so much one merely opposed to the material cosmos, but rather against the Powers of Darkness which keep this world in slavery. It is through that weakening brought about by Jesus Christ as Victor, in the mystery of His death and resurrection, that human beings have access to that *assimilation* with the divine which is the ideal of each one's true identity as an Image of God.

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[C] Jesus as Teacher, and His Teaching⁴

Presentation

1. Christ came on earth to Teach
 - a. Doctor and Master, by Divine Disposition
 - b. The Source of His Competence to Teach
 - c. The Source of the Excellence of His Doctrine
2. His Teaching often Offensive and a Scandal
 - a. The Reason for this
 - b. The Father's Word: a challenge for humanity
 - c. Jesus' Prudence, Insistence in the Hard Sayings

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Presentation:

[1] As the Great High Priest, the Supreme Pontiff of the Church, it pertains to Him the office of teaching and preaching to humanity. Therefore, in treating of this matter, many would hold that it should be discussed in union with the teaching on Christ's Priesthood. This would better maintain the order set by St. Thomas⁵ - and furthermore, Jesus Christ did exercise this office principally in His mortal life, from the very moment that He began to make Himself known to His contemporaries. All of these approaches offer valuable insights.

[2] Here the matter will be considered directly in and of itself: it is good to show clearly that Jesus indeed had all the necessary requisites to be the perfect Doctor. In

⁴ F. Suarez, SJ, *Obras. III. Teología cristológica y mariana*. Vol. XIX Disputa 30. 'De Cristo Doctor y de Su Doctrina.' *Misterios de la Vida de Cristo*. Vol. 1. Madrid: BAC 1958, pp. 826-837, *passim*.

⁵ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 22.

this connection, one could happily study in this regard all that theologians teach us on the knowledge, grace, and innocence of His life. These are the qualities that constitute the perfect Teacher. Indeed Jesus Christ was super-abundantly endowed with those qualifications to make him the perfect Master of Divine Truth and Goodness.

[3] It can readily be established that Jesus always taught the truth. This is not only because He was God, but also because He was supremely intelligent and just in His humanity, and in His integrity, He simply could not teach anything else. Due to His supreme Wisdom, He could neither deceive, nor be deceived, also because of His supreme goodness and innocence. His main interest in all He taught was that truth and goodness that would lead to everlasting peace.

[4] He used every opportunity and all the tools available to Him in His time in history: He taught by word and deed; direct instruction and meditative reflection, in public and in private. No one ever spoke with the authority [Mk 1:22, par.] that he enjoyed in a unique manner.

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1. Christ came on earth to Teach

a. Doctor and Master, by Divine Disposition: Scripture makes it abundantly clear that the Heavenly Father of Mercy and Wisdom sent His only Begotten and most beloved Son on earth to be the Light of the Nations. The following texts need to be pondered:

... You will see your Teacher with your own eyes. Whether you turn to right or left, you will hear these words: 'this is the way, follow it...!' [Is 30:20].

... I will make You the light of the Nations so that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth ... [Is 49:6]

... I have made of You a Witness to the Peoples, a Leader and a Master of the nations ... [Is 55:4].

... The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh has been given to Me, for Yahweh has anointed Me. He has sent Me to bring the Good News to the poor, to bind up; hearts that are broken ... [Is 61:1, ff.].

... rejoice in Yahweh your God, for [He has given you a Teacher of Justice]... [Jl 2:23].

... When Jesus had finished instructing His twelve disciples, He moved on from there to teach and reach in their towns ... [Mt 11:1, ff.].

... Nor must you allow yourselves to be called 'teachers', for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. [Mt 23:8].

... This is My Son, the Beloved – My favor rests on Him. Listen to Him! [Mt 3:17; 17:5 – Baptism and Transfiguration].

... Jesus stood up to read ... [Lk 4:17, f.].

... You call Me Master and Lord, and rightly. So I am...! [Jn 13:13]

... I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth... [Jn 18:36, ff.].

Clearly, in the Divine Plan, divine Teaching was necessary for our salvation. For this to be realized, he ‘had’ to clarify for believers the path of salvation, by His Words and Deeds. Without genuine knowledge of the faith, and of the means necessary for salvation on how to reach its goals, no one could achieve it. It is for this reason, St. Gregory the Great⁶ teaches in this manner, there appeared God in the flesh, Who not only would redeem the world by His Paschal Mystery, but also with teach the world with His conversation and life-style. The Lord Himself, for this reason, refers to Himself as the *Good Shepherd*, because with His word and doctrine He nourishes His flock and gives His life for them. Among the many ‘reasons of convenience’ for the Incarnation, one of these was so that the very Wisdom of God, Who is the True Light [Jn 1:9], would be able to teach humanity and to point out the Way of Salvation.

b. The Source of His Power to Teach: the immediate reason, of course, is His Hypostatic Union – thus, He would be endowed to teach not only men and women of all ages, but even the Angels themselves. By reason of His Grace of Union, He is the Head of the Church, of the entire human race – consequently, He is able to influence all in a manner accommodated to each. Furthermore, by reason of this Union, He is the Supreme High Priest and Shepherd of the Church. It is essential that the Supreme Pontiff should be able to teach and illuminate His members.

As the God-Man the Lord Jesus alone has the inherent right to save and redeem humanity and by this same title, He may also teach all. This is a necessary means of salvation – as a result, Jesus Christ can oblige all human beings to listen to His teaching unto ever-lasting life, which he himself, as well as His Apostles, preached. This pertains to the power of excellence of Jesus Christ.

c. The Source of the Excellence of His Doctrine: the virtue, or faculty to teach, was greater in Jesus Christ than in any other person. This is so in the first place because in Jesus Christ there is greater knowledge and that this is in Him in the most sublime manner, which could be equaled by no other person. He holds this in a most perfect and connatural manner. Regarding what is proper in Him it is that of teaching what He never really had to ‘learn’ – while He did grow in wisdom and age, He was never really a disciple in anyone else’s school, other than the Truth of the Father. In

⁶ Pastoral, I, c. 3.

the first instant of existence His soul received the knowledge of the Word, and had God Himself as His Master. He clearly maintained: *My doctrine is not My own, but is that of the One who sent Me...* [Jn 7:16]. Because Jesus is one Person with two natures, the knowledge of both becomes the knowledge of His Person – all knowledge thus becomes connatural to Him. It is not so much that He ‘learned’ all He knew but He also ‘received’ perfect knowledge from His divinity.

In His divinity, He enjoyed from the Father the Divine Knowledge through His eternal generation – in this sense, perfect knowledge was communicated to him from the Eternal Wisdom:

... But the One who knows all knows [wisdom], He has grasped her with His own intellect ... He has grasped the whole way of knowledge and confided it to His servant, Jacob, to Israel His well beloved... [Ba 3:32, ff.]

... He, who comes from above, is above all others; ...He who comes from heaven bears witness to the things He has seen and heard... [Jn 3:31, ff.]

The second reason is because in Christ there is a greater holiness and purity of life [*Blessed are the pure ... they will see God*] – this contributes greatly to the service of a Doctor of truth and goodness: *... can one of you convict Me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe Me...? [Jn 8:46].*

The third reason for his authority and excellence as a Teacher is not only because He had the ability to teach exteriorly, by proposing the truth [which all good teachers are able to do], but rather by being illuminated interiorly and giving power to understand and present the most sublime mysteries, to which reason unaided can never attain. Lastly, it is also because of the manner in which He taught, that even the unlettered and the children, perhaps incapable to the most sublime realities, became almost sages in that they realized and understood what He was teaching.

The fourth source of His doctrinal excellence is that He did not only illustrate the understanding of His listeners, but that He was also uniquely able to enkindle the hearts of His listeners when He spoke:

... The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double-edged sword. But more finely; it can slip through the lace where the soul is divided from the spirit, or joints from the marrow ... [Heb 4:12, ff.]

... Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked on the road and explained the scriptures to us...? [Lk 24:32].

... To whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life ...! [Jn 6:60].

Furthermore, Jesus Christ was outstanding in this manner of teaching as St. Thomas noted. He declared this under 4 conditions: the first was that He confirmed

His teaching with miracles; the second, because He spoke to persuade with strength and efficacy; the third, because He proposed His teaching with great authority; and fourth, because what He taught, He backed up with His own probity of life. The great Dominican theologian, Cardinal Cajetan in this passage of St. Thomas [a. 1, as 2 um] adds other conditions, which are rather properties of doctrine, rather than modalities of teaching: i.e., re excellence of His teaching; its usefulness, rectitude, integrity and perfection consumed in everything that pertained to customs.

2. His Teaching was often offensive, scandalous:

a. The reason for this: Jesus spells this out rather clearly:

... Do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls in front of pigs, or they may trample them and tear you to pieces ... [Mt 7:6]. Correct a mocker and you make an enemy... a wise man and he will love you for it... [Pr 9:7, ff.]. Do not kindle the coals of a sinner, in case you scorch yourself in the blaze. Refuse to be drawn in by an arrogant man... [Si 8:13, ff.].

Jesus did not hide His teaching, nor did He seek the approval of His contemporaries. Rather, His discourse proved often to be upsetting – His justice was always in trying to better, to challenge His listeners. Charity itself demands this, as it asks that one does not provide another an occasion for sinning. St. Augustine reasoned that if one could not improve another, it might be better not to engage the other. It sometimes happens, he noted, that the Doctors of the Church do not reprehend another – this is not because of their negligence, but sometimes the truly perverse head toward greater evils once their path has been pointed out to them. The Doctor of the Church notes that this can be the prudent manner of progressing, if someone does not intervene in correcting and reprehending those who perpetrate wrong, in order to wait for a more opportune moment, or out of a justifiable fear that they might accomplish even worse, or because they might prove to be an obstacle to other weak human beings, that need rather to be instructed by a good and pious life, and one that would oblige them to belong to the faith, none of this would be motivated by ambition, but much more by delicate charity.

This same manner of acting is to be engaged in one's teachings, and correcting. This age-old principle also preceded St. Augustine and found its ultimate application in Jesus Christ Himself. There is always the quest of the good teacher, preacher, to look for the best means of making the deepest impact of one's listeners. St. Jerome seems to have been of this mind: the prudent person will wait for that moment when the present may not seem opportune [the charism of Pause???]. When the prudent person of the Church notes that he is cognizant of many wrongs that might be opposed to the just life taught by Jesus Christ, sometimes one has to wait in order that another does

not commit even worse. St. Gregory the Great ⁷ was of this mind: there are times when it is required to tolerate wrongs of kings and other important people on earth so that they might not be exasperated and fall into greater wrongs.

The preaching of Jesus provides the ultimate example for all future preachers, teachers of His Word. Thus, they should not correct when they feel a greater harm resulting from their efforts. Jesus never sought directly to offend His listeners – He continually challenged them, and sometimes by waiting.

b. Nonetheless, the Father's Word remains a challenge for all: this needs to be kept in mind with regard to fraternal correction and in the presence of scandal. St. Thomas ⁸ noted that if sometimes this has to be given publicly, when it is known that the one to be correct will not emend his life. Even in times of scandal, it is necessary sometimes to omit the correction – the same reason exists in the professor's chair and the pulpit.

The general principle might be the one enunciated by St. Thomas Aquinas: there is always to be preferred the salvation of the multitudes over the private good of any one individual. If the doctrine is in and of itself good and necessary for the salvation of the People, or even if it is just quite useful for the promotion of good and the avoidance of evil and of sin, it should not be omitted even if some may take scandal from the teaching, and end up in a worse situation that they were in before. In such cases, scandal is not intentionally given, but received - it is not directly procured, but only permitted for a greater good. The order of charity does not oblige always each and every scandal, especially when there could conceivably be greater harm and difficulty for others.

These are the same reasons for communicating fraternal correction: its ultimate purpose is to lead to some emendation of another's conduct. However, one should not give it if there is justifiable concern that it might lead to something worse. A lesser evil might be permitted for a greater good. This is not always easy to discern, even though the Scriptures can be of help in concrete situations – as in a time of penance:

... Our watchmen are all blind, they see nothing...! [Is 56:9, ff.]

... Shout for all you are worth, raise your voice like a trumpet. Proclaim their faults to My people, their sins to the House of Jacob... [Is 58:1].

... The visions your prophets had on your behalf, were delusive, tinsel things, they never pointed out your sin, toward off your exile. The visions they proffered you were false, fallacious, misleading ... [Lm 2:14].

⁷ *Commentarium in Primum Regum*, Book 6, c. 2.

⁸ II-II, 33, a. 7.

St. John Chrysostom points out quite well: Present your arguments before those who are wayward. Is there any scandal in doing this publicly? Not at all. There is often a greater scandal when, while not being ignorant of the sins, one does not seek to emend this. When some offend with impunity, others may be all the more committed to procuring authentic virtue.

Christ offers an insight for the conducting of the teaching and preaching in the Church:

... If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you: the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain any charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community; and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a pagan or tax collector... [Mt 18:15, ff.].

In the long history of the Church, there have been many challenges on such matters. The general principles can be clear enough, but it is often to apply them in a practical manner for the best possible effectiveness.

c. Jesus' Insistence on 'Hard' Saying: in the application of these principles one needs to balance both the prudence of Christ and His courage. Furthermore, He had unique authority, in which the teaching of the Church participates – but, He also was surprisingly permissive in some instances: *...Can a blind man act as a guide to the blind...?* [Lk 6:39]. Jesus came to provide clarity of principle in the quest for the understanding of the terms of the faith – and in the life long struggle to live the revealed principles of morality. The truth can never be changed for the sake of evil – but cannot always perhaps be enunciated fully in the sake of good.

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[D] Jesus as Teacher, concentrated on the 'Little Ones'⁹

1. Recognized as a Teacher
2. His Activity
3. His Methodology
4. His Style
5. His Purpose

Rabbi, we know that You are a Teacher who has come from God...

[Jn 3:2]

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⁹ Brian Grenier, *Jesus the Teacher*. St. Paul's 1995, *passim*.

1. Jesus is addressed as a Teacher¹⁰: on many occasion, Jesus is addressed simply as 'Teacher'. In the Synoptics there are many such citations – while some of them are parallel, it does give a good idea how commonly the title was used to address Jesus¹¹. One of the more remarkable times is that time when He was sound asleep during the storm on the lake [cf. Mk 4:38; Mt 8:25; Lk 8:24].

The term Rabbi is also close to this: a term of respect often used by disciples of a revered Teacher [Jn 1:38; 20:16; Mt 23:7, f.] In the synoptics, only Peter [Mk 9:5; 11:21] and Judas Mt 26:25, 49; Mk 14:45] address Jesus this way.

Jesus often refers to Himself in this manner [Mt 26:18=Mk 14:14; Lk 22:11; also Mt 23:8; 10: 24, f. =Lk 6:40; cf. Jn 13:16].

2. Jesus' Teaching Activity:¹² all four Gospels speak of Jesus' activity: *He began to teach!*¹³ On one occasion, they ask for His teaching [Lk 11:1] – the setting for the *Our Father*.

a. The Scenes: in modern times, itinerant teachers are uncommon - teachers are hardly ever 'on the move', other than Guest lecturers' for a semester or so. Yet, we find Jesus going through town and village along the way to Jerusalem [Lk 13:11; cf. Mt 11:1]. He began in Galilee, then on to Samaria, Judea – across the Jordan [Mk 10:1=Mt 19:1]. He taught from the boat that was Simon's [Lk 5:3; cf. Mk 4:1 = Mt 13:2] – in the streets [Lk 13:26] – the Synagogues of Galilee [Lk 4:15; cf. Mt 4:23 = Mt 13:54; Mk 6:2; Lk 4:16] – in Capernaum [Mk 1:21=Lk 4:31]; in the Temple at Jerusalem [Jn 7:34; 8:2, 20; 18:20; Mk 11:17 = Lk 19: 46, f.; Mt 26:55=Mk 14:49=Lk 22:53]. The disciples took very seriously the command *to make disciples of all nations, euntes docete!* [Mt 28:19, f.].

b. His Audience: *this was his custom* cf. Mk10:1 = Mt 19:1] to teach the people. He did not just instruct privileged groups who had sought Him out – He went into the high-ways and the by-ways, seeking for listeners, disciples. He would teach anyone who would listen:

- the Crowds: while He did instruct individuals [Jn4:4, ff.; 3:1, ff.] most often He addressed even vast crowds. Who gathered to listen [Mt 14:14, 21 = Mk 6:34, 44; cf. Lk 9:14; Jn 6:10. cf. also Mt 13:1, f. =Mk 4:1; Lk 8:4; Mt 15:38=Mk 8:9].

¹⁰ Grenier, o.c., pp. 21, ff., *passim*.

¹¹ Mt 8:19; 12:38; 19:16; 22:16; 22:24, 36; cf. also 9:11; 17:24.

Mk 4:38; 9:17, 38; 10:17, 20; 10:35, 51; 12:14, 19, 32; 13:1; cf. also 5:35.

Lk 3:12; 7:40; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21; 20:28, 39; 21:7; cf. 8:49.

cf. also Jn 8:4.

NB: Jesus is often called Master: Lk 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:35, 49; 17:13.

¹² Grenier, o.c., pp. 25-30, *passim*.

¹³ Mt 11:1; 13:54 = Mk 6:2; 4:1, f.; 6:34; 8:31; Lk 4:15 [cf. Mt 4:17]; Jn 7:14, 35; 8:2, 32.

- religious leaders: at times, this was down in the style of a debate among scribes. Among a few of these, He managed to make converts – as Nicodemus, who considered Jesus as a Teacher Who has come from God.
- Disciples, Companions: He took much time with His ‘own’ – after the parables, *Jesus explained everything in private to His disciples* [Mk 4:34] – He made clear to them, that in the end, *...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you...* [Jn 14:26; 16:12, f.].
- Women: this was something that the traditional rabbis did not do – but Jesus was happy to have them in His circles – the Samaritan woman [Jn 4]. Jesus considered all equal.¹⁴

c. Without Limits: it was meant for all nations [Mt 24:14= Mk 13:10; Mt 26:13=Mk 14:9; Mt 28:19=20; Lk 24:47; Mk 16:15]. He personally was sent only to the Lost Sheep of Israel [Mt 15:24; 10:5, f.; Mk 7:26, f.]. However, He did minister to Gentiles on occasion [Mt 15:21=Mk 7:24, ff].

3. Jesus’ Methodology [Wisdom – Prophetic Traditions; the Way, Truth, Life]¹⁵:

Among His listeners were philosophers, teachers, sages, teachers of the Law; scribes, Pharisees, rabbis, prophets and visionaries.

a. The Wisdom tradition: in ancient Israel, the ‘teachers’ were usually the priests, prophets and sages, who offered advice to the King [Jr 18:18]. The period after the Exile was the era of the Wisdom teachers, who did much to restore the community. The Sapiential tradition was known for its use of proverbs, sayings, parables, and beatitudes. Surely Jesus was greater than the greatest of Sages [cf. Mt 12:42=Lk 11; 31; cf. 1 Co 1:30]. Jesus enormously respected the *TORAH* [Lk 17:14] – He had not come to abolish but to fulfill [Mt 5:17-19]. He did not make it the end-all, however, - but saw it more as a means through which God revealed His will. The whole Law is summed up in the Commandments of Love [Mt 22:34-40=Mk 12:28-34=Lk 10:25-28]. At the Transfiguration, Jesus dialogued with Moses [the Law] and Elijah [the prophets].

b. The Prophetic tradition: Jesus did not accept ‘conventional’ wisdom, but revealed the Good News. He was filled with God’s Spirit [2 P 1:21]. He was truly prophetic in His commitment to Justice, the distaste for ritualism [cf. Mt 23:37=Lk 13:34; Lk 13:33; Mt 13:57=Mk 6:4; cf. Lk 4:24; Jn 4:44. cf. also Mt 5:12=Lk 6:23; Mt

¹⁴ Lk 4:24-27; 8:14, ff.; 18:1-8; Mt 24:43-53; 25:1-13; Mt 24:40, f.; Lk 17:34, f.; Mt 12:38-42=Lk 11:29-32; Mt 13:31-33=Lk 13:18-21.

¹⁵ Grenier, pp. 39, ff., *passim*

26:67, f. = Mk 14:65=Lk 22:63, ff.]. Jesus was often considered to be a prophet [Lk 7:16; 24:19; Mt 21:10, f.; cf. Mt 16:13, f.; Mk 8:27, f.; Lk 9: 18, f.; Mk 6:15= Lk 9:8; Mt 21:45, f.]. Indeed He was greater than a prophet [Mt 11:9=Lk 7:26].

c. He came as the *Way, Truth Life*: He was not primarily a teacher of morals, beliefs – but of an entire way of life, of thinking and willing. His message was one of repentance and believing, faith seeking to be grasped. [cf. Jn 14:6; cf. Mt 22:16=Mk 12:14=Lk 20:21]. Believers came to follow the *Way* [Ac 18:25, f.; 19:9, 23; 24:14, 22; 16:17].

4. His Purpose¹⁶: He came to bring us into the light, to testify to the truth, to bring abundant life [Jn 10:10; 11:25; 12:46; 18:37]. These purposes are abundantly witnessed:

a. In His Priestly Prayer of Farewell: He summarizes the reasons for His Coming: to make the Father and His Name known and loved [Jn 17; cf. 13:1] *Whoever sees Me, sees the father* [Jn 17:6, etc.].

b. To witness to the Truth: this is not speculation, but a dynamic conviction. It is very close to the steadfast love [*hesed*]¹⁷ and fidelity of the God of the Covenant [Is 65:16; ex 34:6; Ps 57o:10]. This is what Jesus tells Pilate. [Jn 18:37]. Jesus IS the Truth, and only communicates what he has ‘learned’ [Jn 8:26, 28].

c. To bring eternal life: He is not merely speaking of prolonging the ‘good life’ in this world – but His gaze was fixed on Jerusalem, the resurrection, the Ascension [cf. Jn 1:4; 3:16; 20:31]. In hearing and heeding His word, believers already HAVE eternal life [Jn 5:24; 1 Jn 5:13].

d. His Mission: was the cosmos [Rm 8:18, ff.] – He is the Lamb of God Who takes sin away from this world [Jn 1:29; 3:16; 1 Jn 4:8, ff.]. He is the Savior of this World [Jn 4:42] – He is the light of the World, the Nations [Jn 8:12; 9:5] – the ‘Living Bread’ for the life of the world [Jn 6:51].

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¹⁶ Grenier, *Jesus the Teacher*, o.c., pp. 79-83, *passim*.

¹⁷ Author's note: this is a Hebrew word meaning: covenant matrimonial love – of fidelity and pardon – basic concept for God in the Biblical Hebrew.

[E] Jesus, the Revealer of the Father

Presentation

1. The Mystery of the Man Jesus
 2. Three Favorite Themes
 - a. The Light of the World
 - b. The Truth
 - c. The Word of Jesus and Jesus-Word
 3. Access of Believers to Jesus' Revelation
- Conclusion

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Presentation:

[1] Fr. von Balthasar speaks of Jesus Christ as the 'Figure of Revelation.' This is really the theme of the 4th Gospel: Jesus is the very center of revelation. Each NT author maintains a personal theological synthesis, and therefore, a central idea departing from which of them considers the Person and the Work of Jesus Christ. In Paul, at least in his great Epistles, the Christology is centered, above all, on the mystery of the death and the resurrection of Jesus – while in the Epistles of Captivity, Paul preferentially considered the mystery of the heavenly Christ and of His continuing influence in the Church. The Johannine synthesis is constructed around the theme of the Incarnation and the Revelation which is made to believers in Jesus Christ. In Jesus, the Word made flesh, there is manifested the glory of the Only Begotten Son of God and of His unique relationship toward the Father.

[2] One indication of the importance that the idea of Jesus as revelation is given to the careful reader by noting the identical vocabulary. It is true that when St. John that are not found the verbs: to reveal; revelation [*apokalyptein; apokalypsis*] which are quite bound to the apocalyptic genre. For Jn, he uses with insistence another verb which contains the concept of revelation: to manifest [*phaneroun*]. Substantially this means to make visible that which was previously invisible. This expresses admirably the Johannine theology of the Incarnation. Furthermore, and this needs emphasis, almost all the great theological notions of Jn are in close relationship with the idea of revelation: [mandate [11 x]; word (spoken) [12 x]; testimony [14x]; sign [17 x]; glory [18 x]; light [23 x]; name [25 x]; truth [25 x]; word [40x]. And to these should be added the words to give testimony [33 x]; to peak [59 x]; and also those which describe the necessary comportment so that this revelation be received: to see, or to contemplate; to listen to [58 x]; to know [*ginoskein; eidenai* - 85 x]; to believe [98 x].

[3] The question arises: what is the most characteristic note of the Johannine theology of revelation? Jn's revelation must not be understood in the Docetic, or Gnostic sense: as some kind of an esoteric transmission, as a kind of secret message

that has come from heaven, without any connection with Salvation History. Jesus as Revealer is not simply as some have maintained, a god who walks on the earth without any real Incarnation. Johannine theology does not follow, nor will it follow the apocalyptic scheme, according to which revelation is a communication of the Divine secrets transmitted in the course of a celestial vision. In Jn's theology revelation is fulfilled in the Incarnation of the WORD. For this reason, it enjoys an historical, concrete and personal character. The Eternal Word of the Father, Who has come in human flesh, is the Bearer of Divine revelation. From this moment, the Man Jesus is for believers the visible sacrament of the divine life. He is the theological 'Place' in Whom believers enter into intimate contact with all of Revelation. To know revelation means to know Jesus Christ.

[4] For this reason the analysis will begin by considering that which Jn relates concerning the 'man' Jesus. In the second part, there will be a reflection that will examine more particularly three essential themes in which the idea of Revelation is pondered: *Light, Truth, the Word*. Finally, in the 3rd part it will be asked in what manner, according to Jn, could a person respond to Revelation: *to see, to hear, to believe*.

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1. The mystery of the Man Jesus

I. The Primordial importance of the Man-Jesus in the economy of revelation as Jn presents it has been very well presented by Fr. Hans Urs von Balthasar. Jesus, in His visibility, is a sign Who might remit to us the Christ of the invisible faith, a conception which borders on a kind of *platonian* Catholicism – or, on the contrary, a type of Christ-centered Protestantism, That which according to the data of the Bible, is the Image and the expression of God, is the Man-God Who is indivisible: a Man in the manner in which God remains resplendent in Him; and God in the manner in which there appears in Him the man Jesus.

a. Among the Synoptics the term 'man' is applied with particular emphasis to Jesus during His public life only in Peter's denial *I do not know this Man*. [Mt 26:72, 74; Mk 14:71]. Perhaps there is no real theological depth intended here. Throughout the 4th Gospel, though, the term is repeated with insistence [cf. 4:29; 5:12; 7:46; 8:40; 9:11, 16,24; 10:33; 11:47, 50; 18:14, 17, 29; 19:5]. The emphasis seems to center on this man. Progressively this definition seems to open up into various theological applications, which peak then in the *ecce Homo – behold the Man!* - of the Passion narratives.

b. The first applications of this title to Jesus place the accent, above all, on the mystery of this Man. In a rather bland sense the term admittedly appears

elsewhere [cf. Mt 11:19; Lk 7:34; 23:4, 16, 14]. At the death of Jesus, the Roman Centurion employs this broad sense: *truly this Man was the Son of God!* [Mk 15:39; Lk 23:47]. However, this verse is often understood as coming from a certain theological depth [cf. also Jn 7:46; 11:47]. There is another important passage in Jn, in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman: on her return home, the woman exclaims: *I there a man out there Who told me everything that I ever did? Could He be the One Whom they call the Christ? They went out from the city and went toward Him* [Jn 4:19]. Here the text could be interpreted as meaning simply *someone, a certain person*. However, this Man has revealed Himself at least as a Prophet in her eyes [4:19] – and this leads to the question: just who is this Man? It is significant that from the words: a man, it eventually leads to the conclusion that He is indeed the Messiah, the scope of the great hope of the simple people. Jn presents the people as gathering and going out toward Jesus: for Jn, this is an expression already of some faith [cf. 6:35: the one who comes to Jesus, believes in Him – cf. 6:45-47; 10:41, f.]. This will lead eventually to the statement that many believed in Him because of His Word [4:41] Jesus, however, a little before was unknown, but here He progressively has manifested himself as a Prophet [v. 19], the Messiah [vv. 225, ff., 29] – the Savior of the World: three stages of the faith, a final title inviting the faith.

II. The enigma which surrounds the Man Jesus seeks to be pondered in a further text. His contemporaries ask the sick man who was healed at the pool of Bethesda: *Who is the Man Who said to you: Take up your bed and walk...?* The poor man who had been healed did not know who He was [5:12, f.]. This concern to know just Who Jesus is, is a characteristic of the 4th gospel. And, at the beginning of the conversation with the Samaritan woman, Jesus says to the woman: *If you only knew who it is Who says to you: give Me a drink* [4:10]. The same question would be placed before the People of the Old Covenant along the first revelations of Jesus on the occasion of the Festival of tabernacles [8:25] and once again for what was made manifest in the revelation of the exaltation of the Son of Man [12:34]. In the controversy which followed the Jerusalem paralytic, the response to this question is given by Jesus Himself, Who allows Himself to be known as 'the Son of Man' [5:19-26]. In this, there is a discreet allusion to Dn 7:13, f., and this Son of Man comes across as having been constituted the supreme Judge [5:27]. There may be found expressed once more the paradox of the Incarnation in this last revelation: if Jesus has received the transcendent powers of the Eschatological Judge, this is precisely in his quality as *man*.

III. In the first part of this great public revelation in the temple of Jerusalem [cc. 7-10], the word *man* serves two times to indicate the extraordinary power of Jesus' Word and His revealing Mission: ... *never has a man spoken as this man...* [7:46]. In this manner the guards of the temple spoke out in the presence of the Pharisees. This same Jesus, after having announced the deliverance by means of the Truth [8:32]. Says to His contemporaries: *Yu are seeking to kill Me, a man, because I tell you the truth*

that I have heard from God [8:40] Jesus presents Himself to the world [7:4] as the revealer *par excellence* the Truth of God reaches believers in the Man-Jesus.

IV. The account of the man born blind is considered by some scholars to be the very 'center' of the 4th Gospel. It is precisely this text which describes better the progressive development of the Mystery of Jesus. In the first place, there is the simple statement: ... *The Man Who is called Jesus, made some mud and He applied it to my eyes and He said to me: 'Go and wash in Siloe...* [9:11]. The continuation of the account brings with it's notable progression in the titles attributed to Jesus: He is a Prophet! This is the profession of the man who had been healed of his blindness to the Pharisees [v. 17]. Further ahead, the evangelist attributes to Him the Messianic title of Christ [v.22] – and in his final replay to the Pharisees the healed blind man says with much feeling: *If this man has not come from God, He could do nothing!* [v.33]. He was then expelled from the Synagogue, and he eventually meets Jesus Who asks him: *do you believe in the Son of Man?* [v.35]. To this, the blind man responds with a Profession of Faith: I do believe, Lord, and he prostrated himself before Him [v. 38]. A literary inclusion places in some relief the itinerary followed by the Blind Man from his initial declaration about this Man who was still unknown, and refers to Him as: *the Man Who is called Jesus*. And then eventually, he refers to him with the transcendental title: *The Son of Man*. This is the passing over from Judaism to Christianity, from spiritual blindness to the vision of faith.

V. The final application of the term *man* to Jesus in the public revelation of cc. 7-10, is as the point of binding the preceding developments. Jesus has solemnly declared: *the Father and I are one!* [10:30]. For His contemporaries, this is a blasphemy: *you, who are merely a man, make yourself God!* [v.33]. For Jn, on the contrary. These words constitute the cupola of revelation. The careful reader here notes a distinct vocabulary, the theology of the Prologue [1:14-18]: in this Man – Jesus – God Himself is present to all who believe.

a. Beginning with c. 11, the word *anthropos*, however, is applied more than once to Jesus – in relationship with His Passion and Death. Gathered together in council, the high priests and the Pharisees were worried; *This Man accomplishes many signs ...!* [11:47]. Caiphas, in his position as high priest that year, declared: *It is better that just one man should die for the people, rather than that the entire nation should perish* [11:50; 18:14]. According to the divine plan, and having presented these prophetic words, Jesus had to die *in order to gather in unity the dispersed children of God...* [11:52]. When Christ had been raised up on the cross, as a King on his Throne, He would draw all to Himself [12:32], achieving in this manner His destiny of being the sign of salvation [Ws 16:6; Jn 3:14-17r] for all.

b. Thus, there is comprehended the exceptional importance that the *Ecce homo* scene achieves in Jn [19:4-7]. This comes immediately after the crowning with thorns [19:1-3], which is the central episode of the entire Johannine Passion account. The declaration: *Behold the Man!* [19:5] are directed by Pilate to the by-standers at the very moment that he presents Jesus to them, with *His crown of thorns and purple garment* - in other words, He is vested and presented in mocked royal garb. For the evangelist these words seem to call to mind the vision of Dn 7:13, f. – in which there is conferred here on the Judge the universal dominion on the Son of Man. The meaning of this scene is suggested by the evangelist to establish a parallel with the *Lithostrotos* in that Pilate after having made Jesus sit down in the Tribunal, declares: *Here is your King!* [19:13]. The man Jesus presented to His contemporaries in His weakness and powerlessness, is in reality, their supreme Judge and at the same time, their Messianic King.

Summary

The analysis of these texts may shed some light on the fundamental aspect of the Johannine theology of revelation. This conception of his is quite distinct from what many other interpreters may interpret it. For Jn, Messianic Revelation is realized *in the Man, Jesus*. For believers, Jesus Christ is the theological presence of God. His flesh is the Temple of this Divine Presence. Therefore, the Church has been called all through the centuries to ponder the mystery of this Man – by contemplative pondering the Gospel, all believers are invited to discover in Him progressively the Messiah, the King of the New Israel, the Eschatological Judge, the Son of Man, the Son of God.

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2. Three Themes of Revelation applied to Jesus

Although the Man-Jesus remains for believers the Mediator of Divine revelation, nevertheless, the word *man* in itself certainly does not imply the idea *revelation*. It is necessary to ponder three recurring themes that Johannine literature employs to communicate this theology.

a. The Light of the World

The metaphor of 'light' is found in almost all religions of the ancient Middle east. It is important to make clear to what its use corresponds on the pen of Jn, because from the answer to this question depends, in part, the interpretation of the texts.

I. In the Greek, Hellenistic world, *light* designates the very Being of God [cf. the Creed: *lumen de lumine*], or of the Divinity in so far as God is supreme intelligence and intelligibility. Didymus the Blind, in his commentary on Jn 1:5: *God is Light* -

offered this explanation, typically Platonic: God is truly light, intelligible and eternal Light – because nothing sensible remains forever. To this light, the shadows are opposed, i. e., ignorance and evil customs.

In the biblical and Judaic tradition the metaphor of Light is utilized in a less abstract manner. It is applied to the *Law [Torah]* to the Word of God, which illumines the path of humanity in its return toward God: the Divine Precept is a lamp, and the law is a light, and the admonitions which are instructive are the pathway of life [cf. Pr 6:23; Ws 18:4; Ps 119:105]. These texts teach how Divine revelation illumines the entire human existence.

The NT accentuates this idea even more – however, indicating the Christian content of revelation: ... *God has said: from the depths of the darkness the light shines* - it is that shone in our hearts in order to have resplendent the knowledge of the Glory of God, the glory on the face of Christ [cf. 2 Co 4:6]. For Paul, this Light of revelation is nothing other than the manifestation of the truth, the word of God [4:2] – the Gospel [v. 3]. These same themes are repeated in the Letter to the Ephesians:

... May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, what rich glories He has promised the saints will inherit and how infinitely great is the power that he exercised for us believers. This you can tell from the strength of His power, at work in Christ when He used it to raise Him from the dead and to make Him sit at His right hand in heaven... [Ep 1:17-20].

This revelation is clearly bound to the Person of Jesus Christ.

II. In the Johannine writings, the Christological sense of the Light of Revelation comes very much to the fore. In his first Letter it is true that Jn states: *God is Light* [1 Jn 1:5] – however, this is to lead to the comprehension that God has revealed Himself in His son Jesus Christ: *the eternal life that was with the Father, has manifested Himself to us... [1:2].*

In the Prologue of his Gospel Jn affirms solemnly: *He was the true Light which illumines every one... [Jn 1:9].* And Jesus Himself declares publicly on the Festival of Tabernacles: ... *I am the Light of the world; whoever follows Me will not walk in the darkness; he will have the Light of Life... [Jn 8:12].* As in earlier times, as Moses was in the desert: Jesus is the Guide of the People of God toward life.

However, Jesus is this to a much greater degree than the leader of the Israel of old. He personally comes into this situation to lead us out toward the true life, the divine life, because He himself is from above. [8:23]. And He has been sent by the Father [8:18, 26, 29]. As He is God Himself, He can declare: I am! [8:24, 28] – to

In the episode of the man born blind Jesus repeats His statement of 8:12” *while I am in this world, I am the Light of the World* [9:5]. To heal this blind man and to enable him to see the light of day demonstrates that Jesus, symbolically, is the Light of the World [9:39]. The healed blind man constitutes an example for all, because in confessing his faith in the Son of Man, he presents himself as one of the first believers. As this page of the 4th Gospel demonstrates clearly, the content of revelation presented by Jesus is the Mystery of His own Person. For all called to follow Him, the vocation is to discover progressively just who Jesus really is.

This Mystery is precisely that of His Divine Filiation: *the Light that has come into this world* [3:19] is indeed the Son of God, sent into this world so *that the world might be saved by Him* [3:17]. As a result, Jesus proclaims in His Final Discourse of His public life: *I am the Light, come into the world so that everyone who believes in Me might not remain in the darkness.* [12:46]. Now believers know that the true faith in Jesus implies faith in His Father: *Whoever believes in Me, it is not in Me that one believes, but rather in Him Who has sent Me; and whoever sees Me, sees the One who has sent Me...* [12:44, f].

Summary

In brief, what is, then, the Light of Revelation? It is the revelation of the communion between the Father and the son, Jesus Christ [cf. 1 Jn 1:3], a revelation destined to have all enter into this same Communion. Justly for this reason, Jn can speak of it as a revelation of love [1 Jn 2:8, f.]. The formula: *God is Light*, contained at the beginning of his First Letter [1:5], returns to be taken up again and explained a bit more further on in the celebrated definition, the text of the First Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI: *God is Love* [4:8, 16]. For the believer, to remain in the light, will be translated, then, into a concrete attitude: *to love one’s brother, fellow human being* [2:10].

b. The Truth

I. For philosophical revelation, *truth* defines the very object of the quest of the human spirit. As a result, this term is encountered in all cultures and in all epochs of the history of thought. This concept holds a most important function in the Greek philosophers, of whom the Catholic Church is the heir to some extent. There is nothing unusual, then, that frequently there has been sought in this philosophical tradition the substrate of the Johannine concept of the *Truth*. For the Greeks, the *true* is identified with *being*, with the ‘real’ in so far as this is known by the human spirit. In the Platonic dualism truth is converted into the supreme reality, that of the entire world of ideas, that of the ‘divine’ itself. Hence, the philosophical and theological tradition derived from the Greeks has transmitted this fundamental principle: The Truth is God. If the term has been used in this sense in Jn 14:6, where Jesus declares

that he IS the Truth, this would seem to be for some, very close to the definitive affirmation of His divinity.

However, a rigorous analysis of the vocabulary of Jn shows that for him, the term *truth*, both in his Gospel as well as in his three Letters, should be more in relationship with the Jewish apocalyptic tradition and of the Wisdom writings. In this environment, the Truth serves to indicate the communication of the divine secrets, the revelation of mysteries. There can be noted, e.g., in Dn 10:21: ... *Do you know why I have come to you? It is to tell you what is written in the Book of Truth...* [Dn 10:21]. The implication is that this is the Heavenly Book of God. St. Paul applies the term to the Gospel Message [Ga 2:5, 13: *the truth of the Gospel*]. For him, *the word of truth* is nothing other than the *Gospel of salvation* [Ep 1:13; cf. Col 1:15; 2 Tm 2:15, 18; 1 Tm 3:15]. For his part, St. Jn uses the word in more directly Christological sense: The definitive Truth of Revelation is realized in Jesus Christ.

II. The different texts of the 4th Gospel in which the term is applied to Christ show that He is properly its fundamental meaning. According to Jn 5:33, St. John the Baptist *gave testimony to the Truth*, he has made known the Persons of Jesus Christ 'cf. 5:34; 3:26]. This phrase condenses in a few words all that the evangelist has said in 1:19-34 regarding the Precursor's testimony. He maintained that *he had come to baptize with water so that He would be manifested in Israel* [1:31] – *He saw and bore witness that He is the son of God* [1:34] the Truth of which John the Baptist is the witness is the messianic revelation, fulfilled in Jesus. In Jesus, the Precursor shows to Israel its Messiah, the Lamb of God, the King of Israel, the Son of God [cf. 1:49].

In the trial before Pilate, Jesus applies to Himself the formula used earlier by the Baptist. To the Procurator who asked Him if He really is a King, Jesus responds with this enigmatic expression: *I was born and came into the world to give testimony to the Truth. All who are on the side of Truth hear My voice ...* [18:37]. At first sight, the two testimonies are identical. If it were so, the testimony of Jesus would only prolong that of John the Baptist and other prophets. However, an essential distinction may be noted: John the Baptist was not the light, but the *witness of the Light*. [1:8] – he gave testimony so that *all might believe through him* [1:7] – his objective was to provoke faith in Him in the 'Other', Whom the Baptist would make known as the Messiah, and the son of God [1:31, ff.] Jesus, on the other hand, gives testimony regarding Himself [5:31' 8:13, f., 18]. To His witness there may be added the testimony of the Scriptures [5:39], that of His 'works' [5:38], and that of the Father Himself [5:31-32, 37], and that of the Spirit of Truth [15:26]. These diverse testimonies have all the same purpose: that human beings might come to Jesus [5:40], and they might believe in His word [5:47].

Jesus' declaration before Pilate means furthermore that His entire Mission is concentrated on this testimony offered to the truth, in this revelation and in this call to the faith. However, different from the Baptist, Jesus provides this revelation of Himself. Apolinaris of Laodicea offered an excellent explanation of this declaration of Jesus: he referred to the truth His manifestation to humanity so that by knowledge of Him He might bestow His salvation upon them. How can this declaration be the foundation of Jesus' royalty? The final verse offers the explanation: *Everyone who is of the Truth hears my voice*. Jesus bears the truth to human beings, His revelation. However, in order to be truly 'king', humanity needs to come to belief in Him, and then He IS the Truth for them. Believers need to allow themselves to be penetrated and transformed by Jesus' message, and to come to being authentically docile before Him. Thus, Christ is the King, thanks to His truth; His reign is a realm of truth. This is an expression in the Preface of the feast of Christ the King. This train of thought culminates on the Cross – thus this theme of royalty assumes its fullness in the Johannine account of the Passion [cf. 18:36, f.; 19:1-5, 13-15] – particularly in the Calvary scene [19:19-22].

This sublime idea of the *Truth* has been taken over by Christ Himself and proclaimed already in the Prologue, in order to characterize both His 'work' and His Person. The Law and the Truth are there present as the two grand stages of the economy of revelation: *the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth have come to us through Jesus Christ* [1:17]. The double parallelism of this verse: the law/truth – Grace/truth: clarifies here the meaning of the word *truth*. It does not mean simply the eternal Being of God present in Jesus Christ – which might indeed be the Greek understanding of the term – but rather, the *charism*, the *Gift* which He provides for us of the complete and definitive revelation. This revelation surpasses, by raising it up to perfection, to that which was given in the time of the Law of Moses. The messianic revelation is fulfilled in the very Person of Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, Jn makes clear. Jesus brings forward the truth, because he, the Only Begotten, turned toward the bosom of the Father, He is the Revelation [1:18].

It is possible now to take on the fundamental text in this regard, Jesus' declaration at the Last Supper: *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life* [14:6]. Very often in this context interpreters have understood the word *Truth* in the Greek sense of the term and even with a Platonic twist! This would mean that Jesus would be the Truth in so far as He is the Eternal *Logos*, in so far as He is the eternal expression of the Father. Thus, he would be revealing His divinity. For this reason, this verse from Jn would be used as the decisive argument in the Anti-Arian debates. [The following scholars have understood it this way: V. Taylor, C.H. Dodd, Bultmann, K. Rahner, R. Guardini].

However, contrary to this Platonic and Augustinian tradition, Jn never defines God Himself or the *Logos* as the Truth. For Jn, it seems that only the Incarnate Jesus is

the *Truth*, in so far as He is the perfect Revealer and the Fullness of Revelation. The analysis of Jn 14:6 permits one to see this always better: the relationship between the three terms is not that of a means [the Way] towards the end [which is the Truth and the Life] – as if Jesus were for human beings the Mediator toward the Truth and the Divine Life. The principal word here in this formula is the First one: Jesus is for all human beings the Way towards the Father. The other two terms are the explanation of this: if Jesus can conduct human beings toward the Father, this is because of the very fact that He IS the truth – this is how He can draw believers in Himself as the Father's Revelation and the purpose of His Life as the Only-Begotten Son of the Father. One and the same divine life is present in Him – by giving Himself to be known, He allows believers to become participants in this life, and thus enables each to enter into communion with the Father and the Son.

In Jn 14:6, the Word Truth expresses, above all, the revealing function of the Incarnate Word. Its meaning, however, is not exclusively functional. Jesus did not come solely to proclaim the Truth - He IS the Truth. This Truth, which Jesus is, is the revelation which he bears in Himself, the revelation of the very mystery of His own transcendence: in Him, the Man-Jesus, in the Only Begotten Son turned toward the bosom of the Father, manifests himself to believers as the Word of God. He is Truth in Person, and has manifested Himself as the Light of a Presence.

c. The Word of Jesus and Jesus as the Word

The central character of the theme of *Revelation* in the 4th Gospel allows one to foresee the importance that the Discourses of Jesus will maintain in it – and, in general, the various words used for *Word* *logos*, *rema*, *legein*, *lalein*. Since Jesus presents Himself in this Gospel as the revealer, this is not [as Bultmann thought] in order to affirm simply the fact of this Revelation, but that it be possible to indicate its content. The analysis of the theme of the Word will permit us to clarify its object, always based upon the considerations presented above on the *Light* and the *Truth*.

I. The Word of Jesus: here is a First Statement: Jesus speaks with much frequency about HIS own Word. This manner of expressing Himself, in comparison with the language of the Prophets and of the Apostles, is surprising. It is found already in the Synoptics: e.g., Mk 8:38: ...*Whoever is ashamed of me and of My word ... the Son of Man, in His time, will be ashamed of him*. The text places in clear parallelism the two complements: *Me/My Word* as though to identify them. The same insistence on the Word of Jesus is then found in the 4th Gospel: ...If you remain in My Word, you will indeed be My Disciples. Then you will know the Truth and the Truth will make you free. [8:31, f.]. To remain in the Word of Jesus is the means needed in order to become His Disciples and to discover the truth, i.e., the Mystery of His Person. This Truth frees humanity: by means of the Word of Truth, it is the Son Himself Who delivers [Jn 8:36].

However, this liberation also has an essentially positive character: it is nothing other than the possibility offered to believers to enter into the very life of Jesus, the Son of God, and to participate in His Communion with the Father. One fact is certain: in the 4th Gospel, the theme of the Word is referred completely to the Person of Jesus. His Word is not merely a message which he proclaims, but which reveals something of the Mystery of His Person in order to make possible to the Disciples that of entering into communion with Him.

A second statement: the Word which Jesus proclaims orients us directly toward the Father, because He is the word of the father. In the Priestly Prayer, Jesus says to the Father: ... *I have made Your Name known to men ... they have kept Your Word ...* [17:6]. – *I have given them Your Word ...* [17:14] – *Your Word is truth* [17:17]. The revelation brought by Jesus to human beings comes from the Father; Jesus' Word reveals the Father to believers.

Other texts however, go even further – the establish an identity between Jesus' Word and the Father's word: *I have not spoken of Myself, but it is the Father, who sent Me, has ordered that which I am so say and to communicate ... The Words that I say to you, it is the Father Who orders Me to say them ...* [12:49, f.]. *My doctrine is not My own, but it is of Him Who has sent Me ...* [7:16] *The Word that you hear is not Mine; it is the Word of the One Who has sent Me...* [14:24]. The Word of Jesus is nothing other than the Word of the Father: received integrally, it is transmitted integrally. Furthermore, it leads us to discover, at the same time, the Father Himself, from whom it [and He, personally!] proceeds. It leads us to the son Who reveals it, by being identified with Him.

There is a most extraordinary text found in St. Augustine commenting on Jn 7:16: What is, then, the doctrine of the Father if not the Word of the Father? Christ Himself is the Father's Doctrine, since He is the Father's Word. However, since the Word cannot be of no one, but has to be of Someone, He has named Himself as the Father's, His, doctrine, and that he is not His own, because He is indeed the Father's Word. So, what can be more yours than yourself, and what can be more yours, than you, if all that you are is that of the Other?

Nonetheless, keep in mind that in no passage of the 4th gospel does Jesus identify Himself as THE Word of the Father. This identification, laying under the texts, has been formulated and explained by Jn only in the two Prologues [that of the 4th Gospel and in 1 Jn] – as the point of Arrival of his entire theological reflection.

II. Jesus the Word: the Personal Logos: on the matter of the Johannine *Logos*, there exists an abundant literature. It is useless to repeat here all the discussions regarding the origin of the term, or all about the problem of coming to know whether Jn had utilized a primitive hymn in the composition of his Prologue. It

would suffice that there be emphasized the fact that the principal substrate of the title *Logos*, has to be sought with all probability in the Wisdom literature and in the early Christian reflection on the Word of Jesus. Furthermore, the meaning that there has to be attributed to the *Logos*, in Jn 1:1 results clear: This Name signifies the word, and designates Jesus as the Revealer of the Father.

The title *Word*, nevertheless, does not serve uniquely to indicate the revealing function of Jesus. It is applied also to Christ in God, in His eternal relationship with His Father. Jn does not say only that Christ is 'the Word', but that this Word is *turned toward* the Father [Jn 1:1, f.]. These verses are important not only for the theology of the Trinitarian relationships, but also for the conception of the typical revelation of Jn. Indeed, it is necessary to raise the question here regarding the author's source for these expressions. Their sudden nature, unusual style, obliges the careful reader to plant this question. In practice, the response may not be allowed to give rise to a doubt. These unusual aspects are the result of an experience of the evangelist, the point of arrival of a broad reflection on the Mystery of Jesus Christ.

That which has made such an impact on the Beloved Disciple was the fact that Jesus always spoke about the Father: He was sent by the Father; He always does the will of the Father; He says only that which He heard from the Father; He was always in the Father, He will return to the Father ... He, the Son, spoke continuously about the Father. Seeking to condense in some one formula that would be sufficiently inclusive that which had made an impression on him concerning Jesus, Jn defines Him: *the Word is turned toward the Father is with Him, He is the Only Begotten Son, turned toward the Father's bosom.* In the man Jesus, Jn perceived the Mystery of His Divine Person. From the level of human experience, he was elevated to the transcendent plane of life in God. In the Man Jesus, he progressively discovered the life of the Son of God and that which constitutes His secret: His unique relationship with the Father.

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3. The Access of the Believer to the Revelation brought by Jesus

a. One cannot speak of the theme of Revelation in Jn without alluding to the manner on how this revelation of Jesus comes to us. The Truth, as has been noted, is present in the 'Work' and Person of Jesus. This is what might be called 'objective revelation'. However, it is necessary that this truth is grasped and assimilated by the believer. Otherwise, this truth would be ineffective. This task of *interiorization* of the Truth is the work of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, by means of him, the Truth of Jesus enters into the life of believers in order to transform their life. Thus, there is explained the expression in 1 Jn 5:6: ... *It is the Spirit who gives witness [along with the water and the blood!], because the Spirit is the truth.* Jn has perhaps already referred in his Gospel these words of Jesus: *I AM the Truth...* [14:6] – so, in his First Letter He compliments

that Truth by saying: The Spirit IS the Truth! The meaning of these words is not that the Holy Spirit brings to bear a brand new TRUTH, distinct from that of Jesus. In fact, His entire service, on the contrary, is that of being the Witness for Jesus for believers, of making penetrate deeply into their hearts and minds the Truth brought by Jesus Christ, of deepening the faith of the Church in Him. Jesus Himself had already noted at the Last Supper: *The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all, by reminding you of all that I have said...* [Jn 14:26]. The service, then, of the Holy Spirit will be to refresh the memory of the teaching of Jesus in order to provide the disciples with a spiritual comprehension of the same. In this manner, He will lead them to the fullness of the truth [16:13].

The Spirit, then, so to speak, is uniquely 'at the service' of Jesus. His service is essential, and consists in leading believers toward Jesus, in opening them up to be disposed to his Truth. Revelation in the sense understood by Jn is, as a result, the 'work' both of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit at the same time. Integrally present in Jesus, nonetheless, this can only be interiorized by means of the Spirit. His activity is so necessary as the revealing action of Jesus Himself. Nothing can separate the Spirit from him.

b. Since revelation is integrally present in Jesus, human beings are able to receive it and so assimilate it only by developing all their faculties of receptivity, docility before Jesus: His Word, miracles, testimony, His Truth. Jn indicates the two essential modes in which men approach Christ and His message: above all, they are invited to see, to contemplate Jesus' signs, His deeds, His very Person. By pondering Him, contemplating Jesus believers are led progressively to greater faith, and thus come to discover in Him, the Son – and in this Only Begotten, Most beloved Son, they come to the Father [Jn 6:40; 12:45; 14:9]. However, one's pondering of Jesus Christ will arrive at being a contemplation of faith in Him [cf. DV 8] only when it is accompanied by a disposition to listen to, to hear, His Word – which is, at the same time, the Word of the Father: *They will all be taught by God* [Jr 31:33, f], *and to hear the teaching of the Father, and to learn from it, is to come to me...* [Jn 16:45].

c. By means of these two fundamental attitudes before the Man-Jesus, those to whom these words are directed open themselves progressively to the revelation which speaks them [Jn 8:40]. This is what is meant by Jn's ideal: *to do the Truth*. [3:21]. This is a typical NT expression and it does not only mean as it does in the OT, that of conforming one's conduct to the Truth [Gn 47:39; Tb 4:6; 13:6]. Rather it describes for believers what is a work of the faith [Jn 6:69], i.e., that Pathway toward Faith toward the Person of Jesus, that process by means of which the effort is made in order to be open enough to make 'one's own' the truth.

From this first attitude of welcoming the message, the believer is invited to remain in Jesus' Word [8:31] and to respond in such a manner so that His word might

remain in one [15:7]. Thus one progressively tends toward becoming one of Jesus' Disciples [8:31; 15:8] – eventually one reaches the level of genuinely knowing the Truth [8:32], in discovering more and more the Mystery of Jesus Christ and His relationship to the Father.

The believer, however, ought to make every effort to be of the TRUTH [18:37; 1 Jn 3:19], to 'be' habitually under the influence of the Truth which remains in him [2 Jn 2], in order to arrive at being a person born of the Spirit [Jn 3:6-8]. Sustained by this interior source of the Truth, the Disciple will live his/her entire Christian life as a life in the truth – each is called to make every effort to walk in the Truth [2 Jn 4; 3: Jn 3, f.], by practicing the precept of love [2 Jn 6] – so that one's entire existence might unfold in Truth and love [2 Jn 3]. This committed believer comes to love his/her brothers/sisters in the Truth [2 Jn 1; 3 Jn 1] – thanks to the power of the Truth which is achieved within. One's prayer will be an adoration of the Father in the Spirit and in the Truth [Jn 4:23, 24]: a filial prayer which is practiced in the Truth of Jesus, in communion with Jesus, the Son of God.

Remaining faithfully in Jesus' Word, the believer will be delivered, freed from sin, for the Truth [8:32] - such a person will be liberated by the Son Himself, from slavery of the Devil and of the sin of incredulity [8:34] – arriving at being a Disciple of Jesus Christ and of remaining in the Father's House, being 'at home' there [cf. 8:35]. Liberation by means of the Truth will allow one to live more and more fully, intensely one's own authentic vocation, one's own graced call to be a Child of God. This is also the meaning of Jesus' Prayer for His disciples at the Last Supper: Jesus prays intensely to the Father for them so that they might be sanctified in the Truth [17:17, 19], by remaining in the Name of the Father who has been revealed to them.

The Christian revelation transmitted by Jesus, the Truth that He brings to believes, thus encounters its definitive fulfillment in the filial life of the children of God, in communion with the very life of God: the Merciful Father and that of His Only Begotten, Most beloved Son, Jesus Christ [cf. 1 Jn 1:3], In the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion:

The exposition up to this point on the Johannine ideal of revelation can offer some further insights for a response to some of the problems that modern thought levels against revelation:

[1] An initial problem arises from Bultmann's interpretation that Jesus, as revealer, has not revealed anything to believers, other than His existence and His revealing function including His own eschatological existence. For all practical purposes, the revelation brought by Jesus Christ, in this view, would be totally bereft of any real content. Such a paradoxical interpretation would be comprehensible only if there is

kept in mind that for Bultmann, all the words that would indicate in Jesus a 'manifestation' of the transcendent to the world of our objective perceptions, in that they describe His work as a Mission of Salvation [the Son of God, the Lord, the Savior, etc.]: however, in Bultmann's view all of this ought to be rejected as mythology.

The faith-response to such an extreme position has been brought forward by many gifted scholars. A question comes immediately to the fore: how would it be possible that the entire existence of Jesus Christ could only be for humanity some kind of an eschatological happening, if we cannot know anything objective regarding His personality. Jn's gospel brings to the committed believer a decisive explanation: the specific object of the revelation of the Man Jesus is precisely the Mystery of His Person – the fact that He, the Son of God, lives in a unique relationship with the eternal and Merciful Father and invites us to participate in His filial life. For this reason, Christology is in the center of the Johannine theology, while for Bultmann, this is for all practical purposes totally eliminated, and substituted for by a certain brand of anthropology and soteriology, not in accord with the Church's tradition of faith.

[2] The Johannine theology of revelation permits the careful reader also to comprehend in what sense one might accept the Bultmann requirement of an existential acceptance. According to these critics, revelation does not bring us any objective truth regarding God or regarding Jesus Christ. What it does for this scholar is simply to reveal oneself to him/her, in one's own personal existence as a sinful human being who has been justified by Christ. To speak of God or of Christ would mean to speak of human existence in relations to God.

Certainly, one aspect of this conception might indeed and should be considered valid: since God reveals Himself to believers in Jesus Christ, this is in function of the Mystery of Salvation. No salvation is offered to humanity as a new doctrine which would not have any bearing on one's final destiny. All Revelation has to be salvific. However, certainly from this it does not follow that this revelation does not bring us to know anything objective regarding the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Salvation for St. John, consists in the possession of eternal life [cf. Jn 3:16, f.; 10:9, f.], in the participation in the very life of the Son of God [1:12; 1 Jn 5: 12]. Thus, this has to be something 'real', objective, and it is necessary that in some way, this would have to be able to be known by human beings. The very reality of revelation would become reduced to nothing if there is no objective reality here regarding the Divine Filiation of Jesus Christ, in which He invites all who would accept Him, to share.

[3] There still needs to be added one more word regarding another problem sometimes advanced in this connection: the matter in revelation of the relationship between 'objective' revelation and the 'subjective' assimilation of it. Revelation, as it has been observed, is at one and the same time both interior as well as exterior. It is

only in the act of faith does it arrive at being effective. In this, Jn also can be of help to believers in drawing this synthesis. These matters do serve the attention of believers.

It is undeniable that earlier theology sinned by excess in emphasizing often unilaterally, the objective element, the content of revelation. Theologians spoke almost exclusively of revelation as an historical and exterior reality. This came to an end with the death of the last Apostle, it will remain forever thus, under the prayerful gaze of believers, as an objective data, almost something like a complexity of revealed truths which the Church has to transmit faithfully and that believers will always be required to accept integrally in faith. The idea of an *interiorization* of revelation into the life of believers was never really treated at much length in the classical texts of *De Revelatione*.

The contemporary existentialistic current runs the exact opposite risk: this side affirms that revelation takes places only in the existential decision of each believer. Bultmann considers uniquely the significance that revelation obtains for the Christian today, and this view forgets, eliminates or seriously lessens all that which has been revealed in the words and deeds of Jesus Christ.

The Johannine theology of revelation invites the committed believer to draw the synthesis between the objective aspect and the subjective aspect of revelation. For Jn, the truth is, above all, Jesus Christ [Jn 14:6]. However, it is also the Holy Spirit, as He, too, is called the Truth [1 Jn 5:6]. Christian Truth, then, is not only the objective data of the Self-manifestation of Jesus Christ. It is also the assimilation and the actualization of His Person within the Church, under the action of the Holy Spirit, tending ever forward toward the Eternal, Merciful Father. In Jn, Christian truth, in its complete sense of the term, comprehends then, both the objective data of divine revelation, as well as also the subjective element of its assimilation on the part of each believer called to sublime holiness. This assimilation is fulfilled by means of a progressive *interiorization* of the Word of Jesus Christ [Jn 8:37].

It is necessary to take note that each one of the three problems noted here regarding Jn's theology of revelation brings into proportionate focus important elements for a balanced solution. It can truly be observed how, as was noted at the outset here, that the idea of revelation is fundamental to Jn, and that he was fully capable under inspiration to present a very profound and balanced theology of revelation at one and the same time.

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[F] Jesus as Preacher: His Missionary Activity¹⁸
... Jesus proclaimed the Good News from God ... [Mk 1:14]
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Presentation

1. Jesus' Preaching Activity
 - a. Affirmation of the Fact
 - b. The Definition of its Meaning
2. His Message
 - a. The Reign of God
 - b. Conversion and Pardon
 - c. Eschatological Urgency
 - d. The Message and the Messenger
 - e. The Divine Paternity
 - f. The New Morality
3. His Audience
 - a. Limited
 - b. Lack of Understanding
 - c. The Mystery of the Reign
4. Jesus, Preacher of the Reign
 - a. Novelty of this Teaching
 - b. His Unique Authority

†

Presentation:

... at various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the Prophets; but, in our own time, the last days, He has spoken to us through His Son ... [Heb 1:1, f.].

The Revelation of God is not only a doctrine, then, but it is also a salvific activity. However, this action does need to be interpreted, as bread that is broken, and this happens through the medium of the Prophetic Word. The contrary would imply that if the Divine Word lacked a definite meaning, for human beings it would prove useless [DV 2, 4]. Thus, it was necessary that Jesus had to come, proclaiming the Good News.

1. Jesus' Preaching Activity

All four Gospels, each in its own style, bears witness to the Preaching Mission of Jesus Christ:

¹⁸ Manuel M. Gonzalez Gil, SJ, 'c.10: La Predicación', *Cristo, el misterio de Dios. Cristología y Soteriología*. Madrid: BAC, Vol. I, pp. 348-369.

a. The Affirmation of the Fact:

Matthew organizes all of his narrative material regarding the Public Life of Jesus around five great Discourses, in which he assembles a large part of the doctrinal output of Jesus [Mt 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 14-25]. He laces his narrative sections between the discourses with instructions and controversies [Mt 8:18-22; 9:14-17; 11:2-30; 12:22-37]. Thus, it appears evident that the 1st gospel attributes much importance to the preaching of Jesus Christ. The first part of the public life resumes all this missionary activity in a repeated succinct phrase at the beginning and end of this section, as *a biblical inclusion*: ...*He went throughout all of Galilee teaching ...and healing...* [Mt 4:23; 9:35].

Mark does not present these grandiose compositions of Jesus' discourses, as Mt did: there is no Sermon on the Mount, nor the ecclesial instruction that happened there as in Mt 5-7; 18. He does offer a discourse in parables [Mk 4:1-34] – a missionary instruction [6:6-13] and the eschatological sermon [13:1-36]. All of these in Mk are much shorter than in Mt. However, as in Mt, there are found dispersed here and there many instructions and controversies [Mk 2:15-28; 3:20-35]. In exchange in Mk it is characteristic to repeat that Jesus taught, without ever specifying the content of this preaching [Mk 1:21, 39; 2:2, 13; 4:1, f. ; 6:2, 6, 34; 8:31; 9:31; 12:35, 38]. At times the text mentions that there is great wonder at the 'content' of His teaching, without having mentioned precisely what this is [Mk 11:8; cf. 1:21, f.]. Furthermore Mk does not forget to remind us that Jesus observed his custom of preaching [Mk 10:1] and that, notwithstanding His fatigue, He set Himself about teaching the crowds at length [Mk 6:34]. For this reason, the people referred to Him as Teacher, Rabbi [Mk 4:38; 9:5, 17, 38; 10:17, 20, 35, 51; 11:21; 12:14, 19, 32,; 13:1].

Luke likewise constructs great oratorical sections like Mt. He prefers to distribute throughout his narrative many of the teachings that he has amalgamated in the grand sermons. It is not known whether he was moved by the desire to be faithful, as far as possible, to historical truth, presenting them precisely as they occurred. Certainly in some cases, at least, Lk seems to situate the Lord's teaching in a very likely historical context: the classical example is his rendition of the Lord's Prayer. Mt inserts this in the Sermon on the Mount, which seems to be something of an interruption in the flow of the material of the pericope [Mt 6:9-13] – while Lk locates this in a context that seems quite plausible [Lk 11:2, ff.]. However, even Lk does not present those constructions of Mt but this in no way lessens the importance of the Lord's Preaching Mission, nor is it any less abundant in doctrinal material. Since he seems to be using a source that was not known to Mt, it was one that was very rich in Jesus' own teaching. It would suffice to recall the Parables of Mercy [Lk 15:1-32: only the first of these is found in Mt (18:12-14); the concerns about wealth (Lk 16:1-13, 19-31); the advice concerning the efficacy of persevering and humble prayer (Lk 18:1-14)].

Furthermore, Lk took great care to indicate from the outset of Jesus' public life that He had *received the Mission of evangelizing the poor, announcing redemption to captives ... and proclaiming a year of grace ...* [Lk 4:17-21].

John is no less abundant than the Synoptics in presenting Jesus' discourses, even though he structures them in a different manner. He gave them often the form of a vibrant dialogue between the speaker and His listeners. The theme is declared and then deepened in concentric circles, each time becoming tighter, by means of His listeners, whether they proved to be benevolent or adverse. The process would present difficulties against the primary premise, or the thesis Jesus would present. It would suffice to look at the conversation with Nicodemus, or with the Samaritan woman [cf. Jn 3:1-15; 4:5-26], and the Sermon on the Bread of Life [Jn 6:26-59], or on the light of the World [Jn 8:1-59]. This is a very unusual trait of the sermon at the Last Supper [cf. Jn 13:21-16:33]. For Jn, Jesus is the *Only Begotten who is with the Father – turning toward Him* – different from the Prophets who did not see God, Jesus has explained to us the mysteries which He has contemplated, because his main purpose on coming into the world was *to give testimony to the truth* [Jn 1:18; 3:11; 18:37].

b. The Definition of its Meaning: the four gospels, then, are in agreement with presenting the doctrinal activity of Jesus Christ, and they present this, as has been indicated above, in accord with the material they assembled and in their own plan of organization. However, there is also a diversity of general perspective, or of emphasis, manifest in the terms themselves, with which they presented Jesus' preaching.

One word that all the evangelists employ is: to teach; teaching. It is the term with the broadest meaning – in simplest terms, it implies the exposition of a doctrine. In the case of Jesus, it is the doctrine of the Mystery of Salvation, the Mystery of the Reign of God and of Eternal Life, as will be presented here. However, this term does not specify of itself the authority of the preacher, nor the content of His teaching. However, when applied to the Scribes and Pharisees, the text reads: they taught their own teachings. [Mt 15:9; Mk 7:7].

The authority of the Preacher and the general content of His teaching are implied are insinuated in a verb that is used with relative frequency by the Synoptics: to proclaim. This verb means the publication, by an authorized herald and in a juridical format, a new Law and an important happening for the entire nation. The tem implies the legitimacy of the herald and the transcendence of His message. Likewise, it is a very suitable term in order to describe Jesus' Preaching, as it will then express the announcement made by the Apostles, concerning that salvation already realized [cf. 1 Co 15:14, etc.] The object of the verb is announced various times with the substantive Gospel as its immediate object [Mt 4:32; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13; Mk 1:14; 13:10; 14:9]. Mt and Mk use this with the greatest frequency [cf. Mt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Mk 1:1, 14, f.;

8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9], Lk, on the other hand is the only one among the evangelists who uses the derived verb to evangelize [Lk 4:18, 43; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16; 20:1]. Mt cites this verb only one time [11:5]. The meaning sheds much clarity, even though in a general manner, of the content of the message proclaimed by Jesus: this is the Good News of Salvation, of the Coming of the Reign of God [cf. Lk 4:43; 8:1] and of the Advent of the Savior [Lk 2:10].

John never uses either verb, to proclaim, evangelize – nor does he employ the object of these verbs, the Gospel. However, he does use with much greater frequency than the Synoptics do, another verb that determines more an aspect, or the quality of the message proclaimed. This verb is to reveal. In fact, he uses this to express the divine revelation by means of the Prophets [Lk 24:25; Jn 12:41], or the Word of God directed to them [Jn 9:29; 12:29]. However, the term utilized by Jn is to testify; to bear testimony. *To testify* presupposes the right to enunciate that which the witness had observed and knows by his/ her own knowledge and experience: *we testify to that which we have seen...* [Jn 3:11]. The value of testimony is founded not in something extrinsic to the person of the witness, but rather in something intimate, something of his/her lived experience. John the Baptist could give witness regarding Jesus, because he had received a revelation and had seen the Spirit descending upon Him [Jn 1:32-34]. And with even greater reason could Jesus testify about divine realities which He had personally seen [cf. Jn 1: 18: 6:46]. However, besides the idea of witness evokes a formal juridical process. As is known, throughout the course of the 4th Gospel that runs like a *motif* the idea of a judgment which is unfolding, one in which human beings are adjudicated, according to whether or not they accept Jesus; own witness, testimony [cf. Jn 3:19], even to the final decisive moment in which there comes to a head the judgment of the world [Jn 12:31].⁰

All of this is in the background whenever theology comes to treat of Jesus' Personal Mission of Preaching.

2. The Message

a. The Reign of God: the Synoptic gospels are in agreement in that the primary theme of Jesus' Message is the Reign of God. *He taught in the synagogues and proclaimed the gospel of the reign* [Mt 4:23; 9:35] – which is *the Gospel of God* [Mk 1:14]. *I must proclaim the Good News of the reign of God to the other towns, too, because that is what I was sent to do...* [Lk 4:43].

The reign of God is not a geographical dimension, nor a political one – but rather, its universal confines regard moral and doctrine. It asks for the subjection of human beings to the dominion of God: it is not a harsh slavery to a tyrannical lord, but rather a challenging service implying the free and joyful acceptance of the loving and beneficent action of God. Because the Reign of God announced by Jesus is the

nearness of God in the sovereignty of His love for the Father, the consequence of which is a state of peace, liberty and happiness, which only the power and goodness of God can bestow. The reign of God is, therefore, the salvific action of God and its acceptance by human beings, and consequently, is salvation, the ultimate object of the most sublime human hopes. This salvation begins in this world and will reach consummation in the future and eternal eon. As a result, the proclamation of the reign is the Good news – the Gospel – precisely for the poor, the destitute, the oppressed, which hope in the salvation of the Only One Who can fulfill all this.

By reason of the content of this [Synoptic Message] Gospel, Jn's goal - even though he was aware of this expression [Jn 3:3, ff.] hardly uses it and has translated it into the categories of life, eternal life [about 40 times]. In this concept there is contained the summary of all the goods that a human being could ever desire and that God seeks to grant these to each person in a superabundant manner: as this is seen as a participation in the very life of God.

The reign of God and Eternal Life; even though these expressions accentuate distinct aspects, are actually equivalent formulations in order to express that total, definitive salvation of human beings worked out by the salvific action of God.

In the first place, as has been noted above, the Reign of God means the same as Eternal Life, and presents a religious and moral dimension: from the temptations in the desert, Jesus sought to disassociate Himself from any nationalistic sense of the Messianism, at least in so far as this was brought forward among the Jewish people. For this reason, He always side-stepped the political question. Yet, He had no hesitation of committing Himself on the matter of the payment of the taxes to the Roman authorities, as His sole interest was that those who would follow Him would render to God, all that is 'His.' [Mt 22:15-22, par.].

When they announced to Him the bloody repression brought to a head under Pilate in the Holy City itself, Jesus immediately raised the theme to the religious sphere, and came to offer an exhortation on penance [cf. Lk 13:1-5]: *Unless you repent, you will perish as they all did!* He did not choose to mix in any patriotic ideals with His own message. His entire attitude in this respect is summarized in His response given to Pilate: *My Kingdom is not of this world* [Jn 18:36]. Only very rarely would He bring up questions pertaining to civil law, as He did speaking about the division of an inheritance. He took advantage of this occasion in order to give counsel in the moral sphere regarding the need to give up one's earthly wealth [Lk 12:13-15].

The Adversary of this reign of God, of Heaven, were not only the religious and political authorities of the earth, but also Satan himself, who dreamed of subjecting the whole world to his slavery of sin [cf. Jn 8:33, f.; 12:31]. The sign that the Reign of God had begun to be implanted is not so much the withdrawal of the enemy occupying

armies, but rather the expulsion of the devils which manifest the disruption of the reign of Satan [cf. Mt 12:27; Lk 11:20]. The Reign of God is the Reign of His Grace in opposition to sin.

b. Conversion and Pardon: from this Reign of Grace, there is derived the necessity of conversion, that of on-going change of one's internal attitude – this is a profound *metanoia*. John the Baptist exhorted his listeners that they undergo conversion as the indispensable condition for them to receive the Reign of God [Mt 3:2, 8; 11; Mk 1:4; Lk 3:8]. Jesus likewise insists on the need for conversion [Mt 4:17; 11:20-21; 12:41; Lk 11:32; 13:3, 5]. Even further, He proclaims that the reason for His coming is *to call sinners to repentance* [Lk 5:32]. Mk has summarized the content of Jesus' Preaching in the first words that He speaks: *the times were completed, and the reign of God has come; repent and believe in the Gospel* [Mk 1:15]. There come together here two imperatives: *repent/ believe* - this is the double condition in order to participate in the blessings of the Reign of God: the change of one's heart and attitude ought to accompany the faith, the acceptance of the reign which God offers. The reason is that the Reign is indeed a gift of God, and it is not some state, or organization that one can approach on his/her own. In the category of Life used by Jn, it might be said that the sole Giver of this Life is God Himself, by means of Jesus Christ.

Attention needs to be drawn between John the Baptist and Jesus in their manner of presenting the Advent of the Reign of God. John the Baptist, following the tradition of the Prophets, announces the Day of Yahweh, and places accent on the awesome aspect of the severe judgment against the evil-doers, all the more so as so many of these pretend to make excuses with their being descendants of Abraham [Mt 3:7-10; Lk 3:7-9; cf. Jl 1:15; 2:1-11; Am 5:18-20; Is 13:6; Ezk 30:2-3]. However, he does not overlook the fact that the Messiah, after having cleared the threshing-floor, and will gather His wheat into the barn – but the chaff He will burn in a fire that will never go out [Mt 3:12; Lk 3:17]. Jesus inverts the terms. Ezk had earlier proclaimed that 'oracle of the Lord: I swear of myself: I do not take pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he be converted and live, and change his ways and live [cf. Ezk 33:11; 18:23].

Jesus proclaims pardon. He assures us that in heaven there is more rejoicing for the conversion of one sinner than for the perseverance of the 99 just persons [cf. Lk 15:7, 10, 32]. He does not neglect, however, the threat of punishment, all the more terrible in proportion to the ease of the grace of conversion that is constantly offered [cf. Mt 11:20-24; Lk 12:15] – those who are obstinate in their refusal to believe will die in their sin [cf. Jn 8:12, 21, 24; 9:41; 15:22, 24]. However, He has not come to condemn anyone, but rather to save all: only those who close themselves off from the loving invitation of God [cf. Jn 3:16-21; 5:24, f.].

This explains His welcoming attitude toward sinners – the reason is that the main reason He has come to call them so that they might undergo repentance and be saved [cf. Lk 5:32; 19:10; Mt 18:12-14]. His preaching is the Gospel itself: the announcement of deliverance, of light, of happiness: there has come the genuine year of jubilation, in that all debts are pardoned and all goods, superabundantly, are restored: the year of general amnesty [cf. Lk 4:18, f.; Is 61:1, f.].

c. Eschatological Urgency: however, this is not the same kind of Jubilation Year as those that had been celebrated up to His time in harmony with the old law [cf. Lv 25:10]. This special year indicates the fulfillment of time [cf. Mk 1:15] – this is the definitive and ultimate year of jubilation: it is the eschatological period of salvation. On the one hand, this is that period about which the OT had served as its preparation, in which promise and prophecy arrive at their fulfillment, realization and consummation. All the prophets and the Law prophesized up until John the Baptist came- however, in the day of this John the reign of God broke into history [cf. Mt 11:12-13; Lk 16:16].

In effect, Jesus preached the reign of God not as some benefit promised for some distant future, but rather as a reality that is just about to happen. However, even further, it is a reality that is already present: the Reign of God is within you [cf. Lk 17:21; Mt 4:17; 12:28; Mk 1:15]. It is true that the Reign of God is orientated toward the future age, because it is not limited to a period more or less with a long duration, within history. The complete realization is reserved for eternity; however, this reign in the present is already active and can be experienced. This is not imposed by any force, but rather seeks its acceptance by extending the invitation to convert, and it provides the necessary period to respond adequately to this. In the last analysis, its coming is not relegated to some distant future – because its mere announcement places us in the shadows of its ultimate realization. The hour has arrived so that God might implant His definitive reign in the hearts of believers, this present moment is the last opportunity – if this is rejected, there is nothing further to hope for.

In this sense, the reign of God is a reality that is already present, with a dynamic intensity: it is present precisely in so far as it is dynamic, in that in itself it provides the energy which impels believers to their ultimate destiny. It is that which Jn expresses as ‘realized eschatology’: eternal life as one that is already possessed, already begins in the present [cf. Jn 3:36’ 5:24; 6; 40, 54].

This is the present and definitive moment. Nothing will follow these times – and there is no further intra-worldly domain that will unfold, but only the final consummation with the glorious manifestation of the reign, at the end of times [cf. Lk 17:20-24]. This is an epoch similar to those times just before the Flood in the days of Noah – or the ruin of Sodom in the days of Lot [cf. Lk 17:26-30; Gn 6:5-7, 24; 18:20-

19:25]. However, there is this difference that now there has been already announced that nothing will follow these times. And furthermore, this present hour, rather than being the execution of a punishment, is the time of the coming repeatedly of god's grace into our world. The reason is that *grace and truth have become real through Jesus Christ* [Jn 1:17]. From this moment on there is an eschatological theme that dominates the preaching of Jesus, with this characteristic tension of the entire eschatological era, between this present partial realization and the future consummation.

This tension appears much more markedly in those predictions relative to the consummation of the Reign, which in some passages is presented as imminent, and even as present. In other passages, it seems as though it is still a long way off, and in still others, it is revealed that it is impossible to predict [cf. Mk 9:1; 13:7, 10, 20, 30, 32]. The passages that might lead us in either direction have long been much discussed – some land on one or other prediction, to the exclusion of the other. There is no denying that scholars have individuated three separate series of texts that seem almost irreconcilable.

The most simple solution that some bring to this challenging aspect of biblical interpretation would be to suppress one of the series of texts, as is done for all practical purposes in the theory known as consequent eschatology, and realized eschatology. However, in these views not sufficient attention is paid to the incorporation into the Gospels of those passages of the opposing series.

Others have sought another solution through a minute analysis of the texts, distinguishing in them the original expression of Jesus; thought, and those editing interventions introduced by the ancient oral tradition, or by the evangelists themselves. However, the results of this theory have always remained inconclusive: it seems rather that a certain opposition exists in the preaching of Jesus Himself and that the early Church has transmitted His words as pronounced without any attempt to resolve the apparent antinomy.

Other attempts have tried to abbreviate the difficulty, by demythologizing the entire futuristic content of those phrases and translating it all into an existential sense of great urgency for conversion. However, the phrases under discussion do not seem that they can be reduced to a pressing invitation to make a decision before God, without achieving a realization that motivates one and gives meaning to the options provided human beings.

There would have to be admitted the internal tension before the salvific event: presence and future; proximity and distance; already/ not yet – that interchange with one another. At this point the believer can be content with insinuating a solution that seems to overcome all those apparent opposites: Jesus Christ did not even try to point

out a plan that would be computed into years and months of the Gregorian Calendar. He Himself maintains that *He did not know the day nor the hour* [Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32], because the settling on the time is reserved to the Heavenly Father of Mercy [cf. Ac 1:7]. However, rather than the proximity or the distance of the final act, as being determined in measurable periods of time, there has been affirmed the inevitability and the certainty of a final event, the arrival of which and its consequences are assured. The powers of this future age are already at work in the Church [cf. Heb 6:5]. All are invited to heed the words of Jesus, those same words heard physically by the Apostles and human beings down through the long centuries of Church life. The responsibility is laid clearly on the shoulders of this present age as well, to make a decision regarding Jesus Christ and His message.

The eschatological announcement is not an anticipated reporting of future events, but rather a hope filled promise that God certainly will show His sovereign power for salvation at the end of times. It might even be said that the present moment, and each instant, is *made relative* quantitatively in far as it is a measurable period of time – and it is *made absolute* qualitatively as a salvific moment: this is *kairos*. However, there is no need to reduce the eschatological message to a mere existential interpretation. Eschatological preaching will always need to bring up this real tension between this present moment and the future. The actual time is the hour for the coming of the Reign: it is a qualified present due to the proximity of the reign and because of the urgency of our decision. The principal matter in all this is the fact that the definitive epoch has already begun – following this all that remains is the consummation of this world [cf. Mt 28:20].

There is no need to hope for some new prophet, nor for the return of one of the Prophets of old, like Elijah, in whom many hoped. The reason is that John the Baptist was the Elijah who spoke of returning [cf. Mt 11:4; 17:12-13; Mk 9:11-13]. The ultimate and decisive reason why the Reign of God was inaugurated is the very presence of Jesus. The Prophets up until John [Mt 11:9-14] – and in Jesus there is One Who is superior to Jonah and Solomon [cf. Mt 12:41, f.] – He is greater than David [cf. Mt 11:41-46, par.] – He is greater than Moses [Jn 5:45, f.] who merely gave the Law – whereas Jesus brings grace and truth [cf. Jn 1:17]. No one has ever seen God, but just the Only Begotten Son who now speaks to us of the Mysteries of God [Jn 1:18]. And no one knows the Father other than the Son Who reveals Him to us [cf. Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22=]. There can be no further revelation – He has brought to us all that there is to know from that which He heard from His Father [Jn 15:15]. The Holy Spirit, whom He wills send after His own exaltation in the heavens, will only bring testimony regarding Him [Jn 15:26] and lead to the understanding of the revelation realized in Him [Jn 14:26].

d. The Message and the Messenger: the inauguration of the reign coincides with the presence of Jesus Christ, not only because He is the definitive messenger, but also because He Himself is the definitive message: the Message of the father is inseparable from His Person. Not only is He the Herald of the reign and of salvation, but He Himself is the salvation and the reign. And yet, more precisely: salvation and the Reign are identified with Him – because He is the very presence of the Savior God. *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* [Mk 1:1] is not merely the Good News announced by Him, but it is also Jesus Christ Himself as preached as the Good News in Himself: Jesus Christ is the subject Who preaches and is the very Object Who is preached. The further explanation of all this are given to us in the themes, or the aspects that provide the substance of the contemplation, studies and Magisterium of the Church, for the living experience of believers through the centuries.

One step further and one might comprehend why Jesus places Himself as the criterion of the salvation offered by God is concretized in the acceptance of Jesus as the very presence of God the Savior. It is necessary to leave everything behind – even one's life – for Him [cf. Mt 16:25, 27; Mk 8:35, 38; 10:29-30 Lk 9:24, 26; 10:29-30; 14:26 Mt 10:37].

Jesus comes to occupy the very center of His own preaching. The decisive and discriminating response is that which is made to His question *Who do you say that I am?* [Mt 16:15, par.]. This aspect is realized with even greater force in the 4th Gospel, and serves as the almost constant theme of Jesus' own preaching: it is His own Person. He is the Light of the World, without which all is darkness [cf. Jn 8:12; 12:35, 42; 1:5, etc.] – He is the Life, outside of Whom only death reigns [cf. Jn 11:25; 14:6; 3:36 etc.].

Nonetheless, Jesus always points to Another who is above Him: His Merciful Father, Who is the primordial source of all truth and of all life [cf. Jn 5:26; 7:16]. Since Jesus does not seek His own glorification, but only the Glory of His Father [cf. Jn 7:18; 8:50, 54]. He only desires His own in so far as it contributes to that of His Heavenly Father [cf. Jn 13:31-32; 14:13; 17:1, 4, 5]. This is all only so that God be recognized as His authentic Father, in a sense that up until that time has not even been suspected. It is necessary that Jesus be accepted as the Only Begotten and true Son of His Merciful Father [cf. 1 Jn 2:22, f.].

e. The Divine Paternity: this is the ultimate conclusion of that intimate nucleus of the Gospel, the quintessence of Jesus' preaching. It is the proclamation of the Divine Paternity over humanity through the mediation of Jesus Christ, His only-Begotten Son. The idea was not totally unknown in the OT – however, Jesus gives to it a dimension which until then had never even been suspected: God is the Father - and since He is the Father of mercy over all human beings, He sends His most Beloved Son into this world.

The OT knows of the paternity of God, and not only in the sense at the creative power worthy of respect [as in Dt 32:6; Is 64:7; Ml 1:6] – but, also as merciful goodness Who inspires confidence [cf. Ps 103; 5s 63:15, f.; Jr 31:20; Ps 27:20; Si 51:10]. What stands out in Jesus' preaching is His insistence upon the idea of the Divine Paternity. No less than 170 times does this description of God come from His lips. With Him, there is expressed the particular relationship of God with Jesus Christ. However, this is not exclusively the situation – because God is the Father Who extends His concern over every human being, whose needs are known even before they can be expressed. [cf. Mt 5:45; 6:8, par.].

The idea of the Divine Paternity which Jesus, as Most Beloved and Only Son of God, knows intimately, is the theme which impregnates His preaching with its aroma of goodness and meekness. This is particularly extended to the humble and the afflicted as well as toward the repentant sinner. Jesus shows Himself as harsh only with those who remain obstinate in maintaining the image of a God, a rigorous enforcer of the Law – with those who would substitute God for the law and for their own interpretations then foisted upon humanity. These are the ones He refers to as 'hypocrites' which He so severely criticizes [cf. Mt 15:3, 7-9; Mk 7:608, 13]. God is revealed as preferring the imitation of His own goodness even over sacrifices. [cf. Mt 9:13; 12:7].

In this spiritual context there have to be noted the *Beatitudes*. Blessed are the Poor – the Afflicted – the Destitute – the Persecuted who place in God all their hope and seek Him Alone [cf. Mt 5:3-11]. Blessed are those who without taking scandal in His weakness, see and hear and heed that which Jesus does and says [cf. Mt 11:6; 13:16]. To such as these are the Mysteries of the Reign of God revealed [Mt 13:11].

The concept of the reign of God unfolds under a new light: there is not demanded any servile submission to a despotic dominion, nor merely gratitude and obedience to the Creator and Sovereign Lord – but, rather, the filial acceptance of the Father's generous love Who is in heaven. The challenge is for each to change their hearts and become as children, and only then can one enter into the heavens [cf. Mt 18:3]. God is the Lord in love. His Reign is His benevolent action regarding every human being, by delivering them from their miseries and by subjecting the tyrannizing powers that would enslave all. And in the very first place, there is offered the deliverance from sin: *your sins are forgiven you – I have not come to call the just, but the sinners!* [cf. Mk 2:5-10, 17]. However above all, the message is God merciful paternity over all human beings: *so that you might become children of your Father, Who is in heaven* [Mt 5:45].

f. The New Morality: with this, there have been laid down the bases for a new moral way of life, not one of mere external and legalistic observance, but rather an internal activity which breaks out into the open in worthy words and deeds, and the

primary obligation of which is love for God and for every other human being [cf. Mt 6:1-8, 16-18; 7:21-23; 12:33-35; 15:7-11, 17, 20, etc.]. Far from destroying morality, abolishing the law, or lowering the ideal, these are all affirmed, interiorized and sublimated. In order to enter into the kingdom of heaven, there is necessary a more perfect holiness than that preached and practiced by the Scribes and Pharisees [cf. Mt 5:20]. The moral demands are not contained by merely composing one's exterior but these ideals penetrate into the depths of each person open to them, including one's thoughts and desires [cf. Mt 5:21-28]. The ideal for virtue will not be the Law of Retaliation, nor some merely equitable and fair benevolence – but rather a selfless and universal love, the Model of which is the Heavenly Father Himself [cf. Mt 5:38-48]. The Law is fulfilled by elevating it toward the heights: *you will love the Lord your god, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind: this is the supreme and greatest commandment; and the second, is like the first one: you will love your neighbor as yourself ...* [cf. Mt 22:37-39].

God seeks to reign as Father with omnipotent and a beneficent paternity: it is 'omnipotent' in that He liberates human beings from the slavery to the satanic powers of darkness, vanity, and outlandish behavior, to any anguished preoccupation for life, to closing in on oneself through abject selfishness. He is 'beneficent' because he gathers all human beings into a family, whose bond of union is the knowledge of being children of the same God, Who is in heaven.

As this matter is very well known to most committed believers, it is not necessary to develop it much further. The preceding brief indications should suffice to allow one to grasp the fact that the teaching of Jesus Christ is profoundly humanitarian and moralizing, without being reduced to the level of a philosophical and natural sense of religiosity. Rather it has been elevated to a transcendent level which is based on a new revelation concerning God Himself: it is the revelation of God as Father, in a sense which up to this moment has never before been so articulated: God is Father in His divine intimacy, Who sends His Most Beloved, and Only Begotten Son in order to make of all of us His adopted children, by infusing into all so disposed His own Holy Spirit. He thus unties each and every one open to Him into a New Covenant of Mercy, and not a mere juridical relationship of rights and mutual duties. It is rather a relationship of life, of participation in His own divine Trinitarian life.

This Divine Life bestows on all open to it, right in this present moment the fruit of the redemption brought by Jesus Christ – but it is one which will reach its full expansion only in the future. Christian morality is determined by these two points of reference. As a consequence, it presents a faith graced by pardon, and received only by accepting grace. It is a joyful hope in the ultimate blessing, in an ecstasy of love for the Father, Who has so loved and loves every human being.

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3. His Audience

After having developed somewhat the Redemptive Mystery of Jesus' preaching, the student should not forget to ponder a bit the audience addressed – as this presents real challenges to the theologian, in that it touches upon the heart of the message:

a. The Limitation to Jews only: this is the first challenging question that has been continually asked through the ages: why did Jesus preach only to Jews? ¹⁹ This restriction, which he Himself laid down, has often seemed unusual in that period when proselytism was the most intense. The Book of Acts leads the believer to note how in all the cities of some importance of the Hellenic-Roman world there were synagogues, so which flocked not only those born Jews but those who underwent a conversion [cf. Ac 13:43, 50; 17:4, 17; 2:11]. Furthermore, the Gospels speak to us, indirectly, of those pro-Israelite enterprises that took place throughout Palestine among the pagans. However, Jesus does not show any personal intention to going to preach in the *diaspora* [cf. Jn 7:35], and was even severely critical of those undertakings – or, more exactly, those of a Pharisaic spirit [cf. Mt 23:15].

Personally He had established as His rule for Himself that of preaching exclusively to Jews. And this rule He set up as a principle for His own personal Mission: *He had only been sent for the sheep who belonged to the House of Israel* [cf. Mt 15:24]. From this principle of His, there came from Him the prohibition to His disciples of going, during His public life, to the lands of the gentiles and to the Samaritan cities [cf. Mt 10:5, f.]. He Himself maintaining these geographical restrictions, took on the many dangers inherent in His own land [cf. Mt 14:13; 16:4]. Only by some exception did He perform any miracle for the benefit of the gentiles [cf. Mt 8:5-13; 15:21-28].

On the other hand, He did not countenance in the least manner that narrow nationalism so much in vogue among the Israelites of His time. The eschatological thrust of His message did not coincide in anyway with the resultant hatred toward the 'outside', the 'stranger' – which is often common among small town folk. Furthermore, He fulminated severe judgments against His own co-nationals for their willful incredulity. This served also as a forewarning that His punishment would be all the more rigorous than that of the gentiles, such as the people of Tyre and Sidon, or Sodom and Gomorrah [cf. Mt 11:20-24]. Much like John the Baptist [cf. Mt 3:7-11], He recognized the election of the Chosen People, however He energetically denied that this automatically ensured them of salvation [cf. Mt 8:11, f.; 12:41, f.; Lk 13:6-9]. To the total contrary, He promised the gentiles full and equal participation in the eschatological Banquet [cf. Mt 8:11] and He spoke endearingly of the sheep who were not yet of His flock [cf. Jn 10:6]. He even threatened His own compatriots with the loss

¹⁹ St. Thomas Aquinas brought this question up: III, q. 42, a. 1.

of the Reign, which would be handed over to another people who would bring forth fruit in their lives [cf. Mt 8:12; 21:43]. Furthermore, His message shed its influence far and wide, with a universal scope in mind. He demonstrates this reality in many different ways, regarding his own attitude with respect to the publicans and the sinners, as with His sublime respect for the Samaritans, considered by His own co-nationals as heretics, schismastics, excluded from the privileged Election of the People of Israel [cf. Lk 17:11-19; 10:30-37; Jn 4:4-41].

The solution of this paradox within the universal message and limited preaching Mission has to be sought in the idea which Paul would develop later on in a thematic form: *first the Jews, then also the Greek*, or the non-Jew, the gentile [cf. Rm 1:16]. The ultimate reason is the fidelity of God to His promises demands that Christ might exercise His ministry among the Jews. Only then, would the Mercy of God be extended toward the gentiles [cf. Rm 15:8, f.]: *salvation comes from the Jews*, Jesus would say to the Samaritan woman [cf. Jn 4:22].

The idea of universal salvation was hinted at even in the OT. Above all, Isaiah who mentioned the 'distant isles' and unidentifiable peoples seems to have started this thought [cf. Is 2:3; 25:6-8; 40:5; 45:20-22]. This is particularly so in II-Is with the Canticles of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh [cf. Is 41:1, 6; 53:10-12 – and 56:6-8; 60:11-14]. Precisely this Canticles of the Servant provide something of a response to the enigma: the eschatological act of the incorporation of the pagan peoples into the Reign of God could only catch fire since the Suffering Servant gave up His life in atonement for the redemption of the multitude, the 'many.' Jesus' death 'for the many' is the necessary condition without which the reign of God would not be offered to every human being. Jesus' death tore down the wall of separation among Jews and Gentiles; He broke open the dikes that seemed to hold back the divine benedictions within the limits of the Israelite People. The Cross of Christ reconciled both of these segments of humanity with God, by bringing them together into one single Body. And after His resurrection, Jesus Christ sent His Spirit out to all flesh, so that all, both Jews and pagans, united into one single Body, and animated by one sole Spirit, we hold access to the Father of all human beings [cf. Ep 2:11-18].

The central principle in Jesus' reaction to His challenges was that He subjected Himself to the laws of history of His time. He was born a Jew, of Jewish parents, and shared personally in His people's destiny. This universal sense of His Mission would then initially sprout forth within the heart of His own people – and the seed was planted during His personal Mission to the four corners of the globe to all nations. As the Suffering Servant of His Father, Jesus fulfilled His personal Mission by offering His expiatory atonement for the sins of the multitude. Thereafter, rightfully, Jesus the risen 'Lord', received empire, power and glory over all nations and people and languages – all would be invited to come and serve Him. With His supreme power over

the whole earth, He would send His apostles to preach the Gospel to the whole world, even unto the end of time [cf. Mt 28:18-20].

b. The Lack of Comprehension on the Part of His Audience: this is the second difficulty that is most noticeable among those privileged hearers of His word, including His own 'inner circle.' As it was limited during His own lifetime to the Jewish People, three separate groups of persons are easily note of not being able to grasp His message;

I. His Adversaries: these offer a special challenge, as their incredulity seems due to their own voluntary blindness in spiritual matters. They were closed off from hearing the voice of the new Prophet, did not pay much heed to His miracles, nor to the startling fact that so many of the OT prophecies were being fulfilled in Him in their presence. They did not choose to listen to Him [cf. Mt 21:25; 32; Lk 7:29, f.] – they would not even believe Someone Who would come back from the dead. They considered themselves already 'illuminated' by their own lights in religious matters, and the threat was that such as these would die in their sin [cf. Jn 9:41; 3:19, f.; 12:43]. The responsibility for this punishment would not fall on the merciful Lord, but was due to the contumacy of His enemies [cf. Jn 15:22, 24].

II. His Own Disciples: their lack of comprehension was only relative – they did want to learn, but were taken over by their spiritual torpor, and were not sufficiently disciplined to be open to His challenging message. Mk seems to be the Gospel [the first one?] that brings this out the most, especially in his presentation of the messianic secret. Their prejudices and pre-conceptions often blocked the full import of Jesus' words and deeds – they hoped more for a more triumphant type of messiah – they thought of a realm in which they would hold important, powerful positions [cf. Mk 8:31-37; 10:35-45]. In order to hear His word and to heed it, there was needed child-like simplicity of heart. To obtain this ideal attitude, it was not so much of a matter of instant conversion, but a life-long progressive way of the Cross to putting on the mind of Christ Jesus [cf. Ph 2:5, ff.]. They would finally 'get it' only in the resurrection and their empowerment by the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them – they would then be His faithful Witnesses, Martyrs, to the far ends of the globe [cf. Jn 2:22; 16:12, f.].

III. The Masses: this seems to have been the majority of human beings. The mass of 'ordinary people' did not seem to grasp well the importance of the Person of Jesus and His Message. It would seem naturally speaking inexplicable how a people who were being offered eternal salvation as imminent would be so hesitant in accepting it, even though it was presented to them in an equitable, rational manner. In effect, at first sight, the Gospels themselves admit that Jesus proposed His doctrine in a form that was not easy to understand. Explicitly it was only to the Disciples, the inner

circle that Jesus unfolded the Mystery of the reign of God, while for the masses He seemed to speak only in parables [cf. Mk 4:11, f., 33, f. – par.].

However, not all of the parables were obscure: however, those regarding the reign of God, are explicitly seen as not being easy to grasp. It is necessary to ask, then: does this difficulty derive from the explicit intention and method of the Preacher, or from the sublimity of the matter about which these parables treat? Because, if Jesus Christ was not trying to have everyone enter into the Reign of God, why would He have proclaimed the Word to them in the first place, and why would He bother preaching to them? It would have been better not to have broached the difficult subject at all with these simple people about complicated matters – they could always then present the excuse of their lack of comprehension as the reason for their incredulity [cf. Jn 15:22].

Jesus' intention could not have been that He was trying to hide totally the truth. On the contrary, the parables are but an introductory means in order to express this in its depths. Jesus did what He could. He did not pretend to explain the Mystery of the Reign of God. However, the mystery is in the very reality of it, the outlines of which, He revealed. It was not fully accessible in any single moment, but implied the process of one's entire life. As a result, in order to know it, two steps are needed: the first, to accept it in its mystery; and secondly, to petition for and to work for its clarification. This can be put in another way: first to break down all the barriers of our own thoughts and plans and small human prejudices; and secondly, to open oneself totally to the immensity of the mystery of God. Only in this manner could one ever come to grips with the Plan of God in his/ her regard, as it is so sublime and so distinct from anything human beings could have imagined [cf. Mt 16:23]. The incomprehensibility of it, of this mystery, does not come simply from Jesus' preaching, nor from the inaccessible form of the announcement of the mystery of God's Reign. The challenge comes rather from the depths of the mystery and the lack of comprehension of the masses. Nonetheless, despite the obstacles Jesus did not give up trying to communicate the mystery and to invite every human being on any educational level to open their hearts and hearts to heed and to seek out, and to question further, as the Disciples themselves did. To whomsoever knocks, it will be opened to him/ her - whoever seeks, finds: in this manner the Reign of God can be grasped by all [cf. Mk 4; 9-12]. The parables of the reign of God are not a repulse, but an invitation.

c. The Mystery of the reign of God: this is precisely the sole passage where, in the context of the Parables, where the Gospels use the word, *mystery* [cf. Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11; Lk 8:10].

The Reign of God, in its reality, is just about diametrically opposed to most human expectations. It is the authentic Day of the Lord – but, it is not presented with any visible prodigious signs or cosmic cataclysm that might be imagined [cf. Lk 17:20]. Rather it is with the simplicity of the grain hidden in the earth which grows without anyone taking note of it [cf. Mk 4:26-29], mixed in with the weeds [cf. Mt 13:24-30], as lowly as the mustard seed [cf. Mt 13:31, f.; Mk 4:30-32] – or the little yeast that disappears in the batter [cf. Mt 13:33]. The Reign of God is God's omnipotence hidden in apparent weakness, it is the majesty of God hidden in the vulgarity of poverty [cf. 1 Co 1:26-29]. And above all, it is the love of God that invites the publicans and sinners, because it is pleasing to God to make such as these the beneficiaries of His mercy as they respond to Him in love. For those persons who would have formulated an image of God according to human measurements, the reign of God could only be a mystery that will totally befuddle them, even in its clarity in full light.

And the Mystery which is Jesus Himself, as He proclaims the Reign of God. Even put in a better manner, Jesus is identified with the reign of God. John the Baptist as well, His precursor, found difficulty in accepting it [cf. Mt 11:2-6; Lk 7:18-23]. As Jesus does not come as a severe Judge who would cut down the fruitless trees, but rather one Who would dry the tears of the repentant with His Mercy [cf. Mt 3:10] He is the Servant of God, Who does not crush the broken reed, nor does He disregard the insignificant [cf. Mt 12:17-21]. However, in the last analysis, He has taken upon Himself our weaknesses and took up our infirmities on His own shoulders [cf. Mt 8:17].

Paradoxically the presence of the Preacher and His preaching veil somewhat the Mystery and reveal it at the same time. The reason is that His words and deeds manifest the redemptive presence of God, which does not judge and castigate, but rather loves and extends salvation. The only Begotten Son has not been sent in order to condemn, but rather to save the world – it was to this extent that that God has loved the world [cf. Jn 3:16, f.]. The lack of the people's comprehension was not a finality that God really wanted, or because of Jesus' preaching. Rather, it was the inevitable result in those who did not continue to strive to open the ears and their hearts in order to see and to hear Him, to witness His deeds, and respond to Him. The challenge is to respond to the mystery of infinite charity of God for as long as life lasts.

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4. Jesus Christ, the Preacher of the Reign of God

These considerations just presented here lead the committed believer to turn toward the Preacher Himself of God's Reign. The reason is this People who has not grasped His message, do admire the originality of His teaching and the authority with which he taught and preached [cf. Mk 1:27].

a. The Novelty of His teaching: the fact that His teaching was totally new is affirmed by Jesus Himself: ... *no one puts new wine into old wineskins – if he does, the wine will burst the skins, the wine is lost and the skins too...No, new wine, new skins...* ! [cf. Mk 2:21, f.]. All know that Jesus did not have a formal education from the schools of His time from famous rabbis, as Paul did. And yet, nevertheless, He knew well how to use sacred Scripture in a form and with an exegesis which up to that time had not been heard of [cf. Jn 7:15]. And He did this with such dexterity that His adversaries were often reduced to silence [cf. Mt 22:46]. It is clear that He knew how to break through the outer covering in order to penetrate into the core of the matter within. He was particularly adroit at discovering the spirit of the word within the letter [cf. 2 Co 3:6]. He was able to look beyond the immediate prescription and uncover the ultimate finality of the words [cf. Mt 19:3-9]. He was able to see the message of salvation, from its initial stages to its fulfillment [cf. Jn 6:32]. His interpretation of the OT is radically different from that of the scribes and experts of His time: he has been able to go beyond all the barriers laid down by rabbinic exegesis and was able to penetrate deeply into the treasures buried in the Law and the Prophets. He is never unfaithful to the authentic tradition, but rather by His total fidelity to this tradition, He was able to lead it forward and present its fuller sense.

The same might be said of His doctrine – He is original and new in his manner of living and speaking. More than once He was forced to respond to the rude attacks on the part of the Pharisees. It would suffice to remember His attitude with regard to the Law of the Sabbath rest. This provided the occasion for an attack and for His enunciation of His principle: *the Sabbath has been instituted for man, and not that man was created for the Sabbath*. Is it licit to do any good on the Sabbath in order to save a life, or would one have to neglect it so that the life would be lost. [cf. Mk 2:23-27; 3:5].

Here there may be the most novel aspect of His teaching: in the presence of any Pharisaical interpretation which considered the old Law as an absolute value, Jesus was able to *relativize* it by sublimating it. Jesus *de-divinized* the rigid observance of the Law in order to divinize love for one's neighbor. The first and supreme commandment is to love God – and the second is like it, to love one's neighbor. In these two commandments are summarized the Law and the Prophets [cf. Mt 22:37-40]. Jesus discovered this ultimate purpose of the Law: God gave the Law out of love for humanity and consequently, God loves humanity more than the Law. The sole supreme and absolute Law is to love and serve God and, out of love for Him, and in His service, to love and serve humanity.

b. The Authority of His Preaching: along with the originality of His teaching, the people also admired the authority with which He taught [cf. Mt 7:29; Lk 4:32]. *No one ever spoken as this man* - is the profession those listeners of His made who were

sent by the high priests [cf. Jn 7:46]. It is true that He was not able to claim as his own authority those great masters who were His teachers, because He did not have any [cf. Jn 7:15]. However, He supported Himself frequently on the Law and the Prophets because as He Himself stated: *Moses stated that concerning Me!* [cf. Jn 5:46]. He was able to draw on Himself an undeniable authority to interpret the Scriptures in a new way, even at times in a sense that seemed contrary to the letter of the law, but always in complete harmony with its underlying revealed divine spirit. Recalling the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mountain, Jesus would say: while others have said ... however, I now say to you...! [cf. Mt 5:21, f., 27, f., 31-34; 38, ff]. And it would suffice to recall the commandment which he imposed as His own: *a new commandment I give you: that you love one another as I have loved you!* [cf. Jn 13:34].

The Prophets in proclaiming their visions would place before their message these words: *Oracle of Yahweh* or: *thus the Lord speaks*. Jesus never uses these expressions, but states categorically: But, I say to you – verily, I say to you! The formula: *in truth, I say to you* - in principle is found in all four gospels. In Mt, 30 times; Mk, 13 times; Lk 6 times and Jn, through re-duplication [Amen, Amen ...] 25 times. It seems to be equivalent to an oath. What it seems to do is to take the place of the old prophetic traditions.

From this it is a simple step to conclude that His authority was derived directly from God Himself: *My teaching is not Mine, but it is of Him Who has sent Me – I say to you what I have heard from My Father, for this is what I proclaim to the world*. These are some of Jesus' expressions in the 4th gospel in this regard [cf. Jn 7:16; 8:26, 28]. With the same original and authoritative tone Jesus claims His own authority over the old Law: *the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath...* [cf. Mt 12:8; Mk 2:28; Lk 6:5; Jn 5:17].

One day His contemporaries asked Him about His teaching, precisely because He is presenting Himself as One Self-taught, and could not base His thoughts on the authority of any of His teachers, as was the custom among the rabbis, for the simple reason that He did not have any teachers! Jesus then, as has just been noted in a number of texts, re-affirms His basic right to teach, and at the same time, He defends the orthodoxy of His doctrine: He did not invent on His own and based solely on His own reason – rather, His authority is derived from His unique relationship with His Father, the Merciful God [cf. Jn 7:14-16; 12:49-50]. On another day, in which He was found in the temple and was teaching the People and evangelizing, there came to Him priests and the scribes and the elders, and they asked Him: tell us, with what authority do you do all this. [cf. Lk 20:1, f.] On this occasion, Jesus did not seek to respond to them, because the question was not presented to Him in sincerity, but out of hatred. The careful reader of the gospel knows that Jesus had replied: *for this have I been sent* - as the over-all response to any and all questions regarding the source of His message.

It is to evangelize the poor, to proclaim the deliverance of captives and to announce the year of the Grace of the Lord [cf. Lk 4:18, f., 43].

No Prophet, and much less, no Rabbi, ever spoke as He did. To His listeners, this newness and authority in His teaching, led them to the fundamental question: what is all this? A new teaching and with such authority! [Mk 1:27]. To believers through the centuries the response springs to their lips: He is the Son of God, Who is eternally turned toward the Father [is *with* the father] and who declares the Mysteries of God to those receptive to Him [cf. Jn 1:18]. However, in giving all this, it is necessary to see the activity that accompanied His preaching: *He taught in the synagogues ... and healed the sick, and all those suffering...* [Mt 4:23; 9:35]. His deeds also tell the believer Who He is.

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G. THE PARACLETE²⁰

He has basically a variety of services rendered to humanity: He comes to the disciples and *inhabits* them - and He guides and teaches them, reminding them about Jesus' words and deeds.

1. There are some basic interpretations of *Parakletos*:

- a passive form, one called alongside to help – advocate, defense attorney. He is often a Defender of the Apostles, the disciples, whenever they are on trial [cf. Mt 10:20; Ac 6:10]. Yet in Jn, the Paraclete is more the district attorney, proving the world guilty/ He is probably more in service as a Witness for the defense, a character witness.
- in the active sense, one who intercedes, an intercessor, a mediator, a spokesperson. This is His role in 1 Jn 2:1 – whereas in the 4th gospel this is not His role. In Mt 10:20, He is a Spokes-person through the disciples in defense of Jesus. He is in this sense, more of a helper, friend. The Paraclete does help the disciples – ‘helper’ is not His full role.
- still in the active sense, He is a comforter, a consoler. Yet, He never is recorded of exercising this role of consoling the Disciples. Consolation is found in the context of Jn 16:6, f.].

²⁰ Raymond E. Brown, SS, *The Anchor Bible. The Gospel According to John [13-21]*. Introduction, Translation and Notes. Garden City: Doubleday 1970, pp. 1136- 1143.

- as a noun: is related to the *Parakelsis*, that ministry of encouragement, exhortation found so often in the apostolic witnesses [cf. 1 Th 3:2; Rm 12:8; Heb 13:22; Ac 13:15]:

... we sent our brother Timothy, who is God's helper, in spreading the gospel of Christ, to keep you firm and encourage you about your faith, and prevent any one of you from being unsettled by the present hardships. As you know these are bound to come our way... [cf. 1 Th 3:2, ff.]

... Since the gifts that we have differ according to the grace that was given to each one of us: if it is a gift of prophecy, we should prophesy as much as our faith tells us; if it is a gift of practical service, let us devote ourselves to serving; if it is teaching, to teaching; if it is encouraging, to encouraging. When you give, you should give generously from the heart; if you are put in charge, you must be conscientious; of you do works of mercy let it be because you enjoy doing them. Let love be without pretence... In brotherly love let your feelings of deep affection for one another come to expression and regard others as more important than yourself. In the service of the Lord, work not half-heartedly, but with conscientiousness and an eager spirit. Be joyful in hope, persevere in hardship; keep praying regularly; share with any of God's holy people who are in need: look for opportunities to be hospitable... [cf. Rm 12: 8, ff.].

... I urge you, brothers, to take these words of encouragement kindly; that is why I have written to you briefly ... [cf. Heb 13:22]

... Brothers, if you would like to address some words of encouragement to the congregation, please do so... [cf. Ac 13:15].

The whole Church walks in the *parakelsis* of the Holy Spirit [cf. Ac 9:31]: ... *The churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria, were now left in peace, building themselves up and living in the fear of the Lord, encouraged by the Holy Spirit, they continued to grow... All the services of the Holy Spirit the Paraclete are worked out in the ministry of the apostles.*

Summary: the Paraclete is a witness in defense of Jesus and a spokesman for Him in the context of His trial by His enemies. He is a Consoler of the disciples for He takes Jesus' place among them, as the Lord does not leave His own orphans, but sends His Spirit, leaves the Eucharist. The Paraclete is teacher and guide and thus, the helper of disciples.

OT Background

These points may help in the understanding of His role:

- tandem relationships: a principal figure dies and leaves another to take his place, carry on His work, interpret his message [e.g. Moses/ Joshua; Elijah/ Elisha; David/ Solomon – the Baptist/ Jesus/ - the Apostles/ Successors. The

Spirit enters here: Dt 34, describes Joshua as filled with the spirit of wisdom – when Moses lays his hands on him - Elisha receives a double share of Elijah's unique spirit [cf. 2 K 2:9, 15] – John the Baptist is instrumental in having the Spirit come on Jesus.

- the Spirit of God: comes upon the Prophets that they may speak God's Word – Lk shows the effects of this on the Apostles whereby they became preachers. The bestowal of the prophetic spirit shows the Paraclete as Teacher of Disciples – inspiring them to be Faithful Witnesses, *Martyrs*.
- Angels: often guide men toward the Truth: ... *When the Spirit of truth comes, He will lead you to complete truth, since He will not be speaking of His own accord; He will reveal to you the things to come. He will glorify Me, since all He reveals will be taken from what is mine...* [cf. Jn 16:13, f.]. The angels are frequently referred to as *spirits*. The ancient view was angels in the heavenly court – particular angels protect God's interests, eliminating evil [cf. Jb 1:6-12; Zc 3:1-5]. Michael defends people [cf. Dn 10:13]. The Paraclete for John dwells within the Faithful. Regarding His 'duties'.
- Personified Wisdom: as for Jesus, there is a background here for the Mission of the Paraclete among the faithful. Wisdom comes directly from God to dwell within the Chosen People [cf. Si 24:12] – bring the Gift of understanding Wisdom [cf. vv. 26, f.] He brings a prophetic spirit [v. 33] – as does the Paraclete revealing the *things to come* [cf. Jn 16:13]. The world cannot accept the Paraclete [cf. Jn 14:17] – thus, the Spirit of the Father will be given to the Faithful Disciples so that they may know how to speak in hostile tribunals [Jn 15: 26, f.; Mt 10:19, f.]. Hence there are scattered Jewish thoughts in this, both biblical and non-biblical – that are the language used to reveal the Mission of the Paraclete in the Church.

2. John's Understanding of the Paraclete: the 4th evangelist presents the Holy Spirit as the personal presence of Jesus in the Church while Jesus is with the Father. The Paraclete is more personal than the *holy spirit* as presented in many NT passages – He is often described as a Force. He is set along-side the Father and the Son performing the ordinary activities of grace [cf. 1 Co 12:11; Rm 8:16]. The Father gives the Spirit to those who ask Him [cf. Lk 11:13; 1 Jn 3:24; 4:13] Paul tells Titus [3:6] that God has poured out the Spirit through Jesus Christ. Both Father and the Son send the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit is variously called: the Spirit of God [cf. 1 Co 2:11; Rm 8:11, 14] – the Spirit of Jesus [cf. 2 Co 3:7; Ga 4:6; Ph 1:19; Jn 4:24 – God is Spirit [cf. Jn 20:22].

a. The Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth, and bears witness on Jesus behalf [cf. 1 Jn 5: 6, f.] This witness of the Paraclete is meant to be borne through faithful

Disciples – in Acts, the coming of the Spirit moves the Disciples to bear witness to Jesus resurrection: ... *we are witnesses to those things and so is the Holy Spirit, Whom God has given to those who obey Him* ... [cf. Jn 15:26, f.; Ac 5:32]. The Spirit will teach them [cf. Lk 12:12] – He will defend those on trial [cf. Mt 10:20; Ac 6:10].

b. Some see a distinction here between the special roles of the Paraclete and the Ordinary ecclesial mission of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit is involved in baptismal regeneration, forgiving sins [cf. Jn 3:5; 20:22, f.] – never predicated of the Paraclete. Yet, there is a clear identification of the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit [cf. Jn 14:26]. There is in Jn a portrait of the Paraclete/Holy Spirit centering around the resemblance to Jesus Christ. These are some of the parallels:

- the Paraclete will come: as Jesus has [cf. Jn 5:43; 16:28; 18:37] – the Spirit comes forth [*exporeuesthai*] from the Father – as does Jesus. At the Son's request, the Father gives the Paraclete, as He gives up His only-begotten, most beloved Son [cf. Jn 3:16]. The Paraclete will come in Jesus' Name [Jn 5:43 – thus the parallel: the Spirit is to Jesus, as Jesus is to the Father].
- the identification of the Paraclete: Jesus served as the 'first paraclete in His earthly ministry, but not in heaven [cf. 1 Jn 2:1] The Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth as Jesus is the Truth [cf. Jn 14:6]. The Paraclete is the Holy Spirit – Jesus is the Holy One of God. [cf. Jn 6:49].
- the Mission of the Paraclete to the Disciples: they will come to know the Paraclete – as it is a special gift to know, experience Jesus [cf. Jn 14:7, ff.]. The Paraclete remains within the disciples – as Jesus remains with and in His 'own' [cf. Jn 14:20, 23; 15:4, f.; 17:23, 26] The Paraclete guides disciples to the Truth – Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life [cf. Jn 14:6]. Both Paraclete and Jesus teach anyone who will listen [cf. Jn 6:59; 7:14, 18; 8:20] The Paraclete declares what is to come – Jesus identifies Himself as the Messiah to come [cf. Jn 4:25, f.]. The Paraclete will bear witness as does Jesus [cf. Jn 8:14] The Paraclete glorifies Jesus – as Jesus glorifies the Father [cf. Jn 8:28; 12:27, f.; 14:13; 17:4].
- the Mission of the Paraclete toward the 'world': the world accepts neither the Paraclete nor Jesus [cf. Jn 5:43; 12:48] – The world does not see the Paraclete, and will lose sight of Jesus [cf. Jn 16:16]. The world does not recognize the Paraclete, nor will the world know Jesus [cf. Jn 16:3, 16; cf. 7:28; 8:14, 19; 14:7]. The Paraclete bears witness against hate in the world – as does Jesus [cf. Jn 7:7].

3. The source of the Johannine Paraclete: Jn shows the spirit as the continued, post-resurrectional presence of Jesus with His Faithful dispels: teaching them proving that Jesus conquered the world. The Paraclete is introduced into His special Mission

among disciples from the fact of their impending persecution [cf. Jn 15:18-16:4; cf. also Mt 10:17-25]. Two problems arose:

- confusion in the Church with the death of eye-witnesses: perhaps one of the purposes of the late 4th Gospel is to show the authentic connection between the late 1st century Church and the already distant death of Jesus – the visible link with Him had ended with the deaths of the Apostles, disciples. This might have been acutely felt after the year 70 – but for the 4th Gospel community it was with the death of the Beloved Disciple – the witness *par excellence* [cf. Jn 19:35; 21:24]. The Paraclete was needed, as the faithful Disciples indeed had seen Jesus, but did not always understand [cf. Jn 14:9] – the Spirit taught them the meaning of it all [cf. Jn 2:22; 12:16] The apostolic witness was like the Prophetic Spirit: God speaking in [the Apostles, Disciples]. There was a profound deeper understanding and revelation concerning what Jesus said and did, expressed by the Spirit's task of reminding the Church. The Spirit will remain in and with the Church – He will remain present in those who keep the commandments [cf. Jn 14:17] . The implication is: the later Christian is no further removed from Jesus than was the earlier Church - almost like a repetition of Dt: *this word is addressed not to your fathers, of long ago – but to you, here TODAY!*
- the second problem: the delay in Jesus' return: after the destruction of all in the year 70, hope for His imminent return faded. For many, Jesus' return had been expected within the lifetime of His earthly companions [cf. Mk 13:30; Mt 10:23] – as the Johannine group felt He would come before the Beloved Disciple died [cf. Jn 21:23]. For some, delay caused skepticism [cf. 2 P 3:3-8]. The Paraclete inspires Hope – it is no longer necessary to be like the men of Israel, looking toward the heavens for the glorious return – get on with life, the Most Blessed Trinity is present within all the faithful Followers of Jesus Christ.

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PART TWO

Euntes Docete [Mt 28]

THE MISSIONARY MANDATE IN THE JESUIT CONSTITUTIONS

The Word of God as Presented by St. Ignatius of Loyola

A. Ignatius' *Formula*²¹

Presentation:

[1] As a kind of Foreword, or Introduction to his original Constitutions, St. Ignatius and his first companions held a number of meetings in which they extensively discussed the Jesuit Modality of serving the - the 'Apostolic Mission' - in the eventual the Jesuit booklet, this proved to become Part VII. As Fr. Stofella made clear to the Stigmatines that our Constitutions are basically the work compiled by the renowned Jesuit theologian - Fr. Francis Suarez. For St. Gaspar, the Jesuit Part VII was Part IX, on the principal tasks of the Apostolic Missionaries.

[2] For these original Companions of Jesus, their Part VII on the Missions evolved from a series of five headings jotted down in their meetings, and these notes bore the name "The Five Chapters", which were:

- the First Chapter: The Aim of the Society;
- the Second Chapter: the particular Jesuit *modus procedendi*, The Special 4th Vow of [Apostolic, Missionary] Obedience to the Pope – the Jesuits were formed as a Religious Order, Society, Company, united by a special bond to the Pope.
- the Third Chapter: the Vow of [Corporate] Obedience to the Superior of the Society.
- The Fourth Chapter: the religious, missionary Vow of Poverty
- The Fifth Chapter: two Jesuit Particularities – no Canonical Choir in common; no specific Jesuit Habit]

[3] The *Formula* is a kind of sketch", the idea expressed by the Latin word *typus* – something like a bas-relief figure. The *Formula*, then, is meant to present a picture of the Society's kind of life. These brief paragraphs were meant to indicate the interior attitude and exterior manifestation of submission and service to the Church, through the obedience to the Pope. [St. Gaspar Bertoni entitled his *Formula*, as a Compendium Rude - a kind of general description, a summary, synthesis, type of Summa, Enchiridion of the Stigmatine submission to the Bishops of the Church.

²¹ Antonio M. de Aldama, SJ, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. The Formula of the Institute*. Jesuit Sources. 1990.

[4] The Society of Jesus was founded under divine inspiration to serve the Church inasmuch as it is the Spouse of Christ, one reality with Him, inasmuch as the Church is under the Pope's authority, Christ's Vicar. The Pope is the Universal shepherd to whom Christ has entrusted the whole of His flock.

[5] The Ignatian *Formula* as it now stands is that draft approved by Pope Julius III, on July 21 1550. This is the draft that represents Ignatius' final thinking – and underwent two previous drafts in 1539 and 1540 – then lived for ten years, and given finality in the Papal Bull. For St. Gaspar, his *modus* of serving the Church is drawn from a *verbatim* citation from a Papal Decree, emanating from the S Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, dated, Dec. 20, 1817 honoring him for his ecclesial service.

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B. The Aims and Specific Means²²

“²³ ... The Jesuit is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose:
to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith,
and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine –
by means of:

- public preaching,
- lectures,
- and many other ministrations whatsoever of the Word of God –
- and further by means of the Spiritual Exercises;
- the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity
- and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions, and administering the other sacraments...”

1. The Aim²⁴: hence, the Society is founded chiefly to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in the Christian life and doctrine. It may have been considered more logical to speak first of faith, which is the foundation – and then of deepening it and living up to it. The early Jesuits did not know into which regions they were to go whether among the faithful or the unbelievers.

This is the double or triple aim the Constitutions mean when they speak of ‘giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their fellow human beings – helping and disposing souls to gain their ultimate end from the hand of God – aiding souls to reach their ultimate and supernatural end It is not only human

²² Cf. deAldama, pp. 10, ff.

²³ These same means are also somewhat spelled out for Stigmatines in CF ## 163; 182.

²⁴ ib., pp. 40, ff.

development in the natural order that is meant, but our fellow man's right ordering in God.

2. Specific Means: Practically speaking, everything is reduced to the Ministry of the Word of God and the administration of the sacraments. As to the Ministry of the Word of God, Preaching and Lectures are mentioned by name – but adding then in a general way: and any other ministration of the Word of God.²⁵ The Spiritual Exercises are mentioned separately, presumably on account of the personalized way in which they were given.

Ministration of the Word of God – is a biblical expressing. The Acts of the Apostles speak of the dispute over the assistance given to widows, the apostles said: *It would not be right for us to neglect the Word of God, so as to give food... we will continue to devote ourselves to prayer and to the Service of the Word.* [Ac 6:2; 20:24].

Lectures: would not include regular class room teaching- but __means sacred lectures on a book from Holy Scripture. These broad aims might be expressed in our own time, to respond to the Pope's challenge to take up the "New Evangelization". This renewed challenge is well itemized for the modern Church by Pope Paul in his *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. One entered the Society in order to become a good and faithful sower in the Lord's field and to preach His Divine Word.

3. Three Adverbs²⁶: The three adverbs are: potissimum; praecipue and nihilominus. There seems to be some redundancy in the use of the first two: founded chiefly...to strive especially... Even though Latin is renowned for juridical precision, some would apply the first adverb to the Aims and the second adverb to the Means: founded chiefly for the defense... especially by means of public preaching. ALL the ministries are presented as means since they are introduced by the preposition, per [by means of]. The entire problem may be side-stepped by using the word EVANGELIZATION. Rightly has it been said that the aim [or, the charism] of the society is to reach the Gospel in imitation of the Apostles.

4. Further clarifications on the Ministry of the Word²⁷: this 'Ministry' occupies the first place in the *Formula* of the Institute in order to indicate that it is the ministry most proper to the Society. *There is a hint here of the Parable of the Sower* [cf. Mt 13:1]. Men enter the Society 'in order to be good and faithful sowers of the word in the Lord's service and to preach His divine word. Preaching in Poverty was the apt

²⁵ For Stigmatines, the Original Constitutions speak of all of this in Part IX: 163; 182: Eorum munus est docere non solum in concionibus, exercitiis, lectionibus...

²⁶ NB: it might be of some interest to note that some of the Capitulars for our extraordinary General Chapter of 1970, and those years following, struggled over these same adverbs!!!

²⁷ cf. Antonio M. deAldama, SJ, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. An Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions*. Jesuit Sources 1989, pp. 259, ff.

expression used by Ignatius to formulate his ideal of the apostolic life. He declared that the “Profession” of the Society was to travel under the banner of Christ in order to preach and to exhort. The ministry most proper to the Professed and the one that particularly demands learning and ability in preaching.

Summary:

[Evangelical, Spiritual Conversations]

The Jesuit Founder zeroes in on three forms of Preaching the Divine Word in his Constitutions: Sermons; Sacred Lectures; Teaching of the Catechism. These follow the three steps of Evangelization: initiation into the faith [catechesis]; instruction in the faith [sacred lectures] – the exhortation to live it [Sermons].

Ignatius gave great emphasis to catechesis and he wanted it to be the object of a Fifth Vow, disallowed by the Vatican. At his insistence, this apostolate [40 hours per year – one hour each week during the school year??] this ministry still remains in the Formula for the Jesuit Profession.

Spiritual Conversations are part of the broader understanding St. Ignatius had of PREACHING. This is a valued manner of sharing one’s own faith – by interpersonal contact – noted by Pope Paul as one of the most privileged ways of sharing the Word of God. Our Lord often used this method with: Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman; Simon the Pharisee and others. The Apostles used the same method. And the Spiritual Exercises remain a privileged source for the divine word.²⁸

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²⁸ There is still another study by Fr. A.M. deAldama, SJ: *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Missioning* [Part VII] 1990, pp. 155-175.

PART THREE
The Word of God as ECHOED by
St. Gaspar Bertoni

[The Johannine Formula of the Missionary Mandate is commented on in his Meditations on First Kings (today 1 Samuel, up through the Call of David) – following St. Gregory the Great]

A. Meditation 16 on I Regum 3:15

... And Samuel slept until morning, and opened the doors of the House of the Lord. And Samuel feared to tell the vision to Heli ...

[Delivered on February 3, 1811]

5526: The Third measure: Discern the time.

The time of the manifestation is indicated by a super-abundant infusion of charity and an ascension of love. *Go forth and teach*²⁹ *all nations.* [Mt 28:19]. *49 And I send the promise of my Father upon you: but stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high.* [Lk 24:49]. This charity which comes down from heaven, is clearly distinguished from that down-right false and imprudent zeal which comes from this earth.

5527: [Jas 3]:

11 Doth a fountain send forth, out of the same hole, sweet and bitter water?

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear grapes; or the vine, figs? So neither can the salt water yield sweet.

13 Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show, by a good conversation, his work in the meekness of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter zeal, and there be contentions in your hearts; glory not, and be not liars against the truth.

15 For this is not wisdom, descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 For where envying and contention is, there is inconstancy, and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom, that is from above, first indeed is chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation.

18 And the fruit of justice is sown in peace, to them that make peace.

²⁹ A key ideal in St. Gaspar Bertoni's Original Constitutions, as we can see in Appendix I.

5528: 1 K 3:16:

16 Then Heli called Samuel, and said: Samuel, my son. And he answered: Here am I.

17 And he asked him: What is the word that the Lord hath spoken to thee? I beseech thee hide it not from me. May God do so and so to thee, and add so and so, if thou hide from me one word of all that were said to thee.

18 So Samuel told him all the words, and did not hide them from him. And he answered: It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his sight.

How does one learn from the executor of the divine sentence the vision of His rejection, who did not hear this from both the one leveling the threat, as well as from one who is coaxed the more by more prayers?

5529: But those who seek the answer of this first will understand that this is not the literal sense, but we discuss these verses more from the spiritual and typical meaning. In this place, to come to” Eli, does not refer to the movement of the Judaic priestly body, nor to the affection of the mind But, nevertheless “to come to him” means this that the rational creature of God, appears to the preachers. And so He comes since He is seen in human nature, and moves the hearts of the [new] Doctors toward being merciful. Therefore, “to come to” Eli, is not that access of the mind or of the body in the people of old, but simply the showing of His human condition. Or perhaps, “to come to” him, means that from this he was elected out of all peoples for the worship of God.

5530: 1 K 3: v. 16: *But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.”...*

And he called him “son” he who looks to him, who would have been remembered in the Elect Fathers as the institutor of the holy Church. So, he called him “son”, not out of the affection that this term applies, but rather in showing of his own lost dignity.

He said, “Here I am.”

5531: Out of this enthusiasm of the ministry, as this unfolds before, the [new] order of Gospel preachers desired to be associated in achieving mercy unto eternity; as this appears in Paul and the rest of the Apostles.

v. 17: *Eli said, “What was it that he told you? [ibi, 3:13].*

And because he is looking out of the darkness of blindness, there is indicated that he sought the vision for himself.

5532: *Do not hide it from me. [ibi]*

For to beg this of him, with respect to the common nature of the [new] preachers to incite their minds toward mercy.

May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” [ibi]

He added threat to the prayers, because the [new] order of those preaching while awaiting the priesthood of the Jews to be placed in such misery, he feared to heap upon himself that the omnipotent Lord would be angry with him, unless he would be relieved by the word addressed to him. The Apostles said whatever they had learned to convert them.

5533: The fourth measure: to abbreviate the time.

When the time had come to manifest [the truth, the Elect makes use of] strong charity without weaknesses. He no longer looks to the effect, whether his words be accepted for good or for bad; rather he keeps his look fixed on the order of God and to satisfy his debt, by leaving the result to God. He speaks strongly to perverse sinners and ministers of the merely human spirit, without human fears, in order to shake them up: *for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell [Ct 8:6]*. By imitating here still the conduct of the divine Providence, which threatens hell for those who would slip away, and harshly scourges those who love.

There are many in this deception, who in order not to bring harm to their own works and undertakings, they neglect some of their own debt but precisely for this reason, they ruin it all the more. Do not ever leave aside even a single point of perfection out of the excuse of not wasting the enterprise.

5534: [1 K] 3: v. 18: *So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him.*

He indicated to him all seen by him, that he benefitted in listening, as the magnitude of his dread converted him to that solicitude of obtaining divine mercy.

He manifested the total discourse of God, so that there he might know in his old age that project that through the tears of penance he might hasten toward that renovation of the true faith.

Samuel manifested the form, who kept silence out of reverence, but when ordered of a subject, but greatly feared keeping silence when ordered to speak. And show he shown forth in the twin light of conversation, while he also kept silent in the strength of filial fear, he sought out the real usefulness in speaking by speaking.

5535: Heli responds saying:

v. 18: *So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is the Lord; let him do what seems good to him.”*

By these words the perfidy of the people is recognized the more clearly; for he said:

It is the Lord: Whoever calls the Lord God Omnipotent, thinks within that he is still serving Him. Since therefore there is made known to the Jewish People their

repulsion by the Doctors of the Holy Church, he says: *He is the Lord*; because while he believes that he is pleasing God through the ancient legislation, he fears not at all the threats of the Holy Church.

5536: For indeed by an even clearer statement that Jewish perfidy is asserted, and there is addressed to the threatening Preachers of the Church: In all this you have no impact with your threats, in that we believe that in the faith we still serve Him, by Whose grace you preached that we will perish. Therefore there is added: *let him do what seems good to him*. [1 K 3:18] they thus deride the doctors of the holy Church rather than subjecting themselves to the divine sentence. It is as though they were speaking with some other intention, and declare: He would not do anything to us ...

5545: In a marvelous manner of preaching, placing in sight even the most hidden vices, the secrets of the most spiritual virtues, the most sublime senses of the Scriptures before every-day intelligence – as well as the rewards of the future life, and with great vivacity of sentiment: in this way the wise have been able to accomplish along with the teaching from their own life-style, along with their simple communication of their words, and so both for sinners as well as for the just, their life and their doctrine³⁰ are rendered more venerable.

1 K 3:20: *And all Israel from Dan to Bersabee, knew that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord.*

5546: *From Dan to Bersabee*: with these terms there is designated the entire land of Judea.

All Israel: by this, the universal Church is designated.

And all Israel ... knew that Samuel was a faithful prophet of the Lord. This is because everyone who is faithful believes that which the order to preachers communicated regarding the truths of the future.

That Samuel was a Prophet: For the office of a Prophet is both to preach the future and manifest that which lies hidden; indeed the preachers of the holy Church uncover even those hidden vices in one's mind, while at the same time they open up the secrets of the spiritual virtues, while they also proclaim those meanings of the holy Scriptures for the common knowledge, while they are enabled to promise anew those future joys of the heavenly homeland to the Chosen Faithful, as they pay heed to the ministry of the prophet.

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³⁰ The Appendix II gives us further details on this.

B. Intellectual Progress [in St. Gaspar Bertoni]

[cf. CF ## 41; 49-68; 164-166; 173; 175, ff.]

1. Attributes:

The Stigmatine Life of Study must be read in the context of St. Gaspar Bertoni's own life of study. Fr. Joseph Fiorio, CPS³¹ describes this to a remarkable degree:

n. 72: Necessity of Study - According to the thought of St. Gaspar, our Congregation has as its special purpose that of a giving itself over to helping Bishops, *with the varied and proper ministries of its vocation*. This is an arduous and difficult end [cf. CF # 185], he observed, and for this reason the community will have the responsibility of preparing and of disposing its members, endowing them with those necessary means and helps, and to fortify them against the dangers and the difficulties.³² Their first disposition will be the desire for perfection, the zeal for the glory of God: after this, there is required a serious application to study.³³

Profoundly convinced of the great usefulness of studies for the promotion of the divine glory and for the utility of the u he applied himself from his early years with ever increasing ardor, occupying himself in them throughout all the time that remained free to him from the ministries, and even stealing for this purpose a great part of his nights and necessary rest. And he succeeded in this in such a manner that he acquired that great treasure of learning, with which he was then always able to serve to great advantage, especially the Veronese Clergy: both in preserving it from Jansenism, which in those days threatened to spread itself into Verona – as well as assisting its members with his exhortations and counsel. With this in mind, Fr. Lenotti once wrote: *As for the good that Fr. Gaspar brought to the Clergy with his counsels, this is indescribable and only known to God alone.*³⁴

n. 73: Extension of our Studies: For this same reason he also recommends to us with great concern, these studies and he prescribes them for us with the same extension: nor does he legislate that we study only the sacred sciences, but also those called 'profane', such as philosophy, mathematics and physics, a bit of medicine and the fine arts, as well as the languages and various literatures, Italian, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, because all of these studies can serve us for

³¹ *Lo Spirito del Beato Gaspare Bertoni. Fondatore degli Stigmatini*. Verona: Stigmatini [reprint of the 1914 edition for St. Gaspar's First Centenary] Oct. 9, 1977, nn. 72-76, pp. 138-147.

³² CF # 185.

³³ CF # 49.

³⁴ *Life of St. Gaspar*: His zeal for the Missions.

the good of the Church.³⁵ However, even though it is not necessary to mention it he did not pretend that each individual of the Congregation would have to become suitable in all kinds of ministry: rather, he insists much on the necessity of dividing and specializing in studies. And it is impossible, he observes, that any individual could become profound in all the sacred and profane sciences: on the other hand it is incumbent on the body of the Congregation in order for it to achieve its end, the perfect knowledge in all those sciences and languages.

As a result, he prescribed: in every branch of knowledge, literary and scientific, there should be those confreres who apply themselves with a special study and for a longer time, in order to render themselves suitable to offer to the Church those services which the various times and circumstances would demand.³⁶ Although these studies pertain principally to Sacred Theology and the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, there should be those who would occupy themselves for a longer time in the inferior studies, in order to deepen themselves in them, always with the purpose of assisting the Church. And the Founder willed that the members of the Congregation should hold themselves ready for the teaching of the theological or philosophical sciences, whenever they might be invited, especially in Seminaries: and he permits them to receive academic degrees in the Universities.³⁷ And further on, when speaking of the students who had completed their theological courses, he says:

That they should apply themselves to the sciences and arts which among us are cultivate, and in those which may be more in accord with each one's intelligence, while not neglecting some particular studies in which they can the more greatly succeed.³⁸

While lacking in those special studies, the Founder recommended to Priests the study of letters, having them observe with their study, in addition to other advantages, they might obtain the advantage of avoiding laziness, of purging the mind from inopportune imagination, and also to mortify their bodies, to their greater spiritual advantage.³⁹ Also in the first years of his Priesthood, St Gaspar particularly committed himself to these studies. We know in fact from Fr. Bragato [who at the time was a young student] who each evening used to go to St. Gaspar's home to read and to study the Italian classics: Ariosto, Tasso and especially Dante. Fr. Bragato remembered how St. Gaspar would interpret these

³⁵ CF # 54.

³⁶ CF # 57.

³⁷ CF ## 58; 68.

³⁸ CF # 71.

³⁹ It is to be noted that St. Gaspar treated Studiosity under Chastity [cf. CF ## 122-127].

with such clarity and depth, *as to make their published commentators to be ignorant by comparison.*⁴⁰

And even years later at the Stimate the Founder continued these studies: concerning him, Fr. Gaetano Giacobbe offered this deposition in the Diocesan Process of his Canonization: *Whenever I visited him, I saw him always with some classical book in his hands, such as Valsecchi, Verger, Baronio, and the like., noting also that sacred Scripture was his daily bread.* And Fr. Lenotti, speaking of his studies, made among other statements this one to the effect that even well advanced in age, he read from top to bottom *all seven unbound volumes of Vitruvio.*⁴¹

All the norms he left behind regarding study, St. Gaspar applied to the first students and Priests of the Congregation. He directed the students in addition to their study of Sacred Scripture that they read and study those works which served to complete their scholastic knowledge: the Dogmatic Theology of Petavius; the great Moral works of St. Alphonsus; the fonts of Canon Law, etc. And he wanted these studies to be continued by the Priests. And Fr. Giacobbe noted that in the choice of studies and the others, the Founder knew how to tap into the inclination and abilities of his Seminarians and Priests: some he would have study the more accredited works of Canon Law; to others, he assigned the challenge of studying the Holy Fathers; and to some others he directed toward special studies in Gregorian Chant, making use of the Codices and manuscripts that could be found in the public libraries of the city, and in the Churches where earlier there had been Convents.⁴²

To all he made the recommendation of reading books with attention and diligence and to note, or at least to cite in a notebook those points which the more greatly struck them, and which one day might prove to be useful to them later on.

n. 74: Learned Conferences - Learning is not only garnered from books: and in fact, St. Gaspar has taught us by his example to obtain assistance from all means in order to increase within us and in others the treasure of learning. From his priesthood, when he had been assigned the St. Paul's Parish, and then later to St. Fermus', he gathered in his own home some zealous priests to reason together and to discuss points from the sacred sciences.⁴³ At those meetings and conferences, also a young priest by the name of Fr. Nicholas Mazza attended.

⁴⁰ Letter of Fr. Bragato to Fr. Marani – cf. Summ. Add., p. 287.

⁴¹ Lenotti, *Life of Fr. Gaspar*. Concerning his Knowledge.

⁴² Fr. Giacobbe, *Life of Fr. Gaspar*, p. 126.

⁴³ Fr. Giacobbe, *Life of Fr. Gaspar*, p. 234.

Cavattoni wrote: ‘...and every day, these priests studied together, especially St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Alphonsus, whose moral theology [which some of the elders at first thought was suspect and called it too broad and gentle in its interpretations] and they were the first to follow and to render his work most useful and highly esteemed...’⁴⁴

Then later also at the Stimate he held similar conferences, to which a number of the diocesan priests also attended. The principal scope was the study of St. Thomas and in those gatherings, St. Gaspar used this method: a question would be proposed, he would invite one of those present to respond: then, after the response of St. Thomas was continued.⁴⁵

Since also then in 1836, the Church of Holy Mary of the Lily reopened for public worship, and he sent two of his Priests there to officiate at it. Under his direction, they also organized similar meetings to those held at the Stimate. We know this from a passage in a letter that St. Gaspar had written to Fr. Bragato. In this Letter after having spoken of the hard work of Fr. Marani at the Stimate [where he taught school] and at the House of the Derelicts [where he often heard many confessions especially on Saturdays and Sundays], Fr. Bertoni then continued:

In the other evenings, he holds a Conference on Moral Theology with 10 or 12 Priests, like we did in the old days at St. Firmus’ After the methodical readings, he carried on then as Fr. Guerreri⁴⁶ used to do. He draws his conclusions and makes his definitions according to the situation, and this is held daily, regarding the most intricate cases. The Lord has given him the light and prudence and clarity that are beyond the ordinary⁴⁷

n. 75: Importance of studies for us: from what has been said thus far, we believe that it can be concluded that our Congregation, according to St. Gaspar’s thought, ought to be a center of study and that the life of study is one of the principal duties of the Priests which pertain to it. And a Congregation also applied to study, according to his thought, is also that of the Foundress of the Institute of the Holy Family, about whom St Gaspar so busied himself, so much so as to be called by her as the Founder also of that Institute⁴⁸.

⁴⁴ *Manoscritti Cavattoni*. Communal Library of Verona.

⁴⁵ Letter of Fr. Foschesato to Fr. Lona.

⁴⁶ Fr. Guerreri was a Dominican Father, well known here in Verona, who held similar conferences.

⁴⁷ Letter to Fr. Bragato, September 1, 1837 [cf. *Epistolario*, pp. 315, ff.]

⁴⁸ This is the way Mother Leopoldina Naudet referred to him: see the letter to her on p. 166, *Epistolario Bertoni*.

So, this is what he wrote to Mother Naudet regarding the importance and the necessity of studies in her Congregation and we report them here because it can be applied also to ours, which on this point has the same orientation:

... I will proceed in the intervals in my own occupations to place under your eyes the entire perfect model of the thrust in studies, as something that is to the great glory of our Lord Who is the author of this: God is the Lord of all knowledge. And without the help of this natural knowledge it is impossible to arrive at the sublimity of spiritual matters, as St. Gregory says so clearly: And I dare to add in their circumstances that this is so delicate and is the main work of your enterprise. It is necessary to remember that even though it might be built up it cannot be retained without that bit of great learning among its various members and that the first germ of corruption of this great Work will be ignorance, or that which is the same that in know much that is known badly, which is to have squandered good taste. However, regarding this, we will have occasion and necessity to speak later on in other circumstances: in the mean time, after charity and the virtues. You, Reverend Mother, should pay special heed to be sure that studies are the principal support of the building, and you need to implore good direction and a plan from these studies, much light from His Divine Majesty.⁴⁹

n. 76. The Manner of cultivating them - our Founder certainly recognized the dangers that studies can also bring, i.e., to dissipate the mind and lead to hear to vanity: however, in speaking to diocesan Priests he used to say that such dangers were incurred by anyone who cultivated studies through vanity, or through curiosity: hence, he observes while learned men might become less devout, this is because curiosity distracts them, knowledge inflates them, pride blinds them⁵⁰.

But when one studies with the proper purpose in mind that of cooperating in the glory of God, or of making oneself useful to the Church, according to the spirit of his Institute, then study cannot hurt him, rather it will provide assistance for his spiritual profit. And this is what he said speaking once to diocesan priests: *Humble knowledge is a great contribution also for prayer and meditating*.⁵¹

This, then, is the spirit of our holy Founder, that which he thought of the need for studies for the proper conducting of our Congregation. Our duty then is to cultivate study with that spirit with which he has recommended to us, if we

⁴⁹ *Epistolario*, pp. 74, ff.

⁵⁰ *Retreat to the Clergy: Meditation*.

⁵¹ *Meditation 52 on I Regum*.

wish to be his genuine sons, authentic members of that Congregation which he intended to found.

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2. Program of Studies:

[1] St. Gaspar has presented a sublime plan for studies within his Congregation. He was well versed in the Jesuit Constitutions. Articles such as these provide much inspiration:

CSJ n. 360: In order to make great progress in these branches [of learning], the scholastics should strive first of all to keep their souls pure and their intention in studying right, by seeking in their studies nothing except the glory of God and the good of souls. Moreover, they should frequently beg in prayer for grace to make progress in learning for the sake of this end.

CSJ # 462: Just as steady application is necessary in the work of studying, so also is some relaxation. The proper amount and the times of this relaxation will be left to the prudent consideration of the rector to determine, according to the circumstances of persons and places.

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[2] St. Gaspar's Original *Constitutions* provide a definite program toward a spirituality of ever more perfect intellectual progress through study:

CF # 41. Those who entered already endowed with the necessary doctrine, upon having completed their Novitiate, will be perfected in it. They will also be formed in applying this through their ministry toward their neighbor.

As for this CF # 41 it is for those Scholastics whose studies are already completed: they are to perfect themselves in doctrine: this provides them with weapons for the combat, materials for the "tower":

Lk 14:28-30: *For which of you having a mind to build a tower, does not first sit down, and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish ...*

St. Ignatius' Commentary is in his *Formula n. 4*:

... Therefore, before those who will come to us take this burden upon their shoulders, they should ponder long and seriously as the lord has counseled [Lk 14:30] whether they possess among their resources enough spiritual capital to

complete this tower; i.e., whether the Holy Spirit who moves them is offering them so much grace that with His aid they have hope of bearing the weight of this vocation...

Ph 1:6: Being confident of this very thing, that he, who has begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.

This latter verse is noted by St. Gaspar in CF # 185:

185. Although the purpose of this Congregation is to offer assistance to the Church under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper duties of its vocation; and since this seems at times to be an arduous and difficult undertaking, and, if it be measured against human weakness, one that is exposed to dangers - nonetheless, this proposal of our vocation, therefore, is not one that is imprudent and rash.

This is so, firstly, because it is not based on human resources, but is to be carried out with the grace of the Holy Spirit, for He Who has begun a good work in you will bring it to perfection ...[Ph 1:6], if He is not hindered in this by us. For this is the special grace of this vocation, which is more powerful than all dangers and difficulties.

Furthermore, through this plan, we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, nor to go to this, or that place, or to undertake one activity over another, but to follow the direction of the orthodox Bishop whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God [cf. Ac 20:28]. This means is sufficiently safe in not erring in the way of the Lord.

Finally, the concern of the Congregation is to be both in disciplining and in forming its men, as well as in selecting them, and in sustaining and strengthening them.

The Jesuit background for commitment to study in St. Gaspar's legislation might be noted as well from these Constitutions:

[Examen, c. 5, n. 7 - n. 110; Part III, c. 1, n. 27, n. 289; Part IV, c. 6, # 3, n. 362; Part IV, c. 8, nn. 1-8, 400-414 passim [The Instruction of the Scholastics in the Means of helping their Fellowmen – a mini-description of commitment to study for excellence in the Apostolic Mission]; perfection is always needed in that doctrine to be exercised in ministry toward their neighbors: c. 10, n. 9 K = n. 437 [teaching Christian Doctrine competently for 40 days. There follow here some Ignatian principles about the relationship of study with the spiritual and apostolic life of the Society:

CSJ n. 110: Likewise, when a candidate is a priest, or when he becomes one, he should be advised that he should not hear confessions inside or outside the house, or administer any sacraments, without a special examination, edification and permission from his superior, during all the time of his probation...

CSJ n. 289: The study which those who are in probation will have in the houses of the Society should, it seem, be about what will help them toward what has been said on the abnegation of themselves, and toward further growth in virtue and devotion ...

CSJ n. 362: ...For in order that the scholastics may be better able to help their fellow men better later on by what they have learned, it is wise to postpone exercises such as these [i.e. numerous devotions mortifications, exterior occupations, duties outside the house, conversations, confessions and other activities with one's fellowmen], pious though such exercises are, until after the years of study, since there will be others to attend to them in the meantime. All this should be done with a greater intention of service and divine glory.

CSJ n. 400: In view of the objective which the Society seeks by means of its studies, toward the end of them it is good for the scholastics to begin to accustom themselves to the spiritual arms which they must employ in assisting their fellowmen...

CSJ n. 402: Similarly, they will exercise themselves in preaching and in delivering [sacred] lectures in a manner suitable for the edification of the people, which is different from the scholastic manner, by endeavoring to learn the vernacular language well, to have, as matters previously studied and ready at hand, the means which are more useful for this ministry and to avail themselves of all appropriate means to perform it better and with greater profit for souls.

CSJ n. 403: While lecturing, in addition to giving the interpretation, they ought to keep alert to touch upon matters helpful for habits of conduct and for Christian living. They should do the same when teaching in their classes in the schools, too, but much more so when lecturing to the people.

CSJ n. 404: It will be helpful if they have studied in a manner that is special and directed toward preaching, the gospel passages which occur throughout the year, and to have studied some part of Scripture for the purposes of learning; likewise, to have considered in advance what pertains to the vices and leads to abhorrence of them and to their correction; and, on the contrary, what pertains to the commandments, virtues, god works, and motives for esteeming them and

means of acquiring them. It will be better, if possible, to have material in excerpts, to avoid so great a need of books.

CSJ n. 405: Some means are these: to have studied the precepts about the manner of preaching given by those who have performed this ministry well and to listen to good preachers; to practice oneself in preaching either in the house or in monasteries to have a good corrector who points out their defects either in the matter preached or in the voice, tones, gestures, and movements. Finally, the scholastic himself, by reflecting on what he has done, can help himself more in every respect.

CSJ n. 406: They should also practice themselves in the administration of the sacraments of confession and Communion, by keeping fresh in mind and endeavoring to put into practice not merely what pertains to themselves, but also what pertains to the penitents and communicants, that they may receive and frequent these sacraments well and fruitfully for divine glory.

CSJ n. 407: In regard to the confessions, beyond the classroom study and the cases of conscience, especially in the matter of restitution, it is good to have a compendium containing the reserved cases and censures, that one may know how far his jurisdiction extends, and the extraordinary formulas of absolutions which occur. Moreover it is good to have a brief list of questions about the sins and their remedies, and an instruction helping toward the good and prudent exercise of this ministry in the Lord, without harm to oneself and with profit to one's fellowmen. Especially at the beginning of the confessor's ministry, when someone has heard a confession he should accustom himself to reflect to see whether he has been deficient in any regard, and to improve himself for the future.

CSJ n. 410: They should likewise bestow special study upon the method of teaching Christian doctrine, and of adapting themselves to the capacities of children or simple persons.

CSJ n. 411: It will be helpful to have a written compendiary explanation of the matters necessary for the faith and Christian life.

CSJ n. 412: Just as one's fellowmen are helped to live well by what has been stated above, so an effort should be made to know what helps them to die well and what procedure should be used at a moment so important for gaining or losing the ultimate end.

CSJ n. 413: It is good to have a compendium on the method of helping someone to die well, to refresh the memory when this holy ministry must be exercised.

CSJ n. 414: In general, they ought to be instructed about the manner of acting proper [*modum tenere oporteat...*] to a member of the Society, who has to associate with a great diversity of persons throughout such varied regions. Hence they should foresee the inconveniences which may arise and the opportunities which can be grasped for the greater service of God, by using some means at one time and others at another. Although all this can be taught only by the unction of the Holy Spirit [1 Jn 2:20. 27], and by the prudence which God our Lord communicates to those who trust in His Divine Majesty, nevertheless the way can at least be opened by some suggestions which aid and dispose one for the effect which must be produced by divine grace.

Thus as is seen in n. 414, there is an apostolic palliative built into the *varied and proper ministries* [CF # 185] of the Stigmatine Congregation. If one mode, or ministry, is not feasible, there are many others that can be chosen from the changing needs of the Diocese and the world [cf. CF ## 5; 37; 57; 220].

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3. Life-long Commitment [# 49]

There is a lifelong commitment to the attaining of the more than Ordinary Knowledge needed for Fr. Bertoni's ideal of the varied Apostolic *Mission*:

CF # 49. In this religious, clerical Institute, the purpose of which is not only to contemplate, but to hand on to others what has been contemplated, there is required not simply ordinary knowledge, but rather one that is perfect in those matters which pertain to faith and morals. And as a result, it is also necessary that the religious clerics commit themselves in this religious state to the acquiring of the knowledge of this kind.

This CF # 49 also would have an intimate connection with the all important CF # 185 that speaks of the "scope" of the Congregation is that of serving under the direction of the Bishops of the Church: *Ecclesiae sub Episcoporum directione obsequium praestare per varia et propria munera suae vocationis* - the same Latin word for St. Ignatius' Spanish, servicio. A few thoughts in this connection follow:

[a] The "end" of the Congregation is both contemplative and active, as St. Gaspar describes it, in his dependence on St. Thomas Aquinas⁵². The work of the active life is two-fold: one of which is derived from the fullness of contemplation, as

⁵² cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 188, a. 2.

doctrine and preaching. And this is preferred to simple contemplation: just as it is greater to illuminate than simply to light up. Thus, it is greater to *hand on to others what has been contemplated*, than simply to contemplate. The other work of the active life which consists totally in exterior activity: as to give alms, to accept guests. Therefore, the supreme grade is held by those religious communities which are ordered toward teaching and preaching, and these are very close to the perfection of Bishops. The second level of religious life is that of communities ordered to contemplation and the third level, those orientated toward activity. [This is noted by Fr. Stofella in his footnote here⁵³].

[b] This number seems to add Fr. Bertoni's own insight with his insistence on a "more than ordinary knowledge" - this is an intellectual spirituality, so much insisted on by Sertillanges⁵⁴ - and much in accord with Fr. Bertoni's own insistence on *Studiosity* - which he presents under the "Four-fold Modesty", as Section III, Chapter 2 of his treatment on Chastity⁵⁵. Fr. Bertoni seems to develop studiosity both with regard to the Vow of Chastity [for which the Ignatian Constitutions do not add anything "particular" over the other religious Communities that preceded them] as ascetical, and sublime ideas - and also the goal of sublime knowledge upon which St. Gaspar insists.

[c] It might be noted, then, that St. Gaspar sees some intellectual proficiency both as an apt means for a specialized apostolic mission - as well as helping to live the consecration of Chastity. As with St. Ignatius, the entire body of the *Original Constitutions* [cf. CF ## 49; 59; 71; 72] is geared toward the challenge of the Apostolic Mission. There are given the reasons why this excellence is needed in CF # 50: to illumine minds in darkness; help them resist heresies [cf. *Formula* n. 3]; give a reason for the faith; help resolve moral difficulties, to the satisfaction of all.

[d] As will be pointed out in subsequent studies, both of these Constitutions, CF ## 49 & 50 are taken *verbatim* from Francis Suarez' classical theological reflection on the Ignatian *Constitutions*⁵⁶, with very minor adaptations made by Fr. Bertoni.

[e] In further reflecting on this CF # 49, St. Gaspar's insistence is: *In this religious clerical Institute* - [the plan of the Stigmatine Founder was to provide capable missionaries for the sacramental, kerygmatic, magisterial service of Bishops world-wide. It is a religious life with a priestly ministry as its principal purpose] - nn. 392 [the

⁵³ cf. Fr. J. Stofella, note for n. 49, in: *Costituzioni del ven. Servo di Dio, D Gaspare Bertoni...* o.c., Verona: 1951, p. 70.

⁵⁴ Sertillanges, OP, *The Intellectual Life*. Cork: Mercier Press 1946. Re-printed CUA 1987.

⁵⁵ cf. CF ## 122-127.

⁵⁶ Fr. Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, lib. VI, c. 1, n. 10, p. 803, a. cf. also CSJ nn. 518, ff.; cf. Monumenta Historica S.J. - Monumenta Pedagogica, Vol I [1540-1556]; Vol II [I:1557-1572]; Vol III [II: 1557-1572].

greater service of God is always to be kept in view]; n. 440 the recipients (of the degrees) may be able to teach with authority what they have learned well in these universities of the Society for the glory to God our Lord].

[f] For so many of these Constitutions of St. Gaspar, rooted for the most part directly in the *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, there is a clear support in the Constitutions of St. Ignatius:

- the purpose of which is not only to contemplate, but also to hand on to others what has been contemplated – early in Jesuit training the candidates were accustomed to making a month’s retreat for a life review, and preparation for what lay ahead – [cf. CSJ n. 65];
- the emphasis on learning is phrased differently in St. Ignatius as ‘sufficiency’ - there is necessary not any ordinary knowledge, but the perfect knowledge of whatever pertains to faith and morals [cf. CF # 59] - nn. 109 [*sufficiens eruditio*] ; 289 [for abnegation]; 12; 307 [*satis instructi*] 308; 518 [*boni simul et eruditi*] 369 [*docti, diligentes, assidui*]; n. 392 [*profecti in litteris*] ; 446; 450 [*perfectam cognitionem ... eruditos Praeceptores*]; n. 464 [*solidioris ac securioris doctrinae*] [cf. also n. 582 - here “study” is listed after “prayer, meditation” - and just before “mortification” n. 656: [*quod ut plurimum letterari erunt*]:

... Theology is the chief source of the scientifically reasoned Christian philosophy of life and the source of integration for the other branches. The importance given to theology [cf. n. 446] is a matter of emphasis and outlook, or attitude, rather than of the hours of instruction, or number of courses prescribed; of an atmosphere in which professors and students alike think that all the particular truths learned in other faculties should be viewed also in the light of God’s revelation whenever this throws light upon them - as it sometimes, though not always, does. The light of theology was meant to filter down to all the students in various ways because of the environment. Virtually all the professors had some theological training⁵⁷.

... Even the Council of Trent did not lay down clear and specific requirements of subject matter, proficiency, or years of study for ordination to the priesthood. The Council stipulated only that candidates should study grammar, singing, ecclesiastical computations, and some other fine arts, and then pass on to the study of Scripture, ecclesiastical books, homilies of the saints, and the rites and forms for administration of the sacraments, especially those opportune for

⁵⁷ *St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary*, by George Ganss, SJ, St. Louis: The Institute of Jesus Sources 1970, p. 213, # 2.

hearing confessions. Against this background, much of the evolution of the two grades among priests in the Society after Ignatius' death is more clearly seen to hinge on divergent interpretations of the word conspicuous in the Bulls of 1540 and 1550 [*Formula* 6]: this Institute requires men... conspicuous in the integrity of Christian life and learning...]

Ignatius constantly understood this word *conspicuous* to mean a *sufficiency* of theological learning, such as that which anyone would possess who completed the four years of theological study, which he prescribed in his Constitutions [cf. nn. 418; 464; 518] - with the lectures based on the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. This *sufficiency* would have made his priests *conspicuous* among others of the era. Ignatius' insistence on theology in his Constitutions led to a rapid increase in the numbers of his priests who possessed theological learning...

Thus, the words conspicuous in the integrity of Christian life and learning appear in the Examen and Constitutions left behind at his death [cf. nn. 12; 13; 112; 113; 518; 519; 521; 819]. Fr. Nadal had a demanding understanding of the word *conspicuous*, and *sufficient learning* [cf. Examen, 12; Constitutions 518; 519; 521] and *persons selected for their learning* [cf. n. 819]. Fr. Nadal interpreted the word *conspicuous* to mean men so outstanding in theology that they could successfully teach it; so that ordinarily they should have the doctorate in theology which required two years beyond the four prescribed by Ignatius for all [cf. n. 476]. Very few received those extra two years. Of those admitted to the Society of Jesus by Ignatius only two received the doctorate in theology.

After the long Generalate of Fr. Acquaviva [1581-1615], the distinction of Grades was regarded as one of the 'substantials' of the Society. He issued an instruction, *De promovendis ad Gradum*. This distinction of membership gave rise to difficulties, sadness and sometimes bitterness - to remain a "coadjutor" was often seen as a "stigma"⁵⁸.

Thus, it is necessary also that the religious clerics should commit themselves to the acquiring perfectly of such knowledge in this religious state nn. 351; 355; 383; 446: theology is first area of study].

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⁵⁸ cf. Ganss, o.c., pp. 349-356, *passim*

4. Explicit Emphasis

Emphasis on the various branches of theological knowledge in an era of widespread Heresies, moral lassitude:

CF # 50. It will be necessary that each confrere be sufficiently instructed so that the minds of others who might be living in darkness may be illumined, or be able to resist encroaching heresies, or give explanation for the faith which is in us, or resolve moral difficulties that might come up, and satisfy everyone in both areas of theology, positive and scholastic, speculative and moral.

This 'Law of Progress' may be broken down as follows in this CF # 50:

[a] It is necessary that the confreres be sufficiently instructed:

CSJ n. 307: The aim which the Society of Jesus directly seeks is to aid its own members and their fellowmen to attain the ultimate end for which they were created. To achieve this purpose in addition to the example of one's life, learning and a method of expounding it are necessary. Therefore, after the proper foundation of abnegation of themselves is seen to be present in those who were admitted and also the required progress in virtues, it will be necessary to provide for the edifice of their learning and the manner of employing it, that these may be aids toward better knowledge and service of God, our Creator and Lord.

Toward achieving this purpose the Society takes charge of the colleges and also some of the universities, that in them those who prove themselves worthy in the houses but have entered the Society unequipped with the necessary learning may receive instruction in it and in the other means of helping souls. Therefore with the favor of the Divine and Eternal Wisdom and for His greater glory and praise, we shall treat first of what pertains to the colleges and then of the universities.⁵⁹

CSJ n. 308: The aim and end of the Society is, by traveling through the various regions of the world at the order of the Supreme Vicar of Christ our Lord, or of the superior of the Society itself, to preach, hear confessions and use all the other means it can with the grace of God to help souls. Consequently it has been seemed necessary to us, or at least highly expedient, that those who will enter

⁵⁹ While Stigmatines were seen teaching in seminaries [cf. CF # 67] and for teaching, they could obtain university degrees [cf. CF # 68; cf. *Epistolario* # 123, p. 218], the Confreres would not ordinarily assume the direction of these universities.

the Society should be persons of good life and sufficient learning for the aforementioned work But in comparison with others, those who are both good and learned are few; and even among these few, most of them already seek rest from their previous labors. As a result, the increase of the Society from such men of letters, who are both good and learned, is we find something very difficult to achieve, because of the great labors of the great abnegation of oneself which are required in the Society.

Therefore all of us, desiring to preserve and develop the Society for greater glory and service of God our Lord have thought it wise to proceed by another path. That is, our procedure will be admit young men who because of their good habits of life and ability give hope that they will become both virtuous and learned in order to labor in the vineyard of Christ our Lord. We shall likewise accept colleges under the conditions stated in the Apostolic Bull whether those colleges are within universities or outside of them; and if they are within universities, whether these universities are governed by the Society or not. For we are convinced in our Lord that in this manner greater service will be employed in that service will be multiplied in number and aided to make progress in learning and virtues.

Consequently we shall treat first of what pertains to the colleges and then of what concerns the universities...

[b] ... so that they might illumine the minds of others [n. 446]:
who may be immersed in darkness.

CSJ n. 446: Since the end of the Society and of its studies is to aid our fellowmen to the knowledge and love of God and to the salvation of their souls; and since the branch of theology is the means most suitable to this end, in the universities of the Society the principal emphasis ought to be put upon it. Thus diligent treatment by highly capable professors should be given to what pertains to the scholastic doctrine and sacred Scripture, and also to the part of positive theology, which is conducive to the aforementioned end, without entering into the part of the canons which is directed toward trials in court.

[c] or be able to resist encroaching heresies: [CF ## 15; 50; 286]:

CSJ n. 167: With respect to schism, if someone was born in a schismatical region so that the schism was not a particular sin committed only by the person but a general sin, he would not be understood to be excluded from the society for this cause [and the same holds true of one born in a heretical region]. Rather, there is understood here an infamous person who was excommunicated after so

contemning the authority and vigilance of our holy mother the Church that the heresy or schism was a particular sin of the person and not a general sin of the nation or country.

[d] or, give some explanation for the reason for the faith that is in us *ad fidei defensionem et propagationem, et profectum animarum in vita et doctrina christiana... Formula nn. 1; 3*];

Formula n. 3: Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus, and to serve the lord alone and the Church, His spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth, should, after a solemn vow of perpetual chastity, poverty and obedience, keep what follows in mind. He is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine...

[e] or, to resolve certain recurring moral difficulties;

[f] and to satisfy all in both aspects of theological doctrine: positive n. 351], and scholastic [n. 353], speculative, and moral [cf. nn. 451; 470; Epitome, nn. 2; 22; 322; 507].

†

5. Promotion of Studies

c. 3: The Series of Disciplines [CF ## 51-53]

Premise:

There are presented here the lists of subjects that the Apostolic Missionaries in formation need to study [cf. St. Ignatius, Part IV, c. 4, nn. 351-391]. These two Chapters - 3 & 4 [CF ## 51-55] - are not taken *verbatim* from Suarez, as are Chapters 2 [CF ## 49-50], already studied, and 5 & 6 [CF ## 56-68]. The two Chapters [3 & 4] seem to be an adapted summary of St. Ignatius' Program of Studies.

CF # 51. Since the Apostle says: *I determined that while I was with you I would speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified* [1 Co 2:2] - and since Christ has said of Himself: *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End*, therefore, all should begin learning Christian Doctrine, even by memory, whenever this can be accomplished, as this has been presented for the level of all

by Cardinal Bellarmine. Those, then, who will undertake their studies, will afterwards return to Christian Doctrine that they might learn and profit from the Roman Catechism.

CF # 51 Fr. Bertoni introduces this Constitution with two biblical quotes [cf. 1 Co 2:2 - the Hymn of the Wisdom of the Cross; and Rv. 1:8]: [It may be of interest to note that the biblical texts often cited by Fr. Bertoni, are not always found in the printed edition of April 1951. This is its own object of study. The following might be listed in passing:

65 [1 S 2:3];
109 [2 Co 11:2];
123 [Rm 12:3];
124; 150
124; 150 [1 Co 3:18 - same text twice];
127 [Ps 118:66];
131 [Ecclus 44:6];
166 [Ep 6:4]; # 185 [Ph 1:6];
185 [Is 6:6, ff; Jr 1:6];
187 [Jn 13:15]; # 188 [Ga 6:10; 1 Tm 5:8];
189 [Ac 3 & 4; Ac 4:32];
226; Ac 2:45, ff.; 4:33];
191 [Ep 4:26; Mt 5:23];
195 [Ga 5:13];
196 [Mt 18:15];
217 [1 Tm 5:17];
222 [Ps 38:4];
232 [Ac 4:35];
259 [Ac 14:26; Ep 6:21];
270 [2 Tm 2:9]; # 276 [Col 4:6];
280 [Ecclus 17:12];
283 [Ecclus 30:24];
299 [Ecclus 32:24; Pr 13:10,16.

The biblical quotes are quite numerous in Sections taken from St. Thomas and Suarez].

St. Ignatius often uses "Jesus Christ" throughout his *Constitutions* as the paradigm for the Jesuit ideal [*Formula*, # 6; 9]:

- the name of the Society [nn. 1; 51];
- the Society's sole hope [n. 812];
- its only reward [n. 478];

- imitate His example [n. 101];
- follow His counsels [nn. 50; 53; 54; 254]
- prayer [n. 65]
- bond of union [nn. 671];
- in obsequium [n. 728];
- vowed to Him [n. 17];
- in Superiors [nn. 85; 284; 286; 342; 424; 434; 547-552; 618, f.; 661; 765].

The Stigmatine Founder suggests the popular Italian Catechism compiled by St. Robert Bellarmine [comparable, perhaps, to the "Baltimore Catechism" for the U.S.A. - and then for the confreres engaged in higher studies, the Roman Catechism {of Trent}]. As has been noted to some extent in another study, St. Ignatius intended the learning and teaching of Catechism as a Fifth Vow, and as one of the major aspects of the Jesuit Apostolic Mission:

- nn. 69; 77: the fifth of the "experiments";
- nn. 113; 394; 395; 410: special apostolate;
- n. 437: the Rector himself should teach for 40 days [once a week for a school year?];
- n. 483: once a week in the Colleges;
- n. 528: special promise;
- n. 645: [Part VII]: an essential part of the Apostolic Mission.

+++

CF #52. They will study the Sacred Scriptures in their entirety, first textually, and then afterwards with the Catholic commentaries.

The thorough study of Scripture: in the text; -
commentaries.

Frequently mentioned by Ignatius:

- n. 351: all previous study leads to this;
- nn. 366; 404: Scripture is the culmination of previous studies - Scholastics need to study it:

... An order should be observed in pursuing the branches of knowledge. The scholastics should acquire a good foundation in Latin before they pass on to scholastic theology; and in it before they study positive theology. Scripture may be studied either concomitantly, or later on... [n. 366].

- 367: the languages in which Scripture was written, into which it was translated, should be studied;
- n. 446: studied in the universities;
- n. 464: studied, and also St. Thomas Aquinas:

... In theology, there should be lectures on the Old and New Testaments and on the scholastic doctrine of St. Thomas, and in positive theology [cf. nn. 351; 446]. Those authors should be selected who are more suitable for our end...

CF # 53. They will also study the following: the Holy Greek and Latin Fathers of the Church, especially the Holy Doctors.

Sacred Liturgy with its commentators.

The General and Particular Councils of the Church, especially those of the diocese in which they will be serving.

The universal and particular Decrees of the Holy Pontiffs and Bishops especially those of the diocese in which they are living.

Ecclesiastical Jurisprudence, both universal and special - and also in some way, Civil Jurisprudence.

Dogmatic Theology, especially that of Petavius; the ancient and new Controversies, especially those compiled by Cardinal Bellarmine.

Moral theology, especially that of St. Alphonsus Liguori; Cases of Conscience; Mystical Theology, both theoretical and practical.

CF # 53: this challenge is comparable to the list of studies: presented by Vatican II: [cf. PO 19]

- Fathers of the Church - cf. CF # 40; *Epitome*, 319; 660.
- Church Councils; Pontifical & Episcopal Decrees: nn.353; 368; 467;
- mystical theology nn. 402;
- Jurisprudence - for Ignatius, the study of Medicine and Law more remote from our Institute. - n. 452.

Then Studies which embellish Theology:

c. 4: Concerning those Studies that can help and embellish Theology [CF ## 54 & 55]

Premise:

[1] The list goes on - modeled perhaps on St. Ignatius: Part IV, c. 6, nn. 360-391. This is a rather extended list of a kind of "hierarchical" approach to Theology and Scripture, through the "auxiliary" subjects - either in preparation for these higher studies, or as a kind of help toward a deeper penetration of them.

[2] These auxiliary subjects seem more or less taken from the Curriculum of a modern Liberal Arts course, with some distinctions. The major goal always is proficiency, competency, in Theology and Scripture - the minor subjects “disposed” toward theology [cf. nn. 447-450].

+++

The confreres will also diligently study Church History and Civil History, as well as building up some erudition in the knowledge of the places principally where they are serving;

They will likewise apply themselves to the study of Metaphysical Philosophy, to physics and to mathematics;

They need to study natural history, as well as the Humanities;

They should acquire some knowledge of Medicine, and the rest of the liberal arts, as well as mechanics, agriculture, graphics, architecture, calligraphy, orthography, and other similar matters;

It is necessary for them to know the Humanities, and also the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, as well as the local language.

CF # 54: The students will also study diligently:

Church and Civil History, to the point of some erudition, principally of the places where the community serves;

Metaphysical Philosophy, physics, and mathematics;

Natural History and the History of Literature;

Some knowledge of medicine: [St. Ignatius noted that the study of medicine and law is more remote from the Institute - n. 452];

as well as of the liberal arts, and mechanics, agriculture, graphics, architecture, calligraphy, orthography, and so on.

They will likewise study human letters [n. 352: in addition to Rhetoric, also Grammar], and the Latin [nn. 366; 447; 468; 675], Greek [nn. 381; 457] and Hebrew [n. 447; 457] languages, and the vernacular [nn. 146; 402; 538; 675]. [The vernacular is most important for missionaries, all evangelizers]. [This “gradated” approach to study - as the languages will be of great help for the study of Sacred Theology and Scripture]:

The languages, too, in which Scripture was written or into which it was translated may be studied either previously or later on, according to what seems best to the superior in accordance with the various cases and the diversity of the persons [cf. nn. 351; 447; 449; 460]. This too will remain within his discretion. But, if the languages are learned among the ends which are pursued, one should be to defend the version which the Church holds as approved... [cf. CSJ n. 367].

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CF # 55. Lastly, they should become proficient in the art of sacred eloquence and Catechetics.

Lastly, the men should study the art of public speaking and sacred Catechetics. [n. 521]: It will be noted under the Ninth Part, “Concerning the Grade of the ‘Professed’” and the work they do, that there are three forms of *preaching, the communication of the Word of God*, noted in the Jesuit *Constitutions*:

- catechism - initiation into the faith;
- sacred lectures [*lectio*] - instruction in the faith;
- sermons [*concio*] - exhortation to live it [nn. 404; 645]⁶⁰.

Praedicare in paupertate was the apt expression used by Ignatius to formulate his ideal of the Apostolic Life⁶¹. The modern Jesuit commentators have much praised Pope Paul VI’s Encyclical, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* [nn. 43-46] and its list of ways of preaching - as has been noted in other studies on these matters⁶².

6. The Distribution of Studies

Chapter 5 The Distribution of Studies [CF ## 56-58]

CF # 56. All this concerning studies has been stated regarding the whole community, or in a general way, regarding its members. For, absolutely speaking, we can say that perfection is necessary for the Institute in the above-mentioned disciplines and languages. It would be difficult, if not morally impossible for any one individual Confrere to be able to join all these together with the required theological knowledge. Nonetheless, in the whole body of the community, there can be excellence, and there should be in all these matters.

These ideals are stated concerning the entire body, in a general manner, concerning the workers in the Institute.

Absolutely speaking, we might say, that a perfection in all the above mentioned disciplines and languages is necessary for the Institute.

This is because, although it is difficult, or morally impossible that all these branches of knowledge, be perfectly brought together in individuals at the same time

⁶⁰cf. A. deAldama, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. An Introductory Commentary...* o.c. pp. 259 ff.

⁶¹l.c., p. 260.

⁶²cf. J. Henchey, [Suarez & Bertoni] - as *Euntes Docete* [for teaching –cf. CF # 182, Duties of the *Professed*] has a broader interpretation – and so does the Jesuit *Constitutions* for preaching, as in: *praedicare in paupertate*.

with theological learning, nonetheless this can be achieved in the entire body of the Institute taken as a whole, and excellence is to be sought after in all the members.

These ideals are noted in the *Constitutions* of St. Ignatius:

- n. 354: there cannot be perfection of all in each one, but excellence is needed in some:

... According to the age, ability, inclination and basic knowledge which a particular person has, or in accordance with the common good which is hoped for, he could be applied to all these branches or to one or several of them. For one who cannot distinguish himself in all of them, ought to try to do so in the case of some one of them...

- n. 366: hierarchy of studies: Latin and Liberal Arts provide solid foundation for Theology and Scripture;
- n. 367: very helpful to know the languages in which Scripture was written, and into which it was translated;
- n. 384: especially in the Liberal Arts and Theology;
- n. 450: the Liberal Arts and natural sciences dispose for Theology.
- n. 453: the lower studies dispose for theology.

+++

CF # 57. Therefore, in each area of these disciplines, someone, or a few confreres, should be committed to it diligently by a particular study and for a longer time, as this would be most useful for the various services to be rendered to the Church depending upon the diversity of times and occasions.

As a result, in each discipline there should be some one, or those who diligently, by a particular study, over a longer period of time committed to these. Keeping in mind the various services of the Church [cf. CF # 185] that we offer because of the diversity of times and occasions, these would be very useful. [It should be noted in this Constitution the *varia Ecclesiae obsequia*, as these are noted again in CF # 185: *per varia et propria suae vocationis munera*. The expression *pro temporum et occasionum diversitate*, [cf. above CF # 37] is often used for the variety of apostolates offered and to engender specialization. [cf. nn. 354; 395; 447; 716]⁶³, an indication of the community's flexibility [cf. n. 351].

These ideals are dear to St. Ignatius:

- n. 109: early in formation, one must offer a specimen of his expertise, in accord with our office and ministry of seminating the divine word;

⁶³ cf. de Aldama, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. An Introductory Commentary...*, o.c., pp. 164, ff.

- n. 351: Specialization: some should be dedicated to a branch of study with greater diligence to fulfill the purpose of all our studies, to be of help for the souls of our neighbors;
- n. 354: according to the manner of age, talent, learning, each one should excel in some branch, for the common good that is hoped;
- n. 356: Superiors will regulate this;
- n. 357: Theology makes use of the lower studies - suitable professors are needed in these as well.
- n. 582: study is also a means of spiritual development.

7. Spiritual and Apostolic Welfare [Specialization]

CF # 58. Moreover, these studies in the Community refer principally to Theology and also aim for the understanding of Sacred Scripture. The Confreres will tend more frequently and with greater commitment toward such studies. Nevertheless, at times some confreres for a longer period are to occupy themselves in these preparatory studies, so that they might excel in them in an outstanding manner, in order to achieve our above mentioned purposes.

Although these studies in the Institute more principally refer to Theology, together with the understanding of Sacred Scripture, toward which its religious more frequently and more principally tend - nonetheless, sometimes some of the members for a longer period of time are occupied in these lower arts, so that in these, too, they might excel singularly to accomplish the above mentioned purpose of the Institute.

St. Ignatius' reflections:

- n. 109: the members should give time also to these other studies;
- nn. 384; 388: these should also be studied privately - even after one has successfully completed the course;
- nn. 446; 447: the purpose of the Society and its studies is to lead to the knowledge and love of God, and to assist in the salvation of souls; for this, the study of Letters can also help;
- n. 518: some need a longer time.

7. A Variety of Aids to Serious Study

- [4] Chapter 6: Concerning those means to be utilized in order to promote Studies
[CF ## 59-68]

Premise:

[a] This Chapter, too, by and large, is taken *verbatim*, from Fr. Suarez, as Fr. Stofella indicates in the footnote here⁶⁴. Special care needs to be taken of the students' health - they are to be properly clad - and have sufficient recreation and balance fervor in study with their piety - and all with moderation.

[b] The matter of books comes up again - one of the treasures of the house is a well stocked library - and each student would need to be equipped with the proper books for his area of commitment.

[c] Sufficient sleep must be safeguarded so that the students might be able to sustain the challenging rigors of study, all with a view to a dedicated service of the Church.

[d] External occupations need to be regulated to take care of the main task of study - for this, the confreres, called 'Material Coadjutors' in sufficient numbers, will be of great help.

[e] Quoting St. Athanasias, Fr. Bertoni challenges all to keep in their hearts and minds the right motivation: the glory of God and the benefit of souls. Fervor in piety cannot extinguish fervor in study - and the opposite is likewise true.

[f] Academic Chairs, especially in Philosophy and Theology, might be accepted, and the required university degrees as well - especially for work in Seminaries. The formation of Seminarians is a prime work of the "Professed" members of the Community [cf. CF # 164].

CF # 59. A special and careful program is to be set up for those who are dedicated to studies, both so that their health may experience no harm, and also so that their necessary comfort might not be lacking. As a result, the Superior should be vigilant so that they might have decent food and clothing, as well as the necessary recreation. He is to see to it that the students might be free from all concern and solicitude about these matters, so that they might the more easily bear the burden of their studies, and be content in religious moderation.

⁶⁴ *Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio... o.c.*, footnote on p. 75. Substantially, and total phrases, are taken from F. Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, Book V, c. 3, nn. 11, 12; c. 4, nn. 9, 10 [pp. 815 b-816, b, 822, b]. St. Gaspar Bertoni fully agrees here with St. Ignatius that the Superiors also play a key role in preparing future Apostolic Missionaries. They need to take special care of those undergoing the rigors of extended and serious study - being careful that they get sufficient sleep, recreation - and that they do not have excessive manual labor that would take them away from the principal duty of study - and the long range preparation of future Apostolic Missionaries.

Here the appeal is made for a special humane care and plan to be in vogue for those who are committed to studies.

This is so that their health might suffer no harm,
and that also the necessary comfort be provided for them.

In like manner, with what regards food and clothing [cf. CF # 32, where the Founder speaks of “religious garb” for Novices], these should be decent, with fitting and necessary recreation provided;

and the Superiors need to be vigilant to see to it that the students are free from all care and solicitude,

so that they might the more easily bear the burden of their studies,
and be content in moderation.

A number of Ignatian ideas are noted here:

- n. 151: for admittance, sufficient health and physical strength are needed;
- nn. 81; 296; 297; 577; 580; 581: in all that pertains to food, clothing and dwelling, it should be balanced between challenging virtue, and providing necessities;

n. 581 provides for those who might need a bit more:

Whether something more or less will be necessary for individual persons according to their circumstances will be left to those in charge of them to judge, as also to provide as is fitting...

In these *Constitutions* are Ignatius’ ideas on the only “religious habit” known to the early Jesuits - cf. n. 577, as noted above;

- n. 424: the challenge of the Rectors of colleges, who take the place of Jesus Christ, are to pray and watch over the students, body and mind, so that all might be conserved and proceed better in the divine service.

†

CF # 60. In each house there is to be a common library, well equipped as far as the needs and the quality of the studies require.

A well furnished Library in each house, for the needs and the quality of the students.

- n. 372: and the Jesuits add that only the Rector has the key - the following n. 373 provides an old Stigmatine reminder not to mark the books! -
However, they ought not to write annotations in these books; and he who has charge of the books should keep an account of them...

†

CF # 61. Every student is to have those books which are necessary.

- n. 376: Scholastics should have the books for their classes;
- n. 404: these are spelled out somewhat: the Gospels for the year; something else from Scripture; material to provide moral sermons - and a useful *compendium*, vademecum [??] of some sort. †

†

CF # 62. It will be incumbent upon the Superior to see to it that the Scholastics do not study in those times harmful to their physical health. They will be provided with that amount of time that will be necessary for their sleep, so that they might be able to maintain a certain balance in their mental endeavors so that they might persevere longer in acquiring and exercising the necessary learning for the service of the Church.

The Superiors need to exercise every care that the confreres do not study in times unsavory for their health;

they will make sure that the students will be given as much time as they need for sleep -

and that they observe the proper measure in their mental labor,

so that they might persevere longer in learning,

and being committed to the service of the Church – all themes dear to Ste. Ignatius:

- nn. 292-306: is a rather detailed expose' on a balanced care of the body regarding food, clothing, dwelling, duties and exercises;
- n. 339: nothing damaging to health should be permitted to the students - that they do not lose sleep and that they might maintain the proper measure in mental labor;
- n. 580: all that is required in food, sleep and the necessities of life.

†

CF # 63. Every care should be exercised so that the impediments of external occupations and endeavors be removed from the Scholastics, both regarding domestic duties, as well as in the other ministries so that more time might be given over to their studies.

It must be provided also so that there be removed from students the impediments of external occupations and work -

both regarding domestic duties, as well as in ministries,

so that a longer time be provided for them for their studies.

- n. 296; 822: the works of the body should be limited so that the spirit be not harmed; moderation of the works of both spirit and body are also the responsibility of the manner in which the Institute is maintained;
- 362: excessive mortifications or ministries should never be allowed that would hinder studies of those in formation.

†

CF # 64. For this reason the brothers will be assigned to take care of the necessary temporal matters in each house, so that the students might be relieved of these tasks.

For this purpose, there should be assigned the Brothers who serve the Lord in temporal matters,
in accord with the needs of each house,
so that the students might be spared from such work.

[One is reminded here of the Ignatian ideal, accepted by Fr. Bertoni, that the numbers of Brothers should be limited according to the need - cf. also CF ## 25; 78-82]; [CSJ nn. 112-120; 148, f.; 305]

- n. 114: need to be committed to the humble tasks;
- n. 149: necessary to free others for study;
- n. 364: the Brothers will help in these heavy tasks in the Colleges at any hour;
- n. 560: they are most useful in the Colleges, and will live there as all the other members.

†

8. All is geared to an intense Spiritual, Intellectual life for an ever more competent service of the church

CF # 65. All the members will protect their upright way of life and the proper intention for the glory of God and the benefit of souls. For no one, without a pure mind and the imitation of the Saints, will ever grasp the words of the Saints, says St. Athanasias [*De Incarn.* near the end]. All should pray often to God, Who is the Lord of all knowledge [1 S 2:3] that He might grant to them the necessary knowledge.

All will maintain the proper moral standard and the right intention:

- for the divine glory - and the benefit of souls.
- Without a pure mind [cf. Ws 1:4, ff.] -
and the imitation of the Saints -
- no one will understand the words of the Saints,
- is what Athanasias states [*On the Incarnation*, near the end]

- and they must often pray to God that He might bestow on them
- the necessary knowledge
for He is the Lord of all knowledge [1 K 2:3].

[a] First of all, there is a biblical quote explicitly made by Fr. Bertoni in the *Original Constitutions*, at the conclusion of this CF # 65, on God being '*the Lord of all knowledge*': *Scientiarum Dominus est* [cf. 1 K [S] 2:3].

[b] There might also be a text implied that only with a pure mind can one understand the words of saints, who are the best theologians - [cf. Ws 1:4,ff.]. There is a relationship in theology and the state of grace – a life of chastity, the clean of heart, are promised the Vision of God [cf. Mt 5: 8].

[c] Fr. Stofella offers a note here ⁶⁵ in which he mentions a sheet of paper left behind by Fr. Marani, upon which he quotes a letter dated June 1, 1551. from St. Ignatius to a certain Fr. Brandão⁶⁶, of Portugal, who had asked his Founder 15 questions on formation for clarification. This rather startling principle noted in the Saint's response, is noted in Part IV, c. 4, # 3, of the Jesuit *Constitutions* - nn. 340-345. The gist of the comments are as follows:

The Scholastics, keeping in mind the purpose of their studies, cannot give themselves over to long meditations, other than the regular daily exercises. And these are: Mass, an hour's prayer, the examinations of conscience, and in addition to Confession and Holy Communion every week, they can exercise themselves in seeking the presence of God in everything, as in conversing with others, in looking about, in eating, in listening, in studying and the like. Since it is true that the Divine Majesty dwells in all things by His presence, by His essence and by His power: and this manner of meditating is one where God is found in everything. This is the more helpful than that other form of prayer in which one ponders the more obtuse things, and only with great effort are they made present. Praying this exercise, one will prepare great visits of the Lord within a very short time of prayer⁶⁷.

[4] A number of Ignatian *Constitutions* come to mind here:

- n. 156 : under admissions, the zeal for souls is presented as a requirement;
- nn. 307; 360: this is the *Proemium* to Part IV - all study is to lead people to know and better serve God our Creator and Lord; even prayer for an increase in doctrine, seeking the divine glory and the good of souls;

⁶⁵ cf. *Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni...*, o.c., p. 77, footnote.

⁶⁶ cf. *Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*. Madrid BAC 87, 6 a Edición, 1997, pp. 884-889.

⁶⁷ cf. this episode noted in deAldama, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. An Introductory Commentary...* o.c., pp. 161 f.

- n. 340: all is studied with the intention of divine service;
- nn. 481: this introduces Part IV, c. 16: Concerning those things which pertain to good morals - along with letters, the students should also learn how to inculcate Christian living.
- n. 813: the pure intention for the divine service; familiarity with God, sincere zeal for souls.

†

St. Gaspar is a legislator of utmost balance:

CF # 66. It will be up to the Superiors to see to it that neither the love for piety will be cooled through the fervor of studies, nor that through any excess of piety, will the necessary studies be impeded.

Furthermore, it will be up to the Superiors to see to it that in the fervor of studies one's love for piety should not grow tepid;
and that through excessive piety that the required studies are not impeded.

There is to be noted here Fr. Bertoni's axiom that when one is excessive in work, he should pray - and excessive piety, should lead one to a deeper involvement in the Apostolic Mission⁶⁸. This balanced approach regarding study and work is noted just above [CF ## 62-63; 72; 127; 152] - and here the same rule of balance is applied to the life of piety. This is most important in the Ignatian ideal:

- nn. 292; 298; 299; 300; 301; 822: balance regarding exterior occupations and work should not interfere with required studies; Part III, c. 2, nn. 292, ff. is on the conservation of the body];
- n. 340: has the surprising principle:
... ne fervore studiorum intepescat
- solidarum virtutum ac religiosae vitae amor; ita mortificationibus, orationibus ac meditationibus prolixis eo tempore non adeo multum loci tribuetur.
- n. 361: *serio et constanter animum studiis applicare deliberent; sibi que persuadeant nihil gratius se Deo facturos in Collegiis quam si cum ea intentione de qua dictum est studiis se diligenter impendant...*
- n. 362: *...impedimenta etiam removeantur quae a studiis animum avocant, tam devotionum ac mortificationum quae vel nimiae vel sine ordine debito suscipiuntur...*

⁶⁸St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Memoriale Privato*, July 12, 1808.

- n. 582:*ne nimius...huiusmodi rerum usus* [ieiunia, vigliae.. ad austeritatem] *tantopere vires corporis debilitet... nec in illis tanta sit relaxatio ut, fervore spirito refrigescente, humani ac inferiores affectus incalescant.*
- n. 583: ... *ne excedant vel deficiant in spiritualibus exercitiis...* - this is "the rule of thumb".

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[5] Special Interest for Seminaries among the *Apostolic Missionaries*:

CF # 67. With the express permission of the Superior, Chairs of Theology might be accepted and also, at times, those of Philosophy, if they are offered, especially in Seminaries. This must always be without contradiction, or controversy, or opposition. This service is gratuitous.

With the express permission of the Superior, there can be accepted:

- also Chairs of Theology, and at times, those of Philosophy, if they are offered,
- especially in Seminaries,
- without contradiction, or controversy or opposition,
- where they will teach in gratuitous service.

It is noted that among the special tasks of the "Professed", the "Apostolic Missionary" properly so-called, Fr. Bertonni lists work in Seminaries, assisting in the instruction and formation [cf. CF # 164]. This paragraph was not immediately found in Suarez, as were the preceding and the one following. The ideals are found in Ignatius' *Constitutions*:

- n. 369: professors should be "learned, diligent and assiduous"
- nn. 446-452: [cf. Part IV, c. 12] as the goal of the Society is the knowledge and love of God; hence, all is subordinated to Theology - other professorships accepted with a view to Theology;
- n. 456: the number of teachers should suffice in accord with the number of students and their capacity;
- n. 813: the purpose of the Society is the assistance of souls to reach their supernatural happiness.

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CF # 68. University degrees might be accepted, as long as this takes place without any harm being done either to religious poverty, or humility.

University degrees may be accepted, provided that:

this is done without injury either to religious poverty, and humility [cf. CF Seventh Part, Section III, under the Vow of Chastity, ## 120-121, the 12 degrees of St. Benedict].

One might be reminded of Pope Paul VI's reminders concerning a comparison between further education and wealth ⁶⁹. St. Ignatius treats of this *ex professo* [cf. Part IV, c. 15, nn. 471-480]:

- n. 390: without ambition - all for God's glory.

[6] All with Our Spiritual and Apostolic Welfare in mind:

a.] Quest for Balance, Two extremes need to be kept in mind [CSJ 340; 582]:

- on the one hand, care must be taken that through fervor in study the Scholastics do not grow cool in their love of virtue and the religious life:

In regard to spiritual matters, the same order of procedure will be used with those who are received in the colleges, as long as they are still going through probations, as that which is observed with those who are received in the houses. But after they have been approved and while they are applying themselves to their studies, just as care must be taken that through fervor in study they do not grow cool in their love of true virtues and of religious life, so also during that time there will not be much place [cf. nn. 362; 363] for mortifications and long prayers and meditations [cf. nn. 340-345, rules for those in formation; and cf. nn. 582-584] for those already formed]. For their devoting themselves to learning, which they acquire with pure intention of serving God and which in a certain way requires the whole man, will be not less, but rather more pleasing to God our Lord during this time of study [cf. n. 361] [n. 340].

In view of the time and approval of their life through which those wait before being admitted among the Professed and even among the formed coadjutors, it is presupposed that they will be men who are spiritual and sufficiently advanced to run in the path of Christ our Lord to the extent that their bodily strength and the exterior occupations undertaken through charity and obedience allow. Therefore, in what pertains to prayer, meditation and study and also in regard to the bodily practices of fasts, vigils and other austerities or penances, it does not seem expedient to give them any other rule than that which discreet charity dictates to them [cf. n. 134], provided that the Confessor should always be

⁶⁹cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelica Testificatio*, June 29, 1971, # 54

informed and also, when a doubt about expediency arises, the superior [cf. nn. 8; 9; 283; 300].

The following statement is the only one which will be made in general. On the one hand, the members should keep themselves alert that the excessive use of these practices may not weaken the bodily energies [cf. nn. 292; 300] and consume time to such an extent that these energies are insufficient for the spiritual help of one's fellow man according to our Institute; and, on the other hand, they should be vigilant that these practices may not be relaxed to such an extent that the spirit grows cold and the human and lower passions grow warm [cf. n. 340] [n. 582].

- during that time of studies, though, there will not be much place for mortifications, long prayers and meditations. The demands of the intellectual and pastoral formation require the whole man. This total sacrifice will not be any the less, but rather - even more pleasing to God than mortifications, prayers, and long meditations already noted - since such commitment flows from a more forceful charity.

- Duration and manner of prayer [nn. 342-345]: it is surprising that St. Ignatius, the great Teacher of prayer and personal witness to it - would prescribe only one hour of prayer for scholastics - over and above weekly Confession and daily Mass. This hour includes the following:

- two examinations of conscience, at noon and at night;
- recitation of the Hours of Our Lady [the "Little Office"];
- other prayers according to the devotion of each individual, until the hour is completed.
- it is only in the following *Declarations* [nn. 343; 345] where it is said that at times, some of the scholastics, not obliged to recite the Divine Office, may substitute for the Little Office and other exercises, that of mental prayer and other spiritual exercises ⁷⁰:

To go [to Confession and Communion] more frequently than every eight days, should not be permitted, except for special reasons and more because of necessity than of devotion. But, neither shall the reception be deferred beyond eight days without special reasons. For such reasons Mass, too, could be omitted on some days, and with some the period of prayer could be lengthened or shortened. All this will remain within the discretionary power of the Superior.

⁷⁰Usually *Spiritual Exercises* refer to the course of a 30 day Retreat for which St. Ignatius is most well known. However, "spiritual exercises" also refer to the customary expressions of the prayer life of committed Christians, and as described by Ignatius in nn. 342-345.

Although the determined hour, or a little more or less, is taken for the recitation of the Hours of Our Lady, nevertheless in the case of the Scholastics who are not obliged to recite the Divine Office, that hour can more easily be changed at times to meditations and other spiritual exercises by which the hour is filled out, especially with some who do not advance spiritually more by another. This is to be done with the permission, or through the order of their superiors, whose duty it will always be to consider whether, for certain reasons with particular persons, something different is more expedient, in order to carry it out while keeping in view the genuine devotion of the subjects, or of the founder, and also the circumstances of persons, times and places.

For those who do not have experience in spiritual things and desire to be helped in them, some points for meditation and prayer could be proposed to them in the way that seems best for persons of this kind [cf. nn. 277; 279]. The elders, or superiors, will have the right to decide whether or not the Scholastics may recite a part of the Hours, for which they have the assigned hour, during that time of the Mass when the priest is speaking aloud in order that the people may understand him. These superiors should provide for this according to the subjects, places, conditions and times, in the way which seems best to them for greater divine glory...[n. 343].

All of this, and what follows, however, are to be regulated by the Superior. The reason for this insistence on the part of the Saint is his emphasis on the situation of Scholastics “who are in studies”, in an intense period of intellectual formation - not of Novices, and not of Religious already formed ⁷¹. It should be noted that Ignatius fixed this norm for the approved Scholastics who had already passed through the “experiences” of the Novitiate, during which they had laid down the proper foundation for self-abnegation [n. 307]. These men had already made the month of the full course of the *Spiritual Exercises* and would be supposed to have emerged as inclined to prayer and devotion. Thus, Ignatius felt there was more need for restraint rather than exhortation.

“Discreet charity”, is sometimes translated “prudent”, and “discerning love” is a phrase characteristic of Ignatius, a figure of speech by which he means the charity exercised by a discreet person, one who exercises natural and supernatural prudence or judgment in his actions. This discreet charity impels him to choose the objective better course after all the circumstances have been considered. Ignatius presents discreet charity as a norm of citing [cf. nn. 209; 237; 269; 582]. In his usage, the phrase

⁷¹These will be treated in Part VI, nn. 582, ff.; the Religious Life of the Society

denotes a discernment of spirits, in which he exercised his natural and supernatural prudence with special care⁷².

b.] Contemplatives in Action: daily prayer seems almost reduced to vocal prayer: the praying of the “Little Office”, the Rosary, with other prayers of personal devotion. St. Ignatius, however, is close to St. Teresa of Avila in her esteem of this prayer:

... In regard to the recitation of the Rosary, they should be instructed how to think or meditate about the mysteries which it contains, that they may take part in this exercise with greater attention and devotion...[cf. n. 277] [n. 345]⁷³.

This prayer needs to be “perfect”, including mental accompaniment. Thus Ignatius would legislate that the Scholastics need to think and meditate the mysteries so that they may take part in this with greater attention and devotion [n. 345]. This is more “Ignatian” as it involves the “whole person” - *my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God!* [cf. Ps 83]. As in the Carmelite tradition, the important aspect is always the love that comes to the fore in authentic prayer. In his own personal life, Ignatius was described as having the Lord constantly before one’s eyes. A key Ignatian ideal is to seek the Lord in all things [cf. nn. 101, f.; 288].

c.] “Specialization”:

... According to the age, ability, inclination, and basic knowledge which a particular person has, or in accordance with the common good which is hoped for, he could be applied to all these branches or to one or several of them. For one who cannot distinguish himself in all of them, ought to try to do so in the case of some one of them [n. 354].

Not every Scholastic can be eminent in all subjects needed. While a general formation is always required, each person ought to give his best to be distinguished at least in one area of study. This is left to the discretion of the Superiors, noting each one’s natural inclinations, aptitudes. This is an entrance requirement: whether they will allow themselves to be directed to what they should study, how long, and the like [cf. n. 109].

⁷²cf. George E. Ganss, SJ, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*. Translated, with an Introduction and a Commentary. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1970, p. 261, n. 2]; cf. St. Gaspar Bertoni, *Memoriale Privato*. Prolonged prayer is an advantage: Nov. 16, 1808; Prayer & activity mutually temper one another - July 12, 1808.[NB Fr. Bertoni speaks of Charity as ordered: CF ## 187-190; 208; 216; 220; 262; 220]

⁷³cf. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*, c. 30.

d.] Theology dominates [n. 446]:

Since the end of the Society and of its studies is to aid our fellowmen to the knowledge and love of God and to the salvation of their souls [cf. nn. 3; 156; 163; 258; 307; 308; 351; 360; 603; 813]; and since the branch of theology is the means most suitable to this end, in the universities of the Society the principal emphasis ought to be put upon it. Thus diligent treatment by highly capable professors [cf. nn. 369; 456] should be given to what pertains to scholastic doctrine and Sacred Scripture, and also to the part of positive theology [cf. nn. 351; 353; 464; 467] which is conducive to the aforementioned end, without entering into the part of the canons which is directed toward trials in court. [n. 446].

All other studies have relative value - all are taken up with a view to theology. The circumstances of the times, and the local conditions need to be kept in mind [n. 447]. The study of philosophy is closely related to theology - whereas, medicine and law are more remote from our institute [n. 452].

e.] The Plan:

The curriculum in theology will be one of six years. In the first four years all the matter which must be lectured on will be expounded [cf. nn. 418; 518; 519]. In the remaining two, in addition to the reviewing, the acts customary for a doctorate will be performed by those who receive it [cf. nn. 388; 390].

Ordinarily, the cycle of the curriculum will be begun every fourth year and the books which are to be lectured on will be arranged in such a sequence that a student can enter the curriculum at the beginning of any one of the four years. By hearing the lectures on what remains of the four-year curriculum, and then on the matter immediately following until he reaches the point where he began, he will hear the lectures of the entire curriculum within four years [n. 476].

It is apparently from this number where Fr. Bertoni got his 6, or 7 year commitment to theology ⁷⁴ - as in the old system, after six years one became a “Bachelor” in theology - to become a “Master”, or “Doctor”, the new “baccalaureus” had to continue at the university for another six or eight years, teaching, debating, and preaching. For the early Jesuit Scholastics, the time given to each one of these branches is not fixed, nor when they are to move on from one to another. All was left to the view of the Rector. Later it will be clarified: in order for one to be promoted to profession, he would have had to have studied theology for at least four years [cf. n. 518].

⁷⁴cf. Antonio M. deAldama, SJ, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. An Introductory Commentary...*, o.c., p. 167 - [cf. here CF # 40].

f.] Doctrine: the old “jargon” was not so much “giving a course”, but “reading, hearing a book read out expounded upon.” - the safer and more approved doctrine, explained by its authors [n. 358]. This is the idea in the title of Part IV, c. 14: “The Books that are to be read” [cf. nn. 464, ff.] - the Latin term is *praelectio*. Ignatius had studied in Paris under the Dominicans - so, after Sacred Scripture, he suggests St. Thomas and Peter Lombard. The Ignatian emphasis was on just the good books [n. 469]. The purpose of these arduous studies was not so much scholarly research in itself, but to help our fellowmen, to instruct and form suitable ministers of the Church.

g.] Obstacles: the first noted is of a spiritual nature: the challenge is to keep their souls pure and their intention of studying right, by seeking in study nothing except the glory of God and the good of souls - to beg in prayer for grace to make progress in learning for the sake of this end [n. 360]: *wisdom will not enter the deceitful soul, a holy and disciplined spirit will flee from deceit..* [cf. Ws 1:4, f.]. There is needed a real commitment to study, keeping alive the firm resolution to be thoroughly genuine and earnest students. They need to study with the intention of pleasing God [n. 361]. The act of studying takes its inspiration from obedience and charity:

In order to make good progress in those branches, the scholastics should strive first of all to keep their souls pure and their intention in studying right, by seeking in their studies nothing except the glory of God and the good of souls [cf. nn. 307; 351; 440; 466]. Moreover, they should frequently beg in prayer for grace to make progress in learning for the sake of this end. [n. 360].

Furthermore they should keep their resolution firm to be thoroughly genuine and earnest students, by persuading themselves that while they are in the colleges they cannot do anything more pleasing to God our Lord than to study with the intention mentioned above [cf. nn. 340; 360]; likewise, that even if they never have occasion to employ the matter studied, their very labor in studying, taken up as it ought to be because of charity and obedience, is itself work highly meritorious in the sight of the Divine and Supreme Majesty. [n. 361].

Some obstacles are:

- excessive devotions and mortifications;
- burdensome household tasks;
- spiritual ministries with neighbors - it is wise to postpone exercises such as these until after the years of study [cf. n. 362].

h.] Order: this emphasis is said to have been made in that Ignatius himself had to repeat some of his studies poorly made earlier on. Latin is needed for Philosophy - this is needed prior to Scholastic Theology - and this is a requirement prior to positive theology [n. 366]. Once a theological framework has been acquired

through the study of Scholastic theology, it is easier to discern the doctrine of other authors. St. Ignatius also suggests Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic - one of the aims must be the defense of the Vulgate [n. 367]. One of Ignatius' concerns was the fact that a number of promising young minds give up the faith to embrace new doctrines, in that they lacked sound theology. He believed that the knowledge of theology would be much helped by the study of Latin, Greek and Hebrew [n. 447].

i.] Concrete Methods: after the professor's *lectio* [nn. 369; 374] the students would engage in *repetitio* [nn. 374; 375; 459]; *disputatio* [nn. 378-380]; *compositio* [nn. 380]; speaking in Latin [n. 381]; *oratio* [n. 381]. These university events would draw the interest as perhaps inter-collegiate sports do today. So, Ignatius encouraged not only "learning", but also "modesty":

Because of the utility there is in the practice of disputation, especially for those who are studying arts and scholastic theology, the scholastics should participate in the disputations, or ordinary circles of the schools which they attend, even though these schools are not those of the Society itself; and they should endeavor to distinguish themselves both by their learning and by their modesty... [n. 378].

The student should not be passive before the lecturer, but should actively take part in his own formation, with much exercise. In addition to attendance, the Scholastic is encouraged to private and undisturbed study, to understand ever more profoundly what has been treated [nn. 373; 376; 384-385; 389]. Teachers need to be learned, diligent and assiduous [nn. 369; 450].

g.] Degrees: not every Scholastic was required to get a degree. Were one to strive for a degree, he does so only to be better able to help one's fellow man for the glory of God [n. 390]. These three conditions were laid down:

- degrees are only granted to those who are found deserving after a careful examination;
- there should be no special honors for those who do obtain them;
- poverty should be safeguarded: the only regard should be Jesus Christ.

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Conclusion:

For St. Gaspar, the Ministry of the Word of God is not only an Apostolic Mission, but also and even 'especially' this Ministry is meant to develop the spirituality of the Apostolic Missionary.

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APPENDIX I

Go forth and teach

A key ideal in St. Gaspar Bertoni's Original Constitutions

Chapter 6

Concerning the Duties of the 'Professed' Fathers

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.

183. They will hear the confessions of all who approach them, especially those of the poor and children, and encourage all to a frequent reception of the Sacraments.

[A Commentary]:

c. 6: The Office of the Professed of the Sodality
[CF ## 182-184]

This c. 6 summarizes anew the *Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium* as found earlier in this section for the 'Grade of the Professed [cf. CF ## 162, 163, §§ 1, 2; 164]. All of these numbers, of course, find their ultimate basis in the Jesuit Constitutions, nn. 645-649 where St. Ignatius explains his ideal for the Ministry of the Word of God. As has already been noted above, this little table helps to understand what the Jesuit Founder had in mind. The three major exemplars have the three steps of evangelization in mind:

- initiation into the faith: Catechesis;
- instruction in the faith: Sacred Lectures;
- exhortation to live the faith: Sermons ¹.

In these Constitutions [CF ## 182-183], Fr. Bertoni notes the following ministries of the Word of God:

- *concionibus* - sermons;
- *exercitiis [spiritualibus]* - retreats;
- *lectionibus ad vitam eternam consequendam* - either in class [for information], or lectures in Church [exhortation];
- *explanare rudimenta fidei et morum, praesertim rudibus et pueris;*
- *in oratoriis;*
- *in catechismis publicis et privatis;*
- *confessiones omnium, praesertim pauperum et puerorum*
- *inducere ad debitam sacramentorum frequentiam.*

Just a word on the “lectures”: when they are called ‘sacred’, they are usually considered to be those delivered in Church, intended for the edification of the people. The ‘school lectures’, as in Seminaries, or Universities which are meant for knowledge. The sacred lectures are different from sermons because the sermons are aimed at stirring the heart and the lectures emphasize teaching.

Thus, this c. 6 of Part IX of Fr. Bertoni’s Constitutions covers some of the same ground as noted in Chapters 2 and 3 of the same Part. There is much repeated emphasis on ministering to the youth - through teaching in the seminaries, the oratories - and again, in “private” instructions and conversations [cf. CF ## 163, §§ 1, 2; 164; 165; 182. The hearing of Confessions especially of the young [the poor], is noted in CF ## 163 § 2; 168; 183. The teaching of Christian Doctrine is presented in cc 2; 4 and 6, CF ## 163 § 1; 170 and 183. In the Original Constitutions, then, this array of ministries is part of the Apostolic Mission for the ‘Professed Apostolic Missionaries.

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CF # 182: while the express text has not been found *verbatim* its substance is clearly presented in Suarez¹. It is clearly stated that the principal task of this Society is to work for the spiritual salvation and perfection of their neighbors, by making use of all the fitting means¹. The main task of the Jesuits is described by Ignatius as leading souls in the way of Jesus Christ. The Jesuit is trained to seek through grace that particular gift of illuminating and directing men and women in the spiritual life¹. They are called not to be the ‘teachers’ of the Holy Spirit, but His ministers, and they might become his apt instruments. The end of this Institute is that of assisting their own members in their own salvation, and in helping their neighbors to reach theirs. For these spiritual purposes, the primary purpose of this Society is contemplation. The end of the Community is to generate perfect men, perfect ministers and other perfect men - and this cannot be done without contemplation. An insight provided here by the Monk-Pope, St. Gregory the Great. The principal activities of the Society, Therefore, are those spiritual actions that proximately and of themselves are ordained to the progress of souls. As a result, it is necessary primarily and more principally for the Society to orient its members toward the contemplative life, the principle source of all such activities. Augustine includes doctrine and the Word of God as acts of the contemplative life¹.

Spiritual activities are intimately connected to doctrine concerning the divine realities - as a result, these divine truths are handed on not only in public lectures and sermons, but also in secret and private confessions, conversations and instructions, as these are presented in CF ## 182, 183 - remembering the beautiful phrase noted in Suarez¹, recorded by Fr. Bertoni as CF # 168 that a pure conscience is the seat of wisdom. The Society, then, has been founded to perfect other priests, under the instinct of the Holy Spirit, in those matters pertaining to the Body of Christ, as the Eucharist and as the Church. These perfected priests are then to be totally committed to the perfection of their neighbor, through these priestly tasks.¹

The Society of Jesus does not pray the Breviary in choir, but like all clerics in major orders, each Jesuit is bound to celebrate this prayer of the Church, this sacrifice of praise, for the Church, the Flock of Christ. The reason for this abstention from 'choir duty' is so that the members of the Society would be all the more free for the Apostolic Mission - the Society is a missionary community. They are founded for the greater glory of God - and in the history of the religious life, this is promoted in a variety of ways. One of these, of course, was through the traditional means, the Choir, as kept alive across the centuries by the monasteries. The Society was not founded for this purpose but rather to be totally committed for the salvation of souls, through sermons, the spiritual exercises, lectures, leading the faithful to more frequent confessions and the life¹. Under the word 'preaching' there was to be understood all the ministries of the word of God. Thus, the ministry of doctrine and communicating the word of God has to be preferred in the Society over ecclesiastical chant and psalmody.

Fr. Bertoni has a very broad grasp of teaching as one of the prime aspects of the Apostolic Mission. It can be communicated in the ways listed above - it is co-extensive with 'preaching' in some of his interpretations. Teaching Christian Doctrine is one of the ministries most proper to the Society [cf. CSJ nn. 113; 528]. It is mentioned explicitly in the formula of the last vows of the Priests [cf. CSJ nn. 527; 532; 535]. It is one of the Novitiate 'experiments' [CSJ n. 69] - and the Scholastics need appropriate training for this ministry [cf. CSJ n. 410].

'Teaching Christian Doctrine' is an expression used constantly in the Constitutions. It was used even before they were written, in the 'Five Chapters', the preliminary draft of the Formula of the Institute. From the earliest days of the Society, there was much emphasis on the repeated expression *rudibus et pueris* - the ministry specialized in two classes of

people: children and the uneducated, whose salvation is in danger due to their ignorance.

The Catechetical Ministry is the one each was called to vow to perform 40 days each year. The early documents of the Society speak often of the teaching of the first elements of the faith. The pressing motive for catechizing children and the uneducated, then, was the pressing need for this basic instruction - nothing is so fruitful both for the edification of our fellow human beings and for the practice of charity and humility of the Jesuits. Catechetical teaching comes fully under the heading of the priestly ministries of the Society of Jesus - it was historically their first ministry¹.

The communicating of the word of God remains a central Jesuit aspect of the Apostolic Mission [cf. CSJ nn. 108; 307; 308 (important numbers); 645].

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CF # 183: the hearing of confessions, especially those of children and the poor - and also the ministry of trying to convince them to come more often [CF ## 44; 118; 163, § 2; 193] to this sacrament is a prime Jesuit Mission. Suarez notes that 'the Word of God is indeed very sacred - hence, with Augustine, it can be said that it is somewhat conferred with the Eucharist¹. Another of the principal ministries that pertain to the Society, from its very institution, pertaining to the salvation of their neighbors is the administration of the sacraments [cf. CSJ nn. 642, ff.] This means particularly the hearing of Confessions and the administration of the Eucharist¹.

The sacraments, instituted for our sanctification and the building up of the Body of Christ, nourish and strengthen the faith. They not only confer grace, but also prepare the faithful to receive this grace fruitfully, to worship God and grace charity [cf. DC 59]. They are fully part of the important challenge of the Church to carry out evangelization. Pope Paul VI stressed their intimate connection with the word of God, from which they cannot be separated [cf. EN 20;47].

The administration of the Sacraments - including Penance - was practiced by the Jesuits from the beginning, and it is included in the *Formula*. The hearing of confessions is for the spiritual consolation of the faithful. The Society became renowned also especially for the hearing of Confessions and the administering of the Holy Eucharist [cf. CSJ nn. 642; 644]. This ministry was added to the Word of God in the second draft of the *Formula*. The early Jesuits - as well as many theologians - see the

administration of the sacraments simply as part of the Ministry of the Word. The principle was the one pronounced by Polanco: the fruit of the plants we cultivate through sacred lectures and sermons is harvested through the hearing of confessions. This was also one of the reason for the institution of ‘Spiritual Coadjutors’ in the Jesuit Rule: people often flock for confession after the sermons and sacred lectures. If there had not been these coadjutors, much good fruit would have been lost.

Over and above religious instruction, the Jesuit ministry included that of consolation, exhorting and in some way causing the consolation from above, the source of all true devotion. The Apostolic Missionary is not a mere functionary in the administration of the sacraments. The community zeal needs to be aimed ultimately and directly to stimulating charity, the living fire of all good, prior to the visit of the Holy Spirit. In the Houses, this ministry was to be carried on in the Society by having some priests assigned by the Superior for this service [cf. CSJ n. 642]. As spiritual needs occur, the superior will have the duty of considering whether others, too, in addition to those who were assigned as ordinary confessors, ought to attend to the administration of those sacraments penance and communion [cf. CSJ n. 643; cf. also nn. 108; 406; 407].¹

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CF # 184: as in the Jesuit Constitutions, in the section pertaining to the Apostolic Mission, there is a careful delineation of the principle placed in the *Formula* - known as *gratis omnino*. It is a value often repeated in Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions [cf. CF ## 3; 67; 102; 184]. This value is powerfully defended in the Constitutions of St. Ignatius - his broad apostolic mission was to be offered *gratis omnino*:

Formula 1: ... by means of public preaching, lectures, and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God, and further, by means of the Spiritual exercises, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of God’s faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments, Moreover, this Society should show itself no less useful in reconciling the estranged, in holily assisting and serving those who are found in prisons or hospitals, and indeed in performing any other works of charity, according to what will seem expedient for the glory of God and the common good. Furthermore, all these works should be carried out altogether free of charge [*gratis omnino*] and without accepting any salary for the labor expended in all the afore-mentioned activities...

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Life and Doctrine for St. Gaspar Bertoni

For St. Gaspar, *life and doctrine* [a theme much renowned in the Benedictine tradition: cf. Jean Leclercq, OSB, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*. NY Fordham 1961] were often paired in the preparation for the varied Apostolic Mission and for the challenging life of the Apostolic Missionary, [cf. CF # 217]:

CF # 217: [Commentary]:

In the Suarezian text [p. 954 a], there are a few lines intervening at the end of the preceding, and this present Constitution. Here Suarez states that St. Basil, in the more extensive Rule, in 170, where it is asked whether on the same level are to be held those who do more in the accomplishing of good, and those who bring a lesser contribution to the task, responds with statements from both Luke and Paul: *...Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much; but to whom less is forgiven, he loves less...* [cf. Lk 7:47¹]. St. Paul is also quoted: 1 Tm 5: 17, and this text Fr. Bertoni includes in his own text here, taken from Suarez:

As Paul says [1 Tm 5:17]: 'Let the priests that rule well, be esteemed worthy of double honor: especially they who labor in the word and doctrine', Basil concludes: [In Reg. Fus. 170] I think it is right to apply this rule to all that honor be served.' Cassian also profusely teaches this doctrine [Coll. 14, c. 16], by the example Christ the Lord, specially loving John. So, not all love, which for some may be greater, than for others, is reprehensible in religion, but that which exceeds just proportions: and this is what is meant most specially by singular and particular friendships.

Paul here embellishes on what he had said earlier in: 1 Tm 4:16: Take heed to thyself and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. [cf. *'More than ordinary'*. [In general, please cf. below Progress in St. Gaspar, Intellectual Progress].

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