

# St. GASPAR BERTONI



## A Trinitarian Charism of Hope

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END NOTES

**FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF THE MOST BLESSED TRINITY  
in the Charism of  
St. GASPAR BERTONI**

**PART ONE: St. Gaspar Bertoni – A Trinitarian Charism**

**A. The Founder and the Trinity**

**August 24, 1808:**

At St. Joseph's Convent. At the base of one's own nothingness, God may be found. While experiencing some sublime insights regarding God, I also had a much deeper understanding of myself.

This evening I saw a painting of the Most Blessed Trinity. This inspired much reverence and love for the Three Persons. The Eternal Father was depicted with His arms open, which explained His Mercy to me, and the ready communication of His gifts.

Thereafter, the Office was said with much devotion and for the glory of God. [1]

**September 27, 1808:**

Meditation today was on the Incarnation. I experienced feelings of gratitude for the Most Holy Trinity, and of correspondence with Jesus Christ. I was obliged to love God even before he became man: how much more now. [2]

**September 28, 1808:**

During Meditation today and afterwards, there was the desire for martyrdom, and prayer for it, along with deep interior exhortation.

This evening, expression of pardon. There was a sentiment of great love toward the Most Holy Trinity, in giving us the Son. Toward Him, there were feelings of much tenderness together with a very vivid faith, and a great desire for union. There was also the yearning for association in His sufferings and shame - with a prayer for the grace to suffer and even to be disregarded as He was. [3]

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## 1. The Trinity and Mission:

a. **Creation and Grace:** Fr. Bertoni's interest in the Trinity is concentrated in the doctrines concerning the Indwelling, the Eucharist, Mission and Hope. In accord with many of the Fathers, there is a kind of cycle: the descent through creation; the sharing of the Divine Nature, for an eventual return to eternal life in the bosom of the Trinity. The universe comes forth from God - grace is offered - for one to be elevated to eternal life. Fr. Bertoni is much more concerned in the documents of his that have come down to these times with the Divine Plan of Salvation [the so-called 'Economic Trinity'] than He is with the inner workings of the Trinity, or the 'Immanent Trinity.'

b. **Incarnation:** this pattern is noted in Jesus Christ: He descends to us from the Father - lives among us in total abjection and lowliness, His *Kenosis* - in order to lead us back to the life of the Trinity. The entire emphasis is on the Mission of the Son, so intimately tied in with His Personality: Jesus has been sent to accomplish our return. The Mission distinguishes the Son, but does not separate Him from the Father.

c. **Stigmata:** For the Stigmatines, the Paschal Mystery is seen in terms of Jesus' life carrying out this Plan of Redemption. The Five Wounds of Christ are the visible signs of this Paschal Mystery: the descent, the living among us, and the return to the Father [cf. Ph 2:5-11].

d. **Kenosis** [cf. Ph 2:5-11]: This biblical passage - even though not often quoted explicitly by Fr. Bertoni - is one that seems to figure throughout his thinking and life - the *KENOSIS* of Jesus Christ. In some way, we might think of a kind of Kenosis of the Father [ who so loved the world that He gave up His only son - whom He did not spare: cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16] - and the Holy Spirit who has not come to say His own word, but only to remind the Church of the Message of Jesus [cf. Jn 16; 13,f]. The *KENOSIS* of Christ lends itself to this outline:

- Jesus did not cling to his equality with God: 'Pre-existence';
- But, He emptied Himself: His entire earthly sojourn:

- His Incarnation - assuming the form of a slave;
- His Redemption - His death on the Cross.

- And the Father raised Him on high - for the divine glory: the Exaltation.



The one classical principle finds a multiple application: *Bonum est diffusivum sui* : would offer some appreciation of the Mystery of the Trinity - the Sacraments - the Church and the Apostolic mission.

The great pattern is this: AS the Son is the Father's Apostle/Missionary, SO He sends His own Apostles, JUST AS He was sent by the Father:

*"... Jesus came and stood among the. 'Peace be with you', and he showed them His hands and His side... 'Peace be with you... AS the Father sent Me, SO I am sending you... [cf. Jn 20:21].*

This is the 'Mystique of Service': the Trinity is not only contemplated, but it is also the heart of the message that is 'handed on to others.' It becomes clearer and clearer that the trinity is the ultimate source and principle of the Apostolic Mission. As Christ 'cooperated/collaborated' with the Father, each believe, each Stigmatine is sent, called to work as Christ did for the extension of the Father's Glory.

Among the 'Models of the Church', there will have to be room left for ecclesial obedience: Jesus, obedient unto death, is the primordial Model of the Church. While the holy Spirit breathes where He will, Fr. Bertoni saw Him as the source of the Stigmatine Vocation: this vocation is a work begun by the Holy Spirit, and He will bring it to completion [4]. Fr. Bertoni believed, too, that the Spirit has been active in the naming of the hierarchy. It is through the Bishops that the Stigmatines discern the Apostolic Mission for the community. The choice of the apostolates, as the assistance of Bishops - is left up to them, as the Incarnate Divine Will for the Stigmatine ecclesial service.

Jesus is the ICON of the Invisible God [cf. Col 1:15] - Jesus really is the 'Symbol of God'. By probing His humanity, one has a deeper sense of the divinity. The humanity of Jesus is a window into the Trinity, a mirror for Christianity. Fr. Bertoni seemed most aware of this:

### **August 17, 1808:**

"In prayer, begin with Christ, and from His Passion - then the spirit should be left free for wherever the Lord may attract it..." [5].

In his Constitutions on the Progress of Stigmatines in ecclesiastical disciplines, Fr. Bertoni noted the following in his original rule:

“Since the Apostle says: ‘for I am determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified’ - and since Christ said of Himself: ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end’ - therefore, all the confreres shall start here, that is, to learn by heart, if possible, the Christian Doctrine as set forth for everyone’s understanding in the Catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine. Moreover, those who devote themselves to study, shall every now and then, return to it, putting a deeper knowledge and hold on it from the Roman Catechism” [6].

There is a biblical foundation for all this:

*“...whoever sees me, sees the One Who sent Me...”* [cf. Jn 12:45]

*“... to have seen Me, is to have seen the Father...”* [cf. Jn 14:9]

*“... He is the radiant light of God’s glory, the perfect copy of his nature...”* [cf. Heb 1:3]

The Stigmatine ‘image’ of God, ideal, in some way can be understood through the Devotions to the Holy Spouses [ manifesting the diversity of Gifts, and family unity, dedication to Christ, abandonment - and the Sacred Stigmata, indicating the total self-giving of Christ, His abandonment to the Father’s Plan - and the Apostolic Mission [cf. Jn 20:20,f.].

God has ‘removed the veil’, regarding Himself in Jesus Christ as is God’s Work of Art, and of Him we are invited to draw a portrait in our own lives [7]. He is the Father’s Symphony, His Master-piece, made manifest under a variety of aspects in the charism of St. Gaspar Bertoni.

The Second Vatican Council has noted that there is a ‘growth’ in the faith in the lives of the believers as they correspond to God’s word. It seems most evident that this passage was truly ‘experienced’ by Fr. Bertoni:

*“... There is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts [cf. Lk 2: 19, 51], through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth...”* [8].

God is the supreme mystery - but, He has been made known through Jesus Christ:

*“... No one has ever seen God; only the Son, who has made Him known. The Son is turned eternally toward the Father...”* [cf. Jn 1:18].

This idea of God is completed in Revelation in all that is sufficient for salvation - but, the progressive understanding of Him, and His Plan will go on until the end of time, through the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of those docile to him. The Mystery of God and human destiny are being unfolded also in the Stigmatine charism through the grace of God, the mediation of the Son and the continuing sanctification of the Holy Spirit.

## 2. God as Father:

This is Christ's basic revelation of 'the One Who sent Him', God, the Father. Very early in the Creed, the Church has prayed for centuries: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of the father.' As the Son is the perfect IKON/Image/Copy of the Father, as the Son 'emptied' Himself [kenosis], this is the revelation the Church has of the Father:

*... God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up to benefit us all...* [cf. Rm 8:32].

*...Yes, God loved the world so much that He gave up His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not be lost, but may have eternal life...* {cf. Jn 3:16}.

In the Trinity, everything is one and the same, where there is not the opposition of relationship. [9]. Jesus is 'constituted' by being 'sent' - the Father is distinct from Him, but not separated - by His 'sending' of the Son. Christ Himself informs us that He has made the Father known:

*"... Everything has been entrusted to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son, and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him..."* [cf. Mt 11: 27].

In a certain sense, the Stigmatine is 'constituted' by the Apostolic Mission - the path to holiness traced by Fr. Bertoni is union with the Trinity in trying to follow Christ as closely as possible, in so far as He is 'sent' by the Father. The 'traditional' treatment, or presentation of the charism of Fr. Bertoni might have emphasized more his 'ascetical' points. There is a real effort in the Second Vatican Council era to understand the charism also from a biblical, 'theological' perspective - there is a 'mysticism of service' evident to the student of Fr. Bertoni's writings. Throughout, much emphasis has been given to the 'discipline', the 'hiddenness' in Fr. Bertoni's spirit - however, there is a wonderful description of his paradoxical charism presented on the first centenary of the

foundation of the Congregation, by the late Fr. John Baptist Tomasi, the Superior General in 1916:

“...Our first Confreres were able to bring together these values:

1. A real effort to live modestly, and yet enjoyed a wide reputation for their witness to holiness;
2. Real penance, coupled with genuine joy;
3. A deep sense of poverty, yet maintaining the upkeep of their properties;
4. A disciplined life, yet most apostolic;
5. Real obedience, and at the same time, a wide multiplicity of activity;
6. Continual up-dating, along with deep piety...” [10].

Fr. Bertoni’s spirituality was not constituted by his hiddenness, but only at times, manifested by it. In striving to fathom the very heart, or the central core of his spirit, most would agree that his spirituality centers on Abandonment to God and Availability to the Church. This is modeled on, and flows from Christ’s own obedience, love for His heavenly Father.

‘Abandonment’ has been understood in a variety of ways by theologians: for some, ‘abandonment’ is that state that flows from the heroic fulfillment of all three of the theological virtues. This might be the position of St. Francis de Sales, with his special emphasis on the Treatise of Divine Love. Others might have understood ‘Holy Abandonment’ as heroic faith. It seems that St. Gaspar Bertoni lived abandonment as heroic hope. the center of his whole restlessness, as well as his interior peace, was his quiet confidence: his absolute trust in Divine Providence [11].

How Fr. Bertoni came to ‘abandonment’ seems to have been a combination of various elements in his life:

- on the ‘natural’ level: it seems to have happened to him in the events of life: deaths of loved ones; family troubles, in the division of his father from his mother; physical illness over a long period of time; failure in some apostolates; the Congregation that did not develop in his life time.
- on the level of the spiritual direction received: first from Fr. Louis Fortis, the future ‘Prepositus General’ of the Jesuits - and also Fr. Nicholas Galvani, his spiritual father during his seminary and early priestly years. He is remembered by Stigmatines in the Necrologies for January 6th, as a ‘Benefactor’ to the

community. It was he who made the gift of the house and Church of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi in Verona to Fr. Bertoni.

- his studies: deep appreciation for St.. Thomas Aquinas, St. Alphonsus Liguori and St. Ignatius of Loyola.
- supernaturally, on the level of grace: his avowed 'Christocentrism', the crucified and risen Christ - Christ as spouse of the soul and of the Church.

Fr. Bertoni was much convinced that all of created being is simply a gift of the Creator. There is nothing that creatures could ever have done in order to be brought into this world - 'nothingness' has no reason of itself for being - has done nothing of itself to 'merit' existence. [12].

Life itself is sheer 'gift'. If existence is indeed a gift, there must be a Giver. Since life, existence, are so fragile - they must be sustained, kept in being. This on-going creation defies any thought that God is on a 'sabbatical.' The Christian God is not a 'lazy', non-caring, 'sleeping' giant - but is actively engaged in each day's events:

*"... can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair of your head is counted. So, there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows... [cf. Mt 10:29,f.].*

*"...that is why I am telling you not to worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it. For life means more than food, and the body more than clothing.*

*Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap; they have no storehouses and no barns; yet, God feeds them. And how much more are you worth than the birds!*

*Can any of you, for all his worrying, add a single cubit to his span of life?*

*If the smallest things, therefore, are outside your control, why worry about the rest?*

*Think of the flowers; they never have to spin, or weave; yet, I assure you, not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these. Now, if that is how God clothes the grass in the field which is there today and gone tomorrow, how much more will he look after you, you men of little faith! But, you must not set your hearts on things to eat, and things to drink; nor must you worry...*

*Your Father well knows your needs... set your hearts on His kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well..*

*There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom...' [cf. Lk 12:22-32].*

Fr. Bertoni's insistence on Poverty [13] seems much more related to this more comprehensive ideal than to discipline. Christian poverty offers a fertile soul for hope and trust. There is an inverse relation between possessions and hope: the less one has, the more one may hope to be.

Fr. Bertoni's idea was that it not simply that creatures received a gift long before, at the moment of their coming into existence - rather, this gift is renewed daily, always, by on-going creation. Conservation is a kind of continuing creation. At this moment, God preserves life, this day is a new gift: this is repeated in all days, at all hours, in each instant. What is so often taken for granted: time, gifts, joys - all are donated.

The Scriptures present the mystery of Creation in a variety of ways:

**a. The Divine Breath:**

*"... God fashioned man from the dust of the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living soul..." [cf. Gn 2;7].*

*"... His breath made the heavens luminous..." [cf. Jb 26:13]*

**b. His Fingers:**

*...I look up at the heavens, made by your fingers, at the moon and the stars  
You set in place - ah, what is man that You should spare a thought for him, the  
son of man, that you should care for him? [cf. Ps 8:3].*

**c. His Hands:**

*"... I it was who spread out the heavens with my hands, and now give  
orders to their whole array... [cf. Is 45:12]*

*"... My hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread  
out the heavens... [cf. Is 48:13]*

**d. His arms:**

*"... Yours was the arm and Yours the prowess... You control the pride of the  
ocean... the heavens are yours... [cf. Ps 89:13,f.]*

*"... Awake, awake! Clothe yourself in strength, Arm of Yahweh...! [Is  
51:9].*

**e. He spread out the skies like a Tent:**

*"... Thus says God ... He who created the heavens and spread them out...  
[cf. Is 42:5; Jb 9:8; Ps 24:1, ff.]*

The Scriptures themselves present a great sense of hopeful trust in the Creator:

*“... As tenderly as a father treats his children, so Yahweh treats those who fear Him; He knows what we are made of, He remembers that we are dust. A man last no longer than grass, no longer than a wild flower he lives, one gust of wind and he is gone, never to be seen there again; yet his love for those who fear Him lasts from all eternity and forever...”* [cf. Ps 103:15,f.].

*“... Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions, my eyes do not look too high. ... Enough for me is to keep my soul tranquil and quiet, like a child in its mother’s arms, as content as a child that has been weaned...”* [cf. Ps 131].

The gift of being, existence, life - are but a first step in the Divine Plan. All activity in some ways, flows from the central Source of all life, and is meant to return there. There is great goodness in this cycle, or process - and an enormous possibility to grow spiritually and also culturally, or intellectually. Fr. Bertoni has made special note of this in his ‘Law of Progress’ as noted in his Original Constitutions:

#### **Part IV: Concerning Progress**

##### **Chapter I: One’s Own Perfection [14].**

##### **Chapter 2: Concerning Perfection in the Ecclesiastical Disciplines [15].**

Fr. Bertoni’s underlying ideal is very close to that of St. Paul in his speech before the Council of the Areopagus:

*“... in fact, God is not far from any one of us, since it is in him that we live and move and exist, as indeed some of your own writers have said...”* [cf. Ac 17:28].

The next step in living out this sublime hope is the enormous respect for grace in the heart of Fr. Bertoni. In a key Constitution 185 [16], Fr. Bertoni speaks of the ‘special grace of [the Stigmatine] vocation that is more powerful than all dangers and difficulties...” [17].

While simple creation is a tremendous gift, that of redemption has added considerably to that:

*“... You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for ...* [cf. I Co 6:20].

*“...You have all been bought and paid for ...* [cf. I Co 7:23]

*"... remember the ransom that was paid to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot, or stain, namely Christ - Who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of all ages, for your sake..." [cf. 1 P 1:18].*

This gift of grace strengthens the bond and the relationship between humanity and God. The dignity of creation depends on the level of participation in the godly, in the divinity. The gift of Grace/Vocation is described in Peter's Second Letter:

*"...In making these gifts, He has given us the guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come: through them you will be able to share the divine nature..." [cf. 2 P 1:4].*

The challenge is to become a New Creation:

*"... Adam prefigured the one to come ... [cf. Rm 5:12, ff.]*

*"...as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, so we, too, might live a new life..." [cf. Rm 6:3-11].*

*"... the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth... [Those who love him] they are the ones he called long ago and intended to become true images of His son... [cf. Rm 8:23,29].*

*"...as death came through one man, in the same way, the resurrection of the dead has come through one man... we will be modeled on the heavenly man ... {cf. 1 Co 15:20-28, 35-49].*

*"... we are turned into the image we reflect... [cf. 2 Co 3:18].*

*... And for anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation ... [cf. 2 Co 5:17].*

In a homily welcoming in the new Year of 1803, Fr. Bertoni seems to have referred to some of the aspects of this 'New Creation':

*... 'Create in us a new heart'! [cf. Ps 51:19]... Who else can produce out of nothing, or call someone to new life - other than God alone...? [18]*

In his homily for the Sunday 'in Albis', April 5, 1807, Fr. Bertoni developed beautifully a kind of New Creation brought through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. These are Fr. Bertoni's comments:



“... If we are planted, in-grafted into the similitude of Jesus’ death [cf. Rm 6:3], we will also be in His resurrection..... Just as the body of Christ, buried in the ground, had the salvation of the world as its fruit, so we, too, through our own repentance may be buried in penance to bear fruit in justice... Our lives are now hidden with that of Christ [cf. Col 3:3]. This blessed fruit has already been produced - it must now be allowed to come to maturity ... if you wish to see me, said the holy Eleazar, look for me in the wound in the side of Christ...!’ [19].

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It is in this context of Creation/Grace that Fr. Bertoni understands vocation. Believers do accept the nothingness from which everyone is called forth by a loving Creator - and an extraordinary goodness is divinely breathed into every human being. In his Hymn to Wisdom, Paul may allude to this:

*“...take yourselves for instance, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word - how many were influential people, or came from noble families?*

*No, it was to shame the wise that God called what is foolish by human reckoning and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning... those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen... the only knowledge that I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about Him as the crucified Christ... [cf. I Co 1:26, ff.].*

Fr. Bertoni makes note of this ideal in his original Constitutions:

“...Since the Apostle says: ‘For I am determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified’ [cf. I Co 2:2] - and since Christ said of Himself: ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End’ [cf. Apoc 1:8]...” [20].

## SUMMARY

Fr. Bertoni’s charism flows out from the Most Blessed Trinity: beginning with the traditional teachings regarding the Indwelling of the Most Blessed Trinity and the Eucharist, Fr. Bertoni discerns the hand of the Trinity in everything.

His heroic hope is expressed as a holy abandonment [21]. His holy abandonment is presented as a superior form of confidence and hope in God [22].

A careful analysis of the Lord’s Prayer would indicate that the intimate relationship with the Father will culminate in the ‘end-time.’ To share in Divine Filiation,

this is the ‘special grace of our vocation’, one that is superior to all difficulties, and dangers - this is ‘costly discipleship.’ Christ is identified with the poor, the struggling. Through His own Filiation, Christ with his Sacred Stigmata is inviting all to the eternal nuptials. The Immolated Lamb, with the marks of His immolation still evident on his Body, invites all to come to the nuptials with the Church. It is on this note that all of Scripture draws toward its end:

*“... The Spirit and the Bride say, come. Let everyone who listens, answer: COME! [cf. Rv 22:17].*

The theological virtues are the sublime ‘experience’ of God through the Holy Spirit to which all are being challenged by Grace. It is the Spirit of God sent into the human heart that enables all to cry out ABBA! [cf. Ga 4:6].



## B. St. GASPAR BERTONI’S DEVOTION TO THE TRINITY and THE STIGMATINE LIFE

### Introduction:

In the Founder’s Original Constitutions, there is much insistence on Mission[s], the ‘other’ person, and on community. All of these seem to flow from Fr. Bertoni’s basic Trinitarian orientation.

Practically every single number of the Original Constitutions from Part X on of the Stigmatine Founder [23] are taken almost *verbatim* from the Commentary of Fr. Francis Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu* .[24].

Turning to Part X of St. Gaspar Bertoni’s Constitutions, this constitutes the largest single concern of the Constitutions: The Union among the Members [25] - and Part XI, on the Familiar and Friendly Conversation within the community and in its apostolic mission to others [26].

Under Section I of Part X of his Original Constitutions [27], Fr. Bertoni treats explicitly of the Trinitarian dimension of charity. In speaking the interior inclination or dispositions of one's soul for charity, the Stigmatine Founder follows Suarez almost word for word:

CF # 221: "This depends especially on our interior spiritual progress, for as true charity, that is, **the love of God and Christ increases**, so also the union among the confreres is increased and perfected in so far as each one unites himself to **God and to our Savior**." [28].

CF # 222: "Because this bond of unity is especially strengthened by prayer and meditation, according to that saying: 'In my meditation a fire shall burn', therefore, this is undoubtedly the surer and sounder way of acquiring this unity." [29].

CF # 223: "Moreover, there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive his special endowment of virtues and gifts of the **Holy Spirit**, and to contemplate him as the image of **God** painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive within themselves to grow in these virtues and gifts and to consider them often in others, and if they regard others as superior to them in soul, rejoice over their spiritual gifts, and give thanks to **God**, mutual charity shall flourish among them in a wondrous manner." [30]

The clear designation of the Persons of the Trinity seems evident: "God", "Christ - Savior" - and the "Holy Spirit". There may also be a hint of St. Paul's 'fraternal humility', "*always consider the other person to be better than yourself*" [cf. Ph 2:3]. There are also many other lessons from these Constitutions, along with their evident Trinitarian imprint:

- there is present here Fr. Bertoni's great dream of continuing progress and development. This is the subject matter of his entire Part IV of his Original Constitutions [31]: and includes both the spiritual growth of each member, as well as the intellectual [or, technical] development of all. This principle of vitality is evident in Fr. Bertoni's own charism that grew and intensified all through his life. In the Latin texts for these Constitutions there may be noted a number of key words that communicate this sense of vibrant commitment:

- *spirituali profectu* ;
- *incrementum* ;
- *augetur et perficitur* ;

- *maxime crescit* ;
- *studeant in his virtutibus et donis crescere* ;
- *mutua inter eos caritas crescet* .

The spirit of Fr.. Bertoni's dynamism is clear in this insistence in such a brief space - however, familial/fraternal charity is the core of all he was about.

- charity is a single virtue, with a variety of dimensions: contemplative, apostolic, 'ad intra... ad extra':
- "... you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins... Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love... [cf. Col 3:12, ff].
- charity: love for God and for others also depends on the Eucharist, personal prayer. Community just does not happen - it is the basic apostolate, due to the Founder's insistence on other Stigmatines as the first Apostolic Mission, in a Constitution derived *verbatim* from Suarez:

CF # 262: "Since the end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls, consequently, it assumes ministries appropriate to this end: therefore, religious should primarily and zealously work for the spiritual benefit of their own Confreres before that of non-members, because charity is very well ordered. As it, therefore, inclines one to seek his own spiritual salvation before that of others, it first intends and seeks the spiritual benefit of the entire body of the Congregation, before that of those outside the Congregation." [32]

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**[I] MISSION[S] - SERVICE - 'OBSEQUIUM' -MINISTRY/MINISTRIES**: these are all key words in Fr. Bertoni's vocabulary - and, in some way, they are synonymous. The sheer repetition of them would show this to be true. An associated idea is 'the greater glory of God', some form of which is founded in many of the Original Constitutions [33]. It can indeed be said that Fr. Bertoni found in the Trinity his *ALPHA* and *OMEGA* - he had a most sublime and inspiring sense of the Glory of God. Fr. Bertoni saw his community as 'Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops'. This *obsequium* is service in the Reign of God.

Fr. Bertoni's motivation was that of bringing an ever more valuable service to the Church - his ideal was that his followers would offer an ever more competent

*obsequium Episcoporum* . As Christ was sent by his Father, so the Son then sends the Apostles in the confirming vision of the Sacred Stigmata that first Easter night [cf. Jn 20:20, ff.]. The Spirit is sent by the Father and/through the Son, to remind the Apostles of all that Jesus had taught them [cf. Jn 16:13,f.]. This 'ICON' is the lowly and obedient Christ, marked with His Five Wounds, totally dedicated to the Plan of the Father in the Holy Spirit.

This filial love for the Trinity, and this missionary love for the Church, is meant to increase as long as life lasts - the Stigmatine is called to be 'a contemplative at home, and a missionary outside'. These roles might also be understood as each Stigmatine being a contemplative missionary at home, and a missionary contemplative outside, 'for the greater glory of God.' The prayer of the Stigmatine is missionary - the contemplation of the mystery of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have made Fr. Bertoni an 'Apostolic Missionary'. While prayer energizes the Mission, the Mission is meant to empower the prayer of the Apostle. The Christian vocation is an invitation to share in the very Mission of the One sent by the Father in the Holy Spirit. In Fr. Bertoni, the Trinitarian mysticism was not divorced from his asceticism: the vows and common life are missionary in scope.

**1. MISSION[S]/MISSIONARY:** appear in a number of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions [34]. In fact, the booklet opens with these words, so well known within the Stigmatine Community:

CF # 1: "End: 'Apostolic Missionaries' at the service of Bishops." [35].

CF # 2: "Method: 'under the direction and dependence of the Ordinaries of those places in which missions are given. They shall wholeheartedly obey these Ordinaries in everything which pertains to the exercise of the Apostolic Ministry; first, obtaining their consent, with the necessary faculties; and always observing their wishes as to the place and time of exercising this ministry.' [Ex Decret. S. Congr. Prop. , Dec. 20, 1817]. [36].

Fr. Stofella offers an explanation in his Note here. This is the end toward which the Congregation tends, namely, the formation of individuals who by their zeal and apostolic traits would merit the title 'apostolic missionary.'

The entire subsequent structure of the Constitutions, like those of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the great model for Fr. Bertoni, then develops along the ideals of this Apostolic Mission [38]. Fr. Bertoni continues his idea along these lines:

CF # 7: "There shall be a distinction of classes, and promotion to a class shall be determined according to the qualities of the subjects.

“Those who excel in learning and piety shall be promoted to the perfection of the priestly ministry, undertaking the Apostolic Mission.

“Others, however, who have sufficient strength and talents, both physical and spiritual, shall be promoted to the perfect assistance, as helpers of the Missionaries” [39].

Even though all ‘classes’ of membership have been abolished by Vatican II [40] - there is the spirit of the Founder which remains: there is to be a gradual assumption of ever more important duties [*graviora ministeria*] as one progresses spiritually and in the intellectual life. The core of the charism remains: ‘Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance, service, of Bishops.’

In the gradual promotion of the members according to Fr. Bertoni’s Constitutions [cf. Part V], a series of prescriptions has been set down:

CF # 74: “At times, the candidates shall accompany the Missionaries as aides; and, at times, they shall also hear the confessions of women.” [41].

CF # 75: “Then they shall also hear the confessions of women regularly, and be assigned to serving in Missions” [42].

CF # 76: “Finally, they shall be entrusted with the direction of the Missions, and make use of all means needful for the salvation of souls” [43].

In Part IX, “On the Grade of the ‘Professed’”, there is a description of the work of the ‘Professed’ members, the ‘Apostolic Missionaries.’ The Means by which the Institute promotes the Salvation of Others’ includes the following:

CF # 162: “The administration of the sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of preaching and of confessions.” [44].

This Constitution, including the Ignatian ideal of offering Mass for the success of the Apostolic Mission, may be found in Book I of Suarez. It comes from his discussion regarding the institution of the Society of Jesus, in general - and in particular, regarding those means by which the Company of Jesus achieves its purpose [45].

Throughout, there is much emphasis on the Ministry of the word of God - assisting the priestly and the consecrated] life, and the youth. ‘Mission’ appears in both the singular and the plural form [46].

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## 2. SERVICE:

It has been said that when St. Ignatius wrote his original rule in his native language, he verbalized his own 'Mysticism of Service' by repeating the same Spanish verb *servir*, over and over again. In the Latin translation, his secretary [Fr. Polanco] varied the Founder's rendition with three Latin verbs and substantives:

- *servire/servitium*;
- *auxiliari/auxilium*;
- *obsequi/obsequium*.

Fr. Bertoni speaks of 'service' on a number of occasions in his Original Constitutions, and often as a synonym of these other words [47]. The verb appears in his third Constitution:

CF # 3: "To serve God and the Church wholly gratuitously" [48].

In developing the requirements for admission, Fr. Bertoni emphasizes much this willingness and ability 'to serve':

CF # 26: "Those who are accepted to do the work of the priestly ministry must have fitness of memory; furthermore, they must be desirous of virtue and spiritual perfection, of peaceful character, active and constant in whatever they undertake for the service of God; they must have zeal for the salvation of souls, and, moreover, a great love for this Congregation...." [49].

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## 3. OBSEQUIUM

In St. Ignatius' Constitutions there is abundant use of this synonym for 'service.' It also is used in the Founder's terms for presenting the 'end' of the Community. It is found very often in his writings, and relatively frequently in his Constitutions [50] - from the opening Constitution that defines Stigmatines as: *Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium [seu auxilium] Episcoporum*. It is a Eucharistic term that would offer some insight into the relationship of loving obedience of Jesus Christ, of His oblation toward His Father. The Latin Vulgate uses it in a key text of St. Paul where he asks the Romans to make of their bodies a living oblation [*obsequium*] to the mercy of God [cf. Rm 12:1,f.].

Fr. Bertoni quotes it *verbatim* from Suarez when he describes the Distribution of Studies for the candidates for membership:

CF # 57: “Therefore, there shall be individuals who specialize in one or another of these branches of knowledge for a longer time and with greater diligence; that is of the utmost importance for the various services [*ad varia ecclesiae obsequia*] we must render to the Church according to the diversity of time and circumstances.” [51].

This Constitution # 57 speaks of the characteristic ‘variety’ of ‘obsequia’ always to be determined by the changing times and needs of the Church. When speaking of promoting studies within the Congregation, the Founder uses the rule of prudence, so that studies may go on for a longer time:

CF # 62: “It shall be incumbent on the Superior to see that the students do not apply themselves to study at times that are harmful to physical health; that they get enough sleep; that they observe due moderation in their studies in order that they may devote themselves for a longer time to mastering the arts and sciences on behalf of the Church’. [*in Ecclesiae obsequium* ]” [52].

Once again, this is a word-for-word use of a text in Suarez - who, in turn, has taken it from the Constitutions of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Part IV, c. 4, § 1 - with a notable exception: the text from St. Ignatius concludes *ad Dei gloriam* [53], whereas Fr. Bertoni has: *in Ecclesiae obsequium* .

The Divine Son, Who has come ‘to serve’ and not to be served - Whose food it is to do the Father’s Will [cf. Jn 4:34] - remains the Model, the Source, the Goal of the Apostolic Mission, that service rendered to God through the Church. This ‘oblation’ can be described as *obsequium* .

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**4. MINISTRY/MINISTRIES:** in both the singular and plural, this word also offers an extraordinary insight into Fr. Bertoni’s charism [54]. A rapid survey of the Stigmatine Founder’s Constitutions would show that both aspects manifest a plurality of proper apostolates:

**a. In the Singular:**

CF # 7: “...Those who excel in learning and piety shall be promoted to the perfection of the priestly ministry, undertaking the Apostolic Mission...” [55].



CF # 48: “... absolutely shunning idleness, by assiduous involvement in those things that pertain to the ecclesiastical ministry, to the observance of discipline and to the obedience due to Superiors...” [56]

CF # 62: “...that they observe due moderation in their studies in order that they may devote themselves for a longer time in mastering the arts and sciences for the service of the Church...” [57].

CF # 125: “But whenever there is a question of studies which are deemed necessary or helpful, overcoming all fatigue, negligence, or tediousness, they shall apply themselves to them eagerly and wholeheartedly, striving to master them for the glory of God and greater service to the Church.”[58]

CF # 163: “The Ministry of the Word of God under every aspect...” - [this section is drawn from Suarez].

CF # 195: “Since the chief part of charity is to anticipate the mutual rendering of service, honor and benefit...” [60].

CF # 255: “Besides, the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is greatly realized by conversing...” - [this entire huge, final section of the Founder’s Constitutions is taken almost word for word from Suarez] [61].

**b. In the Plural:**

CF # 26: “Those who are accepted to do the work of the spiritual ministries must have fitness of mind...”[62].

CF # 57: “Therefore, there shall be individuals who specialize in one or another of these branches of knowledge for a longer time and with greater diligence; that is of the utmost importance for the various services we must render to its Church according to the diversity of times and circumstances.” - [this is taken *verbatim* from Suarez] [63].

CF # 158: “Only priests are to be admitted to the ‘Profession’, for the principal government of the Congregation pertains to the ‘Graduate Fathers’. To them also belong the more important ministries, and these require the priestly dignity.” [64]

CF # 162: “The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of the Missions, of the preaching, and of confessions.” - [this section is also taken from Suarez] [65].

CF # 182: “Their duty is to teach not only by preaching, by giving the Spiritual Exercises and by lecturing on the truths which are useful and necessary to know for the attainment of eternal life, but also by explaining the rudiments of faith and morals,

especially to the uneducated and to children, in public and private catechetical instructions and in the oratories. This also is highly beneficial to the Church, and is to be highly recommended to them.” [66].

CF # 185: “...the end of our Congregation, which is to serve the Church by means of the various and proper ministries of its vocation under the direction of the Bishops... with this program we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, or to go to this or to that place, or to perform this or that action of our own will: but to follow the direction of the orthodox Bishop placed by the Holy Spirit over the Church to God...” - [this, too, is taken, for the most part, *verbatim* from Suarez] [67].

CF # 262: “Since the end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls, consequently it assumes ministries appropriate to this end: therefore, religious should primarily and zealously work for the spiritual benefit of their own confreres before that of non members, because charity is very well ordered...” - [this is taken from Suarez] [68].

...

## [II] THE PERSON:

Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions manifest a sublime concept of fraternal caring and sharing. With the broad diversity of ecclesial service and specialization, the differences in intellectual preparation and apostolic work - were not meant in the least to hinder harmony within the community, or lessen the commitment to the Apostolic Mission. As was noted above, this is particularly evident in Part X of the Original Constitutions, the “Interior Disposition of the Soul”, with a distinctly Trinitarian imprint: as the love of God and Christ increases through the Holy Spirit, through participation in the Eucharist, contemplating the Word of God - in all this, each confrere is challenged to recognize better the developing likeness of God in one’s fellow Stigmatine, noticing the gifts and virtues of the others, depicted within them by the Holy Spirit [69].

This idea of intense fraternal love is present in two very special categories of persons that Fr. Bertoni has more amply described in his Rule: Guests and the Sick:

[a] GUESTS: ‘Hospitality’ [70] is a theme that comes to the Stigmatine Rule, from the monastic tradition - through Francis Suarez’ commentary *De Religione Societatis Iesu*.

It has ancient biblical roots, and is most highly recommended as a basic Christian value. Fr. Bertoni saw unity as all the more necessary, especially for a community with such a varied apostolic mission.

Fr. Bertoni dedicates Chapter VI, under the 'Positive Means' of Part X, the Union among the Members, to the matter of Hospitality toward Confreres [71]. These Constitutions can be found practically *verbatim* in Suarez [72]. While there was a distinction in membership: with the 'Professed', those elevated to the 'Grade' of Apostolic Missionary - and the 'Spiritual Coadjutors, Priests with simple vows - and the Brothers. In the matter of hospitality, this would all be done away with:

CF # 245: "This is to be extended to all the confreres without any distinction of family, or country, without respect of persons or limitation whatsoever. Great charity is to be shown towards all, whether they are professed members or novices, well or sick, known or unknown." [73].

This seems almost "Benedictine" in its orientation - however, it is found in Suarez' Tract from the Book where he treats of the positive spiritual means leading to the perfection of the members in their treatment of their fellow human beings. Fr. Bertoni copied this Constitution word for word from Suarez [74].

The level of hospitality must be that of truly distinguished families toward their dear friends or relatives:

CF # 246: "Let this charity first of all be shown by receiving them with those external manifestations of special friendship which are usually employed, according to the custom of the place, by distinguished persons towards their friends, or even towards their own kindred" [75]

Once again, this is a *verbatim* citation from Suarez, where he treats of the hospitality that is to be extended [76]. This is followed by what became the old Aspirants' Rule of the Stigmatines, known as "# 122, the rule of touch"!

Throughout this entire section of both the Commentary of Suarez, and the relatively lengthy texts that Fr. Bertoni copied very carefully there is much emphasis on the harmony of goals, uniformity of ideals. At the same time, there is indicated a genuine appreciation for individual personalities. In discussing the matter of poverty in receiving guests - on the one hand, nothing should be spared. Yet, from a very practical bent of mind, much consideration has to be given for the differing needs of guests. In this, Fr.. Bertoni quotes St. Basil's Longer Rule:

CF # 249: “[St. Basil] finally concludes: ‘Sufficiency varies, however, according to the physical condition and present needs. One, because of his work, requires more substantial food and a larger amount. Another needs a lighter and more digestible diet. The foods that are served should be offered to all, and be such that they might be nourishing and had at a good price. At table, cleanliness should be observed, even a certain elegance - but, all being such that it does not exceed the limits of our means’” [77].

This citation from St. Basil found in Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions came to him directly from Suarez [78].

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[b] THE SICK:

Fr. Bertoni dedicates Chapter V of Part X to the ill and the infirm, and their special care. In this Chapter, the authorities who are brought to the fore are the Founders of ancient monasticism and forms of common consecrated life, such as St. Basil, in both his shorter and longer Rules - St. Benedict, Pachomius, Lupus and Rule for Monks - as well as St. Augustine, St. Jerome and also St. Bonaventure. There are nine Constitutions here [79]. This is the longest single Chapter of Part X, and once more - practically every number can be found in Suarez, word for word, with a few exceptions.

The central rule of this Chapter, of course, is that the infirm are to be thought of as *the Lord’s own brothers*, and that all are to serve them as Christ Himself would be served [80]. One of the more unusual numbers is this following:

CF # 240: “Lupus, in his Rule for Monks, says: ‘If someone is taken sick, let him be transferred to a larger place, and so comforted by the assistance of the senior brethren, that he feel no desire for the comforts of the city, nor for maternal affection.’” [81].

In Suarez’ commentary he gives as the source of this principle a work of St. John Chrysostom, quoted by Lupus, in defense of the monastic life [82]

...

[III] COMMUNITY:

This would merit an entire study of itself. Fr. Bertoni dedicates Chapter III of Part X to bringing about uniformity in every day living [83]. Perhaps the original Rule of St. Ignatius did not stress community as much as the commentary of Fr. Suarez has- but, it is this latter especially that Fr. Bertoni has followed throughout this entire Part. For the

Stigmatine Founder, community remained a central concern. The vows are meant to assist an apostolic missionary charity - not only in uniting one to God, but also to bringing about a certain fairness in externals.

**[a] COMMON LIFE:** Likeness, even externals can help to bring about this elusive 'union' - the example of the early Church described with theological idealism as having 'one heart and soul', 'summaries' that deeply impressed Fr. Bertoni [84]. This 'idealized' theology of Acts has served through the centuries as the inspiration the ideal for community life. The Founder offers the suggestion to honor God in the other:

CF # 228: "Wherefore St. Augustine says: 'Let all help with one heart and soul' [cf. Rule c. 2] - as if he meant to say: to be of one heart in helping, it is necessary to be of one soul. He adds: 'Let each honor God in the other, for you have been made His temple' - because God alone is the One who makes brethren to live together in unity' [cf. Ps 132, Vulgate]. And thus, this uniformity aids greatly in making God known in all, and as a consequence, uniting all in God" [85].

This, too, is a quotation from Book VII of the commentary of Suarez, chapter 8, regarding special elements leading to uniformity [86]. Modern biblical commentaries speak of this Psalm quoted here as one of the 'Psalms of Ascents', regarding perhaps the brotherly relationships meant to bind priests and Levites in the Temple of the Holy City.

**[b] RECREATION:** The Stigmatine Founder gives surprising emphasis to this when one thinks of his own dedication to the Apostolic Mission - and his enthusiastic ideal for on-going formation, intellectual and spiritual betterment. He dedicates Chapter 7 to this of Part X, a full seven, and rather lengthy Constitutions [87]. It is indeed remarkable as we learn from his biography and Original Constitutions of his plan of total dedication to the Church. His plan calls for an intense spiritual life, life-long formation, or up-dating.

While his times did not know of "burn-out", this amount of recreation time that he required is important to consider. He tells us that while it is for health, the underlying reason may very well be Aristotle's idea for friendships to grow - there has to be communication. The ancient monks saw recreation as beneficial for both body and soul. The Stigmatine Founder sees even in recreation a way of achieving the purpose for the foundation of the Congregation: conversion that comes also through conversation:

CF # 255: "Moreover, since the principal end of our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is to be realized for the most part by conversing with our fellow man,

speaking to them of divine things, kindly and prudently. For this they derive much benefit from the conversations they hold among themselves, which quite often should be about the things of God. Thus, let them in practice learn to keep silence during the times prescribed, to speak prudently and fruitfully, for this is the best kind of silence, as St. Ambrose indicated; ‘Pythagoras,’ he says, ‘imposed silence on his disciples that by keeping silence they would learn to speak. David instead, prefers that we learn to speak by speaking; in fact, how can we learn without practice? or make progress without exercise?’ He concludes: ‘Thus let him who wants to acquire a manner of speaking which is prudent and circumspect not repudiate the natural means, and at the same time, let him make use of those means for properly safeguarding the tongue.’ [88].

This rather lengthy constitution is taken from this same Chapter VIII of the Commentary of Suarez [89].

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[c] **‘APOSTOLATE OF THE PEN’:** a wonderful font for a deeper appreciation of the spirit and mind of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni are the letters of his that have come down to us. He also has dedicated five Constitutions to the exchange of letters among the confreres [90]. His over-all ideal is the ‘one heart and soul’ of the Acts of the Apostles describing the early Church. Citing St.. Basil, who quotes the ‘example of the Apostles’, Fr. Bertoni was convinced that good news should be shared: *bonum est diffusivum sui*!. The Constitution reads thus:

CF # 259: “St. Basil says: ‘He who through the grace of God has done something good, should also let it be known to others, for the great diffusion of God’s glory’. He cites the examples of the Apostles for this [Rule for Monks, 70]” [91].

Again, Fr. Bertoni has taken this from the Commentary of Suarez, where the Jesuit theologian is responding to objections posited earlier in his text, for the sake of clarifying his position. Suarez places the objection that conversation and communication among confreres take much time - and that further, in much speech, there will always be sin lurking - and there is the constant danger of disagreements cropping up. He responds to these arguments - and in his response he offers the text cited by the Stigmatine Founder for his Original Constitution # 259 [92].

Letter writing remains an excellent means of maintaining contact, and also for encouraging one another in the service of the Lord.

**THE TRINITARIAN IDEAL:** this Part X of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions, that treats of the Union of the Members, is the longest of all, comprising some 80 Constitutions [93]. The concluding Constitution of this Part, once more returns to the intra-Trinitarian life as this is meant to move all believers to that harmony and union that would actually make 'all for one and one for all':

CF # 266 "St. John Chrysostom, elegantly commenting on the words of Chapter 16 of St. John's Gospel, 'that they may be one even as we are', says very well: 'Nothing can be compared to the harmony and mutual union of wills: for by it the individual multiplies himself. If indeed two or ten persons agree among themselves, there is no longer once individual, but each individual has multiplied himself ten times, and in the ten you shall find unity, and the ten in each individual.' Further on he says: 'This is the excellence of charity, and how it brings it about that one can be multiplied and inseparable; that he can be found in many places at the same time; that he can be in Persia and in Rome: what nature cannot do, love can.'" [94].

For Suarez, too, these are the concluding lines of his rich Chapter 8 of Book VIII, much quoted by Fr. Bertoni. [95]

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**[d] FAMILIAR AND FRIENDLY CONVERSATION:** an entire Part XI is dedicated by the Stigmatine Founder to this exercise, so necessary to keep the community together [96]. Once again, the central ideal that is presented is that of Jesus Christ and His Apostles:

CF # 271: "Let each one keep before his eyes the example of Christ our Lord, who though habitually living with men, even eating and drinking with them, nevertheless not only observed perfection, but also adhered to a state of life which was the most perfect." [97].

CF # 272: "Let everyone else be mindful of the example of the Apostles, who in their intimate dealings with men, 'becoming all things to all men that they might save all', nevertheless kept a state of perfection." [98].

CF # 273: "The Council of Mainz, held under Leo III, established: 'That ministers of the altar and monks are to abstain altogether from worldly business', and then added: 'Still a becoming occupation is not to be denied them for providing for their various needs; for we read that the holy Apostles were also engaged in business.'

“Thus from the conduct which the Apostles observed in procuring the salvation of souls, we justly conclude that to converse with our fellow men for this reason, according to the rule of our Institute, is not contrary to the religious state.” [99].

All of these Constitutions - as well as the next few which emphasize the example of the early monastic life - are all taken from the ninth Book of Suarez that deals specifically with the Apostolic Mission, or the “Means, or Ministries which the Society employs for the Salvation of its Neighbors.” Suarez’ text almost covers about one half of a column of his large tome [100].

• • •

#### [IV] THE EARLY CHURCH:

The immediate effect of Jesus’ life in the Trinity was the sharing of it with the Apostles and the early Church. The ‘Apostolic Life’ early on meant that life in union with Christ: revealed in the Scriptures, present in the Eucharist, in community. Fr. Bertoni presents the Acts of the Apostles as the ideal:

CF # 189: “Let everyone keep before his eyes, as a norm of this harmony, what is read in the Acts of the Apostles about the conduct of the first faithful who are the source from which all religious orders have their origin and form: ‘They were of one heart and one soul, and held all things in common and distributed them among all according as anyone had need. They took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favor with all the people. and great grace was in them all.’ [cf. Ac 2:44, ff.]” [101].

This is taken from Suarez, as has been seen [102].

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CF # 226: “The characteristic means, however, is that of poverty, in the highest degree proper to religious by reason of their vow, as is splendidly taught by St.. Basil: ‘In the religious state’, he writes, ‘all things are common - hearts, minds, bodies and everything necessary for subsistence and way of life; God is common to all, the exercises of piety are common, and the labors are common.’ The same thing is said by Cassian, who cites the words of Chapter 4 of the Acts: ‘They had but one heart and one soul’; and he observes that right afterwards is said: ‘And they held everything in common.’ [v. 32, f.]” [103].

As has been noted, this Constitution is taken word for word from Suarez [104].

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CF # 232: “However, this should not prevent the needs of each from being justly attended to, according to the words of the Acts; ‘Distribution was made to each as he had need’ [cf. Ac 2:45;4:35 ]- for this is precisely what charity demands.” [105].

This is from Suarez [106].

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CF # 261: “Hence, also in the Church there was the ancient custom among the faithful of exchanging communicative letters [as they were called]. In this way Catholics maintained contact with each other and gave testimony of their own faith, as St.. Optatus and St. Augustine record.” [107] - which is likewise from Suarez! [108].

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## **SUMMARY**

What seems to come through here is the enormous respect for each person - ‘personality’ reaches its summit in the theology of the Most Blessed Trinity. Much might be obtained by reflecting on ‘relationships’: those within the community, those outside - measured along with our relationship with God. The very challenging ‘abandonment to God, availability to the Church’ present challenges not only as regards the Apostolic Mission, but also regarding the primary apostolate - that of each Stigmatine toward his own confreres.

St. Gaspar Bertoni’s understanding of the Trinity would have been most inspired by St. Thomas Aquinas and also by St. Ignatius of Loyola. In the Thomistic tract, there is much emphasis on relationships, personality and mission. Perhaps the Stigmatine ‘character’ would be intimately bound up with these. It does not seem that the Founder’s grace, charism has died with him - a charism is a gift of one for the entire Church. For his Apostolic Mission, Fr. Bertoni learned much from St. Ignatius and also from Suarez’ Commentary ‘On the Religion of the Society of Jesus’.

Any analysis of the Stigmatine Founder’s spirit will find this recurring dynamic presence of the Trinity: the persons are all equal, distinct, but not divided - each involved in the Father’s Plan of Salvation:

The Father did not spare - but offered up His only Son [cf. Rm 8:32; Jn 3:16].

The Son did not cling to His equality with God - but, emptied Himself, by being 'obedient unto death.' - And the Father raised Him on high, with a name above all names. [cf. Ph 2:5-11].

But when the Spirit of truth comes He will lead you to the complete truth, since He will not be speaking as from Himself, but will say only what He has learnt ... he will glorify Me, since all He tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: all He tells you will be taken from what is mine. [cf. Jn 16:13, ff.].



### **C. Fr. Bertoni's Lived Devotion to the Trinity:**

#### **[I] Unity in Pluralism: 'Various and Proper Ministries'**

##### **1. The Trinity: A Central Mystery for St. Gaspar Bertoni:**

As has been noted above [109], in the later summer of the year 1808, Fr. Bertoni noted in his Spiritual Diary his passing by an image of the Most Holy Trinity. What impressed him was the Father's open arms - which for the Stigmatine Founder was some insight into the mystery of Divine Mercy, and the divine 'prodigality', or the easy communication of His gifts. Just about five weeks later, in the early autumn of that same year [110], Fr. Bertoni ponders the extraordinary divine love within the Trinity, in sending the Son to us.

There seems to be in this a sense of the divine Mission - and the great sharing of all one is and has. Fr. Bertoni's dream was to hand on only what had first been thoroughly contemplated:

CF # 49: "In this clerical Congregation, which aims not only to contemplate on divine things, but also to teach contemplated truths to others, the members shall possess not an ordinary, but a perfect knowledge of all those things which pertain to faith and morals; therefore, it is necessary that the religious clerics of this Institute eagerly strive to acquire such a knowledge perfectly." [111].

This paragraph is taken word for word from Suarez' Commentary, where he speaks of training the Jesuit Scholastics regarding the purpose, or the end of the Society of Jesus, to be achieved by more than ordinary knowledge. In Chapter I of his Book V, Suarez asks whether in the Society of Jesus the religious might be destined to proficiency in studies. In his affirmative response, Suarez quotes St. Thomas Aquinas on teaching only what has been profoundly contemplated. Fr. Bertoni was much impressed with St. Thomas' principle and Suarez' response, so much so that he took it exactly for his Original Constitutions [112].

Clearly, then, the Stigmatine community has a prayer-filled Apostolic Mission as its primary purpose.

The manner of realizing this Apostolic Mission is presented as quite varied:

CF # 155: "It shall be the concern of this Father Master to form the Novices well in the spiritual life; and every week, on stated days, he shall explain to them the whole rule of our Institute, and the means of working profitably for the good of our neighbor." [113].

The Constitution seems to indicate that there is variety, plurality of 'modes' of assisting our neighbor. Fr. Stofella notes that these regulations regarding the 'Third Probation' are taken from Suarez' Commentary [114].

This 'plurality' of the 'more important ministries' is noted in Part IX, by Fr. Bertoni in Part IX, where he treats of the 'Grade of the Professed', which means the 'Apostolic Missionaries' properly so called:

CF # 158: "Only priests are to be admitted to 'Profession': for the principal government of the Congregation pertains to the Graduate Fathers; to them also belong the more important duties of the ministry, and these require the priestly ministry." [115].

As Fr. Stofella noted, this Constitution is taken [*verbatim*] from Suarez [116]. Fr. Stofella also indicates that CF # 185 outlines for us 'the principal task of the Members' [117]:

CF # 185: "... Since the scope of the Congregation is to offer service to the Church by means of the various and proper ministries of her vocation under the direction of the

Bishops, which is at times an arduous and difficult thing... but this is indeed the special grace of our vocation, a grace superior to every danger or difficulty..." [118].

This is taken almost word for word from Suarez [119] where he speaks of the 'content' of the Fourth Vow of the Society of Jesus, presenting its Apostolic Mission.

In the Stigmatine history, Fr. Bertoni sacrificed one of his closest collaborators, Fr. Luigi Bragato, at the request of the German - speaking Bishop Grasser, who requested the saint for a confessor to serve the Italian Empress in the royal court of Vienna in the year 1835. Fr. Tabarelli would be the seminary professor of two future Popes [Pius XII and John XXIII], as well as of many Cardinals and Bishops. Some of his former students reached positions of prominence in the Dioceses of the United States of America - from whom would eventually come invitations for the Stigmatines to come to the new world. Examples of 'the more important ministries' along with these would be: parish missions; theological conferences with priests, seminary teaching; retreats and spiritual direction for people from all works of life; experts in catechetical instructions; the founding of oratories and the direction of youth groups. These are some of the examples of the 'varied and proper ministries' of the Congregation in its history.

Yet, among the Stigmatine Founder's contemporaries were those who found it very difficult to preach or to teach, to give learned conferences. Men such as Fr. Michaelangelo Gramego and Fr. Modesto Cainer had talents that were used in other areas of the Apostolic Mission. In his great compassion, Fr. Bertoni never forced any ministry on anyone - with its broad scope, there was room for all.

In the varied and proper ministries offered by the original Constitutions, it is the bond of fraternal, familial charity that kept the men together. The ideal was that they could enrich one another by community living and recreation together. The longest part of the original Constitutions, covering about 80 Constitutions, is Part X, regarding the Unity of the Congregation [120]. This, then, is immediately followed by about another 30 Constitutions in Part XI, dedicated to 'Familiar and Friendly Conversation' [121].

In the Stigmatine Founder's own life, the Mystery of the Most Blessed Trinity is tantamount. This reality has been made known, brought to us through Jesus Christ. Hence, Fr. Bertoni's charism is 'Christological'. Christ has been sent as the Father's Apostles, Missionary. The Trinity, then, is the fountal mystery - the spring-board also, for his Eucharistic reflections. The love for the Trinity, expressed through the Eucharist, is

evident in the practice of offering the Eucharist for the discernment of, and for assistance and success in the Apostolic Mission:

CF # 162: “The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of the Missions and of the preaching and of confessions.” [122].

This text seems based on Suarez’ Commentary, Book I where he, in an introductory manner, takes up the matter of the means the Society of Jesus uses to achieve the salvation of its neighbors. Suarez notes that sacrifices are offered for the Church, to assist in the conversion of infidels and the correction of heretics [123].

## **[2] THE HABIT OF THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY: IN IMITATION OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES:**

Perhaps somewhere within this concept of a very broad Apostolic Mission, and the sense of ‘abandonment’ to the incarnation of the Will of God through the Bishops’ needs - why it is that there is no specific ‘habit’ of the Apostolic Missionary. In the Original Constitutions, it is simply stated:

CF # 6: “Perfection of Self, Perfection in Ecclesiastical Sciences... The rule of life regarding diet, apparel and lodging shall conform to the standards set by the more exemplary clergymen among whom they live; and shall be of edification to the faithful for its Christian parsimony and religious poverty.” [124]

This is further specified:

CF # 137: “One’s attire should be plain and appropriate at the same time bespeaking poverty and fitness for the various ministries and persons with which we deal; and it should be clean and not shabby.” [125].

Suarez speaks of the reason why St. Ignatius of Loyola did not legislate a specific habit for the Jesuits. Suarez notes that one reason is ‘apostolic’. Among the ‘privative’ means the Society uses in living its program is that the Society will not be bound by the choir, in order to be open for its various missions; they will not take on the perpetual care of nuns. A third such means is that the Society does not have a specific habit - but simply assumes the garb of those clerics who live their lives in the proper manner. The Jesuits are asked to follow the customs of the clergy and the area where they are assigned, so that they might have easier access to all their fellow human beings, whether unbelievers, or the faithful [126].

There is a rather extended commentary by Suarez regarding [lack of] the Jesuit habit, that also appears in William Humphrey's English translation [127]. Among the 'privative' means the Society uses are the following: the Society is not bound to choir; it does not accept the perpetual care of nuns - nor does it have its own specific habit.

"The Society is truly and properly called and is a religious body of clerics and priests. it is so called and is declared to be so by the Council of Trent, and by many Bulls of the Pontiffs. It is so called not only by reason of its habit, but by reason of its own institute and functions; for, of its primary end, it demands actions which are proper to clerics, such as the purification, enlightenment [intellectual] and perfection [spiritual] of the faithful. It is to be distinguished, therefore, from those bodies which are called Orders of Clerics merely because they have retained the clerical habit, although of their special aim they have no function for which clerical order is in itself necessary. The Society is not called a body of clerics because it wears the habit of clerics, but it wears that habit because it is in itself a most special manner a religious body of clerics, and primarily aims at the perfecting of its members in the clerical state, and in order that they may fulfill their clerical functions more becomingly, more holily and with greater fruit.

"Although some bodies of regular Clerics have a special habit, such as the Canons Regular, yet for prudent reasons, having regard to the character of the times and the principal end of the Society, St. Ignatius willed that the Society should have no special religious habit. The heretics of his time so hated monks that their very habit was obnoxious to them, and since the Society specially desired to gain them to Christ, it would not offend them by appearing in a novel habit, that being in itself a thing indifferent. The absence of a habit, it was considered, would procure more easy access to heretics, while it would at the same time facilitate intercourse with the faithful. It was convenient also in the case of pagans that those who converted and regenerated them should resemble in outward appearance the pastors by whom they should afterwards and ordinarily be governed. With regard to the attire of the members of the Society, St.. Ignatius desired three things:

- that it should be respectable;
- that it should follow the custom of the country;
- that it should not be at variance with their profession of religious poverty.

"St. Ignatius may be said not so much to have instituted a new religious Order as to have restored that Order of Religious Clerics which, as we have seen, existed before the institution of monks, and was founded by Jesus Christ in the Apostles; and which had

as its proper end the preaching of the Gospel and the defence and propagation of the faith.

As Pius IV says in his Bull: 'As they have assumed the name of Jesus, so do they strive by deed and doctrine and example to imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, and follow in His footsteps.'"

As would be expected, there was no formal 'vestition ceremony' - there was no regular religious habit for the Jesuit Novices. Everything is reduced to this: to live under obedience to the Society, as a member not yet united to it through any vows, but simply with the resolution of entering into the Society, and of living and dying in it, as is noted in the Fifth Part of the Jesuit Constitutions [128].

It seems quite evident then, that for Fr. Bertoni 'the [religious] habit of the Apostolic Missionary' is simply that of 'the more perfect clerics' among whom they live - and also depending upon the variety of the ministries the Apostolic Missionaries would be called upon to perform by the bishops, in accord with the variety of times, places and circumstances of the Church's needs. Throughout, there is this insistence on the 'variety of ministries' - each of which will create for the Apostolic Missionaries a profound interest in the various fields of the community's competencies. There is a real community risk in the 'specialization' that is needed - untended, it could divide, rather than enrich.

The charism of Fr. Bertoni is one that passes from contemplation, reflection, thought and planning - to action, service, ministry - to the specific Apostolic Mission. It is very much a work of 'collaboration' with God and sharing with one's confreres. 'Just as' the Father sent His only-begotten Son, so also the Son sends His Apostles - in showing His Sacred Stigmata on Easter night [cf. Jn 20:21, ff.]. As is evident especially from his Spiritual Diary [Memoriale Privato] Fr. Bertoni pondered the inner mystery of God and was much inspired by the Trinity involved in the salvation of the world. Fr. Bertoni contemplated the Father sending the Son in poverty, humility, and even shame - all for the sake of the furtherance of the reign of Heaven. In contemplation and prayer, as well as in community sharing, there emerges a discernment that is needed in the acceptance of the specific Apostolic Mission for the assistance of Bishops.

For the choices to be made, the XIIth Part of the Original Constitutions [129], places much insistence on hearing the views of the confreres:

- the superior is bound to take counsel with the confreres [130];
- reunions, or chapters should be held [131];
- the superior shall have councilors, not associates, in his government [132];

- however, in affairs of greater moment and of a lasting nature, the right of making decisions does not reside with the superior alone [133];
- in matters of lesser importance, the superior will be assisted by the advice of his confreres [134];
- an Admonitor should be appointed to admonish the superior of his faults [135].

**3. THE WITNESS OF THE BISHOPS OF VERONA: [136]:** they all had an impact on Fr. Bertoni, a priest of the Diocese of Verona - and perhaps in some instances, also on the development of his charism.

**a. Bishop John Avogadro [SJ]:** ordained Gaspar Bertoni a priest on September 20, 1800. In these early years as a priest, through his zealous pastor, Fr. Girardi at St. Paul's in the 'Campo Marzio' section of Verona, Fr. Bertoni became the 'Missionary of the Youth.' His early efforts were in the Marian Oratories, to which was joined the dedicated teaching of catechism. We still have Fr. Bertoni's early catechetical instructions to children both from the time his was still a seminarian, as well as in his early years as a priest. His apostolate to the youth also included schools from the time Fr. Bertoni entered the Stimmate, November 4, 1816.

**b. Bishop Innocent Liruti, OSB:** was the Ordinary of Verona for almost 20 years from 1808-1827. It is during this time that Fr. Bertoni became more and more committed as the 'Missionary to the Clergy, to the seminarians and also to religious.' He was called upon to serve as the Spiritual Director to the Diocesan Seminary of Verona - he was also the preacher of the conferences of renewal for the priests called to live in the seminary - and gave much of his time as the 'Angel of Counsel' - as confessor, spiritual director and advisor to many priests, religious and laity. Perhaps with tendencies toward 'Jansenism', Bishop Liruti did not have many 'confidants', but Fr. Bertoni was one of those in whom the elderly Bishop placed much confidence. It is also during this period that Fr. Bertoni's health problems began and were to plague him for the last 40 years of his life.

**c. Bishop Joseph Grasser:** came to the Diocese at a younger age than Fr. Bertoni was at that time - and he would die prematurely as the Bishop of Verona [1828-1839]. It was through him that the invitation to allow Fr. Bragato to go to the royal court of Vienna as Confessor to the Italian Empress in Austria. On July 15, 1831 [137], Fr. Bertoni received special permissions from the Vatican. Instrumental in obtaining these is the letter that Bishop Grasser wrote in Fr. Bertoni's behalf, dated June 18, 1831. In his letter to Cardinal J. Albani, Bishop Grasser - who knew Fr. Bertoni and his special 'work' intimately - described the saint as follows:



“...Your Eminence:

“... with this letter, We testify that Fr. Gaspar Bertoni is a priest outstanding in holiness of his life, his learning and charity, making himself all things to all. He is above all dedicated to the formation of the Clergy, through retreats and counseling - and also to the forming of youth in religion and virtue. The other members of his community are outstanding in their zeal...” [138].

**d. Bishop Aurelio Mutti:** with the ultimately death of Bishop Grassi, the Holy See named another Benedictine as Bishop of Verona but only for a short time, until he was promoted to the See of Venice. In that capacity on December 7th, 1853, just six months after the death of Fr. Bertoni, the new Archbishop of Venice described the Stigmatines in these words:

“... there is no other scope of this Institute other than that of offering every kind of service to the Diocese, in response to the indications and the determinations of the Ordinary. We can state regarding that period of time in which We had the responsibility of the Bishop’s Chair in Verona, that in accord with the spirit of their community, the priests belonging to the Congregation, showed themselves to be always responsive to Our invitations, committing themselves with the same solicitude, zeal and charity:

- in the hearing of confessions;
- as well as in the assistance of the dying;
- in ministering to those in prison, including those under capital punishment;
- hence, We do not hesitate to affirm that we could not have been able to expect from them any greater or more advantageous service of the Diocese than they gave.” [139].

**e. Bishop Benedict Riccabona:** then succeeded to the See of Verona from 1854-1861 - being then transferred to the Diocese of Trent, where he died in 1879. In a letter to the Holy See, dated July 22, 1854, he thus presented Fr. Bertoni’s community:

“...From its very beginning, this Congregation has never ceased from existing and showing itself to be dedicated in any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever to which it might be invited by their Bishop. In Verona, and in his diocese, they are known, loved, and venerated by people from all walks of life, for their dedication to hearing confessions, preaching, giving Missions, principally in giving priests’ retreats, teaching catechism, observing the Marian feasts in their two Churches, assisting the dying, the imprisoned, those condemned to capital punishment. These priests have been called to supply in the

local seminary as Professors of philosophy and theology, and have performed there to the satisfaction of all. It is rare that a bishop would have men ready to employ in every circumstance and for any unexpected need whatsoever. These men have almost as the law of their community not only to be educated and prepared, but also ready for any ministry whatsoever to which their obedience to the superior might call them in the service of the Bishop.” [140].

This remarkable document of Bishop Riccabona repeats Fr. Bertoni’s quodcumque [regarding: ‘any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever’] [141] under the consideration of ‘The Grade of the Professed’, i.e., the Apostolic Missionaries - and the Ordinary of Trent does this three separate times:

- “in any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever” [*in qualunque ministero ecclesiastico*];
- “ready for every circumstance and any unexpected need whatsoever” [*a qualunque inaspettato bisogno*];
- “ready for any ministry whatsoever” [*apparecchiati a qualunque ministero*].

This Document still retains its importance in the Stigmatine history - in that it was in virtue of the Testimonial Letter of the Bishop of Verona that the Holy See granted the Decree of Praise, April 16, 1855. Almost 40 years later, Pope Leo XIII, through the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, bestowed the Decree of Approbation with these words:

“...The members of this Institute look above all to assisting the Bishops in working for the salvation of their neighbors, with any ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever, through any spiritual work of charity, with the exclusion, however, of the ordinary and perpetual care of souls and nuns. [They do this] especially with the sacred missions, with giving retreats, by teaching catechism, specialized preaching, and with the Christian education of youth, dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to guiding them in piety and study, in their own oratories, as well as in the seminaries and in their own schools...” [142].

f. **Luigi Cardinal di Canossa [1862-1900]:** he was the nephew of St. Magdelene di Canossa, and as Bishop of Verona, he was named Cardinal in 1877. On various occasions, he praised the work and the person of St. Gaspar Bertoni. In a letter to Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General of the Stigmatines, the Cardinal stated:

“... Regarding his reputation for holiness, I can assert with full knowledge that his reputation was well known, being on the lips of all - not only within the city, but throughout the Diocese and even beyond. And since he was so well known, on many

occasions, I personally had recourse to him for advice, comfort, and spiritual direction... My aunt, too, Magdalene, many times, went to him for various matters and to get his advice, and repeatedly spoke to me about the veneration in which he was held, being considered a saint... The well-known surgeon, Luigi Manzoni, mentioned many times to my late Father, with me present, how he, as a professional man, was simply amazed when he would have to repeatedly lance Fr. Bertoni's leg, from the femur all the way to the knee. These lancements were extremely painful - and the surgeon concluded: 'I never saw a patient like he was, undergoing all those painful incisions: I believe he is a saint.' ... In his preaching, too, I heard him many times: he spoke with such gentleness and conviction that whoever would listen to him, would be not only convinced of what he was saying, but deeply moved..." [143].

Throughout his long life, as Bishop of Verona, the old Cardinal had often praised the Stigmatines for the many and wonderful Parish Missions throughout the Diocese. And once again, in his 36th year as Bishop of Verona, Cardinal di Canossa remembered Fr. Bertoni and the enormous impression that the Founder of the Stigmatines had exercised on him, as a boy, long years before in his Pastoral Letter sent out to the whole Diocese:

"... it was in the first years of this century that a young priest, Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, instituted the Oratories, first in the Parish of St. Paul, in the Campo Marzio section of Verona - and then in St. Firmus Major. Under his assiduous and wise direction, those Oratories became models and the spring-board of many others. In a little less than ten years they were established in all the parish and subsidiary Churches of the City, as well as in very many other parishes of this Diocese... In this fertile soil of the Oratories, there were gently developed the seeds of numerous vocations to the priesthood and religious life...

"And We, too, now in these declining years of advanced age, go back in happy memory to those years of my own youth - when, by the grace of God, I, too, was a member, and then for many years, a Prefect of one of these Oratories... The Book of Ecclesiasticus offers great praise to the early patriarchs [cf. Eccus. XLIV: 10-16] - and this praise might be applied in some way to those Apostles of the Youth of Verona - yet, in great part, the credit is due to him who was the rime mover in our midst of this great work. It was Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, who has perpetuated the work of the Oratories in that fine Congregation that he founded later at the Stimato - he lived and died among us with such ardor of holiness, that precisely in these days, to our own indescribable joy, the Cause of his Beatification is being introduced. We express every hope that this cause might proceed happily, so that we might one day venerate on the altars, the Father of our Oratories..." [144].

...

The testimonies of these bishops - individually and cumulatively - state repeatedly that Fr. Bertoni's plan was that his community be dedicated to a broad apostolic mission: the Apostle of Youth was also the Missionary to the Clergy and those in the Consecrated Life - as well as being both competent and dedicated to a wide variety of preaching assignments. It seems that each of the Bishops praised him for some particular emphasis: the aged Cardinal remembered him especially for his Oratories; Bishop Grasser appreciated Fr. Bertoni's work among the Clergy; Archbishop Mutti emphasized the 'one-on-one' ministry, in the Confessional, assisting the dying, and the imprisoned - including those on 'Death Row.' Bishop Riccabona, writing so that the Congregation would receive its Decree of Praise, emphasized the very broad spectrum of the apostolic mission to which the community is dedicated: 'it is rare that a bishop would have men ready to employ in every circumstance and for any unexpected need whatsoever...' [145].

4. **The Appeal for Unity:** with this program of 'varied and proper' ministries within the Apostolic Mission, Fr. Bertoni offers this insight:

"... [the Stigmatine vocation is] arduous and difficult... but there is a special grace more powerful than any danger or difficulty... with this program we do not propose for ourselves to be exposed to dangers, or to go to one place rather than to another, or to carry out this, or that apostolate, of our own free choosing. Our vocation is to follow the direction of the Bishop, placed by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church of God: this is a sufficiently sure means not to wander from the path of the Lord..." [146].

As Novice Master, Fr. Lenotti gave a series of Domestic Exhortations in which he showed the close parallel between the Stigmatines and the Plan of St. Ignatius: "...like the Company of Jesus is in a special way dedicated, directed in its service and to the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff - so, our Congregation is dedicated and determined in a very special manner and characterized through the service and *ossequio* of Bishops..." [147].

Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions manifest an extraordinary openness toward the future in hope - also by not being 'locked in' to any single ministry. Through its nearly 175 years of history, many Stigmatines have been both dedicated to, and competent in: the preaching ministry - in assisting priests and seminarians, as well as assisting those in the consecrated life - and most imaginative in youth work. All is for the development of the Plan of Salvation - since the main purpose of the Stigmatines is the conversion of souls [148] - this scope is also described as the salvation of souls, with ministries accommodated for this purpose [149]: both of these Constitutions are taken verbatim

from Suarez. However, with this wide variety of apostolates, there becomes even more urgent the living of community charity [150].

One of the privileged means suggested by the Stigmatine Founder is the offering of the Eucharist for the success of the Apostolic Mission. “Among the Means by which this Institute promotes the salvation of our neighbors, are the following:”

CF # 162: “The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and the Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of the Missions and of confessions”

This Constitution is based on Suarez, who also includes here the frequent offering of sacrifices, which might assist the Church for the conversion of infidels and the correction of heretics as well as for the advancement of the faithful. [151].

The words of St. Paul might be applied here:

“... There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same Lord who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose... one may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction, given him by the same Spirit; another the gift of faith, given him by the same Spirit...” [I Co 12:4, ff.].

Based on the life of the early Stigmatines, the Constitutions state that the first apostolate will always be ‘other Stigmatines’:

CF # 188: “If, therefore, we must practice charity towards all, especially must we practice it toward those who are our spiritual brothers, as the Apostle says [Ga 6:10]: ‘If one has no care for his own, especially those of his own household, he has denied the faith and has become worse than an infidel.’” [152].

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## **D. THE TRINITY: UNITY IN PLURALISM**

### **[I] SPECIALIZATION**

#### **Introduction:**

From the outset, the Original Constitutions indicate that there will be a wide variety of apostolates, flowing from union with God and a committed community life. The challenge is 'Diversity in Communion', *e pluribus unum* ! The various services of the Church [CF # 57]; the various and proper ministries [CF # 185] are to be accommodated to the goal in mind [CF # 262].

Fr. Bertoni presented the ideal for his Congregation in these terms:

CF # 1: End: Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops [153].

CF # 6: Means: Perfection of Oneself.

Perfection in the Ecclesiastical Sciences... [154].

This two-fold perfection is gradually achieved through spiritual and intellectual Progress, as this is described by the Stigmatine Founder in his Part IV of his Constitutions: 'Concerning the Progress [of the Confreres]' [155].

The supreme goal of knowledge is presented by Fr. Bertoni in these terms:

CF # 51: "Since the Apostle says: 'For I am determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and Him crucified'; and since Christ said of Himself: 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end'. Therefore, all the confreres shall start here, that is, to learn by heart, if possible, the Christian Doctrine as set forth for everyone's understanding in the Catechism of Cardinal Bellarmine. Moreover, those who devote themselves to study, shall every now and then, return to it, getting a deeper knowledge and hold on to it in their study of the Roman Catechism." [156].

CF # 52: "They shall study Sacred Scripture in its entirety, first textually, and then according to its Catholic commentators." [157].

In these Constitutions, it is clear that Fr. Bertoni understood that 'Perfection in the Ecclesiastical Sciences' was also intended to serve as a means of spiritual perfection of the members of the community. The Stigmatine Founder sees Christ crucified, the Alpha and the Omega, as the recapitulation of all knowledge. He also takes a paragraph from the Jesuit commentary by Fr. Suarez:

CF # 56: "All this has been said of the Congregation in general, that is, of the aggregate of its members. Absolutely speaking, a mastery of all the above-mentioned sciences is necessary to the Congregation, though it would be difficult, or morally

impossible for each member to master all these subjects by himself, along with Sacred Theology. Yet, in the Congregation, taken as a body, this is not impossible, and so care must be had that a true pre-eminence in all these sciences exists.” [158].

Fr. Bertoni took this almost word for word from the Jesuit Commentary. Fr. Suarez treats of this in his Book V [159], on the progress of the Jesuit scholastics in their studies. The Stigmatine Founder had this dream of a body of men, each competent in a given field - and each dedicated to the furthering of the Reign of God, committed to community life. For this goal to be achieved, there is always needed a quality library:

CF # 60: “Every house shall be equipped with a common library furnished as completely as possible, according to the requirements and nature of the studies pursued.” [160].

This stipulation was geared to the qualification of all the members. In the present moment of the history of the Church, there is the repeated appeal for an up-dating: going back to the sources, and yet moving ahead toward a New Evangelization - an on-going formation. The Stigmatine Founder hoped that the community would be truly able and prepared. This grandiose plan was much admired by the bishops who first came to know of Fr. Bertoni and his work. Bishop Benedict Riccabona [+ March 31, 1879], considered as a ‘Benefactor’ to the Stigmatine Congregation, much admired the preparation of the early Stigmatines whom he knew. He offered his summer home to the students so that their studies would not be interrupted, during the long struggles with the Italian government. The library that was established there prepared some very brilliant young students.

The emphasis is that this be done in a community, family life. Therefore, it is most important that the health of the students be taken care of in their dedication to their very serious studies - once again the Stigmatine Founder has taken this from the Jesuits:

CF # 62: “It shall be incumbent on the superior to see that the students do not apply themselves to study at times that are harmful to their physical health; that they get enough sleep; that they observe due moderation in their studies in order that they may devote themselves for a longer time to mastering the arts and sciences on behalf of their service [*obsequium*] of the Church” [161].

This closely paraphrases a citation from Suarez, Book V, who in turn uses the Jesuit Constitutions as his source [162].

This injunction seems to be a practical understanding of the situation of candidates, striving for approval and also for progress. The Constitution is taken from Part IV, treating of the 'Progress' in the Spiritual as well as in the Intellectual life of the Congregation. The study envisioned here is a real challenge to the physical and intellectual capacity of the candidate - one of the ideals here seems to be that on-going preparation is part of the asceticism of the community. Very few penitential practices are noted in the Original Constitutions - but, much emphasis is given to continuing formation.

The Original Constitutions offer the virtue of prudence as important to the Stigmatine life of study - true learning, expertise in any field, are the work of a life-time. One might think of a phrase of the English spiritual writer, C.S.Lewis, 'Slow-Paced We Come!' The modern ideal of the entire Church is on-going, permanent religious and intellectual conversion as the daily situation of the Church. Fr. Bertoni's challenge is presented thus:

CS # 59: "Special attention and care shall be taken that those who study do not endanger their health, or lack anything that is necessary for them. Therefore, with regard to their diet and apparel, and their appropriate and needful recreation, the Superior shall do his best to dispel all their worries and preoccupations about such matters, so that the students may the more easily put up with their burden of study and be satisfied with the care and attention afforded them by religious life" [163]

Suarez took his thoughts from the Jesuit Constitutions (Chapter 4, § 1) - which Fr. Bertoni consulted here. [164].

"On behalf of the Church" [*in Ecclesiae obsequium*] - and 'For the greater Glory of God' are the major concerns throughout - these joint intentions permeate the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, and St. Gaspar Bertoni was much inspired by this spirit. These studies can never be allowed to lessen piety:

CF # 66: "Likewise it shall be incumbent on Superiors to see that the stress in studies be not detrimental to their love of piety, and that too many exercises of piety be not a hindrance to their necessary studies." [165].

Again, this is found in Suarez, who cites as his source the Ignatian Constitutions [166].

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### **1. Specialization and Community:**



There is a paradox in fidelity to the past - and creativity toward the future; going back to the sources in order to share the 'New Evangelization' for the new millennium. One Stigmatine means of doing this might be contained among the 'paradoxes' noted by the Superior General, Fr. John B. Tomasi, in 1916: "... the full development of the single activities of the members... with constant study..." [167]

a. **Specialization:** the Stigmatine Founder's Original Constitutions emphasize this to a great extent - the ideal is developed specifically in Part IV, treating of 'Progress' in the Spiritual and Intellectual Life:

CF # 49: "In this clerical Congregation, which aims not only to contemplate on divine things, but also to teach contemplated truths to others, the members shall possess not an ordinary, but a perfect knowledge of those things which pertain to faith and morals; therefore, it is necessary that the religious clerics of this Institute eagerly strive to acquire such a knowledge perfectly." [168].

In this instance, Fr. Bertoni has taken this Constitution and the next one directly from the Commentary on Suarez. As the scope of the Congregation is 'any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever' [170], this exalted purpose will require the life-long effort to excel in some aspect of the Word of God - and to increase this expertise also technically, along with the invaluable lived experience that increases with the passing of time. The Founder returns to this idea in the very next number:

CF # 50: "In order to be able, therefore, to enlighten minds which dwell in darkness, to counteract the onslaughts of heresy, to know how to defend one's religion, or to solve the moral problems which arise, and to give a satisfactory answer to all in all things, it is of prime importance that each one be adequately trained in the science of theology, both positive and scholastic, speculative and moral." [171]

Once again, this important section of Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions, are taken word for word from Suarez [172].

This Constitution sees the faith as something to be defended - but the challenge of the Stigmatines is also to enlighten minds, to search for solutions for the complex problems of the time. To this day, this Constitution offers a genuine challenge. The Stigmatine Founder's approach is always to have a broad based support for an on-going up-dating process, all through life.

In the area of specialization, the needs of the Church and the changing times are predominant considerations. The entire program is one that is to be determined by the very broad 'apostolic mission':

CF # 57: "Therefore, there shall be individuals who specialize in one or another of these branches of knowledge for a longer time and with greater diligence: that is of the utmost importance for the various services [ *obsequia* ] that we must render to the Church, according to the diversity of the times and circumstances." [173].

This important Constitution once more has been taken *verbatim* from Suarez' commentary on the high level of competence that is required of the Jesuit Scholastics [174] - this is Fr. Bertoni's dream for the Stigmatines: true competence in each branch of the sacred sciences especially for the varying times, circumstances and needs of the Church as expressed by the Bishops.

As there is no single apostolate envisioned by Fr. Bertoni, there will always be a real need of those who have a competence in the various sacred sciences. But, since the end of the Congregation is not only the specialized ministry toward the clergy and the consecrated state, there are also other apostolic needs that have to be met. Making allowances for the language of the times, the Founder asked for true competence in other fields as well:

CF # 58: "Although these studies in the Congregation refer primarily to Theology and Sacred Scripture, and our members shall chiefly and more often strive to attain a knowledge of these sciences, nevertheless, some members shall devote themselves more at length to the study of even the minor branches of knowledge, in order to specialize and distinguish themselves in them, for the realization of the ends mentioned above." [175].

This is a Rule from the Jesuit tradition, copied by Fr. Bertoni from his preferred Commentary, composed by Fr. Suarez on the Jesuit Constitutions [176].

This entire section on the broad sweep of 'specialization' in the mind of Fr. Bertoni is taken directly and almost totally from Suarez. Underlying all of this, is the spirit of apostolic abandonment: the actual work, ministry, that the Stigmatines will be called upon to do will depend always on the changing, various needs of the Church as history unfolds. The great diversity of 'missions' envisioned by Fr. Bertoni, taken from his Ignatian inspiration, require a very varied preparation. While 'pluralism' can indeed be an enrichment for the mind, it can present a real challenge for the unity of wills.

The theme of 'specialization' receives a further application in Part IX of Fr. Bertoní's Constitutions [CF ## 158-186]. This is the Part that is concerned with the 'Professed', that is, those raised to the dignity of the 'Apostolic Missionaries' properly so called. It is to them that are assigned the 'more weighty ministries' [ *graviora ministeria* ] of the Apostolic Mission: these Constitutions are taken word for word from Suarez.

The Original Constitutions ## 158, 159 offer a familiar refrain:

CF # 158: "Only priests are to be admitted to 'Profession': for the principal government of the Congregation pertains to the Graduate Fathers; to them also belong the more important duties of the ministry, [ *graviora ministeria* ] and these require the priestly dignity." [177].

This is copied precisely from Suarez where he gives his 'theology' of the Fourth Vow [178]- the 'Professed', or the 'Graduate Fathers' are those with the fourth vow, the Apostolic Missionaries in Fr. Bertoní's plan. This is why there is needed a 'more than ordinary knowledge', and a very holy life:

CF # 159: "A more than ordinary scientific culture is required, and a very good proof of probity of life, of exemplary manners, and of dominion over the passions." [179].

This is the expression taken directly from Suarez [180].

The area of concentration of the community envisioned is always 'any Ministry whatever of the Word of God.' Great benefit might be garnered by all who would truly pray over the Dogmatic Constitution of the II<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum* . In this document, there is a central article dedicated to the development, increase of the faith within the Church. Pondering on it, in the light of the Stigmatine charism, each could find much with which to be inspired, as these important ideas:

"... This tradition which comes from the Apostles, develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth in the understanding of the realities and the words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts [cf. Lk 2:19,51] - through the understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have received through Episcopal succession the sure gift of truth..." [181].

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**b. Unity:** Specialization, competence, learning can separate and divide. Not even the religious habit would unify - as each one wears what would be best in accord with the better clerical customs wherever each might serve the Church (cf. CF # 137). Throughout, there is much insistence by Fr. Bertoni on the wide variety of ministries and plurality of specializations, on that distinction noted in the Fourth Gospel:

“... By this love that you have for one another, everyone will know that you are My disciples..” [cf. Jn 13:35].

Part X of Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions emphasize very much this Unity, or Union of the Community. This is the broadest part of his entire legislation - and much of it is taken exactly from the Commentary of Suarez. For Fr. Bertoni, this is the over-riding challenge: union in diversity, community with plurality, a family committed to a wide variety of ministries. Christ’s words in John’s Gospel are meant to be the only ‘distinctive mark’ the community would have (cf. CF # 187). The idealized example of the early Church described in the ‘Summaries’ found in the Acts of the Apostles (cf. 4L32-35, not unlike 2:4-47) Fr. Bertoni quotes Ac 4:32 twice [182].

Fr. Bertoni lists first the ‘negative means’ for obtaining charity, in Chapter I of this Part X, which has a ‘negative’ title, ‘Of Not Offending the Confreres.” (cf. CF ## 191-196). This is followed by five Chapters of ‘negative’ means (cf. CF ## 197-220). This entire Section is taken almost *verbatim* from Suarez (183). The challenge remains unity in such diversity.

## **2. The Trinity:**

St. Ignatius Loyola has a ‘Proemium’ to his Constitutions which emphasizes the Trinity:

CSJ # 134: “Although it must be the supreme wisdom and goodness of God, our Creator and Lord, which will preserve, direct and carry forward in His divine service, this least Society of Jesus, just as he deigned to begin it; and although what helps most on our own part toward this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts; nevertheless, since the gentle arrangement of Divine Providence requires cooperation from His creatures, and since too the Vicar of Christ our Lord has ordered this; and since the examples given by the saints and reason itself tech us so in our Lord, we think it

necessary that constitutions should be written to aid us to proceed better, in conformity with our Institute, along the path of divine service which we have entered.” [184].

As has been noted, Fr. Bertoni’s devotion to the trinity was also much enkindled by his contemplation of a painting. This same fascination for painting is noted in his Original Constitutions when he presents the Holy Spirit as an artist:

CF # 223: “Moreover, there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive his special endowment of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to contemplate him as the image of God painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive within themselves to grow in these virtues and gifts and to consider them often in others, and if they regard others as superior to them in soul, rejoice over their spiritual gifts and give thanks to God, mutual charity will flourish among them in a wondrous manner.”

This beautiful thought that is so “Bertonian” once more, as Fr. Stofella had pointed out in his presentation of Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions, is taken directly and word for word from Suarez - as are the Constitutions that precede # 223, and those that follow [186].

Once more, the Trinitarian dimension of Fr. Bertoni’s charism comes through: in addition to admiring the portrait that the Holy Spirit paints in others, there is also an idea that is very close to St. Paul’s presentation of ‘fraternal humility’ found in his introduction to the Christological hymn found in Philippians:

“... There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself... in your minds, you must be as Christ Jesus: His state was divine, but He did not cling to his equality with God, but empties Himself...[ cf. Ph 2:3, ff.] [187]

There is a two-fold tendency in the virtue of Christian humility: toward superiors, above us - and toward equals and inferiors. The second aspect is peculiar to Christianity and this humility God gave to us in Jesus Christ. The humility of the Christian is his/her response to this manifestation of loving and humble condescension by which God bestows supernatural grace on un-deserving creatures. It is at the same time participation of the creature in the divine act of condescension which empties itself in the supreme service of love to humanity. Humility of the child of God is a filial response to the love of the Creator and Savior.

By grace and the divine filiation, the disciple is elevated to participation in the divine nature, and by faith and love each is brought to some realization of the infinite distance which separates humanity from the Creator and Father. Each is invited to follow the path of humility of Jesus Christ in loving service toward the lease of creatures and in obedience to the heavenly Father. Only love gives to humility the clear insight into the good qualities of our neighbor. Thus love is in the service of humility, and humility in turn is altogether in the service of love [188].

### **SUMMARY**

Fr. Bertoni's great dream was real fraternal unity in q wide variety of ministries in the one Apostolic Mission - and in the great pluralism of specializations. this is a challenge his original rule still offers today. As Fr. Stofella noted, Fr. Bertoni took this ideal from the Jesuit Suarez' Commentary [189].

Fr. Bertoni's ideal reads thus:

CF # 228: "Wherefore, St. Augustine says; 'Let all help with one heart and soul' (Rule c. 2) - as if he meant to say: 'to be of one heart in helping, it is necessary to be of one soul', he adds: Let each honor God in the other, for you have been made His temples.' - because God alone is 'the One Who makes brethren to live together in unity': and thus this uniformity adds greatly in making God known in all, and as a consequence, uniting all to God" [190].

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## **E. THE STIGMATINE CALL TO UNITY**

### **"Future Good, Difficulty, but Possible"**

#### **Introduction:**

[1] Hope concerns a future good, that is difficult but possible. In the mind of the Stigmatine Founder, the Stigmatine vocation is considered 'arduous and difficult...the scope of our Congregation is to serve the Church through the various and proper duties of its vocation..." [191].

[2] One of the real problems for the Stigmatine community seems to be the fact that on the one hand, there is this wide variety of ecclesial services - each one of which is demanding more and more competence in widely different fields. And yet, at the same time, Fr. Bertoni has made a strong appeal for fraternal family unity, based on the ideal of the early Church [192]. The challenge, then, seems to be the paradox of a wide variety of services, and yet a deep communion within. The Stigmatine union has often been tested, especially in times of pluralism. Christian charity is not the 'natural' response for human beings - this is the Christian ideal to love one another with the same love with which the Father loves Jesus (cf. Jn 15:9; 17:23).

[3] The paradoxes of the Stigmatine vocation have been noted through the years. In 1916, the first centenary of the community foundation, there was no public celebration because of World War I then raging in Europe. Fr. John B. Tomasi, Superior General at the time, wrote a Circular Letter commemorating the event, in which he described these paradoxes as being so evident in the early community:

"... the continuous quest for the hidden way, and the wide reputation that all enjoyed; an austere way of life, coupled with genuine joy; an authentic spirit of poverty, and yet houses and churches that were debt free and unostentatious; a true life in community, and yet the most varied activities; a most complete pooling of resources and yet the full development of the different activities of the confreres; true commitment to study and work, coupled with a solid piety" [193]

[4] Fr. Bertoni's dream is a united family dedicated to a widely diversified, increasingly competent Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops. The very source for Stigmatine hope in Christ is in itself paradoxical: "... by His wounds, ours are healed!" (cf. Is 53:5; 1 P 2:21, ff.).

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## **(I) Hope for Unity**

### **Presentation**

(1) In the ideal presented here, unity, despite trying diversity, manifests itself as the supreme and constant hope of the community. This 'pluralism' that tears at unity is already evident in the 'internationality' of the Congregation. Yet, there is this paradox: Pope John XXIII spoke of 'socialization' as one of the signs of the times:

"... Certainly one of the principal characteristics which seem to be typical of our age is an increase in social relationships in those mutual ties, that is, which grow daily more

numerous and which have led to the introduction of many and varied forms of associations in the lives and activities of citizens, and to their acceptance within our legal framework..." [194].

(2) This coming together of peoples of different continents, nations and languages, was highly esteemed by Pope John XXIII as one of the more promising signs of our times. Yet, paradoxically, religious communities still have the ideal of Jesus Christ upon which to measure their lives. While this seems to be a promising help to internationality, there are these challenges:

- this tendency toward association usually involves one's own field of interest and specialization, but has not so much to do with daily living. In a religious community, many may indeed find more association outside the institute than within. In the theory of 'parallel development', sometimes our very specializations have created an even wider diversity of interests and activity;

- pluralism: there is indeed a wide difference of theological and spiritual opinion alive today in the sacred sciences. As discussions seem almost interminable and almost irreconcilable when one relies solely on human resources alone, some would lose much active interest in trying to succeed in true community sharing;

- in the area of first formation, there is a well-founded caution of disrupting candidates too soon from their native culture.

These and many other challenges are being lived through by many communities: the 'Catholic' Church needs to 'inculturate.'

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## 1. Parallels with St. Ignatius:

a. Under some aspects, the Stigmatine Founder may be thought of as having lived in 'simpler' times - however, historians could also dispute this. He came from a divided city and a divided home. With his vision of faith, he saw that the 'arduous and difficult' vocation of living together as brothers, notwithstanding the 'proper' ministries that are so 'varied', 'accommodated' to the task at hand: unity in such circumstances, he was convinced, is far more the work of God than the result of community efforts.

b. The Jesuit founder, whom Fr. Bertoni sought to emulate so closely, dedicated the entire concluding part of his Constitutions to this unity: Part X, CSJ ## 812-



827: “How the Whole Body of the Society can be preserved and developed in its well being.” St. Ignatius wrote:

CSJ # 812: “The Society was not instituted by human means; and neither is it through them that it can be preserved and developed, but through the omnipotent hand of Christ, God and our Lord. Therefore in Him alone must be placed the hope that He will preserve and carry forward what He deigned to begin for His service and carry forward what he deigned to begin for His service and praise for the aid of soul [ *ad obsequium et laudem suam et auxilium animarum inchoare dignatus est* ]. In conformity with this hope, the first and best proportioned means will be the prayers and Masses which ought to be offered for this holy intention through their being ordered for it every week, month and year in all the regions where the Society resides.”

St. Ignatius alludes here to a passage from St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians:

“...I am quite certain that the One Who began this good work in you, will see to it that it is finished when the Day of Jesus Christ comes...” [Ph 1:6].

This is a verse that not rarely appears in Fr. Bertoni’s writings - he cites it in his very important Constitution # 185, which Fr. Stofella notes presents ‘the principal duty of the Congregation’ [196]:

“... Even though our Stigmatine vocation is an arduous and difficult call... the program of our particular dedication may nonetheless not be called imprudent or temerarious for these reasons:

“In the first place, because we believe that the realization of our dedication (to the Church) does not depend on the capabilities of human beings alone, but flows from the grace of the Holy Spirit: since, the One Who has inspired and begun this work, He Himself will bring it to completion, when our own abilities are not sufficient to keep it going...” [197].

Fr. Stofella states that this Original Constitution of Fr. Bertoni is taken from Suarez, Book I, Chapter 6. However, one may also read that chapter of Suarez where he treats of the Fourth Vow of Jesuits to the Pope - and the entire Constitution is found word for word, except for the first five, or so, lines [198].

1.) This offering of the Eucharist and fervent prayer for the Society in general and for the success of its Apostolic Mission is a key Ignatian idea that recurs frequently throughout his Constitutions:

CSJ # 424: “The function of the rector will be first of all to sustain the whole college by his prayer and holy desires and then to bring it about that the Constitutions are observed...” [199].

2.) The office of prayer is a particular task enjoined on the Father General for the unity of the whole Company of Jesus:

CSJ # 790: “(The Superior General) will achieve this kind of government primarily by the influence and example of his life, by his charity and love of the Society in Christ our Lord, by his prayer which is assiduous and full of desires and by his sacrifices, to obtain the grace of the aforementioned preservation and development. On his own part, he should hold these means in high esteem and have great confidence in our Lord, since these are the most efficacious means of gaining grace from His Divine Majesty, the Source of what is longed for. especially should the General do this as necessities occur...” [200].

d. The entire Part VII of the Jesuit Constitutions is dedicated to the Missions of the Society of Jesus. For the Jesuits, ‘mission’ may be defined as follows:

Epitome SJ # 612: “By the word ‘mission’ is intended any apostolic expedition whatsoever performed in response to an order received by the Supreme Pontiff, or the Superiors of the Society, for the greater glory of God and the assistance of souls, as most often happens outside of our own residences.” [201].

1.) St. Ignatius composed a special rule in his Part VII, under Chapter 2, those Missions undertaken at the request of the Superior of the Society (cf. CSJ ## 618-632). The Saint wrote:

CSJ # 631: “Such aids would be prayer and Masses applied especially in the beginnings of undertakings or when greater need of such succor is observed, because the matters are important or the occurring difficulties great...” [202].

2.) Fr. Bertoni has a similar rule in our original Constitutions:

CF # 162: “...(we should) implore from God, even with the celebration of holy Masses, the fruit of the Missions and the preaching and the Confessions...” [203].

In Fr. Stofella’s translation, there is no translation apparent for ‘Missions’ - he might have included it under *concionum* . This entire section of the Stigmatine

Founder's Original Constitutions (Part IX, Chapter II) may be compared to the commentary of Suarez on St. Ignatius' Rule, when the Jesuit theologian discusses the 'Means' by which the Apostolic Mission of St. Ignatius is carried out. This entire section of Fr. Bertoni may be noted in Suarez [204].

In whatever way one might choose to translate *Missionum et concionum et Confessionum* in Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitution (# 162), it is a common practice to pray sincerely for the 'Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops' that the Stigmatine community is called to offer. the 'Mission' of the Jesuits is the manner in which the Jesuits are distributed in the vineyard of the Lord.

St. Ignatius saw government (Part IX) as a means of union, and Part X is the concrete expression of how to preserve and develop the well-being of the Society.

## **2. The Difficult, Future Good: the Hope for Unity:**

a. In the Stigmatine Founder's Original Constitutions, Part X - the longest single section of his rule (including ## 187-266: about 70 f his Original Constitutions) - is dedicated to the difficult, lived practice of unity. In addition to this long section, he adds Part XI (another 30, or more Constitutions) to the 'familiar conversation' and 'contact' with other human beings for their spiritual betterment. Almost every one of these Constitutions is taken from Suarez [205]. Fr. Bertoni's final Part XII, on government has only about 16 numbers (cf. CF ## 298-314). So, it might be noted that in Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions of 314, about 100 of them deal in some way with the Apostolic Mission of charity.

b. Prior to Part X, which is entitled: *Concerning the Unity, or the Union of the Institute* - he offers an Introduction, consisting of four numbers, each one with a biblical phrase:

CF # 187: "Let all have as the aim and distinctive sign of their vocation the saying of Our Lord Jesus Christ: 'By this love that you have for one another, everyone will know that you are My brothers' (cf. Jn 13:35)..." [206].

CF # 188: "If, therefore, we must practice charity towards all, especially must we practice it toward those who are our spiritual brothers, as the Apostle says: 'If one has no care for his own especially those of his own household he has denied the faith, and has become worse than an infidel' (cf. Ga 6:10). [207].

CF # 189: "Let everyone keep before his eyes, as a norm of this harmony, what is read in the Acts of the Apostles about the conduct of the first faithful who are the source from which all Religious Orders have their origin and form: ' They were of

one heart and one soul, and held all things in common and distributed them among all according as anyone had need. They took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favor with all the people; and great grace was in them all.' (cf. Ac 2:44, ff.)" [208].

CF # 190: "Let everyone to the best of his ability keep this union of charity and concord, shunning everything which is opposed to it, namely, dissensions and discords, all of which must be studiously avoided, bearing in mind the words of Psalm 132: 'How pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'" [209]

Suarez quotes both Ac 2:44, ff. and Psalm 132 in his Commentary, Book VIII, c.6, n. 3 & 4 [210].

c. The Stigmatine Founder states at least twice that the first area of apostolic interest for the community should be that of one's own confreres. One of these times is the recently quoted Original Constitution 188, quoting Galatians 6:10. The other is this following text:

CF # 262: "Since the end of the Congregation is the salvation of souls, consequently it assumes ministries appropriate to this end: therefore, religious should primarily and zealously work for the spiritual benefit of their own confreres before that of non-members, because charity is very well ordered. As it, therefore, inclines one to seek his own spiritual salvation before that of others, so also among others, it first intends and seeks the spiritual benefit of spiritual brothers, and of the entire body of the Congregation, before that of those outside the congregation." [211].

This text and many before and after it, are taken bodily right from the text of Suarez, where he treats of the 'means' by which the Society fulfills its Apostolic Mission in the Company of Jesus - Suarez calls this special concern for one's confreres the ultimate means of increasing fraternal charity [212].

d. After this very positive presentation of the Introduction to Part X, the Stigmatine Founder offers a First Section (from numbers 191-220, about 30 Constitutions) concerning the Negative Means to be considered in removing the impediments to charity:

- not to offend the Confreres (## 191-196);
- to avoid contrast of opinions in so far as this is possible (## 197-201);
- to eliminate contentiousness (## 202-207) [213].
- avoiding particular friendships (## 208-213);

- the discretion, moderation and measure to be brought to the love of one's Confreres (## 214-217);
- how to recognize private, disordered affections (## 218-22) [214].

e. There follows then, a list of Positive Means, and these too are attributed to Suarez by Fr. Stofella (## 221-266), 45 Constitutions:

- the internal propensity, or inclination of one's mind (here the Stigmatine Founder suggests a greater love for God and Jesus Christ). Fr. Bertoni says that this union will be fanned - much like a fire - through meditation (## 221-223);
- external circumstances which contribute: it is here that Fr. Bertoni suggests uniformity in obedience and in poverty (## 224-226)
- this likeness should be manifest in everything: food, clothing - and each one is presented with the challenge of seeing God in everyone else (## 227-229);
- concerning common table and lodgings (## 230-233);
- the special care of the sick (## 234-242);
- the hospitality to be shown to the confreres (## 243-249);
- common recreation and conversations (## 250-256);
- letter writing to distant confreres (## 257-261);
- the mutual concern among the confreres for their spiritual growth (## 262-266).

All of these many Original Constitutions of Fr. Bertoni can be found almost word for word in Suarez [215].

This Part X, with its 9 Chapters, ends with an 'elegant' citation from St. John Chrysostom:

CF # 266 "St. John Chrysostom, commenting on the words of Chapter 16 of St. John: 'That they may be one even as we are,' says very well: 'Nothing can be compared to the harmony and the mutual union of wills: for by it the individual multiplies himself. If indeed two, or ten persons agree among themselves, there is no longer one individual, but each individual has multiplied himself ten times, and in the ten, you shall find unity, and the ten in each individual.' Further on he says: 'This is the excellence of charity, and how it brings it about that one can be multiplied and indivisible; that he can be found in many places at the same time; that he can be in Persia, and in Rome: what nature cannot do, love can.'" [216].

This is a *verbatim* citation from Suarez' commentary - and with these words, he concludes in Chapter 8 of Book VIII [217].

f. Then follows an entire Part XI: Concerning the Familiar Conversation with one's Neighbor, ordered to their Salvation" (there are more than 30 Constitutions here that Fr. Bertoni wrote, ## 267-297). These Constitutions are practically all copied word from word from Suarez' Commentary [218].

1.) This entire matter might be re-read today with fresh enthusiasm, in the light of Pope Paul VI's Encyclical of December 8, 1975, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and his emphasis on Indispensable Personal Contact:

"...For this reason, side-by-side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the other form of transmission, the person-to-person one remains valid and important. The Lord often used it (for example, with Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, Simon the Pharisee), and so did the Apostles. In the long run, is there any other way of handing on the Gospel than by transmitting to another person one's personal experience of faith? It must not happen that the pressing need to proclaim the Good news to the multitudes should cause us to forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual's personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique word that he receives from someone else. We can never sufficiently praise those priests who through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or through pastoral dialogue show their readiness to guide people in the ways of the Gospel, to support them in their efforts to raise them up if they have fallen, and always to assist them with discernment and availability..." [219].

2.) Fr.. Bertoni dedicates an entire Chapter III to this idea: How the Purpose of the Congregation can be achieved through Familiar Conversation (cf. ## 277-281). He suggests also that the Confessor should seek to be the 'friend' of his penitents, as the Introductory number to this chapter - which is taken *verbatim* from Suarez, as has been noted [220]. The Stigmatine Founder also suggests that the sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation are among the principal ministries of the Apostolic Missionaries, the 'Professed' Members, the 'Graduate Fathers':

CF # 162: "The administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and Holy Eucharist, beseeching God, even by the celebration of Holy Masses, to grant the fruit of [the Missions], of preaching and of confessions." [221].

a.) The Stigmatine Founder looked upon spiritual progress as the imitation/following of Christ, as putting on the mind of Christ Jesus - something like painting a portrait:

MP: Feb. 26, 1809: “We must make a portrait in ourselves of Christ Jesus.” [222].

b.) Fr. Bertoni uses a similar idea in his letter to Fr. Bragato, dated June 4, 1836:

“... read the Gospels often, and from the words and deeds of our Lord, draw on them through consideration and meditation, and apply to yourself that which is necessary in the circumstances in which you find yourself. Form yourself on that model, from Whom all the saints drew their ideas.

“Would you like a beautiful copy, as all beginners in art use in order to remain faithful to the design? Then take the life of St. Francis Borgia, written by Bartoli, and you will have something to comfort you, and to lead you to the perfect development of your drawing on the model, i.e., in the life of Christ our Lord, the author and the One Who completes our faith...” [223].

c.) Among the Positive Means for the living of the unity in the Institute, Fr. Bertoni once more returns to the image of a work of art:

CF # 223: “Moreover, there is nothing which causes us to love another more than to perceive his special endowment of virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to contemplate him as the image of God painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all strive within themselves to grow in these virtues and gifts and to consider them often in others, and if they regard others as superior to them in soul, rejoice over their spiritual gifts, and give thanks to God, mutual charity shall flourish among them in a wondrous manner.” [224].

This is taken word for word from Suarez’ treatment of the Positive Means by which fraternal charity is conciliated in the Society [225].

This ‘considering others to be superior to oneself’ is a difficult concept of ‘fraternal humility’ forwarded by St. Paul:

“...There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first, but everybody thinks of other people’s interests instead...” (Ph 2:3, ff.). [226].

### **3. There are examples of this in Fr. Bertoni’s own life:**

a.) The Stigmatine Founder decided to make an offer of all his goods to the newly re-instated Society of Jesus in Verona. Fr. Bertoni was most anxious that the Jesuits might establish a novitiate in Verona, as soon as possible following their return.

For all practical purposes, he made an outright grant, no strings attached, reserving but a few rooms for himself and the few Stigmatines who had followed him. This was in the year 1837. As it turned out, the Jesuits did not need what he was offering - but, later on, the Venetian Province considered him a 'special benefactor.' [227]

b.) He then turned to the Vicar of Christ: on August 9, 1838, Fr. Bertoni wrote a letter to Pope Gregory XVI and offered all that he and the community owned [228]. He did this in the belief that these properties could be put to much better use for the *obsequium* of Christ the Lord, and for the greater usefulness of the Church. Fr. Bertoni lived the conviction that all these sacred places truly 'belonged to Jesus Christ and the Church, who were the rightful owners of all his property, and that he - Fr. Gaspar Bertoni - was but the 'Procurator.' [229].

c.) Modern theology has developed this concept of humility called 'fraternal', that flows from fraternal charity, based on the example of Jesus Christ [230]:

- that humility which is the virtue of the creature-status, the response of created beings to the Creator, the recognition and affirmation of our utter dependence on God. As for humility toward superiors, or those above us, Christianity has in common with many other systems of thought - but a humility exercised toward equals and inferiors seems to be specifically 'Christian';

- God has taught humility in person (cf. the 'KENOSIS of Christ, Ph 2:5-11). this is a 'humility' which has 'descended' from on high 'to dwell among us.' The 'Magnificat; recorded by St. Luke, is filled with this thought of the awesome mystery of divine humility;

- the Incarnation is the very 'Humility of God'. The humility of Jesus differs from that of all others: His is the humility of sinlessness, of omnipotence. Hence, His is supreme humility. He lacks the two basic conditions from our humility: personal creature-hood and sinfulness. So, indeed, He can truly say: 'Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.' (cf. Mt 11:29).

- this 'Christian' humility is a grateful, adoring love. Humility transforms our knowing and our loving. It flows from profound faith, hope and love. Only the truly humble is capable of a complete and the just estimate of the good qualities and merits of one's neighbor. Such humility is both the result of love, and is its most perfect expression - only love gives to humility the clear insight into the good qualities of one's neighbor. Humility is always Christ's gift which bears with it the task to prepare the way for Him: 'He must increase, but I must decrease' (cf. Jn 3:30), The degrees of humility correspond exactly to the degree of love - truly Christian humility conforms to true love.



### **(III) An Idea from the Early Stigmatine Community**

Sharing more in one another's ministry - is an ideal from those early times. There are several incidents in the life of the early community at the Stimate which seem to shed some light on the community, participating - through prayer and interest - in the apostolates of others. Here are several possible examples:

**1. Fr. Innocent Venturini (1803-1864):** throughout most of his years at the Stimate, Fr. Venturini was dedicated to a form of explanation of Christian Doctrine, known by the name of the *Quarta Classe*. It was customarily held between the two Feasts of the Holy Cross, one in May and the other in September. Perhaps something like the American "Bible Camps", or special catechetical instruction for the summer months, Fr. Venturini became a specialist in this ministry [231].

Among the many works conducted under the *Ministry of the Word of God Whatsoever*, the early Stigmatines were much dedicated to this form of catechetical instruction. It was a ministry very dear to the heart of Fr. Bertoni - suggested about 8 times in his original Constitutions, and four of these as specially recommended to the 'Professed,' the Apostolic Missionaries. It is a ministry described by Fr. Lenotti as "one that was rather difficult." the day the Founder died, those who were absent from his room were out teaching the *Quarta Classe*. [232].

With the closing of the schools in the summer months, the early Stigmatines dedicated much time to this difficult ministry [233] - it was a work that absorbed almost all of the membership.

Fr. Lenotti dedicated a Domestic Exhortation to this subject [234]. In some way, the entire community participated in the preparation and the hearing of these classes. All agreed, that Fr. Venturini's huge success in this aspect of the Apostolic Mission was due not a little to Fr. Bertoni - and this, not only because of his personal advice and counsel. The Stigmatine Founder had introduced this method among the early members of the community. Before presenting themselves to their 'public', they would appear in the community refectory, would present their lessons to the assembled confreres, to receive from them their observations and corrections [235].

**2. Shared Sermon/Conference/Catechism Preparation:** this custom seems to have been a fairly common practice among the early members of the Stigmatine community. There is some record of the Feast of the Espousals in the year 1825, as one example. That year, the Feast fell on a Sunday, and hence, the number of priests coming to the Stimate to celebrate the Eucharist was somewhat reduced. The preacher for the evening devotions was Fr. Gaetano Brugnoli- yet, in the papers that have come down to

us, before reaching the final copy that he actually delivered, there is evidence of other hand-writing: that of Fr. Bertoni, Fr. Marani - along with that of Fr. Brugnoli [236].

It seems clear that in the early Stigmatine community, for the three major festivals of the year (the Stigmata of St. Francis on September 17th; the Feast of St. Francis, October 4th; and the Feast of the Espousals, January 23rd) - it seems that the members of the community collaborated in the preparation of the sermons to be delivered. In this same year 1825, there is a panegyric delivered again by Fr. Brugnoli - and again, in its preparatory phases we find the hand-writing of both Fr. Bertoni and Fr. Marani [237].

Fr. Stofella comments that at the Stimate, not rarely - but apparently very willingly - much of the Ministry of the Word of God was done in collaboration [238]. Fr. Bertoni's ideal is present throughout this important sermon delivered for the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, in this same year, 1825. At this time of his life, Fr. Bertoni was confined to his room and chair because of a series of surgical operations, and was not able to write much [239]. This was the Founder's 'Silver Jubilee' Year of priestly ordination - he did celebrate on September 20th that year, but there is no record of any special commemoration of the day.

**3. Fr. Louis Bragato (1780-1874):** in 1835, Fr. Bragato was perhaps the most talented, or prepared member of the early community. He had been the Diocesan Prefect of Studies in the Seminary. On July 1st that year, the Bishop (Grasser) came to the community to ask Fr. Bertoni for the services of a Priest at the Imperial Court of Austria. the Italian Empress, Maria Anna Carolina Pia of Savoy - had asked the Bishop for an Italian priest to serve at the Royal Court as Confessor, and Almsmoner. Throughout this decision making process, the entire Community was together in prayer and sacrifice, in the hopes that this new venture would work out. There is no doubt that Fr. Bragato's departure cost the community dearly, as is evident from the Chronicles of those days:

"... The Stimate will have to be blessed by the faith and holiness of our Superior - how we need them now!" [240]

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The early Stigmatine 'style' of a very broad Apostolic Mission was that of collaboration - sometimes physically, and intellectually and sometimes by prayer and sustained interest.

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This might all be summarized with this line from Fr. Bertoni, written on January 29, 1840, to his dear friend, Fr. Bragato - who had then been in Vienna for about five years:

“... Be cheerful: if you ever want a happy thought, just return in your mind to Fr. Gramego’s room. Have your wings ready to go beyond the clouds to the Heavenly Father, and find support in the Glorious Wounds of your Savior: ‘Seek the things that are above, where Christ is’ (Col 3:1). Just sit there as one of the faithful in the beauty of that peace (cf. Is 22:18): because all comes to an end, and does so quickly, but that eternal peace does not ever come to an end. And please pray for us and know that we do this for you...” [241].

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## F. “THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD”

### Introduction:

The analytical index of the Italian edition of the Jesuit Constitutions simply translates the Latin edition. In the English edition [242], the caption ‘Glory’ is followed immediately by “God” - and it is readily clear that ‘the Glory of God is the supreme norm of the Society of Jesus’. The last entry prior to the formal Constitutions and its Preamble states as follows:

CSJ # 133: “... all things are being directed and ordered toward the greater service and praise of God our Lord.’ [243]

### 1. St. Ignatius:

It is manifestly not by chance that in St. Ignatius’ Constitutions, certain phrases ceaselessly recur: *the service of God ... the Glory of God ... the greater glory of God...the service and praise of God...* These expressions come again and again like a refrain and conclusion to highly delicate prescriptions. In the first Spanish text of the *General Examen* and of the ten Parts of the *Constitutions*, the following statistics emerge:

- *servicio de Dios* - 140 times;
- *gloria... maior gloria... honor de Dios* - 105 times;
- *servicio, alabanza (gloria)* - 28 times.

This implies that on the average, one or another of these formulations occur on every age. While so much of the Ignatian Constitutions deals with studies, it was still necessary to keep the proper motivation for the intellectual life for the studious Jesuits.

St. Ignatius shows himself to be a saint of paradoxes: he asked for the practice of radical abnegation, a complete renunciation of one’s ease, honor, and especially of one’s own judgment and will through a complete obedience. Yet, there do not seem to be long sections devoted to the prayer life of the Jesuits. Along with all these demands for abnegation, the Jesuit ‘experiments’ during formation are unusual. The Jesuit Constitutions expose unformed souls to the general run of human beings, either in hospitals or in harsh pilgrimages. [244]

The spiritual teachings of the Ignatian Constitutions are in harmony with his *Spiritual Exercises* - in both documents, there is the almost ceaseless recalling of the

supreme end of 'the service of God', or of 'God's Glory' to be procured in ever greater measure. Along with this 'theocentrism; of intentions, there is also the constant thought of the interior direction of grace. This thought is constantly translated into the formulas: 'in the Lord', 'according to what is judged in the Lord', 'according to the suggestion of the Holy Spirit.' The Prologue placed at the head of the definitive text of 1556 starts out precisely with recalling the principle that 'as it was our Creator and Lord in His sovereign wisdom and goodness Who designed to begin this least Society of Jesus, so it is He Who will preserve, govern and foster its growth in His holy service' and that 'the inner law or charity which the Holy Spirit traces and engraves upon the heart will contribute to this more than any written constitutions.' [245].

Ignatius is known for his 'mysticism of service' - voluntary and unselfish service in a cause noble among all others. His is indeed a spirituality of service - of unselfish service for the glory of God, of voluntary service embraced through love, of heroic service even to the total denial of oneself. The source of all this seems to be the confluence of two factors:

- powerful supernatural logic: a strong sense of reason and common sense, that goes straight to the decisive point for a life supernaturalized in its entirety;
- - there is also an enthusiastic love for Jesus, the incomparable Leader - an enthusiasm which moves a person following to him to embrace even poverty and insults in order to be associated with Him in winning the world to the service and glory of the Father [246].

The Ignatian ideal is simply this: service, the doing of God's will, with Christ as the Leader, in following Him and in union with Him - in these ideas Ignatius brought in no innovations. By his devotion to the mysteries of the Gospel, and by his tender piety toward the humanity of Christ, he simply inserted himself into the great medieval current of devotion to this holy humanity, and especially into its Cistercian and Franciscan streams. In some highly personal fashion he absorbed this already long tradition into himself. Then he drew from it in order to add something more concrete and attractive to his own thoughts about service of God and conformity to his will.

This seems to be the message which God entrusted to Ignatius through the mystical favors with which He almost overwhelmed him: service through love, apostolic service for the greatest possible glory of God, a service given in generous conformity to the will of God, in the abnegation or sacrifice of all self-love, of personal interest in order to follow Christ, the Leader whom he ardently loved [247].

It has been noted that Ignatius drew from many sources: Francis, Dominic and also St. Alphonsus. The chief Ignatian traits are inseparable: true prayer, genuine familiarity with God, abnegation of oneself, and courageous mortification of disordered passions: also, a tender devotion to Christ, His Passion, and His holy Mother; finally, an ardent zeal to labor, at least through prayer and penance, for the salvation of souls and the glory of God. [248].

In Fr. Bertoni's mysticism, the 'various and proper ministries' of the Apostolic Missionary become all united for the greater honor and glory of God, and His ever greater and more competent service on the part of the Stigmatines.

## **2. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni:**

In Fr. Bertoni's Original Constitutions, Stigmatines are called to 'serve' God and the Church gratuitously (n. 3) - and this *obsequium* is to be offered under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper tasks of their vocation (n. 185). It is all for the greater honor and glory of God - a very central motivation to the heart of Fr. Bertoni, in his two-fold ideal, noted in both the 'Progress in Holiness' and Progress in Knowledge':

CF # 65: "All shall guard the sanctity of their lives, and direct their intention to the glory of God and the salvation of souls, because 'without a pure intention and the imitation of the saints, no one can understand the sayings of the saints,' as St. Athanasias says. Let them often beseech God Who is the Lord of sciences to grant them the necessary knowledge." [249].

Apparently, Fr. Bertoni received this quotation from St. Athanasias from Suarez [250]. In developing his ideal of studiosity the Stigmatine Founder returns once more to the central theme of the service [ *obsequium* ] and glory of God:

CF # 125: "But whenever there is a question of studies which are deemed necessary or helpful overcoming all fatigue, negligence, or tediousness, they shall apply themselves to them eagerly and wholeheartedly, striving to master them for the glory of God and the greater service to the Church" [251].

Fr. Stofella offers Suarez (Book V, chapter 1, pp. 801-806) as the source for these constitutions.

CF # 133: “Finally, in the fourth place, everything pertaining to one’s personal appearance, such as dress and the like, should be unassuming, so that, whatever common poverty allows and permits the religious for his use, modesty will utilize with all propriety for God’s glory and our neighbor’s edification” [252].

In his Part X, Fr. Bertoni presents the negative means to be employed in the living of charity. Much of this is taken from Suarez:

CF # 218: “The signs of such a love (Particular and Disorderly Friendships) are had first of all: if the motive of greater affection be not the greater honor of God, or the greater advantage to religion and souls, or the greater virtue and holiness discernible in such a person: for what cannot be reduced to these motives, is foreign to the order of religious charity. Likewise, St. Basil says that blood relationship, no matter how close, claims no special attention in religious life, but must be disregarded” [253].

This is taken word for word from Suarez [254].

Another means of communicating God’s glory is through letter writing, and the example of the Apostles is cited:

CF # 259: “St. Basil says: ‘He who through the grace of God has done something good, should also let it be known to others, for the greater diffusion of God’s glory’. He relates apostolic examples of this” [255].

This is from Suarez, as Fr. Stofella noted [256].

In the Government of the Congregation, it is for the honor of God and the common good to call the Council together:

CF # 303: “In affairs of lesser importance, the Superior assisted, as far as he deems advisable, by the counsel of his confreres, shall have all the power of ordering and commanding what seems to him to be more advantageous to the glory of God and the common good.” [257].

Fr. Stofella has indicated that these numbers on government come from Suarez, Book X, chapters 1-3.

CF # 304: “A Monitor shall be appointed. After having prayed, and with due respect and humility, he shall admonish the Superior of any fault he suspects him of

being guilty of regarding the greater service and glory of God. Such an office with respect to Superiors is extremely necessary, as St. Basil taught” [258].

### **SUMMARY**

Fr. Nello dalle Vedove offers three Chapters dedicated to the Glory of God in his published doctoral thesis, *A Model of Holy Abandonment*. He writes:

- The Creature is ordained to the Search for the Glory of God;
- The Quest for God’s Glory implies the Exercise of the most Perfect Love;
- The Continuous Search for God’s Glory transforms Life into an Incessant Act of Religion [259].

this was a theme of his own Spiritual Diary - as noted on July 14, 1809: do everything for the glory of God and for his holy love. [260]

For Fr. Bertoni, a ‘devout life’ means the incessant holocaust of oneself to God, in an uninterrupted praise offered to the Divine Majesty and in a reverent carrying out of the Will of the Creator. [261].

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### **‘GLORY’ - END NOTES**

1. Memoriale Privato: 24 agosto 1808: “A S. Giuseppe. In fondo al proprio niente si trova Dio. Sentendo cose molto alte di Dio, una profonda cognizion di me stesso.

“La sera veggendo un’immagine della SS. Trinita’ molta riverenza, e amore alle tre Persone. Il Padre eterno che stava colle braccia aperte mi spiegava la sua misericordia, e la facile comunicazione de’ suoi doni, etc...” [CS IV, p. 39].

2. Memoriale Privato: 27 settembre 1808: “Meditazione. Incarnazione. Sentimento di gratitudine alla Ss.ma Trinita’ e di corrispondenza a Gesu’ Cristo. Io ero obbligato ad amare Dio anche innanzi ch’ei si facesse uomo; quanto piu’ adesso.

“Sera. Perdonanza. Sentimento dell’amore grande della SS.ma Trinita’ in darci il Figliuolo, e gran tenerezza verso di questo insieme con fede molto viva, e desiderio grande di unione: e di associazione alle pene, ed ignominie sue: con petizione di grazia per patire, ed essere disprezzato per lui...” [CS IV, p. 55].



3. Memoriale Privato: 28 settembre 1808: “Meditazione e dopo. Desiderio e petizione umile del martirio, e grand’esortazione interna. [CS IV, p. 55].

4 “De Praecipuo Scopo Sodalium Professorum.

CF # 185: “Cum ejusdem Sodalitatis scopus sit, Ecclesiae sub Episcoporum directione, obsequium praestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera; haec autem quandoque ardua et difficilis res sit, et, si ad fragilitatem hominum comparetur quibusdam forte periculis exposita esse videatur, non tamen propterea imprudens aut temerarium est propositum devotionis nostrae. Primo quidem, quia non humanis viribus, sed Spiritus Sancti gratia implendum creditur, qui enim coepit et inspiravit illud ipse perficiet (cf. Ph 1:6), si per nos non steterit: nam, haec est specialis gratia huius vocationis, quae potentior est omnibus periculis et difficultatibus. Deinde per hanc intentionem non proponimus nos periculis exponere, nec hunc vel illum locum adire, aut has vel illas actiones exercere, sed directionem sequi Orthodoxi Episcopi quem Spiritus Sanctus posuit regere ecclesiam Dei: quod medium satis cautum est ad non errandum in via Dei. Accedit tandem religionis providentia, tum in disponendis et probandis personis, tum etiam in eis eligendis et omni ope sulficiendis et confirmandis.”

{The under-lined words are from Suarez, p. 862 a & b}. [cf. below, note n. 67]

5. Memoriale Privato: 17 agosto 1808: “Nell’Orazione si cominci da Cristo e dalla sua Passione, poi si lasci libero lo spirito, se Dio lo attragga...” [CS IV, p. 35].

6. CF # 51: “Cum dicat Apostolus: ‘non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Iesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum’ (I Co 2:2); Christus autem de seipso dixerit: ‘Ego sum Alpha et Omega, Principium et Finis’ (Apoc. 1:8), hinc omnes prorsus ab addiscenda Doctrina Christiana, etiam memoriter, ubi fieri potest, prout expositam ad captum omnium habemus a Card. Bellarmino, incipiant. Qui vero studiis operam dabunt postmodum huc revertentur, ut addiscant et conquiescant in Catechismo Romano.”

7. Memoriale Privato: 26 febbraio 1809: “Dobbiam fare un ritratto in noi stessi di Gesu’ Cristo.”

8. DV # 8: “... Haec quae est ab Apostolis Traditio sub assistentia Spiritus Sancti in Ecclesia proficit; crescit enim tam rerum quam verborum traditorum perceptio, tum ex contemplatione et studio credentium, quia ea conferunt in corde suo (cf. Lc 2:19, 51), tum ex intima spiritualium rerum quam experiuntur intelligentia, tum ex praeconio eorum qui cum episcopatus successione charisma veritatis certum acceperunt. Ecclesia scilicet, volventibus saeculis, ad plenitudinem divinae veritatis iugiter tendit, donec in ipsa consummentur verba Dei...”

9. Concilium Florentinum, Decretum pro Armenis: "... Hae tres personae sunt unus Deus, et non tres dii: quia trium est una substantia, una essentia, una natura, una divinitas, una immensitas, una aeternitas, omniaque sunt unum, ubi non obviat relationis oppositio." [D-S # 1330; cf. The Christian Faith, n. 325, p. 111].
10. Breve Cronaca, I, p. 6: "... Preghiamo soprattutto perche' il Signore ci conceda, sia pure a prezzo di qualche penoso sacrificio, di riacquistare intero quel segreto dei santi, per cui i nostri primi padri seppero conciliare insieme tante cose, che coi criteri umani son del tutto inconciliabili. I nostri primi padri infatti seppero unire:
- 1. La ricerca continua del piu' umile nascondimento, data come caratteristica della loro vita, con una fama illustre di santita'.
  - 2. La penitenza la piu' austera con la piu' sincera allegria.
  - 3. Un eroico disinteresse ed un vero spirito di poverta' con le spese per fabbriche di casa e chiesa compite senza debite e pur curandone senza risparmio la proprieta' ed il decoro.
  - 4. La disciplina piu' regolare con la svariata molteplicita' delle occupazioni.
  - 5. La soggezione piu' completa col pieno svolgimento delle singole attivita' dei confratelli.
  - 6. Il costante studio e lavoro con la piu' soda pietas'."
11. P. Nello Dalle Vedove, *CSS, Un Modello di Santo Abbandono*. Verona: AMB 1951, specialmente pp. 74, ss.: "La virtu' della Speranza e il Santo Abbandono."
12. ib., pp. 15, ff.
13. ib, pp. 83, ff.
14. cf. CF ## 47-48
15. cf. CF ## 49-68
16. cf. "Nota" di P. Stofella a CF # 165: "... il Praecipuum Munus Sodalium e' delineato ed affermato in Cost. 185 - {da Suarez}.
17. cf. CF # 185: "...haec specialis gratia huius vocationis potentior est omnibus periculis et difficultatibus..."

18. cf. Pagine di Vita Cristiana, pp. 128,ss.; per l'originale, cf. MssB I, # 735: "...*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus. Ps 50:12*. Ah, Creator mio, mio vero principio, mio Dio! Ecco che per la sola mia lingua tutte queste creature vostre al cospetto vostro prostrate, fiducialmente insieme unite in un solo desiderio, con nuova e forte istanza vi pregano: createci un cuor mondo. Perciocche' e chi e' mai che possa far mondo chi trasse dall'immondizia fin la sua origine, se non voi solo, mio Dio? Anzi, chi e' mai che possa produr dal nulla e chiamar a nuovo essere cosa veruna, non diro' cosa si' buona com'e'; la grazia vostra, che monda, purifica, rabbellisce i nostri cuori, se non voi pur solo, mio Dio?"

19. cf. MssB I, ## 1308-1309: "...Questo e' in consiglio del nostro Apostolo, perche' procede Rom 6:5: Se noi siamo piantati nella sua similitudine della sua morte, lo saremo anco della risurrezione. Col nome di piantagione, sotto v'inferisce anche il frutto che si aspetta in noi e da noi. Siccome il corpo di Cristo in terra sepolto ebbe per frutto la salute del mondo, cosi' noi pure, sepolti nuovamente nella Penitenza, abbiain riportato il frutto della giustizia, dell'adozione, della santificazione, d'innunerevoli doni; riporteremo anche in seguito il dono della risurrezione.

"Intanto la vita nostra e' nascosta con Cristo in Dio, Col 3:3. Prodotto questo frutto felice, convien stagionarlo. Potrem dire ancor molto di questa pianta della morte, ma gia' senz' avvederci avendo tocco un piu' lieto motivo del frutto della vita, e racchiudendo egli pure qualche difficulta' a primo aspetto per intenderlo, cosi' troncando per amore di brevità ogni parola sul primo, passiamo la fretta al secondo..."

20. CF # 51: "Cum dicat Apostolus: 'non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Iesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum' (I Co 2:2); Christus autem de seipso dixerit: 'Ego sum Alpha et Omega, Principium et Finish' (Apoc. 1:8)..." [cf. above, note n. 6].

21. cf. Dalle Vedove, Un Modello di santo Abbandono, o.c., pp. 74, ss.

22. o.c., pp. 199, ff.

23. cf. CF ## 187-314

24. Suarez, De Religione Societatis Iesu. Lib. VIII, pp. 926-968; Lib. IX, pp. 969-1057.

25. cf. CF ## 187-266.

26. cf. CF ## 267-297.

27. CF # 221 - 223

28. CF # 221: “Haec ex interno spirituali profectu maxime pendet, quo caritas vera, seu amor in Deum et Christum Dominum, dum incrementum habet, unio ipsa inter Sodales, ex quo singuli uninuntur Deo et Salvatori nostro, augetur et perficitur.”

cf. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 1, p. 955 a: “De mediis Positivis... 1. Haec media quaedam sunt interna, ut unio cujusque nostrum in Christo. - Item oratio. - Veniamus ad alia media, quae non in prohibitione, sed in actione consistunt, et ad eundem finem conciliandi charitatem fraternam ordinantur. Quae partim interna esse possunt, partim externa. Illa generaliora sunt, et ex interno spirituali profectu maxime pendent; huiusmodi est, quod octava parte Constitutionum, c. 1 § 8 dicitur: *Praecipuum utriusque partis vinculum, ad membrorum inter se et cum capite suo unionem, est amor Dei ac Domini nostri Jesu Christi, cum cujus divina et summa bonitate, si Superior ac inferiores valde uniti fuerint, perfacile inter seipsos unientur.*

29. CF # 222: “Unde quia hoc unionis vinculum oratione ac meditatione maxime crescit iuxta illud: ‘in meditatione mea exardescet ignis’, ideo sine dubio haec est certior et solidior via ad hanc unitatem obtinendam.”

Suarez, ib., p. 955 a: “Unde quia hoc vinculum oratione ac meditatione maxime crescit, juxta illud Psalm. 38: *In meditatione mea exardescet ignis*, ideo sine dubio haec est certior et solidior via ad hanc unitatem obtinendam. Sic etiam reduci ad praxim optime poterit, quod p. tertia Constitutionum, c. primo § 4, dicitur: *Atque ita fiat, ut se mutuo considerantes omnes in devotione crescant. Deumque ac Dominum nostrum laudent, quem quisque in alio, ut in illius imagine, agnoscere studeat.* Quae regula sumpta videtur ex reg. 5, Augustini, quam statim numero tertio referam, estque ad rem praesentem optima...”

30. CF # 223: “Quoniam vero nihil ita conciliat erga aliquem verae caritatis amorem, quam cum singularia virtutum ornamenta et Spiritus Sancti dona in eo conspicimus, eumque ut Dei imaginem optimis gratiae coloribus depictam contemplamur; si ergo omnes et in se ipsis studeant in his virtutibus et donis crescere, et in aliis ea frequenter considerare, eosque tanquam sibi Superiores in animo ducere, et de illorum spiritualibus bonis gaudere, Deoque gratias agere; mirum profecto in modum mutua inter eos caritas crescet.”

Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 1, p. 955 a: “...quia nihil ita conciliat erga aliquem verae caritatis amorem, quem singularia virtutum ornamenta et Spiritus Sancti dona in eo conspicere, eumque ut Dei imaginem, optimis gratiae coloribus depictam, contemplari. Si ergo omnes, et in seipsis studeant in his virtutibus et donis crescere, et in aliis frequenter considerare, eosque (ut ibidem dicitur) tanquam sibi superiores in animo

ducere, et de illorum spiritualibus hominis gaudere Deoque gratias agere, mirum profecto in modum mutua inter eos charitas crescet.”

31. cf. CF ## 47-68

32. CF # 262: “Cum sit finis Sodalitatis, animarum salutem procurare et consequenter ministeria postulet huic fini accomodata; hinc in primis fit, ut quilibet sodalis prius et impensius procurare et desiderare debeat suorum fratrum salutem, quam externorum, quia caritas ordinatissima est. Unde sicut inclinatur ad quaerendam prius propriam spiritualem salutem, quam aliorum, ita etiam inter alios prius intendit et quaerit salutem spiritualem spiritualium fratrum, totiusque corporis Sodalitatis, quam externorum.”

Suanrez VIII, c. 8, n. 22, p. 962 a: “22. *Ultimum medium augendae fraternae charitatis, cura cujusque pro alterius profectu. - Item zelus quo conspirant socii ad salutem externorum.* - Ultimo finis ipse, et ministeria Societatis, et hanc unionem maxime requirunt, et ad illam valde juvant. Est enim Societatis finis animarum salutem procurare, et consequenter ministeria postulet huic fini accomodata. Hinc ergo imprimis fit, ut quilibet de Societate prius et impensius procurare et desiderare debeat suorum fratrum salutem, quam externorum, quia caritas ordinatissima est; unde sicut inclinatur ad quaerendam prius propriam spiritualem salutem quam alienam, ita etiam inter alios prius intendit et quaerit salutem spiritualem fratrum, totiusque corporis Societatis, quam externorum.”

33. “Glory”: the word is noted in some form: CF ## 3; 26; 65; 77; 78; 120; 125; 133; 135; 136; 143; 149; 185; 200; 218; 221; 223; 226; 228; 233; 239; 252; 255; 259; 283; 293; 303; 304.

34. “Mission(s)”: noted in CF ## 2; 7; 76; 85; 162.

35. CF # 1: “Finis: Missionarii Apostolici, in obsequium Episcoporum.”

36. CF # 2: “Modus: sub dependentia Ordinariorum locorum, in quibus Missiones fieri contigerit, quibus omnino parere debeant, quod ad exercitium attinet Apostolici muneris, ac licentiam prius cum facultatibus ab eis recipere, servata semper eorundem Ordinariorum circa loca et tempus ejusmodi munus exercendi moderatione” (ex Decr. S. Congr. de Prop, 20 Dec. 20 1817).

37. P. Stofella writes in a note, 2nd paragraph on p. 43 of the Original Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni: “... Come si disse nell’Introduzione e come il testo esplicitamente

ocnferma, le parole **Missionari Apostolici** etc., non sono il **nome** che vien dato ai membri componenti il nuovo Istituto religioso, ma il fine a cui esso tende, che e' quello di formare individui che per il loro zelo e qualita' apostoliche meritino davvero tale grado (cf. nn. 7, 49, 76, 85, 89). **Lenotti**, p. 13.

38. cf. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, *La Missione Apostolica - chiave del carisma Ignaziano* . cf. also Antonio M. de Aldama *La Missio - centro focale delle Costituzioni Ignaziane* .

39. CF # 7: "Promotionis gradus differt secundum qualitates receptorum.  
"Nam alii, quorum ingenium et pietas capax est, promoventur usque ad perfectum opus sacerdotum, assumentes apostolicam missionem.  
"Alii vero, quibus vires et facultates animi et corpori sufficiunt, promoventur usque ad perfectum obsequium et auxilium Missionariorum." [cf. *graviora ministeria* CF # 158; *accomodata* -CF # 262].

40. cf. PC 15

41. CF # 74: "Dentur veluti auxiliatores quandoque Missionariis et quandoque etiam feminarum confessiones audiant."

42. CF # 75: "Hinc etiam mulierum confessiones excipiant et Missionibus inserviant ordinarie."

43. CF # 76: "Denique munus Missionum dirigendarum accipiant, et salutem animarum omnino insistant."

44. CF # 162: "Sacramentorum administratio, praecipue confessionis et Eucharistiae; sacrificiis etiam fructuum Missionum et concionum et Confessionum a Deo imploratio."

45. Suarez I, c. 3, n. 10, p. 572 a: "...Nam imprimis ex illo fine juvandi proximos ortum est, ut haec religio, et habitu et munere clericorum insituta est, ut un c. 5 declarabimus. Unde hoc potest constitui tamquam primum medium scilicet, assumptio status clericalis, quo possint proximis inservire, et consequenter omnis dispositio, quae ad talem statum digne assumendum necessaria est, maxime in his hominibus qui perfectionis viam profitentur.

"Secundo, inter haec media numeranda sunt omnia ministeria sacra, quae ad purgandos, illuminandos, et perficiendos alios utilia sunt, inter quae primum locum tenet sacramentorum administratio, praesertim confessionis et Eucharistiae, quae hujus

instituti maxime propria est, ut ex Bullis Pauli III et Julii III, et Gregorii XIII, et ex forma instituti, quae in eis refertur, et ex omnibus constitutionibus satis notum est. Et hic etiam spectat sacrificiis suis Ecclesiam juvare, pro conversione infidelium; et correctione haereticorum et fructu ac profectu ipsorum fidelium ea frequenter offerendo.

“Tertio, principaliter etiam ad hoc genus mediorum spectat quodcumque ministerium verbi Dei, quod variis modis, et magna ex parte propriis, in hac religione exercetur: primo...”[cf. CF # 163].

46. “Missio-(nes)” - cf. note n. 34 above.

47. “Servitium/Servire”: cf. CF ## 3, 26; 64; 77; 78;236; 236 - i nn. 25; 64; 78 pertain to the “Lay Brothers”.

48. CF # 3: “Gratis omnino servire Deo et Ecclesiae.”

49. CF # 26: “In iis vero qui ad spiritualia ministeria admittuntur capacitas ingenii, indoles boni iudicii et sufficiens memoriae tenacitas, universae autem virtutis et perfectionis spiritualis studiosi sint, constantes, et strenui in his quae ad divinum servitium aggrediuntur, et zelum habeant salutis animarum et propterea ad hanc Sodalitatem bene affecti sint...”

50. Obsequium: cf. CF ## 1; 57; 62; 125; 185; 195; 237.

51. CF # 57: “In unaquaque igitur disciplina, aliquis, vel aliqui sint, qui peculiari studio et diuturniori tempore ac diligentia illi incumbat, et ad varia Ecclesiae obsequia, quae pro temporum et occasionum diversitate occurrunt utillima erunt.”

cf. Suarez V, c. 2, n. 8, pp. 809 b - 810 a: “8. *Dicta peritia quomodo Societati necessaria*. - In quo etiam considero, aliud esse loqui de toto corpore, seu confuse de operariis Societatis, aliud vero de singulis personis ejus. Nam priori modo loquendo, absolute dicere possumus necessariam esse Societati maximam perfectionem omnium dictarum disciplinarum et linguarum; quia licet difficile, vel moraliter impossibile sit, omnes illas simul cum theologica doctrina in singulis personis perfecte conjungi, tamen in ipso corpore Societatis esse potest, et procuranda est excellentia et eminentia in omnibus illis. Quod et facile comparari poterit, si in unaquaque disciplina aliquis vel aliqui sint, qui peculiari studio, et diuturniori tempore, ac diligentius illi incumbat, et ad varia ecclesiae obsequia, quae pro temporum et occasionum diversitate occurrunt, utilissimum est, ut discursus factus ostendit, et ipsa experientia satis hactenus comprobavit. Atque ob eam rem, quamvis haec studia in Societate principaliter ad Theologiam referantur, ad quam, et ad sacrae Scripturae intelligentiam ejus religiosi

frequentius et principalius tendunt, nihilominus interdum aliqui diutius in diutius in his inferiribus artibus occupantur, ut in eis singulariter fines excellant.”

[As P. Stofella notes: ‘Tutta la sostanza di questo capitolo e quasi tutte le parole son prese dall’ o.c. del Suarez, V, c. 2, n. 8. Infatti si trovano in questa citazione CF ## 56-58].

52. CF # 62: “Satagendum Superiori erit, ut temporibus ad valetudinem corporis incommodis non studeant; somno etiam quantum temporis satis erit tribuant et in laboribus mentis modum servant, ut diutius perseverare in litteris addiscendis et exercendis in ecclesiae obsequium possint.”

53. Suarez V, c. 3, n. 11, p. 816 a: “... In hoc autem eodem genere media privativa dici possunt, quae corporalia impedimenta studiorum auferunt seu praeveniunt. Hujusmodi est illud, quod habetur quarta parte Constitutionum, c. 4, § 1: *Peculiari cura animadvertendum erit ut temporibus valetudini corporis incommodis scholastici non studeant, ut somno quantum temporis satis sit, tribuant, et in laboribus mentis modum servant; sic enim fiet ut diutius in illis perseverare, tam in litteris addiscendis, quam in eisdem exercendis, ad Dei gloriam possint...*”

[Again P. Stofella notes that for this whole “Cap VI delle Costituzioni del Bertonì”: “Anche qui la sostanza ed intere frasi sono tolte dal Suaarez, V, c. 3, nn. 11, 12; c. 4, nn. 9.10...].

54. “Ministerium [sing.]: cf. CF ## 7; 48; 62; 125; 163; 195; 240; 241.

“Ministeria” [pl.]: cf. CF ## 26; 57; 137; 155; 158; 162; 182; 185; 262.

55. CF # 7: [for the Latin text, cf. note n. 39 above].

56. CF # 48: [last paragraph]: “... Fuga otii omnimoda et occupatio assidua in rebus, quae ad ecclesiasticum ministerium, ad religiosa officia, aut ad observantiam disciplinae et obedientiam Superioribus debitam pertinere vedeantur.”

57. CF # 62: [for the Latin, cf. note n. 52 above].

58. CF # 125: “In iis vero, quae necessario, sive utiliter, addiscenda erunt contra laborem, vel negligentiam, vel taedium addiscendi, per vehementiam hujusmodi rerum percipiendam, alacriter et constanter insurgent propter Dei gloriam et ecclesiae majus obsequium.”



59. CF # 163: “Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium...” - cf. Suarez I, c. 4, n. 10, p. 572 b: “... Tertio, principaliter etiam ad hoc genus mediorum spectat quodcumque ministerium verbi Dei, quod variis modis, et magna ex parte, in hac religione exercetur: prima, per publicas conciones, vel lectiones sacras, etc..]”

60. CF # 195: “Cum ad religiosam caritatem praecipue pertineat se invicem obsequio, beneficio et honore praevenire...”

61. CF # 255: “Praeterea cum finis praecipuus nostrae Sodalitatis, sit conversio animarum, hunc magnopere consequitur conversando cum hominibus, et de divinis rebus, suaviter ac discrete loquendo: ad hoc autem valde proficiunt religiosi sodales in his, quae inter se habent religiosa colloquia, quae frequentius esse debent de divinis rebus; et ita usu addiscunt suis temporibus tacere, et suis prudenter et fructuose loqui, quod est optimum silentii genus, ut indicavit Ambrosius: ‘Pythagoras, inquit, suis silentium imposuit, ut non loquendo, loqui doceret. David ut loquendo magis disceremus loqui; quomodo enim sine exercitio doctrina? aut sine usu profectus?’ Et concludit: ‘Ita ergo qui volunt discere cautionem loquendi, quod naturae est non negent, quod custodiae exercent.’ (De Off. libr. 1, c. 10).”

Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 17, p. 960 a & b: “17. *Hoc etiam medio instruimur ad agendum cum proximis.* - Alia praeterea consideratio adhiberi potest, quia hoc medium est etiam utile Societati ad finem suum praecipuum conversionis animarum, quem magnopere consequitur conversando cum hominibus, et de divinis rebus suaviter ac discrete loquendo; ad hoc autem valde proficiunt religioni Societatis, in his quae inter se habent religiosa colloquia; quae frequentius esse debent de divinis rebus, cujusmodi praescribuntur in instructione decima quarta, de Renovatione spiritus, ad finem; et ita usu addiscunt suis temporibus tacere, et suis prudenter et fructuose loqui, quod est optimum silentii genus, ut indicavit Ambrosius, in Psalm. 118, Octonar. 2, in principio, et optime toto cap. decimo, libro primo de Offic.: *Pythagoras (inquit) suis silentium imposuit, ut non loquendo loqui doceret; David, ut loquendo magis disceremus loqui; quomodo enim sine exercitio doctrina? aut sine usu profectus?* etc., quod late per varia artium humanarum exempla prosequitur, et concludit; *Ita ergo, qui volunt discere cautionem loquendi, quod naturae est non negent, quod custodiae est exercent.* “

62. CF # 26: [for the 1st Paragraph of this, cf. note n. 49 above].

63. CF # 57: [cf. above note n. 51, with the citation from Suarez]

64. CF # 158: “De Professione: Ad professionem non admittuntur nisi Sacerdotes, quia ad Professos pertinet principale regimen Sodalitatis, et graviora ministeria quae Sacerdotium requirunt.” [cf. CF # 262].

Suarez VI, c. 1, n. 4, p. 838 b: “... Ratio vero hujus conditionis presbyterii est quia Societas est religio presbyterorum, ut supra lib. I, c. 5, ostensum est, et quia gradus professorum est supremus in Societate, ad eosque pertinet principale regimen ejus, et graviora ministeria, quae sacerdotium requirunt.”

65. CF # 162: [cf. above, note n. 44; cf. Suarez, p 572 a & b].

66. CF # 182: “Eorum munus est docere non solum in concionibus, exercitiis, lectionibus, quae ad vitam aeternam consequendam necessaria vel utilia sunt; sed etiam rudimenta fidei et morum, praesertim rudibus, et pueris explanare, in oratoriis, in catechismis publicis et privatis; hoc etiam iss commendatum sit.”

[P. Stofella cites Suarez I, c. 6 for this number - cf. pp. 587-593].

67. CF # 185: [cf above, note n. 4, for the Latin. P. Stofella cites Suarez I, c. 6 for this number - there is great similarity for this text in Suarez VI, c. 4, n. 25, p. 862 a, [on the 4th Vow of the Jesuits]: “25. *Ad tertium caput responsio triplex.* - Quamvis autem hoc votum sit de re valde ardua et difficili, et, si ad fragilitatem hominum comparetur, periculis expositum (id enim non negamus), non tamen propterea imprudens est aut temerarium. Primo quidem, quia non humanis viribus, sed Spiritus Sancti gratia implendum creditur; ‘qui enim coepit et inspiravit illud, ipse perficit’ (cf. Ph 1:6), si per nos non sterterit (ut in superioribus, lib. I, cap. sexto, numero nono et cap. septimo, numero decimo, diximus) haec est specialis gratia hujus vocationis, quae potentior est omnibus periculis et difficultatibus. Deinde per hoc votum non promittimus nos periculis exponere, nec has vel illas regiones adire, aut has vel illas actiones exercere, sed obedire Christi Vicario, quo medio nullum potest esse certius ad non errandum in via Dei. Accedit tandem religionis providentia, tum in disponendis et probandis personis, tum etiam in eligendis. At praeterea in Constitutionibus saepe monemur, ut patet in Septima Parte Constitutionum, c. 1 § 2, et in Bulla 1 Pauli III et Julii III, ne ullus in hanc vel illam partem mitti procuret, sed se moveri sinat, quamvis se paratum ostendere malum non sit...”

68. CF # 262: [cf. above note n. 32, with the citation from Suarez, p. 962 a].

69. CF ## 221 - 223 [cf. above nn. 28-30, with abundant citations from Suarez, p. 955].

70. "PHILOXENIA" : Cf. Gn 18: 1-8; 24:18-32; Ac 10:23; Rm 16:23; Heb 13:2. cf. also Roland DeVaux, OP, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* , pp. 10, ff.; C. Spicq, OP, *Theologie Morale du NT* , II, pp. 809,ss.
71. cf. CF ## 243-249.
72. Suarez VIII, c. 8, nn. 8, 9, pp. 957 a & b, 958 a
73. CF # 245: "Hoc ad omnes extenditur erga quoscumque Sodales, sine ulla generis aut patriae distinctione, absque personarum acceptatione vel limitatione sive professi sint, sive novitii, sive sani, sive infirmi, sive noti, sive ignoti, ad omnes magna caritas exhibenda est."
74. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 8, p. 957 b: "... Unde colligitur officium hoc in unoquoque Societatis domicilio, ad totam in universam Societatem extendi, sine ulla nationum vel provinciarum distinctione, absque personarum acceptatione vel limitatione, sive professi sint, sive novitii; sive sani, sive infirmi; sive noti, sive ignoti; ad omnes magna charitas exhibenda est..."
75. CF # 246: "Haec autem caritas in primis in ipsa receptione ostendenda est, quae esse debet cum externis signis, maxime amicitiae, qualia exhiberi solent, de more regionis a gravibus inter se amicis, aut etiam consanguineis."
76. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 9, p. 957 b: "9. *Dicta hospitalitas signis benevolentiae ostendenda*. - Quae imprimis in ipsa receptione ostendenda est, quae esse debet cum externis signis maximae amicitiae, qualia exhiberi solent de more regionis, a gravibus inter se amicis, aut etiam consanguineis. et ideo in regula trigesima quarta ex communibus, cautum sit *ut nemo alium etiam in joco tangat, et ea, quae religiosos decet, gravitas et modestia retineantur*, subditur; *Praeterquam in signum charitatis amplexando eum, qui aaut abit vel redit pergere*. Deinde non solis signis..."
77. CF # 249: "Tandem concludit unumquemque debere juxta suam qualitatem et necessitatem tractari, ita tamen, 'ut cibaria, quae promiscue omnibus apponuntur eiusmodi sint, quae cum vili pretio, cum parvo etiam negotio comparentur, Adhibenda tamen in mensa, necessaria ubique munditia, atque elegantia, ita tamen ut numquam extra fines nostros egrediamur.'"
78. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 10, p. 958 a: "...Et post multa, quae de hoc argumento eleganter prosequitur, et valde notanda sunt ad vitandos excessus, quos non charitas,

sed vanitas, vel ambitio, in suscipiendis hospitibus, saecularibus, aliquando introducit, concludit, unumquemque debere juxta suam qualitatem et necessitatem tractari, ita tamen, *ut cibaria, quae promiscue omnibus apponuntur, ejusmodi sint quae cum vili pretio, tum parvo etiam negotio comparentur. Adhibenda tamen in mensa necessaria ubique munditia, atque elegantia, ita tamen ut numquam extra fines nostros egrediamur.*

79. cf. CF ## 234-242.

80. cf. CF # 236: "...Infirmorum cura ante omnia et super omnia adhibenda est, ut sicut revera Christo, ita eis serviatur.." (S. Benedictus, Reg. c. 36).

81. CF # 240: "Lupus in Regula monachorum: 'Si quis, ait, coepit aegrotare, transferatur ad exedram latiore et tanto senum ministerio confoveatur, ut nec delicias urbium, nec matris querat affectum.' (ex S. Hieron. c. pen.).

82. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 6, pp. 956 b - 957 a: "... Praeterea in Concilio Aquisgrand., sub Ludovico imperatore, cap. quadragesimo secundo, clericis, seu Canonicis regularibus haec regula maxime commendatur. Item Lupus, in Regula monachorum, ex S. Hieronymo, c. pen.: *Si quis (ait) caeperit aegrotare, transferatur ad exedram latiore, et tanto senum ministerio confoveatur, ut nec delicias urbium, nec mataria quaerat affectum.*"

83. cf. CF ## 227-229.

84. cf. Ac 2:44-46; 4:32,ss. - texta cited by Fr. Bertoni in: CF ## 189; 226; 232.

85. CF # 228: Unde Augustinus: 'Omnes unanimiter et concorditer juvent' (Reg. c. 2); ac si diceret: ut iuvent concorditer, necesse est ut vivant unanimiter. Et subdit: 'Et honorate in vobis Deum invicem, cuius templa facti estis.' Quia Deus solus est, qui habitare facit omnes unius moris in domo: unde haec uniformitas maxime facit ut Deus in omnibus recognoscatur, et consequenter, ut omnes in Deo maxime uniantur."

86. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 3, p. 955 b: Unde Augustinus in Reg. c. 5" *Omnes unanimiter et concorditer vivant*, ac si diceret, ut vivant concorditer, necesse est ut vivant unanimiter. Et subdit: *Et honorate in vobis Deum invicem, cujus templa facti estis.* Quia Deus solus est, *qui habitare facit omnes unius moris in domo*; unde haec uniformitas maxime facit, ut Deus in omnibus recognoscatur, et consequenter ut omnes in Deo maxime uniantur."

87. cf. CF ## 250-256.

88. CF # 255 [for the Latin, cf. note n. 61 above].

89. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 17, p. 960 a & b: [for the Latin, cf. note n. 61 above].

90. cf. CF ## 257-261.

91. CF # 259: “S. Basilius ait: ‘Qui Dei beneficio recte aliquid fecerit, is ceteris quoque notum facere illud debet, ut Dei gloria crebrior efficiatur.’ Affertque de hoc Apostolorum exempla (reg. mon. 70).”

92. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 21, p. 961 b: “...extat etiam hac de re instructio data anno 1594, praescribens modum in his litteris tenendum, consonatque huic institutioni, quod Basilius scribit in Regulis moralibus, reg. 70, c. 1: *Qui Dei beneficio recte aliquid fecerit, is caeteris quoque notum facere illud debet, ut Dei gloria crebrior efficiatur*. Affertque de hoc Apostolorum exempla, Acta 14; Ep 6...”

93. cf. CF ## 187-266: [P. Bertoni took many of his Original Constitutions, *verbatim* from Suarez].

94. CF # 266: “Eleganter Chrysostomus in illud Ioannis XVI: ‘ut sint unum sicut ego et tu unum sumus’: ‘nihil est concordiae et mutuae voluntati aequiparandum, unus enim multiplex est. Si enim concordēs sint duo vel decem, non amplius erit unus, sed eorum unusquisque sit decupulus et inuenies in decem unum et in uno decem.’ (Hom. 77 in Io 16).

“Et infra: ‘Ecce dilectionis excellentia, quo pacto unum inseparabilem et multiplicem reddit, et unus in multis simul locis, in Perside et Romae esse possit, et quod natura non potest, dilectio potest.’”

95. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 22, p. 962 a & b: “... Ut enim dixit eleganter Chrysostomus, hom. 77, in id Ioan. 16, *ut sint unum, sicut ego et tu unum sumus: Nihil est concordiae et mutuae voluntati aequiparandum; unus enim multiplex est. Si enim concordēs sint duo vel decem, non amplius erit unus, sed eorum unusquisque fit decupulum, et inuenies in decem unum, et in uno decem;* et infra: *ecce dilectionis excellentiae, quo pacto unum inseparabilem et multiplicem reddit, et unus in multis simul locis, in Perside et Roma esse possit, et quod natura non potest, dilectio potest. Quod hactenus per divinam gratiam in Societate mirum in modum experimur, faxitque Deus ut in perpetuum conservetur et augeatur.*”

96. cf. CF ## 267-297.

97. CF # 271 “Propositum unicuique sit exemplum Christi Domini, qui vitam ita instituit, ut cum hominibus conversaretur, et cum eis manducaret, et biberet; cum tamen non solum perfectionem servaverit, sed etiam vitae statum perfectissimum coluerit.”

98. CF # 272: “Item exemplum Apostolorum, quos statum religiosum et perfectionis habuisse novimus, et tamen constant inter homines familiariter conversatos fuisse et omnibus omnia factos ut omnes lucrifacerent.”

99. CF # 272: “Unde concilium Moguntinum sub Leone III cum dixisset: ‘Ministri altaris, vel monachi a negotiis saecularibus omnino abstineant’, subdit: ‘Non tamen justum negotium est contradicendum propter necessitates diversas, quia legimus Sanctos Apostolos negotiasse.’ (c. 14)

“Sic ergo nos in negotiatione Apostolorum circa animarum salutem recte colligimus, non esse contra religiosum statum eo fine cum proximis conversari ex vi instituti.”

100. Suarez IX, c. 8, n.2, p. 1045 b: “2. *Prima assertio bipartita. - Probatur Prima Pars. -* Dicendum nihilominus est primo, medium hoc familiariter conversandi cum proximis ex suo genere non esse alienum ab statu perfectionis, et juxta proprium. Societatis institutum esse illi maxime conveniens. Utramque partem certam existimo. Prior constat exemplo Christi Domini, qui vitam ita instituit, ut cum hominibus conversaretur, et cum eis manducaret et biberet, ut ex Evangelio constat, cum tamen non solum perfectionem servaverit, sed etiam perfectissimum vitae statum coluerit, ut latius in n 2 tom., tertia parte, disp. 28, sect. 1 et 2, diximus. Idem ostendi exemplum Apostolorum, quos statum religiosum et perfectionis habuisse supra ostendimus, tom. praeced., et supra, lib. I, c. 5, n. 6, et tamen constat, inter homines familiariter conversatos fuisse, et omnibus omnia factos, ut omnes lucrifacerent. Unde Concilium Mogunt., sub Leone III, cap decimo quarto, cum dixisset: *Ministri altaris Domini, vel monachi a negotiis saecularibus omnino abstineant*, subdit: *Non tamen justum negotium est contradicendum propter necessitates diversas, quia legimus sanctos Apostolos negotiasse*. Sic ergo nos in negotiatione Apostolorum circa animarum salutem, recte colligimus non esse contra religiosum statum eo fine cum proximis conversari ex vi instituti.”

101. CF # 189: “Unusquisque autem veluti hujus concordiae normam, prae oculis habeat de illis primis fidelibus leguntur in Actis Apostolorum, unde omnis religiosorum ordo sumpsit initium et formam: ‘Quorum erant cor unum et anima una, qui habebant omnia communia, et dividebant singulis prout unicuique opus erat; et ideo et sumebant cibum cum exultatione et simplicitate cordis, collaudantes Deum et habentes gratiam ad omnem plebem; gratia magna erat in omnibus illis.’ (cf. Ac 2:44,ss.)

102. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 3, p. 948 b: “... nec immerito B. P. N. Ignatius in hac unione et vinculo fraternae charitatis praecipuum hujus religionis fundamentum posuit, nam hoc etiam fuit primum vinculum status religiosi, qui in illis fidelibus inchoatus censetur, *quorum erat cor unum et anima una, qui habebant omnia communia, et dividebant singulis, prout unicuique opus erat; et ideo et sumebant cibum cum exultatione et simplicitate cordis, collaudantes Deum, et habentes gratiam ad omnem plebem; gratia magna erat in omnibus illis, ut Actor. 3 et 4 dicitur.*”

103. CF # 226: “Peculiariter vero est paupertatis medium, utpote religiosi ratione voti propriissimum, quod luculenter tradidit Basilius: ‘Ubi, inquit, omnia communia sunt, animi, mentes, corpora, et ea omnia quibus necessario ad victum cultumque utimur, communis Deus, communis pietatis mercatura, communes labores.’ (Const. Mon. c. 19).

“Idem Cassianus, afferens illud actorum 4: ‘erat illis cor unum et anima una’: et statim ibidem subditur: et erant illis omnia communia.’ (Coll. 16, c. 6).”

104. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 2, p. 955 b: “...peculiariter vero paupertatis medium, utpote religiosi ratione voti propriissimum, quod luculenter tradidit Basilius, in Constit. Monast. cap. decimo nono: *Ubi (inquit) omnia communia sunt, animi, mentes, corpora, et ea omnia, quibus necessario ad victum cultumque utimur, communis Deus, communis pietatis mercatura, communes labores, etc.* Idem prosequitur cap. trigesimo quinto; et Cassian., collat. 16, c. 6, afferens id Actor. 4: *Erat illis cor unum et anima una.* Et statim subditur: *Et erant illis omnia communia,* Chrysostomus, libro tertio, contra Vitup., vitae monast., et orat. de S. Philogonio, et alia congerit Gratianus, 12, q. 2, c. *Dilectissimis,* cum aliis.”

105. CF # 232: “Quamquam hoc impedire non debeat quominus necessitatibus omnium cum proportionem subveniatur, iuxta illud: ‘Dividebatur singulis prout unicuique opus erat’ (cf. Ac 2:45; 4:35), nam hoc ipsum caritas ipsa desiderat.”

106. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 4, p. 956 a: “... ut optime docet Bernardus, serm. trigesimo in Cantica. Quamquam hoc impedire non debeat, ut praecedenti cap., numero decimo

septimo, in simili dixi, quominus necessitatibus omnium cum proportionem subveniat, juxta illud, *dividebatur singulis, prout unicuique opus erat*; nam hoc ipsum charitas ipsa desiderat.”

107. CF # 261: “Hinc etiam antiqua fuit in ecclesia consuetudo ut essent inter fideles communicatoriae (sic enim appellabant) litterae, quibus invicem inter se catholici communicare et fidei suae testimonium praebere solebant, de quibus mentionem facit Optatus et Augustinus. (Libr. II de schism Donatist., Ep. 163, ad Eleus.).”

108. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 21, p. 962 a: “... Hinc etiam antiqua fuit in Ecclesia consuetudo, ut essent inter fideles communicatoriae (sic enim eas appellabant) litterae, quibus invicem inter se catholici communicare, et fidei suae testimonium praebere solebant, de quibus mentionem facit Optatus, lib. 2, de Schisma. Donatist., et Augustinus, epist. 163 ad Eleusium.”

109. cf. above, note n. I.

110. cf. above, note nn. 2 & 3.

111. CF # 49: “In hac religiosa Clericali Sodalitate, cujus finis est non solum contemplari, sed etiam contemplata aliis tradere, necessaria est non vulgaris scientia, sed perfecta rerum omnium, quae ad fidem et mores pertinent, ac proinde necessarium est etiam, ut religiosi clerici huiusmodi scientiae perfecte acquirendae, in tali statu religioso incumbant.”

112. Suarez V, c. 1, n. 6, p. 803 a: “6. *Secunda assertio bipartita. - Prior pars ostenditur. -* Dico secundo: in statu religioso, cujus finis est non solum contemplari, sed etiam contemplata aliis tradere, necessaria est non vulgaris scientia, sed perfecta rerum omnium, quae ad fidem et mores pertinent, ac proinde necessarium etiam est ut religiosi huiusmodi scientiae perfectae acquirendae in tali statu religioso incumbant. Prior pars adeo est evidens, ut non egeat probatione...”

113. CS # 155: “Instructor vero illos omnes in spiritu formandos curabit universamque nostri Instituti rationem explanabit per statos aliquot dies cuiusque hebdomadae, ac modos exponet juvandi proximos salutariter.”

114. cf. Suarez VI, c. 2, pp. 844-850. - cf. P. Stofella’s note here : “Parte VIII: I due Capi di questa Parte sono estratti dal Suarez (o.c., lib. VI, c. 2) e riproducono il così detto Anno di Terza Probazione, tanto importante fra i Gesuiti.”



115. CF # 158: [...*graviora ministeria*... cf. above, note n. 64].
116. Suarez VI, c. 1, n. 4, p. 838 b: [... *graviora ministeria* ... this number # 158, is taken *verbatim* from Suarez, cf. above, note n. 64].
117. "... *principale munus Sodalium*...: cf. P. Stofella's Note, Costituzioni Bertoni, p. 115].
118. "...Cum ejusdem Sodalitatis scopus sit, ecclesiae sub Episcoporum directione, obsequium praestare per varia et et propria suae vocationis munera; haec autem quandoque ardua et difficilis res sit...nam haec est specialis gratia huius vocationis, quae potentior est omnibus periculis et difficultatibus..." [cf. note 4 above for this entire passage]. .
- 119 Suarez VI, c. 4, n. 25, p. 862 a: cf. above note n. 4, where CF # 185 is explained, taken *verbatim* from Suarez].
120. cf. CF ## 187-266.
121. cf. CF ## 267-297.
122. CF # 162: [cf. above, note n. 44 for the Latin].
123. Suarez I, c. 3, n. 10, p. 572 a & b: [the Latin text of Suarez is the source for CF ## 163, ff.].
124. CF # 6: "Media. Perfectio sui ipsius. Perfectio in doctrinis ecclesiasticis...Ratio vivendi, sive quod ad alimenta pertinet, sive quod ad vestes et tectum erit consentanea clericis perfectioribus quibuscum vivent et aedificationi fidelium, sive in parcitate christiana, sive in evangelica paupertate."
125. CF # 137: "Vestis simplex sit et honesta, quae paupertatem redoleat simul et deceat tum ministeriis, tum hominibus quibuscum versamur, et munda, nec lacera."
126. Suarez I, c. 3, n. 13, pp. 574 b - 575 a: "*De mediis privativis ad eandem salutem proximorum*. - ... haec media non tantum positiva, sed etiam privativa esse... non habere usum chori; ...praesertim quia parati esse debent ad varias missiones ... Aliud medium privativum numerari potest, abstinere a suscipienda cura

monialium...Potest etiam inter haec media poni non accepisse singularem habitum, sed communem clericorum honeste viventium, juxta morem regionis in qua socii versantur; nam hoc etiam ad hunc finem ordinatum est, ut facilius pateret aditus ad omnes proximos, sive haereticos, sive fideles, etc....”

127. Suarez I, c. 5, nn. 1-8, pp. 582 b - 586 b (passim): “... Societas est et vocatur religio clericorum et presbyterorum... illa est religio clericorum, quae per se instituitur ad eas functiones ad quas clericalis ordo per se necessarius est... (Ipsa) per se maxime est clericorum religio, ac per se primo tendit ad perficiendos homines suos in statu clericali, et ut proprias clericorum functiones honestius, sanctius ac fructuosius perficiant....ita decuit eorum habitum nihil aliud significare, quam clericos religiose et sancte viventes ex vi suae professionis...Quae omnia citato loco ostensa sunt, simulque probatum Christum, non solum fuisse institutorem status religiosi, ut sic, sed etiam factorem cujusdam particularis religionis, quae in Apostolorum collegio primum creata fuit, et postea in aliis discipulis fuit propagata. Illam ergo dicimus fuisse primam religionem clericorum, quia non solum ex sacerdotibus a sui initio congregata est, sed etiam per se primo fuit a Christo instituta ad actiones hierarchicas purgandi, illuminandi, et perficiendi homines, quae sunt proprie actiones clericalis status...hic ordo dicitur coepisse in Apostolis, quatenus ordo clericorum...ad divina mysteria divinamque contemplationem...(Dicere) possumus S. Ignatium non tam novam religionem instituisse, quam eam quae in Apostolis fuit, etiam quoad proprium finem ejus, scilicet, Evangelii praedicationem ac fidei propagationem et defensionem, instaurasse....”

[cf. For a partial English translation of Suarez: William Humphrey, *The Religioius State. A Digest of the Doctrine of Suarez*, Volume III. London/New York: Burns & Oates, pp. 397-398].

128. Suarez, I, c. 5, nn. 1-8, pp. 582-586: [no religious habit for the Novices]. cf. also Suarez ib., II, c. 5, n. 15, p. 647 b: “...Hic etiam non est necessarius specialis habitus regularis, sed totum ad hoc reducitur, quod est vivere sub obedientia Societatis, tamquam membrum nondum illi unitum per aliqua vota, cum proposito illam intrandi, et in illa vivendi ac moriendi, ut dicitur in quinta Parte Constitutionum, c. I, litt. A...”

129. cf. CF ## 298-314.

130. CF # 299: “Basilus: ‘Nullo modo quis curiose Antistitis consilia pervestiget, aut in eius facta anxie inquirat, his dumtaxat exceptis, qui cum dignitatis gradu, tum consilii prudentia, Antistiti ipsi proximi sunt. Quos quidem ille necessario sibi quandocumque de re aliqua erit deliberaturus, in consilium, ac maturam considerationem adhibebit, nimirum praecepto illi obtemperans: omnia fac cum consilio.’ (Reg. 48, ex fus.).”

131. CF # 300: “Congregatones etiam Sodalium cogendae sunt, in quibus defectus corrigantur, et honesti mores laudentur. ‘Quo videlicet, ait idem Basilius, adhibita locuplete multorum sententia, majore cum auctoritate quod in medium adductum est, quale sit judicetur.’ (c. 54). Non tamen iudicium definitivum erit omnium nex pro singulis, et ordinariis defectibus iudicandis.”

132. CF # 301: “Unusquisque igitur Superior Sodalitatis, pro ratem, solumque consilarii, non conjudices illi adjungantur. Primo quidem, quia hoc secundum se et ex genere suo melius est ex communi sententia.

“Deinde quia in statu religioso sine dubio potest maxime conferre ad perfectinem.

“Tum quia hoc modo purior, perfectior obedientia exercetur, tum quia hoc modo est maior dependentia membrorum a capite, et ita etiam major unio qualis inter patrem et filios esse debet, tum etiam quia hoc modo tollitur occasio multiplicandi dignitates tot iudicum et quasi praelationes in religione, et consequenter etiam minuitur ambitionis occasio. Tum, denique, quia si ordinationes, iudicia, et aliae negotiorum expeditiones a plurium sententia et voluntate pendeant multiplicantur pericula schismatum et divisionum; quae videntur esse majoris momenti magisque frequentia quam sint, si potestas regiminis sit in uno tantum posita, et temperata solum per consilia sapientum.”

133. CF # 302: “In rebus tamen gravioribus ac perpetuis non Superior solus, sed Superior ipse de consilio et decisivo suffragio majoris partis Sodalium professorum, jus habeat statuendi.

“Hujusmodi res forent condere vel mutare statuta, declarare seu definire, quae circa ea dubia oriuntur, alienare, vel dissolvere semel fundatas domos et alia graviora negotia.”

134. CF # 303: In aliis autem, quae non ita magni momenti sunt, idem Superior adjutus, quatenus ipse opportunum iudicabit, fratrum suorum consilio per se ipsum ordinandi et jubendi, quae ad Dei gloriam et commune bonum pertinere in Domino videbuntur, jus totum habeat.”

135. CF # 304: “Monitor etiam constituatur, qui praemissa ad Deum oratione, cum modestia debita et humilitate, quicquid sentiat in ipso Superiore requiri ad majus Dei obsequium et laudem, eam debeat admonere. Nam hoc officium erga Praelatos valde necessarium est, ut docuit Basilius (REg. 27, ex fus.).

136. cf. J. Henchey, *I Vescovi di Verona e il P. Gaspare Bertoni*, in: Comunita' Stimmata 1989, pp. 26-32.

137. cf. Bertoni, *Epistolario*, pp. 336,f.

138. cf. Vescovo Grasser, cited by Henchey, o.c., p. 28: "...testamur dictum sacerdotem (P. Bertoni) vitae sanctimonia, doctrina, et charitate ornatum, omnibus omnia factum, maxime in Clericorum disciplina, Spiritualibus Exercitationibus , et consilio promovenda, et pueris religione ac virtutibus imbuendis, ut caeteris de claro zelo suo praeluceat..."

139. cf. Vescovo Mutti, cited by Henchey, o.c., p.29: "...non e' altro scopo (di questo Istituto) che quelli di prestare ogni sorta di servizio alla Diocesi, dietro i cenni e le determinazioni dell'Ordinario. Attestiamo pure relativamente all'epoca in cui coprivamo la Sede Vescovile di Verona che appunto lo spirito della loro istituzione, i sacerdoti appartenenti alla Congregazione medesima, si mostrarono sempre pronti ai Nostri inviti, prestandosi con la medesima sollecitudine, zelo e carita', tanto nello udire confessioni, quanto all'assistenza degli ammalati, come dei detenuti nelle carceri e dei medesimi giustiziati onde non dubitiamo di affermare che non avremo potuto da essi aspettare un maggior e piu' vantaggioso servizio nei bisogni della Diocesi...." [cf. *Causa Beatificationis et Canonizationis ven. Servi Dei, Gasparis Bertoni. Positio Super Virtutibus*, in: Summarium Additionale. Verona 1960, Documento XXIII, Vol. II, p. 250).

140. cf. Vescovo Riccabona, cited by Henchey, o.c., pp. 29,f.: "...Dopo il suo cominciamento, questa Congregazione non ha lasciato mai di esistere, e dimostrarsi operosa in qualunque ministero ecclesiastico al quale fossero invitati dal loro Vescovo. In Verona e nella sua Diocesi sono conosciuti, amati, venerati da ogni ceto di persone, assidui al confessare, al predicare, al dare Missioni, principalmente nel dare esercizi al Clero, spiegare il catechismo, assistere i moribondi, i carcerati, i condannati all'ultimo supplizio; chiamati a supplire in seminario i Professori di filosofia e teologia vi si sono prestati con molta soddisfazione di tutti... raro e' che un vescovo abbia pronti ecclesiastici da adoperare in ogni circostanza ed a qualunque inaspettato bisogno; mentre quasi hanno per legge del loro Istituto l'essere non solo istruiti ed educati, ma anche apparenziati a qualunque ministero li chiamo l'obbedienza del loro Superiore in servizio al Vescovo..." (cf. Summarium Additionale, Documento XXIII, pp. 251-253).

141. cf. CF # 163 (cf. above note n. 59, per il esto Latino - for Suarez, p. 572 b).

142. cf. Papa Leone XIII, Decretum Approbationis: "...I membri di questo Istituto mirarono soprattutto a coadiuvare i Vescovi, nel procurare la salute dei prossimi, con qualsivoglia esercizio del ministero ecclesiastico, con qualunque opera di spirituale carita', esclusa la cura ordinaria e perpetua delle anime e delle monache... specialmente con le sacre missioni, con gli esercizi spirituali, con i catechismi e i discorsi sacri, e con la cristiana educazione dei fanciulli, industriandosi a tutto potere di guidarli alla pieta' e allo studio, sia nei loro oratori, sia nei seminari, e nelle scuole domestiche..."

143. cf. Cardinale di Canossa, cited by Henchey, o.c., p. 30: "... Circa adunque la fama di santo, posso asserire con piena conoscenza ch'essa era comune e sulla bocca di tutti, non solo in citta' ma sibbene per tuta la Diocesi, e altresì fuori di essa. E come tutti il proclamarono, così quante volte io ricorsi a lui per avere consigli, conforto e direzione di spirito .. La stessa mia zia, ven. le Maddalena, assai volte ebbe a trattare con lui e prenderne consigli; e ripetutamente me ne parlo' colla venerazione che si ha ad un santo... Il rinomato chirurgo, Luigi Manzoni, narro' piu' volte al fu mio padre, me presente, come egli fosse fuori di se' per lo stupore, avvengache' egli ... dovesse molte e molte volte fargli tagli dolorosissimi dal femore al ginocchio... concludeva: '... Io non vidi mai un paziente tale in tante operazioni da me fatte: io lo ritengo un santo...' Anche nei suoi sermoni che faceva e ch'io udii piu' volte, egli parlava con tale soavita' e zelo che il cuore di chi lo ascoltava rimaneva non solo persuaso, ma commosso e penetrato in modo tutto particolare..." (cf. Summarium Additionale, Documento XXIII, p. 618).

144. cf. Card. di Canossa, cited by Henchey, o.c., pp. 30, ss.: "... Fu nei primi anni di questo secolo che un giovane sacerdote, D. Gaspare Bertoni, istituì prima nella parrocchia di S. Paolo di Campo Marzo, e poi in quella di S. Fermo Maggiore, quelli Oratori, che sotto la sapiente ed assidua direzione di lui, divennero modelli e propaggini di tanti altri, che in poco piu' di un decennio furono eretti in tutte le Chiese parrocchiali e sussidiarie della Citta: ed in moltissime parrocchie di questa Diocesi... nel pingue terreno degli Oratori si sviluppavano soavemente i germi di numerose vocazioni allo stato ecclesiastico e religioso...

"Ed anche Noi possiamo confermarlo che in questa grave Nostra eta' ritorniamo spesso con indicibile compiacenza agli anni nostri giovanili, quando per grazia di Dio, fummo alunno e poi per piu' anni sostenemmo la carica di Prefetto... L'elogio che fa l'Ecclesiastico degli antichi Patriarchi (xliv: 10-16) il quale elogio di questi Apostolo della gioventu' veronese risale in gran parte a colui, che di tutti fu il principale nel promuovere in mezzo a noi questa grand'opera, a D. Gaspare Bertoni, che perpetuo' l'opera degli Oratori nella benemerita Congregazione da lui piu' tardi fondata alle Stimate, e visse e morì tra noi con tanto ardore di santita' che proprio in questi giorni con indicibile Nostro gaudio si sta introducendo la Causa di Beatificazione, la quale

facciamo voti che prosegua felicemente fino a farci venerare sugli altari il Padre dei nostri Oratori..." (cf. Summarium Additionale, Documento XIII, pp. 636-638).

145. cf. Riccabona, note n. 140, above: "... raro e' che un vescovo abbia pronti ecclesiastici da adoperare in ogni circostanza da qualunque inaspettato bisogno... a qualunque ministero..."

146. cf. CF # 185 - cf. above note n. 4 for the Latin of Suarez, p. 862 a & b.

147. cf. P. G. B. Lenotti, in: CS III, pp. 409, ss: "... Come la Compagnia di Gesu' e' in modo speciale dedicata, indirizzata all'ossequio e alle disposizioni del Romano Pontefice...(P. Bertoni ha istituito una Congregazione) ... ad essere dedicata e determinata in modo tutto speciale e segnalato al servizio ed ossequio ai vescovi..."

148. cf. CF # 255 - cf. above note n. 61, for the Latin, cf. Suarez p. 960 a, its font.

149. cf. CF # 262 - cf. above note n. 32, for the Latin, cf. Suarez p. 962 a, its source.

150. cf. CF # 187: "Omnes ut Spiritus vocationis scopum et tesseram habeant illud Christi Domini verbum: 'In hoc cognoscent omnes, quod discipuli mei estis si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem.'" (NB: P. Stofella cites Suarez I, c. 4, cf. p. 579 a; also; VIII, c. 6, cf. pp. 947,ss.)..

151. cf. CF # 162 - for the Latin, cf. above note n. 44 - and Suarez I, c. 3, n. 10, p. 572 a & b is found above in note n. 45.

152. CF # 188: "Si autem ad omnes dilectio caritatis habenda est praecipue ad domesticos fidei, dicente Apostolo: 'Qui autem suorum et maxime domesticorum curam non habet, fidem negavit, et est infideli deterior.'" (cf. Ga 6:10) - [cf. also CF # 262, and Suarez, p. 962 a.

153. CF # 1 - cf. above, note n. 35 for the Latin.

154. CF # 6 - cf. above, note n. 124 for the Latino.

155. cf. CF ## 47-48, "De Profectu sui ipsius" - CF ## 49-68, "De profectu in ecclesiasticis doctrinis".

156. CF # 51: cf. above note n. 6 for the Latin - also note n. 20.

157. CF # 52: “Studeant S. Scripturae universae, textualiter primo, postea cum suis commentatoribus catholicis.”

158. CF # 56: “Haec dicta sunt de toto corpore seu confuse de operariis Soalitis. Nam absolute loquendo dicere possumus, necessariam esse Sodalitati perfectionem omnium dictarum disciplinarum et linguarum, quia licet difficile, vel moraliter impossibile sit omnes illas simul cum Theologica doctrina in singulis personis perfecte coniungi; tamen in ipso corpore sodalitis, esse potest, et procuranda est excellentia in omnibus.”

159. Suarez V, c. 2, n. 8, p. 809 b: “8. *Dicta peritia quomodo Societati necessaria.* - In quo etiam considero, aliud esse loqui do toto coprope, seu confuse de operariis Societatis, aliud vero de singulis personis. Nam priori modo loquendo, absolute dicere possumus necessariam esse Societati maximam perfectionem omnium dictarum disciplinarum et linguarum; quia licet difficile, vel moraliter impossibile sit, omnes illas simul cum theologica doctrina in singulis personis perfect conjungi, tamen in ipso corpore Societatis esse potest, et procuranda est excellentia et eminentia im omnibus illis...”

160. “In unaquaque domo sit bibliotheca communis, amplior quidem pro necessitate vel qualitate studiorum.”

161. CF # 62: cited above, cf. notes nn. 52 e 57.

162. Suarez V, c. 3, n. 11, p. 816 a: - for the Latin, cf. note n. 53 above.

163. CF # 59: “Peculiaris cura et ratio habeatur eorum, qui studiis dicantur, tum ne sanitas laedatur, tum ut commoditas necessaria non desit. Itaque in victu et vestium decentia, et honesta ac necessaria recreatione, Superior ita vigilet, ut omni harum rerum cura et sollicitudine liberi, facilius ferre possint studiorum laborem religiosa moderatione contenti.”

164. Suarez V, c. 3, n. 11 pp. 815 b - 816 a: [Fr. Stofella notes that for this Capo VI of Fr. Bertoni, “Anche qui sostanza e intere frasi sono tolte da Suarez...]

“...Ob hanc ergo causam provisum est in Societate, ut scholares in suis collegiis habeant unde convenienter sustentari possint, tum quoad victum et vestitum, tum etiam quoad ipsum studium necessaria, ita ut omni harum rerum cura et sollicitudine liberi sint, religiosa moderatione contenti. De quo breviter statuitur quarta Parte

Constitutionum, cap. 4, in principio; latius parte Tertia, cap 2, ubi litt. C specialiter advertitur, in his, quae ad vestitum attinet, maiorem quandam ratinem habendam esse cum scholasticis exterioris decentiae et commoditatis propter studiorum laborem...”

165. CF # 66: “Superiorum item erit providere ne fervore studiorum, pietatis amor tepescat, et ne per nimium pietatis excessum studia debita impedianur.”

166. Suarez ib., p. 816 b: “...quoad hanc tertiam partem, B. N. Ignatius sufficientia remedia providit, tum singulis moderationem debitam consulendo, tum etiam Superioribus magnam circa hoc curam et vigilantiam injungendo. Atque ita, in cap. 4, saepe citato § 2: “*Cum studiis (inquit) vacant, ut est cavendum ne fervore studiorum intepescat solidarum virtutum ac religiose vitae amor, its mortificationibus, orationibus, ac meditationibus prolixis eo tempore non adeo multum loci tribuetur...*”

167. cf. P. G. B. Tomasi - above, note n. 10: “... pieno svolgimento delle singole attività’... il costante studio...”

168. CF # 49: for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 111

169. Suarez V, c. 1, n. 6, p. 803 a: for the Latin, cf. note n. 112 , above.

170. CF # 162 for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 44

171. CF # 50: “Ut igitur possint aliorum mentes illuminare, qui in tenebris versantur, aut haeresibus resistere ingruentibus, aut rationem eius, quae in nobis est fidei reddere, aut morales difficultates occurrentes dissolvere, et omnibus satisfacere, in utraque theologia doctrina, positiva et scholastica, speculativa et morali, satis instructus quisque sit necesse erit.”

172. Suarez V, c. I, n. 6, p. 802 a: [a continuation of note n. 112, above]: “...Prior pars adeo est evidens, ut non egeat probatione. Quia nemo potest alios docere, si ipse ignorans sit; quomodo enim poterit mentes illuminare, qui in tenebris versantur, aut haereticis resistere, aut rationem eius, quae in nobis est fidei reddere, aut morales difficultates occurrentes dissolvere, et omnibus satisfacere, nisi in utraque Theologica doctrina, positiva et scholastica, speculativa et morali satis instructus sit? Confirmat hoc D. Thomas...”

173. CF # 57: for the Latin, cf. above notes nn. 51, 63, 112.



174. Suarez V, c. 2, n. 8, pp. 809b - 810 a: for the Latin, cf. above , note n. 51

175. CF # 58: “Quamvis autem haec studia in Sodalitate principalius ad Theologiam referantur, ad quam et ad Sacrae Scripturae intelligentiam eius religiosi frequentius et principalius tendunt, nihilominus interdum aliqui diutius in his inferioribus artibus occupantur, ut in eis singulariter ad praedictos fines excellant.”

176. Suarez, ib, p. 810 a: “...Atque ob eam rem, quamvis haec studia in Societate principalius ad Theologiam referantur, ad quam, et ad sacrae Scripturae intelligentiam, ejus religiosi frequentius et principalius tendunt, nihilominus interdum aliqui diutius in his inferioribus artibus occupantur, ut in eis singulariter ad praedictos fines excellant...”

177. CF # 158: [for the Latin, cf. notes nn. 64 & 115 above].

178. Suarez VI, c. I, n. 4, p. 838 b: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 64].

179. CF # 159: “Postulatur item eruditio non mediocris in litteris, et in vita et moribus conspicuis, et in affectuum moderatione magna probatio.”

180. Suarez, ib., n. 6, p. 838 b: “... 6. *Tertia conditio*, - Rursus postulatur eruditio non mediocris in litteris, ut infra, in c. 5, num. 7, attingemus; et in vita et moribus conspicuis magna probatio, et in eisdem locis citatis declaretur, et p. 10, § 7, ac saepe alias, et in Bullis Pontificiis hoc saepe repetitur...”

181. DV # 8: [pfor the Latin, cf. above, note n. 8].

182. cf. CF ## 187; 226: the Positive Means for Union.

183. Suarez, VIII, c. 7, nn. 1, ff., pp. 949 a, ss.. For CF ## 208-220, cf. Suarez, pp. 953 a - 954 b.

184. CSJ # 134: Proemium Constitutionum.. 1. Quamvis summa sapientia et Bonitas Dei Creatoris, nostri ac Domini sit quae conservatura est, gubernatura atque promotura in Suo sancto servitio hanc minimam Societatem Iesus, et eam dignata est inchoare; ex parte vero nostra, interna caritatis et amoris illius lex quam Spiritus Sanctus scribere et in cordibus imprimere solet potius quam ullae externae Constitutiones ad id adjutura sit; quia tamen suavis dispositio divinae Providentiae suarum creaturarum cooperationem exigit, et quia Christi Domini nostri Vicarius ita statuit, et Sanctorum exempla et ratio ipsa nos ita docet in Domino; necessarium esse arbitramur Constitutiones conscribi,

quae iuvent ad melius in via incepta divini obsequii procedendum, iuxta Instituti nostri rationem.”

185. CF # 223: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 30].

186. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 1, p. 955 a: - for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 30]

187. Ph 2:3,ss.: [Vulgata]: “...nihil per contentionem neque per inanem gloriam, sed in humilitate superiores sibi invicem arbitantes .. Hoc enim sentite in vobis, quod et in Christo Iesu, qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo...”

188. cf. B. Haring, CSsR, *Law of Christ*. I, pp. 546, ss.; Vol. III, pp. 56, ff. Westminster MD: Newman 1966.

189. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 3, p. 955 a & b: for Latin of CF## 221-229.

190. CF # 228: for the Latin, cf. above, note nn. 85 & 86.

191. CF # 185: for the Latin, cf. above, notae n. 4 - acf. Suarez, p. 862 a & b.; also above note n. 67].

192. CF # 189: cf. above, note n. 101 - cf. Ac 2:44,ff.; 4:32,ff.

193. Breve Cronaca, I, p. 6: cf. above, note n. 10.

194. Giovanni XXIII, Mater et Magistra 1961, nn. 59, ff.

195. CSJ # 812: “Quia Societas, quae mediis humanis instituta non est, per ea nec conservari nec augeri potest, sed per gratiam omnipotentis Dei ac Domini nostri Iesu Christi; in Eo solo spem constitui oportet quod conservaturus sit et promoturus hoc opus, quod ad obsequium et laudem suam et auxilium animarum inchoare dignatus est. Et iuxta spem hanc, primum medium et maxime consentaneum, orationum et sacrificiorum erit; quae, hac cum intentione sancta offeri, et singulis hebdomadis, mensibus et annis in omnibus locis ubi Societas residet, certa ordinatione institui debent.”

196. cf. *Costituzioni del ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni...* Verona 1950, p. 15, P. Stofella’s note regarding CF # 185.

197. CF # 185: cf. note n. 4, above.
198. Suarez VI, c. 4, n. 25, p. 862 a: cf. above note n. 4.
199. CSJ #424: “Rectoris officium erit in primis oratione et sanctis desideriis totum Collegium, velut umeris suis, sustinere. Deinde curare ut Constitutiones observentur; omnibus Collegialibus cum omni sollicitudine invigilare...”
200. CSJ # 790: “Hoc praestabit, in primis, auctoritate, et exemplo vitae suae, et caritate ac dilectione Societatis in Christo Domino nostro, et oratione assidua ac desideriis plena, et Sacrificiis, quae gratiam conservationis et augmenti huiusmodi impetrent; et ex iis quae praestare ipse potest hoc maximi momenti apud eum esse debet, et in quo plurimum in Domino confidat. est enim in primis efficax ad gratiam a divina Maiestate impetrandam, a qua, quod expetitur, procedit; idque potissimum faciet, cum necessitas occurrerit; tum etiam id faciet, sollicitudinem adhibendo ad Constitutionum observationem; iniungendo crebro sibi rationem reddi eorum quae in Provinciis omnibus geruntur per Provinciales; scribendo eisdem quod sentit de rebus ad se relatis; et curando ut provideatur, ubi convenit, per se et ministros de quibus augetur.”
201. Epitome SJ # 612: “Missiones dicuntur expeditiones apostolicae iussu Summi Pontificis vel Superiorum Societatis susceptae, ad maiorem Dei gloriam et animarum auxilium ut plurimum extra loca residentiae nostrae.”
202. CSJ # 631: “Cuisumodi essent orationes et Missae, quae initio praesertim suscipiendorum operum, vel quando maior subsidii necessitas cernitur, quod res magni momenti sint vel difficultates graves incidant..”
203. CF # 162: cf. above for the Latin, note n. 44.
204. cf. Fr. Bertoni’s synthesis Suarez I, c. 3, n. 10, p. 572 a , for his CF ## 161-163.
205. For CF ## 187-266, many Constitutions are taken *verbatim* from Suarez VIII, cc. 7 & 8, pp. 948-962.
206. CF # 187: for the Latin, cf. above note n. 150, with the text of Suarez, p. 579 a, etc.

207. CF # 187 for the Latin, cf. above note n. 152. For the 'Proemio', cf. CF ## 187, 188 - Fr. . Stofella notes Suarez I, c. 4, pp. 582-587; VIII, c. 6, pp. 947-949. Suarez cites Jn 13:35 on p. 579 a.

208. CF # 189: for the Latin, cf. above, notes nn. 101, 192.

209. CF # 190: "Singuli hanc unionem et concordiam maxime sectentur, et quae contraria huic sunt omnia, dissensiones, discordias omnino abhorreant, et summo studio evitent, considerantes illud Psalmi 132: 'Quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum.'"

210. Suarez, p. 948 b where he cites Ps 132.

211. CF # 262 cf. above note n. 32 -

212. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 22, p. 962 a. cf. above, note n. 32.

213. P.Stofella attributes all these numbers to Suarez VIII, cc. 6 & 7, pp. 947-955.

214. These number, CF ##208-219, are found *verbatim* in Suarez VIII, c 7, nn. 16-18, pp. 953 a - 954 b.

215. Suarez VIII, c. 8, nn. 1-22, pp. 955 a - 962 b.

216. CF # 266: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 94].

217. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 22, pp. 962 a & b: [for the Latin, cfr above, note n. 95].

218. cf. Suarez IX, c. 8, nn. 1-15, pp. 1045 a - 1049, ff. - as for the 'danger of death' cfr. pp. 1051, ff.

219. EN # 46: "Quapropter, praeter illam Evangelii nuntiationem, quam generalem publicamque opportune dixerimus, semper probanda est suumque tenet momentum alia tradendi Evangelii forma, ab altera ad alteram pertingens personam. Ea enim ipse Dominus persaepe usus est - quemadmodum colloquia cum Nicodemo, cum Zacchaeo, cum Samaritana muliere, cum Simone Pharisaeo testantur - ipsique Apostoli usi sunt. Numquid exstat alia evangelizandi forma ab illa, qua quisque res, wuas in se quoad fidem expertus sit, alteri tradat? Fieri sane non debet, ut necessitate Bonum Nuntium afferendi ad multitudines hominum oblitteretur memoria huius formae, qua

personalis hominis conscientia contingitur, quippe cum moveatur mirifico admodum verbo, quod ab altero accipit. Equidem Nos paene impares sumus egregio merito sacerdotum, qui per Paenitentiae Sacramentum vel per pastorales colloquutiones sese impigros sedulosque praestant ad personas secundum Evangelii vias ducendas, ad eas quae enitantur confirmandas, ad eas si ceciderint erigendas, ad eas suo semper consilio studiosaque voluntate adiuvandas.”

220. CF # 277: “In primis, ad perfecte tractandum confessoris munus necessarium saepe est cum poenitentibus etiam extra confessionem familiariter agere, vel propter majorem eorum instructionem aut spiritualem consolationem, vel ad conservandos illos in usu frequenter confitendi, et in bonis operibus, quae ex illo nascuntur.”

cf. Suarez, IX, c. 8, n. 5, p. 1046 a & b: [“De medio juvandi proximos, conversando familiariter cum ipsis”]: “...Ad hunc autem finem valde accomodatum et moraliter necessarium medium esse, cum proximis familiariter tractare et conversari, per se evidens est, et experientia id docet. Ratio autem est, quis imprimis ad perfecte tractandum confessoris munus, necessarium saepe est cum poenitentibus, etiam extra confessionem, familiariter agere, vel propter majorem eorum instructionem, aut spiritualem consolationem, vel ad conservanda illos in usu frequenter confitendi, et in bonis operibus quae ex illo nascuntur.”

221. CF # 162: [for the Latin, cf. above, note, n. 44. From Suarez, I, c. 3, n. 10, p. 572 a: for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 45: “Quibus Mediis Societas Salutem Proximorum procuret.”

222. Memoriale Privato, 26 febbraio 1809: “Dobbiam fare un ritratto in noi stessi di Gesu’ Cristo.”

223. Epistolario, 4 giugno 1836: “... Leggete spesso nel Vangelo, e dalli detti e fatti di Cristo Nostro Signore sminuzzate con la considerazione e meditatione, e applicate a voi quel che vi e’ all’uopo nelle circostanze che siete. Formatevi su quel modello, onde ritrassero tutti i Santi.

“Volete anche una bella copia, come fanno i principianti in pittura per addestrarsi al disegno? Prendete la vita di S. Francesco Borgia del P. Bartoli, e ne avrete di vantaggio per confortarvi e condurvi sno alla perfetta distrezza di formare il vostro disegno sul Prototipo, cioe’ nella vita di Cristo Nostro Signore, autore e consummatore della nostra fede. E fidatevi altamente di Dio...” [cf. Ep., p. 313,s.].

224. cf. CF # 223: for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 30.

225. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 1, p. 955 a: for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 30.
226. Fil 2:3,ss.: for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 187.
227. cf. Nello Dalle Vedove, CSS, Vol. 5, c. xxi, pp. 509-534.
228. Epistolario, 9 agosto 1838: cf. pp. 339, ff.
229. P.G. Stofella, CSS, *Vita*, III<sup>o</sup> Periodo, c. 11.
230. B. Haring, CSsR, *The Law of Christ* III, Part I, c. I, n. 5, pp. 55 ff.
231. Collectanea Stigmatina I, pp. 273-281; 474-475.
232. Breve Cronaca Vol. I, p. 42.
233. ib, p.. 67
234. CS III, pp. 433-440
235. cfr. *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli della Congregazione*. Verona 1866, p. 69; cf. P. G. Ceresatto, CSS, *Vita*, c. 16, "Alla Scuola del Padre."
236. cf. Nello Dalle Vedove, CSS, Vol. 4, p. 410.
237. ib., p. 411
238. Collectanea Stigmatina I, p. 257: "Lo Sposalizio."
239. Nello, IV, pp. 440,f..
240. Cronaca Cainer, in; Stofella, *Vita*, III<sup>o</sup> Periodo, c. 9.
241. Epistolario 29 gennaio 1840, pp. 318, ss.: "... Nel resto siatemi allegro; e quando vi occorra un po' d'allegria, volate col pensiero al camerino di D. Michele: se non avete sempre l'ale pronte da poggiar sopra le nuvole nel seno del vostro Dio, e nelle Piaghe gloriose del vostro Salvatore - - *Quae sursum sunt quaerite, ubi Christus est* (Col 3:1) - Sedetevi ivi come uno de popol suo nella bellezza di quella pace (cf. Is 22:18):

che' finisce tutto, e finisce presto, ma quella pace eterna non finisce mai. E pregate per noi, che sarete ricambiato dalle nostre preghiere..."

242. cf. George Ganss, SJ, *St. Ignatius of Loyola. The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus - translated with an Introduction and a Commentary*. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1970, p. 383.

243. CSJ # 133 "... quandoquidem omnia instituta et ordinata sunt ad maius obsequium et laudem Dei et Domini nostri."

244. cf. Joseph de Guibert, SJ, *The Jesuits. Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice. A Historical Study*. St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources. 3rd Printing 1980, p. 83, ff.

245. cf. de Guibert, *ib.*, p. 146.

246. *ib.*, p. 175, f.

247. *ib.*, p. 180, f.

248. *ib.* p. 252.

249. CF # 65: Custodiant omnes morum probitatem, et rectam intentionem divinae gloriae et fructus animarum, nam sine pura mente et sanctorum imitatione nemo comprehenderit sanctorum verba, ait Athanasius (De Inc. ad fin.), et crebro orent Deum ut scientiam debitam illis largiatur, qui scientiarum Dominus est."

250. Suarez V, c. 3, n. 12, p. 816 a & b: "...Ob hanc ergo causam haec media saepe in nostris Constitutionibus propnuntur. Nam cap. sexto quartae partis, sic dicitur; *Ut scholastici plurimum in his facultatibus proficiant, imprimis animae puritatem custodire, ac rectam studiorum intentionem habere conentur, ac rectam studiorum intentionem habere conentur, nihil aliud in litteris, quam divinam gloriam et animarum fructum quaerentes, et in suis orationibus gratiam, ut in doctrina proficiant, ad hunc finem crebro petant*. Sic Athanasius, lib. De Incarnatione Verbi, circa finem: ...Nam sine pura mente, et sanctorum imitatione nemo comprehenderit Sanctorum verba..."

251. CF # 125: [For the Latin, cf. number n. 58].

252. CF # 133: "Quarto demum moderentur id omne, quod ad exteriorem apparatus pertinet, puta in vestibus et huiusmodi, ita ut, quod idem religioso homini

concedit et relinquit in usum paupertas regularis, modestia hoc ipsum reliquum ad omnem decorem et honestatem concinet in gloriam Dei et proximi aedificationem.”

253. CF # 218: “Indicia autem talis amoris sunt: Primo, si ratio majoris amoris non sit, aut maior Dei gloria et honor, vel major religionis aut animarum utilitas, aut major virtus, et sanctitas, quae in tali persona cernitur; quidquid enim ad haec motiva non reducit, alienum est ab ordine caritatis religiosae, adeo ut Basilius dicat, etiam sanguinis propinquam, in religiosa caritate non spectandam, sed pro nihilo habendam esse. ( Serm. 2 De Inst. mon.).”

254. Suarez VIII, c. 7, n. 18, p. 954 a: “18. *Nimiae familiaritatis unum indicium. - Alterum. - Tertium.* - Indicia autem talis amoris sunt, primo, si ratio majoris amoris non sit, aut maior Dei gloria et honor, vel major religionis aut animarum utilitas, aut major virtus et sanctitas, quae in tali persona cernitur; quidquid enim ad haec motiva non reducit, alienum est ab ordine charitatis religiosae; adeo ut Basilius, d. serm. 2, de Instit. monast., dicit etiam sanguinis conjunctionem quantumvis propinquam, in religiosa charitate non spectandam, sed pro nihilo habendam esse. Secondo, si talis affectio...”

255. CF # 259: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 91].

256. Suarez VIII, c. 8, n. 21, p. 961 b: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 92].

257. CF # 303: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 134].

258. CF # 304: [for the Latin, cf. above, note n. 135].

259. Nello Dalle Vedove, CSS, *Un Modello di Santo Abbandono*. Verona: AMB 1951, Parte I a, cc. 2-4, pp. 22-51.

260. Memoriale Privato, 1 luglio 1809: “Non far niente se non per la gloria di Dio e del suo santo amore...”

261. *ib.*, p. 51.

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## PART TWO: Towards a Theology of Fr. Bertoni's Hope

### The Hope of the Apostolic Missionary

**Introduction:** Hope and the *Kenosis*: Christian Hope is born in Emptiness.

[1] The two authors that Fr. Bertoni quoted perhaps more than anyone else, after Sacred Scripture, would be St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Ignatius of Loyola. It seems that Fr. Bertoni's spirituality of Holy Abandonment and his broad concept of Apostolic Mission flow from St. Ignatius. So much else in the Stigmatine Charism was inspired by St. Thomas Aquinas.

[2] One specific contribution of St. Thomas is the Stigmatine Founder's idea of the Apostolic Missionary as an "instrument" in the hands of Jesus Himself. The more united we are to Christ, the more effective is our Apostolic Mission.

[3] A further contribution lies in the spirituality of Hope. St. Thomas brought together Theological **Hope**, the Gift of **Fear** of the Holy Spirit and the Beatitude of **Poverty**. One of the clearer commentaries on this would be the Carmelite Doctor, St. John of the Cross, who was trained under the great theologians of Salamanca. The "Doctor of *Nada* " wrote: " ...all possession is contrary to hope ... the more the soul hopes in aught else, the less will it hope in God ... This virtue, then, produces an emptiness, for it has to do with that which is not possessed..." [cf. *The Dark Night of the Soul*, Book II, c.21, n. 7; *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book II, c.6, n. 3; c. 14, n. 2].

[4] In our own time, "nothingness" as the spring-board for hope, has been the theme also of Catholic philosophers. Gabriel Marcel, for example, vigorously denounced any social system that forever emphasizes "having" over "being" - and whatever offers a program of always corresponding to the ever-increasing demands of human beings. In such a system, humanity becomes completely absorbed in the sphere of "having" which will always be divisive. In such a system, one loses consciousness of the sphere of "being" - and "being" is the only area that can unite humanity, as all share in the same human "being", "**Being**" is the only legitimate sphere of hope - "**having**" is the enemy of hope.

[5] The Thomist, the late Josef Pieper, makes a clear distinction between the "fundamental", the absolute, the genuine, unique hope on the one hand - and then, on the other hand, the "common", "every-day", "particular", "ordinary" hopes. These

“common-place” hopes have as their object something determined, precise, that pertains to the sphere of this world. The “fundamental” hope has for its object that which cannot be limited, found in this world. There is a proportion existing between the common, every-day hopes and **THE** fundamental Hope: the more that these lesser hopes are realized, the fundamental hope grows weaker and weaker. It is precisely in the delusion of all the secondary hopes that there comes about the powerful appeal to enter the bast, vital sphere of **genuine Hope**.

[6] Among the “Liberation Theologians”, some saw the connection between the Poor and Hope. A Brazilian Protestant thinker, Rubem Alves, noted that for the prophet, even the time of captivity is a time when it is possible to remain “human” -provided one is neither dominated by the bitterness of despair - nor, overcome, “domesticated” by the flesh pots of captivity, that create the contradiction of the “happy slave”. The erotic enjoyment of life makes hope impossible. The living of the evangelical counsels are presented as leading one to union with God, the ultimate hope.

[7] In his social teaching Pope John Paul II expresses his challenge repeatedly. This is one example: “...This general analysis [of today’s situation], which is religious in nature, can be supplemented by a number of particular considerations to demonstrate that among the actions and attitudes opposed to the will of God, the good of neighbor and the ‘structures’ created by them, two are very typical:

- on the one hand, the all-consuming desire for **profit**;
- and, on the other, the thirst for **power**, with the intention of imposing one’s will upon others.

In order to characterize better each of these attitudes, one can add the expression: ‘at any price’. In other words, we are faced with the absolutizing of human attitudes with all its possible consequences. Since these attitudes can exist independently of each other, they can be separated; however, in today’s world both are indissolubly united, with one or the other predominating.

Obviously, not only individuals fall victim to this double attitude of sin; nations and blocks of nations can do so too. And this favors even more the introduction of the ‘**structures of sin**’ of which I have spoken. If certain forms of **modern ‘imperialism’** were considered in the light of these moral criteria, we would see that hidden behind certain decisions, apparently inspired only by economics or politics, are **real forms of idolatry**: of money, ideology, class, technology...” [cf. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Encyclical Letter, December 30, 1987, # 37].

[8] In his time, Fr. Bertoni noted:

“... Today I was at St. Joseph’s - [it dawned on me that] at the basis [ *fondo* ] of one’s own nothingness, one finds God. experiencing many sublime things concerning God came over me. This evening, upon seeing an image of the Most Holy Trinity, I experienced much reverence and love for the three Persons. The eternal Father was standing with open arms, and this explained to me something about His Mercy, and the easy communion of His goods...” [cf. MP, July 24, 1808].

In this text, there seems implied a foundation for his ideal of Apostolic Mission. What is interesting, too, is his expression: *at the basis of one’s own nothingness, one finds God...[in fondo del proprio niente, si trova Dio...]*. What this means for St. Gaspar Bertoni might be gleaned from what follows. It is an idea that has known development in the mystical tradition:

**[a.] John Tauler, OP**

This disciple of Meister Eckhart, distinguished two aspects in the human soul:

- the “exterior” part, wherein are exercised the three potencies, or faculties: intellect, memory and will;
- the “interior” part, the deepest part of one’s being - in this view, this would mean the highest aspect of one’s humanity, the core of one’s being. While by no means are the following to be considered “proof” texts, they may indicate how easy it was to think of there being a “deep” part of each human being:

“... That is why there is no weakening on our part, and instead, though this outer man of ours may be falling into decay, the inner man is renewed day by day ... [cf. 2 Co 4:16].

“...Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong...” [cf. Ep 3:16].

St. Francis de Sales refers to this part of a human being as the most delicate part of the spirit - the supreme aspect of the human spirit. St. John of the Cross would later

think of this as the “deepest center” of the soul, its “substance”. In popular language one may speak of “way down, deep inside!”

The German mystic, Tauler, speaks of this *fondo* in many of his sermons to religious. He describes it differently: on two occasions he seems to translate the *fondo* as the high point of the human spirit. Other times, he thinks of the “deep inside” as the core of the human spirit itself - specifying that when he uses this term “spirit”, what he really means is “the most interior aspect, the most sublime part of the soul”. There is, he says, a more “exterior” aspect, where the potencies of the soul function.

Tauler explains that he received this concept from Denys the Areopagite, who spoke of the *fundus animae*. St. Augustine described this aspect of a human being as “the occult abyss”, or “the secret abyss”, deep within a human being. In Tauler’s theology, this deep interior “base” is the very center of a human being, and it is here that one finds the image of the Most Holy Trinity.

Later, St. Paul of the Cross, deeply influenced by Tauler, would use this terminology of the mystical doctors. The Founder of the Passionists called this part the “base” [*fondo*] of the spirit, and distinguishes it from the “exterior” part. This *fondo* was looked at, in the psychology of the times, as the “high point”, the “peak”, “the interior cabinet” of the spirit, the very core of a spiritual being. This “part” is looked on by the mystics as the true “sanctuary” of the human soul, where faith, hope and charity exercise their principal functions.

Some understanding of this “compartmentalizing” of the human spirit seems to be somewhat necessary so that one might have some insight into the language form of the writers of another age. As for this “most noble, most intimate” part of the human being, this *fondo* of the soul, is variously described by mystical writers in enthusiastic terms. Tauler spoke of it in a most outstanding manner, and deeply influenced those who came after him. Heir to the Dionysian tradition, his writings served as a stepping stone for those of later generations, clarifying to extraordinary depths this innermost aspect of human beings.

He reasoned that the Indwelling of the Most Blessed Trinity would be understood as pertaining to the deepest aspect of a human being: he wrote that this was indeed the special dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God. The nobility and true greatness of this “part” of the human person was so great, sublime and mysterious that there are not adequate terms to describe it. Tauler stated that just as there are no adequate terms to describe God, neither will the human person ever fully be

understood, made as it is to the image and likeness of the Triune God. If one could ever “see” how God lives and dwells deep within the mind and heart of the believer, this would already be something of a “beatific vision”.

The affinity and proximity of this *fondo* of the human person, imbued with the theological life, and God Himself - is so great, and so “ineffable” that no one can ever really fathom the mystery of the human person. In this whole area of mysticism, not much can be said with precision = explaining, perhaps, the need for symbolism to describe the deepest spiritual realities: e.g., the “Dark Night of the Soul”, the “Spiritual Winter”, the “Desert”, the “Living Flame of Love”. Tauler may be of special interest to the Stigmatine because of the deep tie to be noted between emptiness and hope, the Stigmata and Holy Abandonment. Here are some of Tauler’s statements:

“... His loving and bleeding wounds can lead us to our eternal vocation. Have mercy, O Lord, on those ungrateful persons who may say: ‘What are we supposed to do about something which happened so many years ago?’ - understanding this ‘something’ to mean the Passion of our Lord! And yet, His wounds are really a living book and a pure mirror. Whoever penetrates them with St. Paul, will find in them all that the divinity can offer, the perfect seal of the Book of Life. In this book there is found all perfection in time and in eternity, as Eternal Wisdom Himself says: ‘I am the way, the Truth and the Life’ [cf. Jn 14:6]. [cf. Tauler’s Sermon, entitled: Concerning the Abandonment in Poverty and in the Wounds of Jesus. *Opere*, Italian edition, Paoline pp. 825, ff.].

In his Sermon on the Assumption [cf. *Opere*, pp. 438, ff.] Tauler preached:

“... Here below, these Five Doors ought to be our inheritance, and through them we ought to pass through to our eternal inheritance, in our true fatherland. The Holy Spirit is the Porter of these Five Doors. His sweet love is always ready whenever we knock at them, and to inspire us to enter through them, and to inspire us to pass through them into our eternal inheritance from the Father. For, most surely - anyone who enters here in orderly manner, can never be lost.... From these lovable wounds, we should learn five lessons that will make us enter them without further delay. These lessons are: to flee, to suffer, to be silent, to disdain, to deny oneself, in a true abandonment ...”

Tauler also spoke once on a theme very close to the spirituality of Fr. Bertoni. The German Dominican’s sermon was entitled: “An Exercise by which to be united to the Divinity through the Five Wounds: [cf. *Opere*, pp. 844, ff.]:

“...In Christ Jesus, I wish for you His five essential virtues, and in His Wounds, **an illumined and perfect voyage into the Eternal Jubilee Year**, in the divine Rome, which is love in divine unity ...

“... The way through the wound in the heart is that of being consumed and of burning generously with actual love, through the Holy Sacraments, in accord with obedience of the Holy Church, in all the good exterior and interior good works, with burning desires and exercises devoid of show - this is a call to become one in an essential love...”

“...Each one ought to ponder the Five Holy Wounds, and with ardent desire and love, really penetrate into God, and with all one’s faculties: heart, soul and spirit, through the heavenly doors of the radiant wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ ... Whoever wants to obtain something of great price, has to be willing to surrender something of great price ...”

Tauler also described a way by which one would achieve “True Love through the Wounds of Jesus” [cf. *Opere*, pp. 838, ff.]:

“... The comprehension and knowledge of the soul consists in enjoying eternally, with all the saints, that one thing necessary...O Spouses of Christ, learn to enjoy this, your Spouse, and nothing else - and do not ever compare Him to anything else... and whatever has to be surrendered by you each day, offer it all in accord with the Rules of your Order, and bring it all to the Five Wounds of Jesus, according to the exercise of the Five Virtues of Jesus, which I have taught you - namely, how, through them, you should reach even God ...”

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### [b.] St. John of the Cross

The Carmelite mystic speaks in a very similar manner: the Word, the Son of God, dwells essentially with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the most profound **fondo** of the human soul, where He is hidden. The mystics of this tradition [Tauler, John of the Cross, Paul of the Cross] understand the **fondo** of the soul to be that “point” where a “New Birth” through Grace is achieved within the believer, the “point” of mystical union [cf. P. Gaetan, CP, *Doctrine de la Croix sur l’oraison et la mystique*, Louvain 1932, pp. 56, ff.].

This “part” of the human soul is described with a multitude of poetic and metaphoric examples. All of these, in the last analysis, refer to that which the mystics

[particularly the so-called “Rhine Mystics”] ordinarily call the *fondo* of the soul. This “point” does have some foundation in Scripture and is not merely the result of Platonic speculation. There are biblical references that would allow one to think of the “interior” person, a kind of “Interior Temple”. The mystical tradition often would cite St. Paul’s idea of the “Temple of the Most High”:

“...Didn’t you realize that you were God’s Temple, and that the Spirit of God was living among you? ‘cf. 1 Co 3:16].

“... Your body, you know, is the Temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you since you have received him from God ...” [cf. 1 Co 6:19].

“... we are the Temple of the Living God... We have God’s word for it : I will make my home among them ...” [cf. 2 Co 6:16].

While the texts do not “prove” the “interior person”, they do in some way indicate the Indwelling of God within the individual as well as in the ecclesial community. St. Paul asked for the adoration of God in spirit and in truth “deep within” oneself. The metaphor of the “Temple”, even though quite removed from philosophical terms, has long served in the mystical tradition as a valid aid in coming to grips with what the mystics mean when they speak of the *fondo* of the human soul. A Temple is not merely a place where human beings are sanctified by God. The Temple is also a place where a human soul responds with his/her better effort, to be united to the Divinity, to the God Who sanctifies. In order that the metaphor be understood, it is necessary that the believer respond through the theological life, through faith, hope and charity - all of which flow from the interior participation, “consortium” with the Trinity.

The *fondo* of the human soul is indeed a mystery in itself - even the senses do not have access to it, and the operations that make it known to us are of themselves, purely spiritual. The divine presence is achieved there in a most sublime mystery, and the “curtain” is never penetrated through curiosity. When one is not even able to meditate, St. Paul’s teaching helps [cf. Rm 8]: the Holy Spirit comes to us in our weakness and makes it up for us. In the mystical tradition, this is interpreted as one striving to be “content” with God in the supreme “part” of his/her being.

St. John of the Cross sees this “sublime part” of the soul being reached and developed only through the theological virtues. All else must be “emptied” and become as “naught” - *nada* - he develops in this way his great asceticism of Spiritual Poverty, as the sole means of developing theological hope, which flows from faith, and leads to charity. He wrote:

“... All possession is contrary to hope - which, as St. Paul says, is from that which is not possessed: ‘For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved - our salvation is not in sight yet, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were - but, as I say, we most hope to be saved since we are not saved yet, it is something we must wait for in patience’ [cf. Rm 8:24]’. Therefore, the more the memory despoils itself, the more will it have hope - and the more hope it has, the more will one share in union with God. Since in regard to God, the more the soul hopes, the more does it obtain and, therefore, one hopes the more, the more does one become dispossessed of all else. When one becomes perfectly deprived of all possession, one will then enjoy the perfect possession of God in divine union ... whoever does not renounce all that he/she possesses, cannot be a disciple of Christ [cf. Lk 14:33]. [cf. *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book III, c. 7, n. 3].

St. John of the Cross refers to this teaching rather frequently:

“... we have already proven that the soul must renounce all possession of memory, so that it might become united with God in hope: in order for hope to be perfect, it is necessary that memory can have nothing other which is not God ...” [ib., c. 11, n. 1].

Like a good teacher, deeply intent on communicating this basic lesson of his doctrine, St. John of the Cross returns to this still again:

“... Re-capitulating, therefore, I say above all, that the scope toward which we are tending is that the soul be united with God, according to the memory, **in hope**. With this as our premise, there should be noted that that which is hoped is that which is **not yet possession**, and that the less that other things are possessed, then all the greater is the capacity and the potency to hope in that which is hoped - only in this way, is hope the more perfect. On the contrary, the more things that are possessed, then all the less is the ability and the capacity to hope, and thus hope is all the more imperfect...” [cf. I.c., c.15, n. 1].

In his classic *Dark Night*, St. John of the Cross offers a rather intense instruction on the theological life toward which each human being is called. He writes:

“...On the white tunic of faith, the soul immediately places over it the second garment, green in color, which signifies the virtue of hope. It is with this virtue with which principally the soul defends itself, and liberates itself from its second enemy, that is, the world. This green of lively hope in God gives to the soul such vitality, courage and elevation, to those things which pertain to eternal life. By means of hope, all the



things of the world which indeed are really empty, arid, dead, seem to be of no value. Here the soul despoils itself of all the decoration and costumes of this world. By means of this despoilment, the believer does not place his/her heart in any thing, hoping in nothing of that which is found here on earth. One comes to life vested solely in the hope of eternal life..." [cf. *Dark Night*, Book II, chapter 21, n. 6].

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### [c.] St. Gaspar Bertoni

He was profoundly inspired by the Thomistic doctrine which would unite the Beatitude of Poverty with the Theological Virtue of Hope [cf. Mt 5; St. Thomas: I I - I I, q. 19, a. 12; 3 Sent., 3, d. 34, q. 1, a. 5; In Mt c. 5]. Deeply imbued with his biblical spirituality, Fr. Bertoni radicated his own hope in two realities profoundly familiar to him: the omnipotent **Mercy of God** and the abysmal **misery of humanity**. Whether or not the Germane Dominican, Tauler, had any profound effect on the Stigmatine Founder could be studied further. Tauler is mentioned by Fr. Lenotti in one of his Domestic Exhortations:

"... Tauler narrates that Christ appeared to a certain great servant of His, and He lamented with heart-felt sorrow that there are six ways in which He was dishonored by His followers. The second of these six ways was that in their meetings and conferences they treated empty and useless things that only rarely, or not at all, had anything to do with Him..." [cf. "Domestic Exhortations". On Recreations - II<sup>nd</sup> Exhortation, in: CS III, p. 530].

It is possible that Tauler came to the Stigmatine Founder also from his effect on St. Paul of the Cross, with whom St. Gaspar Bertoni was familiar:

"... One should not be preoccupied with his own good example ... This is a common error, understood by the Venerable Paul, Founder of the Passionists, from our Lord Himself. What is most important is to work well and perfectly - good example will then follow by itself [cf. MP, July 17, 1809].

Fr. Bertoni worded the principle in a variety of ways, such as:

"... the less that we think of, find support in, or take our rest in creatures, all the more will those [theological] virtues assume strength and increase..." [cf. Letter 6, December 11, 1816 - in Ep, p. 35].

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### [A] The Primary Motive of Christian Hope:

Schooled in the classical Thomistic mold, Fr. Bertoni developed a Spirituality of Hope that was eminently “theological”, “**Trinitarian**”:

#### 1. A Hope based on God, the Father

a. While St. John of the Cross spoke of the “Dark Night”, describing the intensity of spiritual tribulation, Tauler called it a “Spiritual Winter” to describe its longevity, exasperating duration - implying what seems often to be its endless duration. Fr. Bertoni has alluded to this experience of “winter”:

“... Precisely this life of glory, experienced now solely as hope, is much less known and considered by the world; in like manner, the world does not see the glorious life to which Christ has risen, and in which He now lives in God, with the Father. This is why, as St. Paul said, our life is hidden with Christ in God: ‘But when Christ is revealed, and he is your life, you, too, will be revealed in all your glory in Him...’ [cf. Col 3:4].

“It is like the pearl, as St. John Chrysostom explains, remains hidden for as long as it is in its shell. Even less inviting is the similitude which St. Augustine employs to explain this passage. In the harsh winter, the green tree seems dry to the sight. When the summer approaches and the living root sends out its branches, they are endowed with fruit. Such is our life that may be compared to the winter: our sun is Christ, Who seems far from us and hidden from view, obscured in the dark clouds. Outside we may give the appearance of being without life, without honor, without beauty or luster. But deep inside, we maintain the root - charity in God - very much alive. It is as though planted in a vital land, firm and alive. The summer will come with the appearance of the glory of Christ. We will be seen to flourish again, by coming again to life, by showing our branches and fresh fruit - these are the characteristics of the beatitude more in the spirit than in the flesh...” [cf. Sermon 38, ‘The Spiritual Life’ - Easter, April 5, 1807 - in: PVC, P. 296.].

b. The Stigmatine Founder looked on the omnipotence of God under the image of a broad sea and its counter-part was the yearning of the human heart, similarly vast and which would find repose solely in God:

“...Would we really want such misery, such limited goods to satisfy our hearts? If our hearts are really almost as vast as another sea, how can such insignificant twigs fill

the immensity of our yearnings? Only in heaven will we find anything that will be suited to the longings of our hearts - a God, an infinite good. My God, only then would I really be fulfilled, when Your glory will appear. Yes, You alone with the flood of your delights can satisfy my yearning [cf. Ps 17:15]. And this is why You have given me such a restless heart: so that I might come to understand that for You alone has my heart been prepared, and that it will be restless until it rests in You ... (cf. the *Confessions* of St. Augustine)..." [Sermon 5, 'The Ascension', May 14, 1801, in: PVC pp. 11, ff.].

c. like most mystics, Fr. Bertoni was deeply impressed with the wonders of nature, and often used them as an example to express his thought. He often thought of the love of God as an immense sea:

"...O admirable abyss of Divine Love! And profound abyss of His charity! When will it be that we will indeed be so ship-wrecked and abandoned in this immense sea, that we will no longer look toward the shores of this wretched earth of ours? 'Blessed - (and really blessed) - is the one who takes shelter in Him! (cf. Ps 34:9). [cf. Letter 3, November 26, 1812 - in Ep, pp. 28, ff.].

d. Being ship-wrecked in the sea of divine love served Fr. Bertoni as an apt image to express his total trust in God:

"...Blessed is anyone who lose himself in this abyss! Blessed is the one who throws himself into it, fully alive and totally ship-wrecked into this Ocean! The little child is never more secure than when sleeping in the embrace of its Mother, he abandons all thought and concern for himself. The infant does not see, hear, or speak. But, the Mother sees for him, listens for him, speaks and works for him. And when she wants, she can and knows how to awaken him, as she remains always so close to him [cf. Letter 36 - cf. Ep pp. 96, f.].

e. This "feminine" image of God reflects the ancient Psalmist:

"Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions, my eyes do not look too high. I am not concerned with great affairs, or marvels beyond my scope. Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet, like a child in its mother's arms, as content as a child that has been weaned. Rely, Israel, on Yahweh, now and for always! [cf. Ps 131].

f. One of his repeated principles [cf. CF # 185] appears in his Letters with a Trinitarian dimension, and also in his sermons. This is a principle inspired through St. Paul [cf. Ph 1:6]:

“...The One Who has begun this good work in you, that of your sanctification, by giving you the grace to be converted, this same One will carry it through by assisting you with efficacious aids, right through to the end[cf. Sermon 17, ‘Perseverance’, April 11, 1803 - in: PVC p. 118].

g. Fr. Bertoni depended on this principle in his own Letters of spiritual direction, and often suggested it for reflection:

“... Nonetheless, you cannot allow discouragement because the Lord, Who has already given an outline for the entire edifice, will also offer a design for each part, corresponding to the magnificence and greatness of so worthy a palace. Even if at the present moment, you do not see clearly before the eyes of your mind the blue-print, you can rest assured that you will see it all in His own good time, and that will be the best possible of times ...

“The Lord will enlighten you and also me, further - but, this present time is to prepare you from afar to receive these lights. Once they are received, for even greater assurance and strength, they must be seen in the light of the Divine Scriptures, the Holy Catholic Church, and her saints and Doctors. You will see completed in you what He has already begun: ‘I am quite certain that the One Who has begun this good work in you will see that it is finished when the day of Christ comes’ (cf. Ph 1:6)” - [cf. Letter 28, in: Ep, pp. 80, ff.].

h. The Stigmatine Founder’s hope was based in his faith-inspired vision of an eternally active God:

“... ‘I am the Lord, your God, Who brought you...’ (cf. Ex 20:2). This is an expression of the love of the active God, committed to so dominating our hearts that only He could remain in them as a free Master - and does not stay in them merely as a respectful guest who would never dare to make a move. ‘I am the Lord, your God ...’” [cf. Letter 5 - in: Ep, pp. 33].

i. In the difficulties of vocation, Fr. Bertoni was totally hopeful in the assistance of God. In his Constitutions, he described the Stigmatine vocation as one that was both ‘arduous and difficult’ - but, can be undertaken because of God’s help [cf. CF 185]. He writes:

“... in my view, we have only to praise, admire and thank God, Who gives the necessary talents according to the purpose of the vocation. We have no reason ever to entertain any doubt about this - nor, should we for the future, even in greater difficulties. For Him to help us in the great things, as in the lesser ones, is all the same. In a certain way, the greater challenges are more worthy of Him, even though when compared to an infinite Being, complete in all perfection, everything is slight and small. Furthermore, every slight and small thing that is done for Him, is supremely and most sublimely great...” [cf. Letter 12, January 9, 1813, in: Ep p. 48].

j. As is noted by St. Paul, there is a close tie between patience, perseverance and hope [cf. Rm 5:5, ff.]. Fr. Bertoni noted the need for patience in the exercise of hope:

“... The Lord will supply the means and, in time, will see it through ...” [cf. Letter 13, in: Ep p. 52].

k. The Stigmatine Founder’s trust in Divine Providence began early in his life, and seems to be one of the strong points of his spirituality:

“...Blessed are they indeed who trust in Divine Providence! They have nothing to fear that anything could ever really stand in their way, and that would frustrate Its designs. Divine Providence sweetly but strongly at one and the same time, disposes all things for Its own purposes. All things, both pleasant and adverse, as well as the good and evil of human beings, serve It in equal manner: ‘In the heavens, on the earth, in the ocean, in the depths, Yahweh’s will is sovereign’ (cf. Ps 135:5, f.). - (Mordechai’s Prayer): ‘And there is no one who can with stand You in Your will to save Israel’ (cf. Est 13:9 - Vulgate; 4:17, in JB) - ‘We know that by turning everything to their good, God co-operates with all those who love Him, with all those He has called according to His purposes (cf. Rm 8:28).

“And we still have another most serious commandment to hope that our misery will one day be changed into such glory, and that we will indeed be similar to Him. May He be thanked, blessed and loved for ever! “ [cf. Letter 13, in: Ep p. 52]

l. Fr. Bertoni made his own a great many Ignatian principles of spirituality - but there is one that he repeated very often. It is not unlike the idea from John of the Cross that one obtains from God just as much as one dares to hope from Him. From St. Ignatius, the Stigmatine Founder was deeply convinced that God would do great things in the lives of believers if only they would not place obstacles in His way. he wrote:

“... There are very few who understand what it is that God would do in them, if one He was not impeded by them in His designs. We cannot even think what God would do with us, and how much He would achieve in us and for us - since we are the pupils of His eye - if only we would not place obstacles in the way of His grace, but would simply, freely and totally hand our lives over to him [cf. Mss B # 5480].

m. This grand idea is echoed by a modern Protestant theologian, Jurgen Moltmann, who holds that original sin is not so much the titanic desire to be as God is, but rather the refusal to be all that God wants. Fr. Bertoni repeated the idea very often: it has been called ‘one of the corner-stones of his spirituality’ [cf. CS IV, p. 181]. It is found in his own Spiritual Diary [cf. MP, December 2, 1808; May 18th, 1811]. He preached it to the priests who made his Retreat [cf. Mss # 2180] - it is found in his Letters of spiritual direction [cf. Letters 19; 21] - and he wrote it in a letter to a Monsignor Biraghi [February 19, 1832]. The principle seems to have come to Fr. Bertoni from his repeated readings of a biography of St. Ignatius, written by the Jesuit, Fr. Mariani:

“... Very few are they who even know what it is that God would do with them if only He were not impeded by them in His designs for them. It is a pity that the Reign of God is not accepted by all! Whoever really wants to enter there is called upon to break his stride, even when going full speed ahead, with the denials of certain appetites that prove to slow one down in the long run: ‘Try your best to enter by the narrow door...’ (cf. Lk 13:24). Put aside friendships, clothes, reputation and even life itself, should this be necessary...” [cf. Mss B # 4047].

n. The principle is found in two letters of spiritual direction, in close proximity to one another, written to Mother Leopoldina Naudet:

“...How few are they who ever understand what God would do with them if only He was not impeded by them in His designs! This is to be noted not only in individual persons, but also in the totality of Society. We should exercise extraordinary diligence to do all in our power whatever is necessary and not to impede what God can and wishes to do on His part: ‘I considered Your works and was overwhelmed’ (Old Liturgy of Good Friday). In fact, if we would only proceed with diligence, bringing others to walk along in harmony, we would see such magnificent works accomplished by the Almighty hand of God. We would not only be happily surprised, but even amazed, simply overwhelmed with admiration: ‘Blessed be Yahweh who performs marvels of love for me!’ (cf. Ps 31:20)” [cf. Letter 19, in: Ep, pp. 61, ff.].

o. The principle, then, as Fr. Bertoni saw it, did not apply merely to individuals, but also to communities: what wonders can still be accomplished with God's help! He synthesized it all in a vivid faith, and continuing prayer:

"... How very few are they who even know what God might do with them, and what they could never achieve by their own efforts - if only He was not impeded by them in His plans. Ultimately, everything - in the last analysis - is reduced to an act of faith, and to incessant prayer. Let us allow Him to enter freely and to take full possession of this soul, that He loves so much, and really desires to unite to Himself..." [cf. Letter 21, in: Ep, p. 66].

p. Fr. Bertoni's hope in the omnipotent power of God was somewhat paradoxical in the traditional sense, based on St. Ignatius of Loyola's principle: 'Pray as though all depended on God, and struggle as though it all depended on you.' His hope was not passive, but active, firmly based on thoughts such as this one:

"... Let us leave it all up to God: He knows how to bring it to a happy conclusion, and He will surely do His part..." [cf. Letter 22, in: Ep, p. 68].

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## **2. A Hope based on God, the Son**

a. Almost in lyrical language, the Stigmatine Founder presents a kind of Canticle in honor of Jesus Christ, the Priest of the Most High - Who has offered through His life, the perfect sacrifice for sinners:

"... The Name of Jesus means a Savior, not in some particular manner of just a few - but, the universal savior of all, as St. Paul writes, 'Christ has died for all' (cf. 2 Co 14:15). His offering is in no way limited by time, since Jesus has an eternal priesthood, and therefore, perpetually He is able to save anyone who through Him draws close to God. Jesus is ever alive to intercede on our behalf (cf. Ep 7:24, ff.)

"He is not limited to any number of faults, since there can be found in Him a mercy without any restriction that would determine or limit Him: 'with the Lord, there is mercy'. His is a super-abundant redemption, without measure: 'copious redemption is to be found in Him' (cf. Vulgate, Ps 109: 7). Therefore, in Him it will always be true that where iniquity has abounded, grace abounds even more (cf. Rm 5:20)..."

“If my pleading here today has gained nothing, I turn to Christ, crucified love ... by Your infinite clemency, pour out the oil of Your Name into the hearts of the most obstinate, that they might be softened that they might be rendered able to strengthened to trust in You in all things so that they might never despair of rising up again and that once risen up, they might be illuminated, nourished and preserved. Let them experience all the other effects of this love, as an oil spread throughout the world. To Your Name, O Jesus, may there be honor, praise, blessing, and thanksgiving for ever...” [cf. Sermon 9, ‘The Name of Jesus’, 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, 1802 - in: PVC, pp. 244,250].

b. Fr. Bertoni often preached about the infinite Mercy of God, as revealed through Jesus Christ:

“... Why wait longer to throw yourselves into the arms of this divine Mercy, while there is still time before this Mercy gives way to Justice which we have much offended and irritated? Now is the proper time for our penance to be accepted [cf. Sermon 10, ‘Universal Judgment’, November 28, 1802, in: PVC, pp. 92, ff.].

c. An ardent hope in Christ the Savior permeates so much of the writings of the Stigmatine Founder which have come down to us:

“...the Supreme King of Heaven wishes to liberate us with His grace, and to enrich us with His gifts. Therefore, we ought to feel with ever greater joy the approach of that most fortunate day, that most joyful moment, that surpasses all imagination in happiness and joy for us...” [cf. Sermon 25, ‘The Advent of the Lord’, December 9, 1804, in: PVC, p. 227].

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There are many texts of Fr. Bertoni in which he clearly places his hope in the Paschal Mystery. The aspect of Fr. Bertoni’s devotion to the Crucified has already been studied. The Lord Jesus, with His Stigmata preserved in His resurrected body, invites the Apostles to continue that Mission that He received from His Father [cf. Jn 20:21], all the way to a share in the glory that is now His. Fr. Bertoni in his ardent preaching, following the Patristic tradition, “hides” himself, takes refuge in the open side of Jesus Christ: the Stigmatine Devotions to the Sacred Stigmata and to the Espousals of Mary and Joseph, also express his hope. Thus, the Hope of the Stigmatine Founder might be considered in the way that follows:



## 1.] The Glorious Christ

a.] Fr. Bertoni looked upon Jesus Christ as the “Victor” in the terrible “ordeal” which all the baptized must endure, offering to all now a share in His own hard-won glory:

“... The glorious Conqueror, Jesus Christ, has already risen after having conquered sin and the demon by death. You increase the glory of His triumph when you see to it that He also conquers sin, the devil, in each one of you in particular...” [cf. Sermon 23, 1804, in: PVC, p.99].

b.] In a dramatic sermon for Easter, one year early in his priesthood, Fr. Bertoni invited a contemplation of the Sorrowful Wounds of the Passion as a means of conversion:

“...Look at the Man! Just look at this Body, how lacerated it is with so many wounds that have not only taken from Him all beauty, all grace, but have even taken from Him the aspect of being a man! Just reflect on His head, pierced by so many thorns, these hands and feet, how wounded they are. Look at it all, and the sorrow this conjures up will respond to the deepest yearnings of your hearts. Yet, even the deepest sorrow possible would never arrive at what is merited.

“On Your part, O Jesus, see the compassion that these good people tend toward You. Now, it is up to You to speak to them, and to tell them what it is that can console Your pierced Heart... When they come now to venerate Your wounds, and to mix their tears with Your Blood... they might come to understand and to fulfill what it is that You now ask of their hearts ....

“As for me, if you wish to find me, look for me in the Wound of the side of Christ. There I will remain, and it will be easy to find me. Anywhere else, you will seek in vain (cf. Cornelius a’ Lapide). Christ awaits you now, and prepares for you - rather, a throne! [cf. Sermon 38, in: PVC, pp. 289; 299].

c.] This Sermon on Easter does offer us some deep insights into his own classical faith in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The Paschal Mystery is the ultimate source of Fr. Bertoni’s charism and, of course, of his hope:

“... You have completed during these recent days the lamentations of penance, and have achieved in this, your justification, celebrated today - as I am deeply

convinced - by all of you on this Easter. I can almost see you all now, resurrected in Christ, walking joyfully in the newness of life, hurrying on ahead with the anxious disciples, to see Christ in Galilee.

“I am speaking now with believers, who from fear and contrition ascend securely to confidence in Divine Mercy. I see you ascending from the joys of time and the consolation of the world, going through compunction and that grief which are of God. You have now passed over into a holy and devout exultation, into a lively spiritual joy in the Holy Spirit. I see you all rejoicing the more in the memory which inflames within you the desire for eternal rewards than previously the recollection of past faults had weighed you down...

“You have resurrected with Christ... in proposing the future resurrection, St. Paul demands of us all another resurrection: i.e., a new direction of life at this present moment, by a change in our attitudes...” [cf. *ib.*, pp. 289, ff.].

d.] Fr. Bertoni manifested some fascination with the wound in Christ’s side, inflicted according to John’s Gospel, even after Jesus’ death had already been ascertained. Fr. Bertoni writes:

“... The side of Christ, opened after His death, shows us that Heart, the Heart wounded with the lance. This wound was retained in His glorious body, and renders the Heart a symbol that is so moving, evident, divine, that it is impossible to venerate His Wound without remembering and worshipping His immense love...” [cf. *Mss B # 1771*; cf. *Nello*, Part 2, p. 388].

e.] A few years after these Homilies were delivered, Fr. Bertoni preached the Spiritual Exercises to the Priests and Seminarians of Verona. Following St. Ignatius, the Stigmatine Founder offers a vision of the Wounds of Christ preserved in His Risen Body:

“... Just imagine that you see Him, just as He appeared to them, alive and luminous, and with the scars of His Wounds. He is also inviting you to go with Him to heaven, and He explicitly states the purpose of His leaving: ‘I go to prepare a place for you!’ (cf. *Jn 14:2*)... We began these ‘Spiritual Exercises’ with a Meditation on the goal of humanity and now we return to this same theme. We have stated, with St. Paul, that the proximate end is our own sanctification (cf. *1 Th 4:2*). The resurrection of Christ is precisely our model in this.

“The ultimate end is eternal life and in the Ascension of Christ there is brought home to us that eternal life is the goal toward which we should always tend...” [cf. CS I, pp. 230, ff.].

f.] Fr. Bertoni personally was very convinced of the presence of the Merciful Christ in his own life and it is this that he shared particularly in his preaching”

“... Christ is simply the necessary principle for all of this - by the Lord’s Mercy I can make of Him the foundation of my life so much so that in these days, rather than denying me this, He makes me feel His merciful presence all the more strongly in His inspirations. Hence, it is so certain that I ought to operate with this principle in mind. In this sense, the carrying out of the work of my resurrection and sanctification depends on me..” [l.c.].

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## **2.] Union with Christ in Glory, the Spouse of the Soul**

a.] The very real, lived and “experienced” foundation of Fr. Bertoni’s Hope was his vivid faith in the Presence of the Suffering and Glorious Christ in his own life. He deeply believed in this union with Christ, Who comes to the soul under the form of Mercy, the Ultimate Motive of Christian Hope:

“... The time is short and the appearance of this world soon has its end. On the contrary, each of us, every day, with giant steps forward, are approaching a lasting eternity. Therefore, whatever we have to do, it is fitting that we should do it now, in great haste. Are we, perhaps, waiting for the night to settle in, to begin to work? Will we wait, by chance, for the Spouse, for Him to supply oil for our lamps that have already gone out? Will we wait for Him to invite us to the nuptials, to begin only then to weave the cloth for our wedding garments?

“Behold, I come soon!’ and I am bringing with me your reward...!” [cf. Sermon 11, April 20, 1801, “Devotion”, in: PVC p. 206].

b.] Fr. Bertoni personally, perhaps through the trying events of his early life, was deeply impressed with the passing nature of this world. Therefore, much of his preaching centered upon “being ready”. He did preach the demands of God,

but also with evident insistence on the fact that He would come in great love. The following is one indication of his deep faith and love:

“...‘if anyone will open to Me, I will come to him’. Here He speaks as a guest who comes in the night. It means simply this: that He will forget all past injuries and all rejections, and He is expressing His will to live with you with a great familiarity of friendship, and is disposed to receive your obsequious response.

“He does not merely say: ‘I will enter’ - but, He also adds: ‘And I will sup with him, and he with Me’ (cf. Apoc. 3:20) - i.e., I will really make Myself at home with him, and I will spread around great joy, as is customary among friends. And the host will do likewise with Me. This cell is made so pleasant by the sharing of My Sacraments and in the generous communication of My most moving secrets: ‘I’, says the Lord, ‘will have no difficulty in receiving My host at My own table’.

“It may be noted that Christ still speaks here as a Guest, but One Who is very rich and grateful. On entering another’s house, He blesses the host for more than He receives ... St. John Chrysostom would say that He is like a King who has fallen in love with a lowly shepherd girl. He has already decided to take her from her hut, and bring her to His royal apartments and make her His wife. He is not content with sending important emissaries to win her hand, but comes Himself ...

“In reality, our loving King was so carried away by His love, so to speak, that He even gave up His life for us...” [cf. Sermon 8, ‘The House of Loreto’, December 13, 1801, in: PVC pp. 306,f.].

c.] The Stigmatine Founder uses the Nuptial Theme often as a motive for hope in his Letters of spiritual direction:

“... Can you not hear the Gospel that cries out with such power: ‘Set your hearts on His kingdom first, and on His righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well’ (cf. Mt 6:33). ‘So, do not worry about tomorrow ...’ (v. 34). And also: ‘Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or land for the sake of My Name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life’ (cf. Mt 19:29).

“Common sense itself states that it is the task of the spouse to be ready to please her Husband, and that it pertains to Him to find a home and to lead His spouse to it...” [cf. Letter 32, June 28, 1813, in: Ep p. 86].

Summary: Holy Abandonment is not merely allowing the Lord to work when we are not able to do so. Abandonment is far more present when we are still able to do something, but nevertheless commit ourselves to Him. Abandonment is not merely waiting that the Will of God be known, but it is a positive searching, a choosing of God's Will, and surrendering all else in total dependence. Fr. Bertoni believed that this is how the Church herself operates. The exercise of Holy Abandonment became for him his most sublime expression of veneration for the Spouse of Christ, looked upon, as he did, as a perfect model of abandonment into the hands of God [cf. Nello dalle Vedove, Part II, p. 520].

...

### **3.] Union with the Mission of the Glorious Christ, Spouse of the Church:**

a.] This is a Hope that finds strength in the Principle of "Instrumentality", or "**The Espousals Principle**". The more intimately one is united with Jesus Christ and the Church, the more effective does his Apostolic Mission become. In this sense, even ordinary talent becomes "extraordinary" through prayerful union with Jesus Christ. Jesus is espoused to the Church, and His Power is channeled through her by loyalty to her Bishops.

b.] This ideal flows from the Thomistic teaching on "Instrumental Causality". St. Ignatius expressed this in a number of his letters. He stated that ordinary talent, and even that which might not even merit being called 'ordinary', often becomes an instrument of very notable apostolic effectiveness for the simple reason that one strives to act from the supernatural motivation of intimate union with the Principal Agent, Jesus Christ. On the contrary, other talents, even extraordinary ones, produce an inferior apostolic efficacy for the simple reason that they are separated from the Principal Agent, or only remotely joined to Him in the Apostolic Mission.

c.] Fr. Bertoni has a series of insights that could easily be understood in this light:

"...God saves His elect with determined instruments, and in a determined manner [cf. Mss B 6874] ... Good and wise preachers who with well prepared sermons defend the people from hidden enemies - by their good lives, in imitation of Christ, are powerful with their example. They are thus able to give support to those who may be wavering.

By their good lives in following our Lord they bring light to those struggling in the darkness ..." [cf. Mss B 6892; 6936; cf. also Nello, o.c., pp. 358. ff.].

d.] Fr. Bertoni saw this divine effectiveness in his theology of grace and the religious life, flowing to the Apostolic Missionary:

"... The graces that come to the instruments who are chosen and converted to God, flow from the Shepherd, Who is the Head. They are diffused to the flock and to the members. This comes first to the priestly preachers and doctors, then through the different Orders of active and contemplative life..." [cf. Mss B 7077; Nello, p. 368].

e.] There is a grace, and also a power received by loyalty to the Church. This kind of spirituality is clearly reflected in the life of Leopoldina Naudet, for many years directed by Fr. Bertoni. She wrote once:

"... Since I was deprived of all human assistance and support with the death of the Arch-Duchess, I exercised even greater confidence in God. In His works He often chooses the most humble of instruments and lowly individuals, so that His glory might shine out the more..." [cf. Nello, p. 614].

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### 3. **A Hope based on God, the Holy Spirit [cf. + Jose Alberto Moura, CSS, *The Holy Spirit in the Charism of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni*. Rome: 1988].**

a. The Stigmatine Founder nurtured a "devotion" to the Holy Spirit in the fullest meaning of that word. As he once explained in a sermon, taken from the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, as understood by St. Francis de Sales:

"... True devotion essentially consists in a will that is ready **to give of itself for service** (cf. 2-2, q. 82, a. 1)" [cf. Sermon II, "Devotion", April 20, 1801, in: PVC, p. 203].

b. In this sense, one can discern a lived, an "experienced" presence of the Holy Spirit in his life, precisely as the Giver of Hope:

"...In order to shed greater light on the matter, it would perhaps not be out of place here to introduce a teaching of great brilliance of the Angelic Doctor, a teaching which was taught before him by St. Augustine. In the Law of the Gospel, two things should be considered:

"- the principal matter of celebration is the grace of the Holy Spirit, Who gives of Himself by means of faith in Christ;

“- the second is the reading, i.e., the scriptures of the Holy Gospel in which are contained only those things which pertain to Grace - either as disposing one to receive it, or matters that pertain to the manner of using this grace (cf. St. Thomas, 1-2, q. 106, a.1).

“As for that which disposes the intellect for the faith, by which means grace is received, there are contained in the Gospel those principles which pertain manifesting the Divinity, or the humanity of Christ; as far as the effect is concerned, there are contained in the Gospel those directions which pertain to the disdain of the world, by which a person is rendered capable of receiving the Holy Spirit. The reason is that the “world”, i.e., those who love this world, cannot receive the Holy Spirit, as St. John states (cf. 1 Jn 14:17).

“The use of this spiritual grace is manifest in the works of virtue and it is to these that the Scripture of the New testament exhorts the faithful in many ways.

“ And since everything else seems to be defined by that which is principal in it, e.g., a human being by reason - so principally the New Law is that grace given by the Holy Spirit to the faithful. Hence, the Apostle calls it: ‘the Law of Faith, the Law of the Spirit and the Life in Jesus Christ (cf. Rm 3:27; 8:2)’.

“And St. Augustine asks: ‘What are these Laws, if not the very presence of the Holy Spirit?’ (cf. *De Spiritu et Lettera*, c. 21). It is to this level that the glory of our situation is raised...” [cf. Sermon 20, ‘The Law of the Gospel’, June 2, 1803, in: PVC, pp. 26, ff.].

c. Fr. Bertoni speaks of a kind of Espousals, or nuptials, between the Faithful and the Holy Spirit:

“... By grace, you have been raised up to the divine nature, in which you have participated. You are the children of God. Christ is our Brother. You have been declared the heirs of God. Your souls are indeed the Spouses of the Holy Spirit. Has He not bestowed on them a most rich pledge of precious gifts? Were not the most august Princes of Heaven destined to bring them here to earth? Did not the very Son of God descend from heaven, putting on your nature, just to converse with you? Could I, then, ever watch with indifference, tranquillity, the masters of this earth, the princes of heaven, the children of God, the spouses of God - humiliated under shameful slavery,

being made into slaves of the lowest type, subjected to tyranny...? “ [cf. Sermon 23, April 2, 1804 - in: PVC, p. 33].

d. This special, intimate union with God is the dignity of the Christian in this faith-view of Fr. Bertoni. Through the Holy Spirit, the believer becomes one and the same’ with the Lord, through a kind of sponsal union:

“... You should keep in mind those two sayings of the Lord. The first one is: ‘Without Me, you can do nothing’ (cf. Jn 15:5). The second is: ‘There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One Who gives me strength’ (cf. Ph 4:13).

“Therefore, always be ready and waiting. This will all be revealed one day, and we have His word for it...” [cf. Letter 32, in: Ep, p. 87].

e. The Stigmatine Congregation, at least in the mind and heart of its Founder, is a work of the Holy Spirit. Its Rule and its “obsequious” service of the Church are inspired by the presence of the Holy Spirit in it. Fr. Bertoni wrote these thoughts, not so much concerning his own Constitutions, even though he did think they were the work of God. He described the work of Leopoldina Naudet, struggling with the writing of her Rule, in these words:

“... As far as the Rules are concerned: you ought to keep them before your heart with the utmost - even exquisite - diligence to prepare them so that you might follow the gentle Providence of our Lord, Who asks this of you. It is already evident that His prime intention is to inspire into your mind the Living Rule, which is the Spirit, and to write deep within your heart the entire Law, or Constitution of His charity and His love. Therefore, in all that has to do with the Divine Glory of your Most Holy Spouse, Christ our Lord, you should not let yourself be impeded by anyone of this world. Furthermore, you should not place even the slightest impediment yourself in the way of that which He indeed really wants to write. He will perform all the more, and with the greater necessity for His own glory, and out of love for you, and of all those who are to receive this Rule from you...” [cf. Letter 21, in: Ep, p. 67].

f. In the compilation of his own Constitutions, Fr. Bertoni used as his principal source the work of Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ, and his classical Commentary on the theology behind St. Ignatius’ idea for what it means to be in the “Society”, in the “Company” of Jesus [cf. ***De Religione Societatis Iesu*** ]. In this work, Fr. Suarez spoke of the variety of ‘founders’ in working out the plan for the Society of Jesus:



“... In the work of founding the Society, three causes might be taken into consideration:

“- the primary and principal cause, which is God;

“- the proximate and ministerial cause, which is the human being whom God has illuminated and inspired in thinking up this wonderful work;

“- the third is the Apostolic See, which, in the Name of God, as taking the place of Christ on earth, has accepted and confirmed this religious institute by its authority [cf. Suarez, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, lib. I, c. 4, n. 1, pp. 575, ff.].

g. The Stigmatine Founder was most convinced that the Congregation he founded was the work of the Holy Spirit [cf. CF # 185], and that all Stigmatines are called to serve the Church, through their assistance of the Bishops. In his mind, these Bishops, following the Acts of the Apostles, were chosen by the Holy Spirit [cf. Ac 20:28]. Fr. Bertoni's "devotion" to the Holy Spirit is evident in this key, and necessarily oft-quoted consideration of the very core, the central ideal of his charism:

"Since the scope of our Congregation is to serve the Church with the various and proper ministries of its vocation, under the direction of the Bishops, it is to be noted that this, at times, is a most arduous and difficult undertaking. This is particularly so when one considers the fragility of men, and it might seem that it is a call that is exposed to dangers.

"Nonetheless, this program of our particular dedication to the Church still, even with this in mind, cannot be called imprudent, or rash. The reasons are:

"In the first place, because we believe that the carrying out of this vocation does not depend on human strength alone, but on the grace of the Holy Spirit: 'since the One Who has inspired and begun this good work, He Himself will lead it to fulfillment' (cf. Ph 1:6) - whenever it is a question of keeping it on its feet and our human resources do not suffice. This is, in fact, the special grace of our vocation, a grace which is more powerful than any danger or difficulty.

" Secondly, with this program, we do not propose for ourselves any exposure to dangers, nor do we go to this, rather than to some other place; nor do we perform this, or that action, of our own whim. In all, we choose to follow the direction of the orthodox Bishop placed by the Holy Spirit to govern the Church of God. This is a means that is sure enough to keep one from erring in the ways of the Lord.

“Finally, the Congregation itself is to exercise care both in the approval of its members, as well as in the choice of them, and in sustaining them and strengthening them with every means.” [CF # 185].

h. As does all theology, Fr. Bertoni also attributes to the Holy Spirit a special role in maintaining charity in the community. It was originally conceived as one made up of a variety of members, each assigned with special competence, to a particular area of the ministry. Thus, it would so happen that charity would really be tried on the community level. With this in mind, the majority of his Constitutions pertain to charity among the members. The following insight came to him from the tradition of the Church:

“... Since it is true that nothing helps to have genuine charity toward another person than to notice in him the singular traits of virtue that are in him through the Holy Spirit. One great means for this is to contemplate the other person as the image of God, painted with the most beautiful colors of grace. If, therefore, all would strive to increase in these virtues, and to consider them often in others, if they would only really believe in their hearts that others are truly superior to them and that they enjoy spiritual gifts which can be discerned in them, and come to thank God for them, then mutual charity would increase among them in a marvelous manner [cf. CF # 223 - a direct quote from Suarez].

i. This Constitution 223 has come to Fr. Bertoni from Suarez - who may have received it directly from St. Paul. With such sentiments, the Apostle to the Gentiles introduced his Christological Hymn celebrating the *kenosis* of the Divine Son. As St. Paul tried to inculcate in this “Letter from Captivity” the virtue of fraternal humility, as it has been called, he offers this principle:

“... Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interest first but everybody thinks of other people’s interests instead. In your minds, you must be as Christ Jesus... Who emptied Himself...” [cf. Ph 2: 5. ff.]

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## **[B] The Secondary Motive of Christian Hope: Human Misery, Weakness**

1. Throughout his long life Fr. Bertoni had ample contact with human weakness: in his years as Confessor, in his own personal life through the experience of so much intense human physical suffering, through his early experiences with the deaths of his loved ones in his home. All of these factors forcefully shaped his deep sense of compassion and feeling for others and enabled him to look at God as coming to meet

humanity with His omnipotent mercy, in its abysmal misery [cf. Ps 103]. From the experiences of his early life, and for as long as he lived thereafter, he had a highly developed sense of the fragility of human life, the rapid passing of time [cf. Ps 90, and the Wisdom Tradition]. He had a marked sense of his own "creaturality", seeing his own life as a free gift from God and as the substrate of all the many additional gifts that came to him: grace and vocation. With this deep sense of the gratuity of God's gift of life, Fr. Bertoni understood the infinite distance between God and man already to a profound extent and then his faith-vision of sin that even distanced humanity from God even further.

2. All of these factors developed in him a fervent hope in the Father as the Creator of heaven and earth, and the God of life. He saw the Son as the Redeemer and Savior of all humanity, and the Holy Spirit as the tireless Sanctifier, the Lord and Giver of Life - for all those who would strive to be docile to Him. All of this convinced Fr. Bertoni more and more, in his own physical and spiritual weakness, to trust implicitly, and to abandon himself totally into the arms of the merciful God. He once preached as a Deacon:

"...Should there be here the most sinful human being, I would not be dissuaded from the horror of his sins, nor from the strength of his chains. I would simply say to him: rise up, go up on this carriage of humility, and you will see its benefit in comparison to any Pharisee who might reject you. Offer to God the most humble prayer, and He will extend His hand for you to ascend. The Lord will know how to lift you on high from the mud in order to situate you among the princes of His realm (cf. Ps 113:7, ff.)..." [This is an excerpt from his first public parochial sermon, delivered as a Deacon on June 8, 1800, entitled "Humility". cf. PVC, p. 148. The entire series of the Stigmatine Founder's parochial expression of preaching in this aspect of his Apostolic Mission begins here, with "Humility"].

3. The "Sweet Name of Jesus" offers itself as Medicine - is one of his thoughts from another Sermon. He would apply a similar theme to the Eucharist, as a God-given remedy for human weakness. He said:

"...Our task is to suggest a clear light against the darkness of the human mind and the interior confusion that comes. My task is to offer food, authentic pasturage, for the well-being of the flock, that has been led so often to weeds. These words should provide a health-restoring medicine against the disorders of the senses.

"All of these results can be seen being effected by this Most Holy Name. The Holy Name is like an oil that is poured out, and that serves for light, for nourishment, for

medicine. These are precisely the properties of oil, as St. Bernard has so eloquently noted..." [cf. Sermon 15, the "Canticles"].

"This oil is furthermore medicine against disordered passion. In fact, just in pronouncing this Name, there is immediately presented to our mind the most perfect human being Who is also God. He is, therefore, the mirror of every virtue and the font of all grace. He does not only invite with His gentle example, but far more He inspires efficacious assistance with which to repress them, to moderate them..." [cf. Sermon 9, "The Holy Name of Jesus", 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, 1801, in: PVC, pp. 246, ff.].

4. It is interesting to note in the Gospel of John [c. 20] that in the commissioning of His disciple for the Apostolic Mission, that Jesus showed them His Sacred Stigmata. Immediately thereafter, He communicated to them the power of the Holy Spirit by "breathing" upon them, to forgive sins: John's special rendition of the "Apostolic Mission."

a. The Stigmatine Founder spoke often about "Confession", the Sacrament of Reconciliation, in his Constitutions. He presents this aspect of the Apostolic Mission for the Stigmatines as one of the principal duties of the Apostolic Missionary, the "Professed", the few men admitted to the Fourth Vow [cf. also CF ## 44; 47; 72; 73; 118; 162; 168; 183; 291; 292; 296].

b. It is also an historical fact that in the long years of his involuntary confinement due to his illnesses, that this was about the only ministry that was left open to him. However, even in his preaching he showed a great interest in this important form of the Apostolic Mission in his charism, and he offers this compassionate description of the ideal Stigmatine Confessor:

"... The goodness and the mercy of Christ have been communicated to the Confessor. In fact, when the priest sits in the sacred tribunal of penance, he represents the Person of Christ Himself, and takes His place. Scripture teaches that Christ was always very far from rejecting in harsh disdain even the most wretched of sinners, provided they showed genuine signs of repentance and had recourse to Him. He always treated the Publicans with great affability. He accepted lovingly the tears of the lost Magdalenes. He sent away in full freedom the adulteresses already condemned to death. He promised to lead back with Him that very day into Paradise a thief who turned toward Him on the Cross, after previously having blasphemed Him.

“With such a witness how could His minister not treat with the same spirit of leniency and gentleness, the most timid of sinners who present themselves to him? How could the Confessor ever show horror at the wounds which the Divine Doctor reaches out to heal with equal gentleness and effectiveness. He does not heal with pouring out merely oil and wine, but, a kind of heavenly balm, His most precious Blood, totally poured out...” [cf. Sermon 10, “On Confession”, in: PVC, pp. 59, ff.]

6. It was most fitting that on the day of his Beatification, Pope Paul VI eulogized Fr. Bertoni in his homily at the Eucharistic Celebration on All saints’ Day in 1985, with these words:

“... Gaspar Bertoni, a priest of the Diocese of Verona, and Founder of the Stigmatine Congregation... as a young priest, He was formed in the Ignatian school, and poured himself out for the well being of his neighbor. He did what he could to heal the wounds left by the French Austrian War ... An expert confessor, he gave the best he had to the development of vocations, encouraging other religious communities which were just forming... His life was indeed a continuous immolation...”

7. Following a long tradition, the Stigmatine Founder considered sins already confessed as elements of a most sublime holiness:

“... God assures you of this whenever you resolve to place with vivid sorrow and deep sincerity your failings at the feet of one of His ministers - not only does this remove from you all confusion, but this also changes these into a glory as sublime as the previous shame was degrading ...” [cf. Sermon 10, ib., in: PVC, p. 57].

8. Fr. Bertoni was most realistic in the spiritual direction that he offered. He realized that failures were always possible in the spiritual life, but he saw them all as “wounds” that could be healed by the Mercy of God:

“... and if, in the struggle there should happen because of our weakness, that some wounds might be inflicted, we cannot lose heart. We have to keep in mind that the medicine is ready and is effective. Let us restore ourselves immediately with greater courage than previously and trust ever more in God, and let us take up once more our course. And when we least think of it, we will see all our difficulties overcome, our every enemy weakened. And there is thus assured for us that crown which is promised to all who struggle (cf. 2 Co 2:5) - i.e., with perseverance unto the end ...” [cf. Sermon 17, “On Perseverance”, April 11, 1803, n: PVC, p. 120].

9. One of Fr. Bertoni's principles was that the greater is one's misery, the greater "right" does one have for God's mercy:

:... Should it be that the soil of our hearts is desert, arid and abandoned, then it is all the more worthy than ever to be inhabited by you. While we do lack the knowledge and the capacity to bring such terrain to cultivation, yet You, Lord, might shower upon it those gratuitous blessings, that would indicate that You have set such soil aside for Your inheritance (cf. Ps 68:9, ff.). And when Your inheritance is filled with such goods, it will then form an eternal object of Your praise..." [cf. Sermon 21, "Divine Benefits", December 31, 1803, in PVC, pp. 137, f.].

10. Some modern theologians speak of a possible derivation of the word "future" as coming from the Greek word, *phusis*, meaning "nature". In this sense, the future shall be like the present essentially, but it is just projected to "later on". These theologians point out that authentic Christianity is based on "**Advent**", which means the "totally new" which derives from the Incarnation, as Christ is to come ever anew into human life. Fr. Bertoni was the faithful interpreter of the standing tradition, sees "Advent" as a motive of great hope in the Infinite Mercy of God:

"... In fact, the Son of God descends from heaven to save that which was lost (cf. Mt 18:11).... It is up to us who are sinners, oppressed by the misery of our own failings, and detained shamefully in the slavery of our vices, that there is directed the announcement of an imminent, most blessed visit of the Supreme Regent of the Havens. He wishes to free us with his grace and to enrich us with His precious gifts. Therefore, we ought to feel with great pleasure the closeness of that blessed day, of that most joyful moment, one that is so happy and promising for us, that surpasses all imagination.

" So, each one of us should say: 'Courage, my poor heart, rejoice in the mercy of your Lord, and He will fulfill all your desires': 'Make Yahweh your only joy and He will give you what your heart desires (cf. Ps 37:4). To You, o Lord, I have lifted up my soul. I trust in You, and I will never be ashamed for having hoped in you. But as You accomplish what You will, and which I hope from You, my enemies will cease from ridiculing me, and in deriding my vows ... The reason is that no one who awaits You will ever remain confused or ashamed.

"To You, o Lord, I lift up my soul, o my God. I rely upon You, do not let me be shamed, do not let my enemies gloat over me! No, those who hope in You are never shamed, shame awaits only disappointed traitors..." (cf. Ps 25:1-3)" [Sermon 25, "The Advent of Our Lord", December 9, 1804, in: PVC, pp. 227, f].

11. While he clearly saw its real difficulties, the Stigmatine Founder never lowered his ideals concerning the authentic living of the Christian vocation, and the Apostolic Mission. As is true of all genuine hope, its object remains a future good, difficult, but **possible**:

“... God will never reject a sincere penitent even if a person might fall into the pit of all evils. Rather, the Lord always receives such a one, embraces him, assists him to get up again, and to recover his pristine dignity.

“Furthermore, and this is an indication of His even greater kindness, the very first steps that one makes on the way to repentance, even though these might be meager and imperfect, and even though these are the only indications of a change of heart - the Lord will never reject these simple indications of a change of heart. The Lord will never reject these but responds to them by putting on them the rich garlands [of victory]... In bodily sickness we should never lose hope. Why, then should we ever lose it in those weaknesses of soul? These are never terminal illnesses, while those of the body often are. If it were so that any one who might have sinned seriously could never recuperate, I stand here to say that no one, perhaps only the very, very few would ever put foot in Paradise.

“It is the exact opposite that is noted: even the most illustrious Saints have been chosen from among those who first were among the fallen. Just think of St. Peter, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Paul. The explanation for this lies in the fact that the very same ardor with which they first accomplished evil, they then turned around to doing good. And for this reason, the Evil One makes every effort to impede their conversion - for he knows that if they even begin the way of conversion and repentance, they will no longer be able to help themselves, for they will come to commit themselves with such fervor to serve Christ, knowing that from their debts they will become innocent and immaculate: ‘And the last will be first!’ (cf. Mt 19:30)” [cf. Sermon 27, “Desperation”, January 27, 1805, in: PVC, pp. 41, f.].

12. God has revealed Himself also as a loving Mother [cf. Ps 131; Is 66:12, f], full of love and care for His children:

“... How wonderful are the piety and goodness of the Lord! Should He see one of us through our human weakness wavering in our exalted position, and on the verge of falling into our native baseness - He, as a loving Mother, stretches out His hand to keep us from falling - just as Scripture notes: ‘He may fall, but never fatally, as Yahweh

supports Him by the hand!’ (cf. Ps 37:24). Even should one do evil, He both sweetly, but powerfully, can lift him up again. Let us then, cry out with the Psalmist: ‘In God alone is rest for my soul, from Him comes my safety; with Him alone for my Rock, my Safety, my Fortress, I can never fail... (cf. Ps 62: 1, ff.): ‘*Mihi autem adhaerere Deo...*’ [cf. Letter 6, December 11, 1812, in: Ep, pp. 35, ff.].

13. The theme of God as “A Loving Mother” recurs rather often in the writings of the Stigmatine Founder:

“... More than all else, prayer, diligence, hope and humility are needed: because, in the last analysis, the humble, the meek of heart, are the ones whom God picks up in His arms as a Mother would, and takes them out of the mud...” [cf. Letter 89, in: Ep, pp. 179, f.].

“What tongue could ever praise God enough, as He indeed merits, and to give back to Him the love with which He loves us, and return in any way the most loving care that He has for us - a care that is even grater than that a Mother would have for her children...? [cf. Letter 7 to Fr. Bragato, August 1840, in: Ep, pp. 321].

“Let us reflect well in this day of light with which God consoles us, revealing to us His loving face, and entrust ourselves totally to Him - even if those moments when He seems to hide Himself. In this He acts as a loving Mother, Who plays with her children, finding great delight in being sought, desired, and called with earnestness and even with tears by her needy children. What more could He give us in heaven after having surpassed such proofs of His love, in showing us such loving and tender care now? ‘He is at play everywhere in the world, delighting to be with the sons of men...’ (cf. Pr 8:31)” [cf. Letter 31, l.c.].

14. The Stigmatine Founder uses this image of God as “Mother” in his teaching of being abandoned to God:

“... In fact, it is evident that the Lord wills that we should remember Him, and that we direct toward Him all our desires and affections, all our lives in a firm and recollected way. And should it be that for this reason we should ever forget other things, He will either remind us of them, or, through His Providence will resolve our concerns even better than we could be capable of doing, even with all our remembering and planning. We are always truly ‘diligent’ when we indeed chose to love Him - diligimus Deum - for the play on words].



“Blessed is anyone who loses himself in this abyss! Blessed is the one who throws himself trusting and as though ship-wrecked into this Ocean! An infant is never more secure than when it sleeps in its Mother’s arms, and abandons all thought and care of itself to her. In this position, the infant does not look out for itself, does not hear, or speak. And whenever she wants, the Mother may wake the infant, as he is so close to her...” [cf. Letter 36, in: Ep, p. 96].

15. Following the teachings of St. Paul, the Stigmatine Founder sees in human weakness a very strong reason for Christian hope:

“...I really know what the Apostle means when he says that strength is perfected in weakness. I also know that when I am weak, then it is that I am strong by the grace of Him Who comforts me (cf. 2 Co 12:9). In death I will remain immovable in the fulfillment of the Law of God, from Whose love then nothing else may ever separate me again. However, I do feel within myself another law, which battles against the law of my mind (cf. Ph 4:3). The spirit indeed is ready, but the flesh is weak, so I am forced to cry out: ‘What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body doomed to death?’ (cf. Rm 7:23, ff.).

“This is the situation even of the most pure among the just, as long as they live on earth, and their spirit is renewed day by day (cf. 2 Co 4:16), and this by the grace of our Savior, Jesus. Nonetheless, the flesh groans while waiting for the revelation of the children of God, until Christ will appear, our glory and resurrection, delivered from corruption, and death will be taken up in victory.

“There are some I know in whom the grace of Christ has already begun this final victory after long struggles and terrible agony. They enjoy in an anticipated manner some of the preliminary goods of that peace, even while they are still on the terrible battle-field, that is formidable for every one...” [cf. Sermon 29, “The Name of Mary”, September 15, 1805 - in: PVC, pp. 326, ff.].

16. Very clearly, then, for the Stigmatine Founder, human misery, weakness and wretchedness provides a most convincing motive for Christian Hope:

“... To such immense Mercy one has every right to entrust such immense misery ... O what a sweet thought and what comfort should this be for us! The very same misery of ours which first so confuses us and almost leads us to despair, now we see it all changed into a motive of such rich hope.

“O surely, if You, o Lord, should choose most graciously to enrich us with Your most precious gifts - should You choose to raise us up even to the honor of Your most

privileged and most intimate friends, we would have no reason to take glory in our own merits and good dispositions. We are all simply too cognizant of the dust and misery of our past iniquities.

“If we are seeking for any reason to glory, then we really cannot, and even do not care to - anywhere, except in You. All those who may have known and still remember our former wretchedness, all of them can only admire Your Wisdom and Power, Who alone is able to call out those things which were non-existent, into something that exists (cf. 2 Co 10:17) - Who chooses the most abject and miserable of this world to confound the more strong! (cf. 1 Co 1:27)..” [cf. Sermon 25, “The Advent of the Lord”, December 9, 1804, in: PVC, pp. 228, ff.].

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### [C]    **The Principal Means offered to support Christian Hope in St. Gaspar Bertoni’s Thought**

In the meeting of the infinite Mercy of God with the abysmal misery of humanity, Fr. Bertoni’s faith nurtured his hope, principally in the employment of the following sources of spirituality. Of a wide variety of fonts, the following seem to peak in so many of his expressions:

#### **1.     The Eucharist**

a.     To open the New Year of 1803, Fr. Bertoni offered these thoughts on “The Beauty of Grace”:

“... Make of yourselves new creatures - and may each of you be sustained by that rectitude with which the Lord first created you, raising you up to new hopes in Him. Each one of us has the task to prove how good You are to the pure of heart (cf. Ps 73:1). And then one day, no longer under the veils and in the obscure shadow of faith - as we adore You now under the Sacred Species - we will at long last be able to contemplate You, to love You, to possess You, face to face, as You have promised to the clean of heart - for all eternity, true Center, sole Purpose and last End of our hearts: ‘God, create in me a clean heart,, put into me a new and constant spirit’ (cf. Ps 51:10)...” [cf. Sermon 15, January 1, 1803, in: PVC, p. 129].

b.     St. Gaspar Bertoni looked on the Eucharist as a means of handling even the ordinary, every-day tasks of this world:

“... By being united to true Wisdom, Who is Christ, one’s mind becomes well illumined to take direction prudently in one’s interests. By going to the very font of Strength, one comes to have a share in it, to be able to sustain the burden of those cares which weigh upon one, without experiencing oppression. One is truly helped and one’s burdens are lessened, as Christ Himself has said: ‘Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest!’ (cf. Mt 11:28).

“This is so true in that our loving Lord not only takes pleasure in giving grace to souls, but takes even special care of the interests of those who lovingly turn toward Him...” [Sermon 17, “Frequent Communion”, March 20, 1803, in: PVC, pp. 105, ff.].

c. The Stigmatine Founder considered the Eucharist as a great help for the Apostolic Mission:

“... For the grand effort needed to divine service, the Eucharist is most surely a help. And we can work with what seems to be four hands, rather than with just two! Neither throughout, nor the study of this secret part of the glory of God - no one has ever taken it from me, nor, I hope, will I ever be impeded from working for it, from promoting it, with all the weak powers whatever of these may be at my disposal.

“So, Sister, with the offering of Masses in which more trust is to be placed than in all the efforts of my own hands and than in my studies and words, and with whatever I might be able to do in the Lord, I offer myself now and always to your service, and to that of your compassion...” [cf. Letter 2, November 25, 1812, n: Ep, p. 27].

1.] This offering of Masses for the interests of the Apostolic Mission was an habitual manner of procedure of our Founder:

“... On Saturday, I will, with God’s help, ask His divine Majesty for assistance. However, you, too, should pray that I might be made worthy and that I might myself offer this prayer at the Altar, as I really want to do. I offer this with an even greater confidence that my prayers will not be rejected by reason of my personal unworthiness...” [cf. Letter 18, in: Ep, pp., 114, f.].

2.] So many times, this idea is found in his writings, his praying for the success of some aspect of the Apostolic Mission:

“... On Thursday, I will begin the Masses, and when I am not impeded by some other reason, I will offer them at the Altar of St. Francis Xavier...” [cf. Letter 4, December 1, 1812, in: Ep, p.32].

3.] Many times he offered his Mass for the Apostolic Mission of his penitents, always presupposing that the interested parties were giving their vest to the effort:

“... When you begin this endeavor, I will once again begin the Masses, since this is all so important. It is most necessary to prepare and order things with utmost diligence, and to remember those words of St. Paul: ‘The love of Christ overwhelms us!’ (cf. 2 Co 5:14). [cf. Letter 6, December 11, 1812, in: Ep, pp. 34].

4.] This series of Letters all written a few days of each other, shows Fr. Bertoni accompanying the efforts of Mother Naudet with his Mass:

“... In the meantime, I will immediately begin the Masses. You, too, should begin a series of petitions. And the Lord, in His goodness, will not be lacking in His light for a matter that is so important for His interests...” [cf. Letter 7, December 14, 1812, in Ep, p. 37].

5.] This intense Eucharistic prayer carried over well into the new year:

“... I will not fail to pray to the Lord in my weakness for this new undertaking of yours. And if the Lord thinks me worthy, I will begin to apply the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. ‘Prepare the way of the Lord!’ (cf. Is 40:3; Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4)...” [cf. Letter 18, February 3, 1813, in: Ep, pp. 60, ff.].

6.] This thought occurs so often, namely, that of offering the Mass for the Apostolic Mission, that it has to be considered as his usual manner of responding to the needs of the Church:

“... Nor, have I failed, in my own weakness, to recommend this whole matter to the Lord. I have offered Mass yesterday and this morning for this intention. I have such great confidence in this, and while my pride does not merit to be heard, nonetheless, the humble reverence of His Son will be graciously heard by the heavenly Father for His own greater honor and glory...” [cf. Letter 39, in: Ep, p. 101].

d. It pained him sorely when he was not able to further some Apostolic Mission with his own offering of the Eucharist:

“... I am really sorry that I cannot accompany this endeavor with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. Only on Thursday, will the doctor allow me even to go to hear Mass. [Most likely “Thursday” that week of that year was the “Corpus Christi” celebration]. Perhaps you could have your companions, who may be free from study, help with a certain number of your prayers more than those called by the daily schedule. In the last analysis, endeavors of this type depend most principally on prayer...” [cf. Letter 46, June 4, 1814, in: Ep, p. 110].

1.] When he was not able to do much else, he followed the efforts of others with his daily Mass;

“... I have followed this same intention in my daily Mass, since I am unable to do any more than this...” [cf. Letter 57, October 13, 1815 - just about three weeks prior to coming to the Stimmat to begin his community of priests, “according to the mind of St. Ignatius”].

2.] The Eucharist allowed him to share in the Apostolic Mission of others:

“... I have not failed with my own prayer that has been asked for, and I have also given the order for other Masses for this intention. Now I ask also for a remembrance in your prayers...” [cf. Letter 106, in: Ep, p. 199].

e. When he was able to celebrate the Eucharist, his heart was filled with great joy, and he included the intentions of Sister Naudet’s community in his offering:

“... And I immediately, and still persevere, in giving thanks to His divine Majesty in so far as I can. And as long as my strength will permit, I celebrate the Mass every day, offering to our Heavenly Father His Most Beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased. I also pray continuously that the Lord might assist you and all your sage companions and daughters, with His Spirit. This is how He acts with those who are chosen to undertake such tasks, so that the Divine Glory might be realized. This is what He waits for, that the fruit in behalf of souls might be abundant...” [cf. Letter 186, in: Ep, p. 288].

1.] This offering of the Eucharist for the success of the Apostolic Mission is also codified in Fr. Bertoni’s Original Constitutions:

“... The following are the means with which our Congregation promotes the salvation of our neighbors:

“The administration of the Sacraments, especially that of Penance and the Eucharist, imploring from God, also with the celebration of Holy Masses, the fruit of the Missions and the preaching...” # 162].

2.] In union with the consistent tradition of the Church, the Stigmatine Founder considered the Eucharist also as a powerful means to heal the wounds of life:

“... The Eucharist is an excellent medicine of the soul. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Bernard are all in accord in this saying that the Eucharist is an excellent medicine against sin. St. Cyprian wrote that the Chalice of the Lord inebriates, in that it leads the mind to spiritual wisdom and that whoever partakes of it, finds that his intelligence is geared away from the taste for this world and toward a desire for God. And just as anyone who drinks earthly and common wine might find that his mind experiences some enjoyment, and that one’s spirit is built up anew and chases away all sadness. In like manner, whoever tastes the salutary drink of the Blood of the Lord, simply loses the memory of the ‘old man’, forgets the earlier worldly conversations. Such a one sees that while he might first have experienced the oppressions of sins that crushed him, now through the joy of the gift made to him by God, sees his anguish resolved, and that his worries become less... (cf. St. Cyprian, Letter 72, p. 11)...” [cf. Sermon 17, “Frequent Communion”, March 20, 1803, in: PVC, pp. 108, ff.].

f. Based on this Patristic teaching, Fr. Bertoni saw the Eucharist as a privileged means of trusting more in the divine mercy, and increasing one’s fervor:

“... And even though at times one will experience total aridity and a lack of fervor, if he will only trust in divine mercy, he will receive it confidently. The reason is that the more one thinks that he is unworthy, he will come to the realization that he needs the doctor. This is the situation of those who find themselves ill. (A thought from St. Bonaventure)..” [cf. I.c., p. 110].

g. Throughout his life, Fr. Bertoni experienced a deep familiarity with the Eucharist, and had tremendous confidence in this unique source of Divine Grace:

“... This is the invitation of the Divine Lover of souls: I am your Father, Master, Friend, Brother. If you ever fall ill, I am also your Doctor, I am your Health. And one day, I will be your Beatitude, your Glory...” [cf. I.c., p. 111].

h. The daily participation in the Eucharist was for the Stigmatine Founder a great motive for Hope:

“... Not even death, whatever kind it may be, can remove love, even though love, in the words of the Wise Man (cf. Ct 8:6), is as strong as death is. So, this Lover does not pay the price for His beloved with incorruptible gold or silver, but rather with all His Precious Blood (cf. 1 P 1:18).

“And should the beloved ever again fall into the hands of the infernal enemy by lowering himself with sin, Jesus will return each day in the suffering of this same Victim on the altars. He will was His beloved with His Blood, of which He has opened a perennial source of it in the bosom of the Church [cf. Sermon 3, “The Name of Jesus”, the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany, 1801, in: PVC, pp. 238, ff.].

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**2. Sacred Scripture** [cf. Giuseppe FURLANI, CSS, *Parola di Dio, regola del pensiero e dell'azione del Beato Bertoni*, in: *Saggi sullo spirito del Beato Gaspare Bertoni*. Roma 1983.

a. Throughout his long life, Sacred Scripture was the daily companion of the Stigmatine Founder. It has been remarked that perhaps no other spiritual personality of his time used Scripture more, even on an informal basis, as in his letters. It would be of no small interest to red his letters of spiritual direction and to note the number of times that he quoted Scripture [often in Latin] in his letters, not to speak of the more extended citations found in his sermons. He saw Scripture as a valid spiritual ally, and surely was one of the privileged sources of his hope:

“... The Word of God is more worthy of faith than is any demonstration. Rather, in these matters (of faith) it is the only demonstration. Now God has spoken: ‘God has spoken once’ (cf. Ps 62:11). He has also spoken in many ways in the Prophets to the ancient Fathers - and finally, He has spoken in His Son to the Apostles, and even more fully, the Holy Spirit has spoken to them instructing them in all truth pertaining to salvation: ‘I still have many things to say to you, but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will lead you to the complete truth’ (cf. Jn 16:12, 13).

“We have the books of the Prophets, we have the Book of the Gospels from the Apostles. This is the Word of God revealed in the Scriptures ... We do have the Scriptures in which God speaks. Therefore, what do we have to do with the books of this world? In

the Holy Scriptures we have not only what is necessary, but also what is good to know, in order to be able to discern what is evil and to correct our ways, to lift up our spirits. What else is needed? Only to become saints and well instructed in every good work: 'All Scripture is inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching, for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be holy' (cf. 2 Tm 3:16). This is what the Apostle teaches. The Word of God in the Scriptures ought to be the rule of our thinking, of our working, if we really do want to know the truth, to arrive at salvation and not the different systems which vary so often, as these are presented by the pernicious books of our world. Do not let yourselves be carried away... by different and strange doctrines. Paul himself warns us: 'Do not let yourselves be led astray by all sorts of strange doctrines' (cf. Heb 13:9)..." [cf. Sermon 35, Epiphany 1806, in: PVC, pp. 254, ff.].

b. This "biblical spirituality", shared also with the laity by Fr. Bertoni, is certainly much in the spirit of Vatican II. As would be expected, he also preached this spirituality with special fervor to priests and seminarians, in the years that he was the Spiritual Director of the Diocesan Seminary of Verona:

"... Scripture, therefore, is a Ladder to arrive at the knowledge of God, by means of faith. One should not stop at the letter, but ascend upwards towards the Spirit. The letter is the foundation of the faith. It is necessary to build on this, with hope in God, and charity through works. How many priests bring the material of the letter to build the houses of others! While the people often build in the spirit on the letter, the priest remains sometimes with the letter, leaving the spirit a desert. The priests often carry the ladder, while others climb. They often remain below, as happened to the Spiritual Directors of St. Teresa..." [cf. Mss B # 4859].

c. Fr. Bertoni brought a sense of urgency to his preaching to priests:

"... Therefore, it is necessary to approach the sacred book: 'and work for your salvation in fear and trembling'... work all the harder! (cf. Ph 2:12; 1 P 1:10)..." [cf. Mss B # 4858].

d. Fr. Bertoni saw Sacred Scripture as a basic means for any development in the spiritual life:

"...'All Scripture is inspired by God' (cf. 2 Tm 3:16). St. Gregory comments on this: Sacred Scripture so surpasses the illustrious geniuses even as so many illustrious individuals are inferior to God. They see nothing in that spiritual sublimity except that which is unveiled for them by divine condescension. No one is so far advanced in



knowledge that he cannot progress even further. All human progress remains inferior to the height of the divinity which has inspired the Scriptures..." [cf. Mss B # 4860].

e. Once Fr. Bertoni described his own biblical experience as though he were standing looking at a vast forest on a most high mountain. At first sight, he writes, all seems equal, but as one enters it, he is able to see the plains and valleys, that are hidden therein, and how much more there is to see than that which appeared at first sight. This forest is Sacred Scripture [cf. Mss B # 4855]. In order to make any progress, there is needed much humility in investigating the "sacred papers". All that can be expressed is admiration for this divine sublimity [cf. Mss B # 4860; cf. also Nello II, pp. 175, ff.]:

"... 'You study the Scriptures believing that in them you have eternal life. Now these Scriptures testify to Me ... If you really believed Moses, you would believe Me, too, since it was I he was writing about!' (cf. Jn 5:39, 46).

"Grant, o Lord, that we might be reformed and conformed to Your teaching and example, while making good use of the holy Sacraments, through which we obtain the strength to do this..." [cf. Mss B # 4895].

f. In this spirituality, Scripture is seen as an aid to a deeper sacramental life. Fr. Bertoni saw the Scriptures as a necessary means to come into familiarity with God:

"... The study of the Scripts is necessary for the priest, both for his own life, as well as that of others. It is here that one comes to know God and Jesus Christ ..." [cf. Mss B # 4890; cf. also Nello, o.c., p. 185].

g. With the serious crisis in the priesthood in the time of the Stigmatine Founder, there was a very real danger that a number of authentic vocations might have been ruined because of the faulty spiritual direction given. Fr. Bertoni presented a thought that is often heard still today:

"... A Spiritual Director is a great help, and the Scriptures, too, are a great help: 'And indeed everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us something about hope from the examples scripture gives of how people who did not give up were helped by God' (cf. Rm 15:4)..." [cf. Mss B # 5198; cf. also Nello, o.c., p. 209].

h. In a period in which it was not uncommon to find "unworthy pastors", Fr. Bertoni offers a practical suggestion:

"... A mirror and measurement to discern the Good Shepherd are the Sacred Scriptures. The people know this: '... the Good Shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep, and runs away ...' (cf. Jn 10:11, ff.)..." [cf. Mss B # 6846; Nello, o.c., p. 289].

i. In his many letters of spiritual direction, Fr. Bertoni often sought to offer solutions to difficulties that would arise in the light of Sacred Scripture. This has been described as his customary manner of acting to dissipate doubts and uncertainties in the minds and hearts of those seeking to make some progress in the spiritual life [cf. Nello, o.c., p. 419].

j. Fr. Bertoni deeply believed in the rich spiritual wealth that the Sacred Scriptures afford. He offers his own "Litany of Praises":

"... The Sacred Scriptures, well meditated, impart not only good ideas, but also suggest some order in accord with the way Divine Wisdom might suggest. The Scriptures form one's spirit, develop it, educate it, multiply and put order into one's ideas, perfect reason, rectify judgment, orientate reflection. Through Sacred Scripture, one first learns to know God, His greatness and omnipotence. One also learns to come to grips with the prime duty of the creature, which is obedience to the Creator..." [cf. Mss B # 4650].

k. He saw that one of the prime lessons of wisdom is that the creature really came to know his place, a basic wisdom is that of self-acceptance:

"... A person who knows his dependence and his limitations, on being taught, educated, formed by God, knows that the truth of our intellect is conformity with the order of divine wisdom, made known to us in Its works and words..." [cf. Mss B # 4654].

l. The Scriptures are the grand Teacher of the greatness of God:

".. Sacred Scripture leads one to true humility in its very principle, which is to revere the majesty and the greatness of God. It teaches us to submit our wills to it, and it reminds us to employ diligence in all things..." [cf. Mss B # 4658; cf. also Nello, .c., pp. 607, ff.].

m. For the Apostolic Mission, Fr. Bertoni believed that the study of the Scriptures is a prime duty:

“... The lesson of sacred and spiritual books: ‘Love the study of Scripture, and you will not love the vices of the flesh!’ (cf. St. Jerome, Epist. 125 ad Rusticum, 11)...” [cf. Mss B, # 3603; Nello, o.c., p. 714].

n. The Stigmatine Founder “codified” this biblical spirituality in his Original Constitutions:

“...Sacred Scripture should be studied in its entirety, first in the text itself, and then in the Catholic commentaries” [# 52].

o. He felt that the study of the Scriptures was most necessary for all the members, no matter what their specialization might be:

“... The competence of the Congregation refers in the first place to the study of Theology. To the knowledge of Theology and of sacred Scripture, the members of the Congregation are to tend principally, even when some of the members might be occupied for more time in the inferior disciplines, so that the members might be specialized and distinguished in theology and the Scriptures, in order to achieve the purposes of the Congregation” [cf. # 58].

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### **3. Mary: Virgin, Mother AND Spouse**

a. While his basic charism would be termed more “Trinitarian-Christological”, Fr. Bertoni was deeply and sincerely devoted to Mary, perhaps more in her relationship to God: Daughter of the Father, Virgin-Mother of the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit. From the beginning, the Stigmatine community treasured the Founder’s Devotion to the Holy Espousals of Mary and Joseph, seeing in their portrait over the Main Altar of the Church of the Stimmate a providential sign of the Patrons of the new community. It is remarkable, however, that nowhere in Fr. Bertoni’s own writings, does Mary appear formally as the “Spouse of St. Joseph”, even though this is more “lived” than to be traced in the existing writings of Fr. Bertoni [cf. CS I, fasc. III, pp. 247, ff.].

b. Fr. Cajetan Giacobbe, the first biographer of the Stigmatine Founder, wrote his work a relatively short time following his death. Among his testimonies, might be noted the following:

“... To say how much Fr. Bertoni was a loving devotee of Mary, how much he achieved for her, and how he tried to excite in all hearts the love and obeisance [ *ossequio* ] towards her, many pages would not be sufficient even to present the least part of this .

“His filial devotion towards her was most outstanding. He invoked her often and prayed to her that she might be the merciful mother and powerful advocate to him always. He offered his every day to her most pure heart...”

c. In Fr. Bertoni’s Sermon “On the House of Loreto”, as a young priest, he spoke to the personified dwelling in these terms:

“... You, o walls of Loreto, more splendid than royal palaces, have housed the Queen of Heaven, the Spouse of God...” [cf. PVC, p. 302].

d. Later, preaching on purity, Fr. Bertoni offers his praises of Mary as follows:

“... This Virgin is the Mother of God...Come, devout lovers of Mary and faithful imitators of her purity. Sit in the most pleasant shade of this Plant of Paradise, and its fruit will be sweet to your palate. She spreads broadly and lowers so courteously the branches of her protection over all her servants, even those who are infirm. Whoever you may be, o brother, or sister, who may be walking across the arid desert of this world, beaten down by the raging fires of your concupiscence, go with confidence to the gentle shade of this beneficent plant, and you will find refreshment, repose, health, for your worn down, exhausted and discouraged heart...” [cf. Sermon 30, October 21, 1805, in: PVC, p. 329].

e. Most characteristic of Fr. Bertoni’s devotion toward Mary is a Prayer he copied from some unknown source. It is found in his Spiritual Diary, under the date of May 24, 1810, and is quite similar in spirit to that of St. Grignon de Montfort. During the life-time of Fr. Bertoni, he knew that the bishops of the world were already in full accord in petitioning the Holy Father for the formal definition of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Fr. Giacobbe wrote:

“... He invoked her and revered her and honored her, as conceived without original sin - the Blessed Mother of God...”

f. This is the Prayer, as it appears in his Spiritual Diary:

“I greet you, o my Mother, give me your blessing. Bless me and all who are dear to me. Vouchsafe to offer to God all I have to do and suffer today, in union with your merits, as well as those of your beloved Son. I offer you and consecrate to your service, all my being and whatever belongs to me, placing everything under your protection. Obtain for me, my dear Lady, purity of soul and body, and grant that I may not do anything today displeasing to God. I entreat you through your Immaculate Conception and your perfect virginity.”

As is most evident, this is a Prayer totally permeated with the spirit of Abandonment and Confidence in Mary, not unlike the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius.

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#### 4. Personal Prayer

a. Prayer is always an expression of some hope, and hope extends as broadly as do the intentions of prayer. To have some idea of the hopes of the Church, it would be rewarding to review her prayers: those of the Missal, as well as the Prayers of the Faithful, also in the Liturgy of Hours. St. John of the Cross had as a principle that “we obtain as much from God as we dare to hope from Him!” The Stigmatine Founder does not offer an ordered treatise on Prayer, but by reading his many writings, there are offered some precious insights for our reflection. Prayer was often the subject of his letters of Spiritual Direction:

“...As for prayer, and for that biblical saying: ‘I open my mouth, panting eagerly for Your commandments!’ (cf. Ps 119:131), and how one should respond to this, the Holy Spirit Himself offers a reply: ‘Let nothing prevent your discharging [prayer] in good time’ (cf. Si 18:22); ‘... pray continually and never lose heart...’ (cf. Lk 18:1): ‘Pray constantly!’ (cf. 1 Th 5:17).

“It seems to me that prayer will help prayer. Diligence in prayer will draw even a greater abundance of the Spirit, ‘And the Spirit, too, come to help us in our weakness’ (cf. Rm 8:26). So are we able, even here on earth, to offer the perpetual and perennial sacrifice, and the holocaust which the Blessed Spirits and the Saints in heaven offer of

themselves before God: 'The fire that consumes the holocaust on the altar must not be allowed to go out!' (cf. Lv 6:12).

"All the servants of God, exiles and pilgrims on this earth, have always done this. With those strengths and aids which they could call upon, we can, too. And since this is pleasing to God and redounds to His glory, and He commands this, it is enough. If it can be done, it should be done.

"If there is any one of you who needs wisdom, he must ask God, He gives it all freely, and ungrudgingly; it will be given to him..." (cf. Jm 1:5...) [cf. Letter 5, in: Ep, pp. 33, ff.].

b. Fr. Bertoni was certainly not passive in his trust in prayer. He fully realized that there was always need to give one's best in any undertaking. It is after presupposing a total effort that the Founder speaks of "abandoned prayer":

"... My dear Sister, 'Man's heart makes the plans, Yahweh gives the answer' (cf. Pr 16:1). This is what our Lord says and He has made this known to you. However, with divine assistance, I would not just say that you should be diligent, but rather that you should use supreme and even exquisite diligence, by always having your soul prepared for the visits of His Divine Majesty. 'Let nothing prevent your discharging (prayer) in good time' (cf. Si 18:22) is what the Holy Spirit goes on to say. The caution of silence, of breaking off useless speech, of avoiding wasting time; all of this is what is entailed in speaking to our most gentle Creator..." [cf. Letter 22, in: Ep, p. 68].

c. In his praises of prayer, as in all his letters of spiritual direction, as has already been noted, Fr. Bertoni is not remarkable in his informal use of Scripture to establish his point. While he is at times 'free' in his application of texts, it is most unusual to see his most frequent citations of God's Word. Fr. Bertoni sees a decided unity between an increase in charity and a developing prayer:

"... The Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and you will be inspired with fervor. 'Stay in the city, then, until you are clothed with power from on high!' (cf. Lk 24:49).

"St. Gregory the Great notes that an abundance and an increase of Charity would be the decisive and definitive sign of the moment in which these endeavors should get under way, which might have been pondered over for a long time, and conceived in the secret light and hidden inspirations of the Holy Spirit. These have to be mulled over in the warmth of prayer and nourished and matured with many meditations. The language,

then, of the Lord is peace. It is with this that He answers and assures us what it is that is pleasing to Him: 'I am listening. What is Yahweh saying? What God is saying means peace for His people, for His friends..' (cf. Ps 85: 8, ff.).

"So, may the care you are taking for the spiritual well-being of your companions be pleasing to His Majesty. And how I wish I could explain how this is pleasing to Him! However, the Lord in His goodness, He himself will explain it to you as you go along. It seems that everything is inviting and moving forward to hasten the preparation for what the Lord inspires for His glory. Surely, it is our task to wait, prepared as we will be, because the Master is closer to us than we imagine. He is so close that He is already at the door, and He is only waiting for our preparedness: 'Know that He is near, at the very gates' (cf. Mt 24:33)..." [cf. Letter 43, in: Ep, pp. 105, ff.].

d. The confidence the Stigmatine Founder had in Eucharistic prayer, in particular - his own, as well as that of others - seems to have been unshakable. He often mentions it in his letters of spiritual direction, declaring that he is offering his own, and very often asking this of others, for his spiritual undertakings and trials, as well as for his many long years of physical suffering and cruel torment:

"...Just remember, Sister, that our defects, imperfections and failings which render us more worthy of rejection in our own eyes, all go to show how little we know ourselves, and how we appear in the eyes of God, Who sees all. These failings offer still another motive, and a most efficacious one, to move the heart of God, so that He might extend to us His grace, or mercy: 'We are indeed unworthy!' This is a prayer of a truly generous soul, who conquers and almost forces the heart of God. This is truly to elevate God all the more in our esteem, in proportion to the level which the knowledge of our misery lowers us. So, this prayer is worthy of one who has a heart made according to the heart of God, as was that of David... Let us leave it all up to the Lord, Who has always disposed things well ... Man proposes and God disposes..." [cf. Letter 11, in: Ep, pp. 45, ff.].

e. When he was overwhelmed with concerns, Fr. Bertoni often asked for prayer, as he struggled to reach some kind of a solution in his concerns. He deeply believed in the efficacy of prayer:

"... I thank you, Sister, for the charity of your prayers for me. I have such a need of them, because of a real problem. But, to the Lord, all is as nothing, if only we pray and have great confidence..." [cf. Letter 19, in: Ep, p. 62].

f. He was appalled at times with the lack of prayer he encountered in some cases in his Apostolic Mission among priests:

“... Very rare are they who meditate in our times ... those who do dedicate themselves to it, do act in a spiritual way: ‘I reflect on all that you did ...’ (cf. Ps 77:12). I considered your works, and trembled’ (From the Liturgy)...” [cf. Mss B # 2550].

g. Fr. Bertoni never failed to be deeply moved at the lack of prayer among priests. Perhaps the contrast was felt all the more in that he gave such care to it in his effort to live uninterruptedly in the presence of God. He truly sought to conserve himself in loving union with God and it seems that in his life, he did share in some mystical experiences, generally reserved to those who have made genuine progress. In his own annual retreat on year, he describes in his Spiritual Diary something of what happened to him:

“...today I experienced much tenderness and the desire for self-offering. There was the sentiment as though Christ was drawing our hearts... all good, every bit of knowledge, gentleness, that may be found in creatures, implies that He alone should be praised and loved ...” [cf. MP, March 16, 1809; cf. Nello, p. 129].

h. In a letter of Fr. Bragato to Fr. Marani, some years after the death of the Stigmatine Founder, they remembered his “assiduous prayer”. They recalled the nights when he used to come to the Seminary to preach the early morning meditations on Sunday’s, to all those at the Seminary. Fr. Bragato has left this testimony::

“...he used to take his candle and go to the alcove of the Chapel to meditate first before the Most Blessed Sacrament. He would first pray over what he would preach to the seminarians. He used to leave his room about 10:00 p.m., and I do not now if he ever went back to it again. In those years, the subject of his Meditation was I Samuel. We would enjoy a good sleep and coming down in the morning, we would find Fr. Gaspar already in Church. I believe this was the usual way he would spend Saturday night [cf. *Summ. Add.* , p. 279; cf. also Nello II, pp. 177, ff.].

i. In the interests of something like a survey of his writings, Fr. Bertoni left a kind of “program” for the spiritual life concerning union with God:

“... The time for prayer should be established [cf. Mss B # 3402]:

- before working [ cf. Mss B # 3404];

- alternating prayer and work [cf. Mss B # 3407];



- between tasks [cf. Mss B # 3408];
- after work [cf. Mss B 3410].

“And prayer should be:

- continuous [cf. Mss B #3412];
- familiar with God [cf. Mss B # 3412];
- practical [cf. Mss B # 3416].

j. He once wrote, quoting perhaps Pseudo-Gregory’s Commentary on Samuel:

“... Prayer is a certain life of our lives, and the soul of our souls. It is our very breath: ‘I open my mouth, panting eagerly for Your commandments’ (cf. Ps 119:131)... prayer is most fitting for priests in anything they try to do...” [cf. MssB # 3413

...

## 5. Real Poverty

a. As has already been noted, poverty is a fundamental element for Christian hope. The Stigmatine Founder stressed it repeatedly in his plan for the Apostolic Missionaries for the Assistance of Bishops:

“...A minister of the Gospel has an inexhaustible capital of riches and every sort of good for serving God and piety. According to the promises of Christ, such a minister will never be lacking in his temporal needs, as these will be controlled by a moderate spirit desiring only that which is necessary to sustain life: ‘Set your hearts on His kingdom first, and on His righteousness, and all these other things will be given to you as well’ (cf. Mt 6:33). Do not be afraid that the necessities of this life will ever be lacking for those who are engaged in the struggle for the interests of the Reign of God and even (as this is required for the glory of God and for charity), sell even what you own in order to give alms...” [cf. Mss B 3470; cf. also Nello, o.c., p. 720].

b. Poverty is a privileged means employed in the Church’s spiritual tradition to follow Christ more closely:

“... Today I experienced a very strong inspiration to follow our Lord more closely, and even at the cost of my life, especially through His poverty and shame...” [cf. MP, September 25, 1808].

“...Today I experienced the desire to imitate Christ in His poverty and in those hardships brought about by poverty...” [cf. MP, October 22, 1808].

c. These texts are rather fundamental for the understanding of the Christology of Fr. Bertoni. For him, Jesus Christ was indeed a lived, daily “experience”:

“... Jesus Christ, from His birth, has us see in His life a supreme poverty, suffering and disdain. Therefore, these are the only true goods...” [cf. MP, March 13, 1809].

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**[D.] The Missionary Hope of Fr. Bertoni:  
Hope for the Apostolic Mission for the Assistance of Bishops -  
The Increase of the Church**

**Presentation**

[1] In a number of very difficult assignments, as well as being held back from his world-wide apostolic missionary dream by sickness and the events of his times, Fr. Bertoni maintained an unshakable hope until the end of his life. After 25 years of community life, he set to write the Constitutions of a community which was always small, but at the time of his writing was in “a state of decline.” Throughout, he kept alive his unquestioning trust in the Power of God’s Mercy:

“... When the time does come for the chosen minister to begin his work, he will use a strong charity, without weakness. He will no longer look to the effects of his efforts, whether his words are well or badly received. Rather, he will rivet his concentration on the order of God and to carry out his task, leaving the effect to God, he will speak strongly to hardened sinners and ministers of a merely human spirit, without any human fear to wake them up...” [cf. Mss B # 5533; Nello, II, p.242].

[2] There is some indication that he may have experienced some fear, or lack of self-confidence in his work, as we read:

“... I should not listen to the fears and excuses which nature might inspire to me. For it is in these that the enemies of my salvation and of my perfection would like to hold me back. I may have lost the right to be Your son, but You have not given up Your role as Father...” [cf. Mss B, # 2444; Nello II, pp. 629, ff.].

[3] Fr. Bertoni was deeply convinced that God would meet anyone more than half way, once He was assured of at least the effort to respond to His grace:

“... Instead of a severe, implacable God, I will find Him full of goodness and tenderness for me. I can make use of His own promises that He Himself will come to meet me, to assist me in the return that I am proposing to make to Him. He will grant to me a ready remission of sins and will cede infinitely above the satisfaction that is due. He will assist me with His ever new graces in all the efforts that I have to engage in to review my life, to sustain me to persevere. He will not be content merely to see me to return to a priestly way of life, but will dedicate Himself to lead me to perfection, so that it really does not depend on me to regain all alone what I have lost, but He will see to it that I join company with the more perfect...” [cf. Mss B # 2445; Nello, II, pp. 629, ff.].

[4] Something of Fr. Bertoni’s method of persuasion might be noted - he identifies himself with the priests sent to the seminary by the Bishop for a disciplinary renewal, in the hopes they might one day return to full ministry. Fr. Bertoni’s message was a firm one, but always full of hope:

“... In responding to His election of us, we have to count on His strength and not on our own...” [cf. Mss B # 3238; Nello, II, p. 707].

[5] Fr. Bertoni’s hope may be traced particularly in those areas in which he was inspired to manifest particular apostolic interest. The hope of the Apostolic Missionary may be seen in those “various and proper ministries” [cf. CF # 185] of the “arduous and difficult vocation” of “any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever”:

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# **1. Hope for the Apostolic Missionary in the Preaching Ministry:**

a. Preaching is indeed one of the basic and principal ministries toward which the Stigmatine Founder directed his community:

“... God will raise up individuals in the Church, illustrated by His Spirit. He will call preachers to correct, repair and eliminate the scandals, the disorders, the weaknesses in prelates...” [cf. Mss B # 5310].

b. He dreamed of a community whose abiding purpose [along with being founded to offer competent service to the bishops] - was that of serving as a witness to

the Church. So, he thought of a community that could offer the example of the Apostolic Mission:

“... Through the Magisterium of the Church there is made known the divine will of sign, in all that pertains to the reprobation and destruction of a merely human spirit and also for that which pertains to the renewal or restoration of the divine spirit in His ministers...” [cf. MSS B # 5302].

c. The most convincing witness of all for the dedication of the Congregation to the Apostolic Mission of Preaching is the example of the Founder himself and the early community gathered around him. From his earliest years in the priesthood, and throughout the better part of his life, Fr. Bertoni excelled in his dedication to “the Ministry of the Word of God”, also under the form of preaching.

**2. Hope for the Apostolic Missionary in the Assistance to the Clergy and those of Consecrated Life:** once again, it is the life that the Stigmatine Founder and his first followers lived personally - far more than their words - that shed the greater insight into this aspect of their Apostolic Mission

**a. The Apostolic Missionary to the Clergy and Seminarians:**

1.] Once he found himself at the head of a small community at the Stimmate, the charism progressively developed in dialogue. The group through the spirit alive among them, was dedicated, at the beck and call of the bishops, to the spiritual renewal of the diocesan clergy of Verona [cf. G. Ceresatto, CSS, Biography, p. 266].

2.] The early Stigmatines were invited by a line of bishops of Verona to assist them in diocesan renewal. Fr. Bertoni worked out a rather bold plan for helping priests in this direction. His idea for the reform of his priestly ministry was as providential as it was daring. His ideas were thoroughly agreed to by those who had chosen to follow him, a lived expression of his saying that a united force is always stronger! [ *virtus unita fortior* !]. These first followers of his: priests, brothers and seminarians - had also joined him to share in his challenging life of holiness [cf. Nello II, pp. 228, ff.].

3.] The bishop entrusted to Fr. Bertoni’s spiritual direction those priests who had been assigned to the local seminary for their spiritual renewal, in the difficult times after the fall of Napoleon. From his sermons of those days that have

come down to us, we see him still as a relatively young priest preaching to men many years his senior in age and experience in the priesthood. There is at times evident a nervousness, yet with all - a forthrightness and courage. His apostolic heart and hours of prayer inspired him with the more suitable expressions to shake his listeners from their apathy and lethargy, but not to discourage them. His plan of procedure seemed to have been a very frank review of the situation of their priesthood, in the hopes of moving them to seek the healing power of God's grace and a return to the priestly way of life. [cf. Nello, II, p. 626].

4.] For the Diocese of Verona, long the "buffer zone" between the two great powers of the time, France and Austria, these were particularly difficult times for its spiritual life. A good number of religious orders had been suppressed and its members either exiled or sent out of their communities. The state of the diocesan clergy left much to be desired at the time, and the general situation of the diocese was rather disheartening.

5.] A series of Benedictine Bishops was sent to the Diocese, with the express mandate of healing old wounds, repairing the damage, and renewing the Diocese. It is in this context that Fr. Bertoni was called by the Bishop to take over the spiritual care of the seminary. This included the few seminarians studying there, as well as those priests who were sent there by their new Bishop in accord with the canonical discipline in vogue at the time. [cf. Nello 1975, pp. 122, ff.].

6.] Some reflection of these times has found its way also into the personal spiritual diary of Fr. Bertoni. He wrote under the date of May 24, 1810:

:... [A text from St. Thomas of Villanova, then these words:] ...Let us pray for our civil leaders so that the Lord might inspire them with words of peace for His people (cf. Ps 85), and may He inspire peace among them. May He also inspire our Shepherds who are working for the reform of the Church - because, as you see, all is now in ruins. And if there is not a reform forthcoming, then there is no hope for a better state..."

[Thus, Fr. Bertoni became the "bishop's right hand man" in this effort of renewal of the diocesan clergy, at the age of 33 [cf. Nello, 1975, p. 126].

7.] It is quite possible that the attention of the Bishop was drawn to Fr. Bertoni also for the fact that even while he was still an assistant at his home parish of San Paolo in Campo Marzio, he already began organizing meetings with priests in his own home. They would gather evenings for theological discussions, prayer and

friendship. This little group, perhaps not uncommon in the troubled Europe of the times, had as its purpose a deepening of spiritual and cultural values. We have this testimony from an erudite scholar of the Church of Verona, Sommacompagna. It is also from these gatherings that initial steps toward the formation of a community of priests and religious may be noted. From the outset, it was clear that they would share common life together, in the hopes of serving both the local and the universal Church for its renewal and increase, through a truly competent, docile group of Apostolic Missionaries.

**b. The Apostolic Missionary for those of the Consecrated Life**

1.] In more recent times, Pope Paul VI [in: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of 1975] has stated that the first ministry of religious is their “**witness.**” Fr. Bertoni’s own life has been described as his being “An Angel of Counsel” especially for those engaged informing new religious committees as part of the Church renewal. Also because of the thrust given by the Bishops, a number of new religious communities came into being with the express purpose of keeping alive, of institutionalizing the reforms that were so sorely needed. The interest that Fr. Bertoni showed in other communities was so great that this even became a question in his own process of Beatification: how is it that he gave so much attention to other communities, and apparently so little to his own? The response is that his ideal was clear, evident in his own daily life in the community and in the Constitutions he wrote for it in the last years of life. In his early sermons, he offered the Sacred Stigmata as an object of contemplation for “faithful souls”.

2.] In his early sermons, he also meant this ideal for the laity of his home parish listening to his sermons. In some way, however, these sermons do offer much insight into his interests for the whole Church and also for those who follow the consecrated way of life:

“... Christ has entered into His Reign with the scars of His Wounds. ‘This is the price that I have paid for this Kingdom’, He tells us, ‘and it cannot be had for any less!’ [cf. his Sermon on “The Passion”, already cited under the section of Fr. Bertoni’s Christology. In: PVC, p. 272].

3.] Fr. Bertoni personally had a sublime idea of people consecrated to God. In the common symbolism of the times [as well as our own [cf. Can. 607, § 1] he thought of religious in nuptial terms, using a text from St. Paul, a kind of “test” of union with God:

“... To what beauty could I ever compare a soul whom God has endowed to make of it, His Spouse? I simply do not have the colors to paint such a portrait. I will only say this, filled with the same wonder of the Apostle himself, that whoever is united to God with such an intimate adherence, becomes through a loving transformation, one and the same spirit with Him (cf. 1 Co 6:17)”.

...

### 3. The Apostolic Missionary to the Youth

a. In the aftermath of what might be thought of as a “world war”, as is usual, those who suffered the most were the poor, the innocent and the defenseless. Already in his early years as a priest, Fr. Bertoni was assigned by his superior, in this case, his first Pastor - Fr. Louis Girardi - to be the Apostle of Youth. This added still another facet to his gradually developing charism as a Founder of a religious community. We are told the specific incident: it was a First Communion day in the Parish and the Pastor gave him the responsibility of its youth. Fr. Bertoni began gathering them in the confines of the parish grounds, but gradually shifted the meetings also to his own home. The little group was placed under the protection of Mary, the most Holy Virgin. This initial foundation eventually came to be the Marian Oratories, and the Stigmatine Founder was the first to bring the idea into the Diocese [cf. *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli*, p. 18]. Even these would be suppressed in the hard days following the war. It is to Fr. Giacobbe that we owe this information from the early years of Fr. Bertoni’s priesthood.

b. One of the characteristics of the Stigmatine Founder’s Original Constitutions is the fact that while there is very little codification of the other central apostolates of the Congregation, such as: retreats, or parish missions; any specifics regarding these, or concerning the care of religious and seminarians - there are relatively abundant references to the care of youth. The following are a few of the Original Constitutions composed by the Stigmatine Founder, dedicated to the care of the youth:

“Each confrere will be committed, according to his capacity, and keeping in mind the circumstances of places and times, to the explanation of Christian Doctrine to the youth, and the uneducated.” [CF # 37].

"Without omitting any particular studies of those matters which the confreres might excel the more, or which are the more - gradually the young confreres will be exercised in preaching in our Churches, in catechizing the young and the other uneducated individuals, in hearing the confessions of the young men and children" [CF # 72].

"The Christian education of children and young men, and of other uneducated persons, is to be promoted with every effort through the Oratories, with the teaching of Catechism, and also even with private instructions" [CF # 164].

"The special occupations of the Professed Fathers are the following: it is their duty not only to teach the truths necessary, or useful for the obtaining of eternal life with preaching, retreats, lectures - but also by explaining the first elements of faith and morals, especially to the young, and uneducated persons, through the Oratories and in public and private catechism lessons. This, too, is of supreme use to the Church; therefore, it is to be supremely recommended" [CF # 182]

"To hear confessions of all classes of people, but especially of the poor and the youth, and to encourage the due frequency of the Sacraments..." [CF # 183].

c. There is much insistence here even on private conversations and lessons to the poor, to the uneducated, to the youth. These 'lowly' tasks are presented by the Founder as pertaining to the very heart of his charism.

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## CONCLUSION

### [1] Hope and Growth

a. Here we might apply Fr. Bertoni's principle of the possibility of limitless development, provided no obstacle is placed in God's way:

"... Jesus once said to a Saint: if only I could find individuals who would give themselves to Me without reserve, all that you read in the lives of saints as having been accomplished in them by Me, I would do the same with these and I would furthermore



contribute to miracles being accomplished. My hand in no way has been shortened! (cf. Is 59:1). I am still the Same...!" [cf. Mss B # 2463].

This idea is in full harmony with the Ignatian principle that God would do great things in the lives of believers, if only they would not put obstacles in His way in what He would really want to accomplish [cf. Nello, II, p. 144].

b. As has already been noted above, this Ignatian principle is a fundamental point in Fr. Bertoni's personal life and in his preaching:

"... How very few are they who really understand what God would do with them if He were not impeded by them in His plan ..."

[Another variation:]

"... We cannot even think what God would do with us, and how much He would accomplish in us, who are the pupils of His eyes, if we did not place obstacles in the way of His grace, but if only we would commit ourselves freely and totally into His hands..." [cf. Mss B # 5480; Nello, 1975, p.232].

c. This principle is found on the lips of Fr. Bertoni in all kinds of situations: in his words to others, as well as in his own examination of conscience:

- in his own Spiritual Diary [cf. Dec. 2, 1808; May 18, 1811];
- in his Retreat to priests [cf. Mss B ## 2180; 2463; 4047];
- in his Letters of Spiritual Direction [cf. Ep, pp. 61; 66; 68;
- in a letter to Fr. Briaghi [Feb. 19, 1832].

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## **[2] Hope and Joy**

a. Despite all his afflictions and personal defeats, it can be said that Fr. Bertoni was a very hope-filled and even joyful person. The theme of joy is a frequent one, flowing as it does from his hope and charity:

"... This is true happiness, true joy, in recognizing God as one's Master, in serving Him with fidelity, in living together with God. This sentence is found in the Scriptures... And if those who hope to be the heirs of much money, of a rich inheritance, or to come

into the possession of a principedom - are so happy in the prospects of their inheritance: how much greater should not the real joy be of a believer who waits with a firmly founded confidence, for the inheritance of an eternal realm, a heavenly reign! If, in the meantime, such an individual should raise his eyes to heaven, and if Faith should show him the other honors, the extraordinary wealth, the most pure delights of that happy homeland, then Hope would immediately respond deep within his heart: and these goods are all for me, indeed they are mine! What comfort this brings! What exultation!..." [cf. Sermon 22, 1804, in "PVC, pp. 17; 19].

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### [3] Hope and Perseverance

a. The connection between these two Christian values is found explicitly in St. Paul:

"... These sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive because of the love of God that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us..." [cf. Rm 5:5, ff.].

b. For Fr. Bertoni, the theme of perseverance was an important one, a key means for the Imitation of Christ:

"... The lack of perseverance is that of never bringing to a conclusion the good that has been begun. Each one should flee such a vice even more than death, for the simple reason that even though death does deprive a man of the present life, nonetheless, for the just, it is merely the end of tribulation: 'The virtuous man, though he die before his time, will find rest!' (cf. Ws 4:7).

"But, the lack of perseverance deprives a man of the crown of eternal life, because only to those who persevere in the good they have undertaken until death, is eternal life due ...: 'the man who stands firm to the end, will be saved!' (cf. Mt 10:22)..."

c. As throughout his own entire spiritual journey, the figure of Jesus Christ in Fr. Bertoni's daily 'experience' of Him, remains the ultimate motive for it all:

"... For this reason, Christ our Teacher by disregarding all offered honor, accepted instead all confusion... (cf. Heb 12:1-3)..." [cf. Mss B # 4488].

d. The example of Jesus on His cross is the real model for the believer struggling with perseverance:

“... He never chose to come down off the Cross, but willed to die there, rather than failing in any way in the work of our redemption which He had undertaken (cf. Mt 27:42, ff.). This was also to show us how displeasing is the lack of perseverance, the ruin of all good work...” [cf. Mss B 4489].

e. Fr. Bertoni saw God as the promised “Emmanuel”, our true Companion on the Pilgrimage of Life:

“...Along the pathway of virtue, God is always with us. God not only is content in showing you the route, but He also offers Himself to lead you by it: ‘I will lead you by the path of justice!’. Reflect well on this, because in such a way I respond to those fears that disturb you deeply. Nonetheless, the sheer number of them may even have you fail in your resolutions.

“No matter how long is the journey that you still have to go, and even though the struggle to stay on it will never end, and the fact that all along this way, real dangers have to be met, and powerful enemies rise up in one’s way, and the fact that real traps are set in one’s path - yet, with all this, if the Lord is with you, of whom can you be afraid? If the Lord is right there, along-side you at all times, how can you be discouraged? How can you be afraid of failing? (cf. Ps 16:8). And if it is true that He is in your midst, and if He Himself takes up arms to struggle against your adversaries, how can they ever make you afraid? (cf. Dt 7:21). And finally, if it is true that He watches over you and guides your every step, and will free you feet from any trap they may wander into, how can you not make progress? (cf. Pr 3:26).

“The Psalmist prays: ‘May Your good Spirit guide me to level ground!’ (cf. Ps 143:10). What greater security can you have?...” [cf. Sermon 17, “Perseverance”, April 11, 1803, in: PVC, pp. 116, ff.].

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As in his Christology, so also in his Hope, St. Gaspar Bertoni’s deep inspiration was the Cross, the Glorious Stigmata, the “source” of the Apostolic Mission [cf. J 20:21, ff.] and the Resurrection of the Lord. Before anyone can be found worthy of this, he reasoned, all are called to prior “resurrections” in God’s grace. The following, to conclude this section on the Stigmatine Founder’s Hope, is one of his early sermons as a young priest, on an Easter Sunday morning:

“... Now, though, that we are once more in this Easter risen in grace and dead to sin, how could we ever want to abuse such mercy? How could we not want to employ every possible means to persevere? ... It is just right, my listeners, that you should use all manner of means to persevere with every diligence in your holy resolutions, and to strive in a lively manner towards Heaven, without returning your gaze toward this earth.

If you have indeed risen with Christ, then seek those things which are above earth, where Christ is indeed sitting at the right hand of God. Seek out the heavenly things, and not those of this earth (cf. Col 3:1)...” [cf. Sermon 38, “Holy Easter: The Spiritual Life”, in: PVC, pp. 294-297].



### PART THREE: Biblical and Theological Reflections

#### [A.] The Old Testament: Ps 131

[Total Abandonment into the “Arms” of God]

[cf. Louis Jacquet, *Les Psaumes et le coeur de l’homme. Etude textuelle, littéraire et doctrinale*. Belgique: Ducuolot 1979, Vol III, pp. 510-523, passim]

#### Text:

“Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions, my eyes do not look too high. I am not concerned with great affairs, or marvels beyond my scope.

“Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet, like a child in its mother’s arms, as content as a child that has been weaned.

“Israel: rely on Yahweh, now and for always!”

[The **JB** note: The soul at peace abandons itself to God, laying aside anxiety and ambition. The same child-like trust is demanded [cf. v. 3] of the People of God.

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#### Introduction:

[1] This Ps 131 is one of the shortest in the entire collection, the 12th of the Psalms of Ascents, takes up again the discreetly didactic theme as was found in Pss 123; 125; 127 & 128. That which it strives to do, however, is not so much to insinuate, for the instruction of the Pilgrims a practical directive for the moral and religious life of the wayfarer - but, rather to determine the mentality’ according to which the faithful should respond to Yahweh and how to act in His regard all through life. This Psalm wishes to remind them of that “spirit”, “mysticism”, to respond in every occurrence to the demands of the Mosaic-Davidic Covenant - this is its object and scope - not just during the annual pilgrimage. This is the “every-day” spirituality for the soul of Israel.

[2] For this Psalmist, the fervent Israelite would never - without denying his divine vocation, hand himself over in the manner of non-believers, to good as well as in bad fortune, to restless and passionate calculations, from which one awaits a betterment, or a change of situation -nor, should the Israelite cultivate that attitude for the overly enthusiastic aspirations of a patriotism that is by far too human.

[3] It is rather necessary for the faithful, instructed by passed reverses they have suffered, to give up restless “activity”, or frantic “re-acting”, striving ever more tenaciously to do over one’s existence. This Psalm bespeaks an opening of oneself to God, in a limitless confident **Holy Abandonment**. The Soul of ancient Israel had as its ideal as expressed in this Psalm to hand oneself over in all things, in calm serenity of soul, to the One Who has constituted Himself, in heaven, the Purveyor of His faithful. This is the condition of **spiritual poverty**, which Yahweh demands of all his faithful followers.

[4] What is true as the ideal in the individual sphere, on the personal plane, is also true on the collective level - for the entire Israelite community in its totality, for the nation itself. This Holy Abandonment, Spiritual Poverty, needs to be taught to the pious Pilgrims as models of Israelite behavior.

[5] The “Liturgical Character” of the Poem - and this is readily noticeable - results here from an adaptation - even if v. 3 might be a Levitical addition. There seems to be little doubt that originally this Psalm transmitted **the spiritual experience of some individual** - and more precisely one of Israel’s “Greats” - who, after having sought out and experienced great joy and pride, and perhaps other delights, finds him/herself one day cured from some terrible ordeal, or perhaps some deception - or, without knowing why, to be under the effects of Grace. This seems to have been the experience of some person who would not try any more than this - a person who has come to **understand the irrefutable logical of Holy Abandonment**.

[6] Therefor, the Psalmist has been brought back from all illusions. He is far from turning this experience of the way of the Yahwist, into despair, or even discouragement. He has come to find out first by himself - and then by the instruction of others, to take refuge, resignation in a virtuous silence. Here, there awaits for him a spiritual rejoicing - and for his brothers and sisters, a deepening of the idea of that which is the authenticity of Israel, still being built up. This seems to be the poetical description of an authentic mystical experience.

[7] There is no other writing, perhaps, which surpasses this short poem that describes the core of **Spiritual Infancy**. The literary form, with its imagery - remaining all the while difficult to translate - has enjoyed across the ages its own enduring allure. Its underlying idea, without neglecting its sublimity, offers its own wonder and charm. This is a literary “jewel”, perhaps without equal in interiority, discretion and emotion.

[8] There is an enchantment here for the religious-minded person, of finding here presented and expressed in poetic manner, one of the most original sentiments of the Christian spirituality [cf. J. Steinmann]" **'unless you become as children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven [cf. Mt 18:3]**. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola recommended a very special practice... where solitude is indispensable to discover communion with the Will of God, sought for in silence, and to find there the pathway of a full and free insertion into the world... This is immortalized in his Prayer, the *Suscipe* : All is Yours, let us say to God, dispose all in accord with Your Will. Give me Your love and Your Grace: this is enough for me! [# 234]. This is a Prayer formulated in accord with the concrete circumstances of a human life. [cf. Fr. Courel, "The Retreat according to the Spiritual Exercises", in: *Christus* 1966, Jan. n. 49, pp. 35, 47].

[9] There have always been those who will proclaim that this is "the most beautiful Psalm in the Bible". The TM, followed in part by the LXX, but not by the Targum - nor by the Jerusalem, or Syriac texts - accompanies here the indication of a dedication to: "Jesus, son of Joseech, the High Priest of the Return from Exile" [cf. Zc 3:1; 6:11]. This Psalm is attributed to David. One would like to believe that in its primitive tenor [describing the spiritual experience of some individual], this Psalm conserves the echo of the humble sentiments, testified to by the High Priest, following the entry of the Ark into Jerusalem [cf. 2 S 6:10-12]. At different times, this is his recorded attitude [cf. 1 S 26:10-12; 2 S 18:5; 24:17]. While this specific historical attribution is extremely doubtful for most interpreters, there is hardly anyone who is not impressed by the beauty of the ideal presented here, and the general rhythm of the poem.

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### Exegetical Notes

**1. The Profession of Humility:** "Yahweh, my heart has no lofty ambitions, my eyes do not look too high. I am not concerned with great affairs, or marvels beyond my scope."

a. The Psalmist professes not to nourish any sentiment of pride, of presumptuous self-sufficiency, or of the ambitious research of riches, thanks to which glory is acquired [cf. Ps 18:28; 101:5; Pr 6:17; 21:4; Mi 6:8]. He has no personal ambition, nor pretension in such a situation [cf. Ezk 31:5, 10,14; Jb 42:3]. The ascendant gradation of the text is to be noted: the total absence of pride in the heart [intelligence - desire - will] - then, in the exterior attitude, and finally in active efforts. This entire thought seems inspired by Is 2:11-17: "...human pride will lower its eyes, the arrogance of men will be humbled ... Yahweh alone will be exalted!"

b. Maimonides, citing Si 45:4, where it is said that Moses was chosen by God because of his **fidelity**, his **humility**, and comparing this text with Nb 12:3, which likewise celebrates his profound humility - points out that this “humility” pertains to that category of virtues whose perfection is not situated in some middle point of mediocrity. One is never too “humble” - anyone who is inflated with pride in his/her heart, really denied God [cf. his Book of Knowledge].

c. There is besides here the foundation of the theological virtue of **Hope**. The only authentic Hope is that which does not depend on us, the point of reference for which is humility, and not pride [cf. G. Marcel]. St. Thomas Aquinas [cf. II-II, q. 19, a. 12] and St. John of the Cross [cf. *Mount Carmel*, III, c. 6, 10, 14; *Dark Night*, XXI] also treat extensively of Spiritual Poverty as the foundation for Hope. The sole point of support of the religious believer on this earth ought to be the hope in celestial grace, chants the Christian Liturgy [cf. Collect of the 5th Sunday after Epiphany; the Prayer over the People, of Saturday, the 2nd week of Lent].

d. The over-all theme here allows it to be understood that in a few words there is conveyed the idea that the acts and the plans of this Psalmist [cf. Ps 1:1] have not always been sage and moderate in the past. Without any doubt, he has struggled too much and worked very hard - either to recover his earlier situation, that seems to have been particularly flourishing - or, to acquire such an important advantage before legitimately ameliorating his condition. Perhaps, if one takes into account the verb used in v. 1 c in the LXX translation, would avow that some lose their view in the clouds [cf. Ob 4; 2 M 5:17; 7:34], because of having tried to look too high [*meteorizein*]. Some seem to have been tempted to living a life in the elevated areas of dreams. At any rate, one soon learns that life just does not bring what one might have earlier expected from it. One must then, change his/her tactics with Yahweh.

e. This Psalm seems to have in mind some major personality of Israel's history. One might usefully note these verses:

“...Now I am knocking down all that I have built, tearing up what I have planted ...” [cf. Jr 45: 4, ff.]. - “... for great though the power of the Lord is, He accepts the homage of the humble ... Do not try to understand things that are too difficult for you, or try to discover what is beyond your powers. Concentrate on what has been assigned to you. Do not meddle with matters that are beyond you; what you have been taught already exceeds the scope of the human mind. Many have been misled by their own presumptions, and wrong-headed opinions have warped their ideas...” [cf. Si 3:17-27].



f. St. John Chrysostom will note: humility is the vehicle of prayer [cf. PG 55, col. 130]. As a spiritual director, St. Augustine would state: For this exaltation of the abundance of graces, how this is to be feared, so that one would not take pride in the gift of God - but, would the more greatly serve humility, and do as it is written: the greater you are, the more humble should you act towards others, and before God you will find grace (cf. Si 3:20) [PL, col. 1708].

g. The NT Echo is:

"...My food is to do the will of the One Who sent Me, and to complete His work [cf. Jn 4:34].

"...Jesus, Who could see they were about to come and take Him by force and make Him king, escaped back to the hills by Himself.." [cf. Jn 6:15].

"... Not that I come for My own glory, there is Someone Who takes care of that and is the judge of it..." [cf. Jn 8:54].

Let us not lose sight of Jesus Who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, He endured the Cross, disregarding the shamefulness of it, and from now on, He has taken His place at the right hand of God's throne.." [cf. Heb 12:2].

"...The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself, will be exalted..." [cf. Mt 23:11].

"...He has shown the might of His arm, He has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones, and exalted the lowly ..." [cf. Lk 1:51, f.].

"...Take yourselves, for instance, brothers, at the time when you were called: how many of you were wise in the ordinary sense of the word, how many were influential people, or came from noble families? No, it was to shame the wise that God chose what is weak by human reckoning; those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen - those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything. The human race has nothing to boast about to God..." [cf. 1 Co 1:26-29]

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**2. Profession of Abandonment to God** [or, of "Poverty" in the Biblical sense of the word - cf. Ps 34]: "Enough for me to keep my soul tranquil and quiet like a child in its mother's arms, as content as a child that has been weaned.." [cf. also Is 30:15; Mt 18:3, par.; Is 66:12, ff.; Ho 11:4].

a. Instructed by experience and worked on by Grace, the Psalmist has even come to renounce any and all vindication in his condition of the most legitimate rights

that he may have. At any rate, he has leveled off all the reactions of soul [cf. Is 28:25], simply refusing all reaction: and he has established himself in a climate of calm and interior silence [cf. Ps 37:7; 62:2], of waiting in peace [cf. Is 30:15]. This is a state apparently described by Raissa Maritain: He does not say anything to me, the dear Lord, but He receives me so strongly that I prefer these moments of silence to everything else in this world [cf. "Journal"]. As agitated as it was, the sea of the soul is calmed! Peguy has written poetically: The world is always at the 'opposite', says God - and in the 'contrary' sense. Happy is the one who would remain as an infant. And the one who is like an infant would retain that innocence of earlier times.

b. As spontaneous as the image of the "infant" might be, that of the weaned infant seems even more eloquent. The author declares that he has come to sever his soul from all its natural aspirations; so much so that it remains in him no more like the avid yearning for nourishment that he received from his mother who weaned him - and that image indicates all the avidity of which infants are capable. But, he is now like the infant who has already been weaned [cf. Ho 1:8; Is 28:9]. The image, then, seems here to be that of the Infant of 2, or 3 years [cf Ps 8:3; cf. also 2 M 7:27; 2 Ch 31:16; Ex 2:9; 1 S 1:22-24; 1 K 11:19,f.]. After the weaning, the primitive instinct is calmed, and the infant abandons him/herself to the mother's care, to the sweetness of peaceful repose as an infant who does not desire any more. The weaned child is the subdued, contented child.

c. The soul is at peace, as would be an infant - the image of the child asleep on its mother's shoulder. This is reminiscent of some art depicting 'Our Lady of the Way', hurrying along with the Child at peace and asleep on her shoulder: the work of our redemption is underway.

d. Having come to understand that all things are really nothing, and that God is everything, the Psalmist has become the master of the appetites of his soul, and placing finally confidence in divine providence, he commits himself to it in everything. He has won this serenity of soul, which is a calming of the one who has learned to seek God in and for Himself, and not for the grandeurs which His favor might procure.

e. The image, in the acceptance that has just been described is found already in equivalent terms in the Prayer of the Poor of ancient Egypt to Amon [cf. A. Gelin, in *The Poor Whom Yahweh loves*]: 'You are Amon, the lord of the silent, who comes to the voice of the poor. I do not place my hope in the power of humans ... it is my lord who will be my defense. Two times happy, who reposes blessedly in the arms of Amon, he who takes care of the silent, who aids the poor, and gives breath to the one he

animates...’ One will find at Qumran also this expression: ‘You are a Father for all your faithful sons; You have exulted over them as a mother over her infant...’

f. This image would also serve as the base for the entire spirituality of Edith Stein. There exists a state of repose in God, of total suspension of all activity of spirit, in which one can no longer even formulate plans, nor make decisions, nor do anything; but where, having remitted the entire future to the Divine Will, one abandons him/herself entirely to his/her destiny. One has emptied human reason from all frantic research and excessively natural reflection in directing toward God **the simple regard of faith**. The rising up from this emptiness of plenitude, and enveloped by a sentiment of intimate security... a new life begins little by little to take one over. The person, thus giving of him/herself, obscurely proven, that St. Thomas assigns to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. This line of thought can still be developed further.

g. Bergson, on his part, would recognize the well-founded goodness of this mystical state: the soul stops, then it allows itself to be taken, to be led forward. It does not perceive directly the Force that moves it, but it feels itself before an undefinable Presence. This is the mystical “repose”, if one would like to call it by that name. And it is in this that the philosopher would make use of a concept dear to the thinkers of India: The one who has the faith, according to the proposal of one of them, the one who has mastered and conquered the mental state and his senses, who has fixed his entire conscious being on the supreme reality, this one awaits and achieves knowledge; and having attained knowledge, he goes rapidly to the supreme peace [cf. *Bhagavad Gita* ].

h. There is likewise this enthusiastic exclamation of St. Bernard: O Place of veritable repose, in which God does not appear any more as overwhelmed, or charged with preoccupations, but where He manifests His perfect and sweet benevolence! This view does not overwhelm, it charms; it does not awaken restlessness, it brings peace; it does not fatigue the spirit, it brings it repose. The tranquil God pacifies all - and considers them tranquil, this is what is meant to taste peace! [cf. Sermon 33 on Canticles].

i. Still it is good to emphasize that such peace, and lack of concern, have nothing to do with a disincarnate “Quietism”, permitting one to evade all responsibilities, slip away from commitments. The Hope that is based on one’s repose in the Lord is in no way a flight, or dismissal in regard to the demanding human condition, and from the real responsibilities imposed by this.

1.] All will have to answer the Creator’s question: Where is your brother/sister? Holy Abandonment includes the handing over of all things into the hands

of a God, Who now takes charge of everything. The challenge is to be committed intensely, peacefully, to this real world, and the real human condition, and counting on the Lord who clarifies and assists. There is no attempt at any self-sufficient solution to the complex challenges of modern Church life. Abandonment will always ask for the integral accomplishment of the duties of one's state in life, under the light and movement of God, in full docility of intelligence and soul, far from being a manner of mystical infantilism.

2.] Abandonment constitutes that which is the most "adult" in the living of Faith. To utilize all that one is, and all that one has, in the limits and the routine of the human condition, will always mean conformity to the Divine Will. Consequently, there is always the putting to death of one's personal desires in the light of Christian Hope, in a daily response to the imperatives of grace. This demands a highly developed religious maturity and intensity.

3.] In Abandonment, there is no awaiting, or expectancy for the spectacular, out of the ordinary, solutions to challenges - there are no pseudo-miraculous interventions that could interest one truly "abandoned" to the Wisdom and Mercy of God. The qualities of Spiritual Childhood, as described in Ps 131, deserve the utmost praise.

j. Therefore, and it is necessary to repeat this: the Psalmist has made a profession of definitive abandonment to his God: he has been once and for all "weaned" on the word of God, his thirst has been slaked by the fonts of salvation. However, the traditional exegesis of the verse is oriented toward a slightly different meaning. According to this version, the translation would not be "weans", but satisfied, i.e., the thirst, hunger have been "satisfied". The notion of "Abandonment" would thus be coupled with that of "comforted":

"... For thus says Yahweh: Now towards her I sent flowing peace, like a river, like a stream in spate the glory of the nations At her breast will her nurslings be carried and fondled in her lap. Like a son comforted by his mother, will I comfort you. And by Jerusalem, you will be comforted..." [cf. Is 66: 12, ff.].

k. This notion of abandonment is indeed touching and very "natural", but quite singularly less virile and really, from a doctrinal point of view, less rich: the emphasis shifts to the Mother, with no "conscious" response on the part of the child. The notion of virile abandonment would be much recommended by the Fathers of the Church, particularly St. Jerome. He understands Ps 131 not as enjoyment 'in full' of God - but more as an appeal to religious maturity, to spiritual energy.

I. On the use of *nefesh*, the emphatic personal pronoun is to be noted: "... why so downcast, o my **soul**, why do **you** sigh within me? Put your hope in God: I shall praise Him yet, my savior and my God..." [cf. Ps 42:5, 7]. The NT Echo might be:

"...Father, he said, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me. Nevertheless, let Your will be done, not mine! [cf. Lk 22:42].

"... Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." [cf. Lk 23:46; Ps 31:5; Ac 7:60].

"...Then He said: I tell you solemnly, unless you change and become as little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. And so, the one who makes himself as little as this little child, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.." [cf. Mt 18:3, 4].

"... It is only on account of this that I am experiencing fresh hardships here now; But I have not lost confidence, because I know Who it is that I have put my trust in, and I have no doubt at all that He is able to take care of all that I have entrusted to Him until that day..." [cf. 2 Tm 1:12].

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### 3. **Liturgical Adaptation:** Israel, rely on Yahweh, now and for always!

a. The lesson that had been learned by some individual is now applied to Israel [cf. note Ps 130:8]. Without seeking "human glory", or "success", with feverish activity to repair reverses, or to satisfy desires for vengeance, or for political supremacy, the People of God ought to be content with its lot, to have total confidence in God, Who is like a parent [mother !] with loving care for Israel [cf. Ho 11:4; Is 66:12-13; Ps 62:9; 115:9-11]. That Israel should become the weaned infant in the loving arms of Yahweh, in full abandonment to its God. This is the lesson that pilgrims should be reminded of in their pilgrimage [cf. Ps 125; 127].

b. This is a lesson that would give inspiration to the beautiful Midrash following the Book of Job: "Do not seek that which is beyond you. That which is far from you, do not try to sound its depths. That which is more marvelous than you are, you should never try to know what it is. That which is hidden, do not try to discover. That which God has given to you as a heritage, try to contemplate it. You should not occupy yourself with 'mystery'". The KORAN would make mention of something like this: the one who professes the most beautiful religion is the one who is totally abandoned to God!

c. Where could one find a poem that responds more fully to the mystical concerns of the true children of God. than in this canticle of complete humility? This is not some speculative recognition of our smallness, but it is a full acceptance of the limits of life which are a consequence of it, and of filial abandonment to the conduct of Paternal Providence which governs us. 'What is necessary to be done, O Lord, for us to render faith to You? One day in silence before you...: Blaise Pascal in his profound intuition of the things of God, is most correct when he notes: all of the misfortune of human beings comes from a single source, which is not to know how to remain quietly in a room! [Pensees # 136].

d. This is the Psalm of Spiritual Childhood which anticipates the evangelical doctrine of the Kingdom of God, and of the Divine Paternity. This is the Canticle which introduces one to "the Spirituality of Holy Abandonment" to the Father in heaven, which Jesus recommended in the Cenacle: "... My peace I bequeath to you, My own peace, I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is My gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid..." [cf. Jn 14:27].

e. This is an eminently biblical spirituality, as in St. Paul, where he heard:"...My grace is enough for you: My power is at its best in weakness." [c. 2 Co 12:9]. And we should never forget the words of Jesus Himself inculcating trust in Divine Providence: He seems to be appealing against any anxious quest of the goods of this earth, in failing to understand the solicitude of the heavenly Father [cf. Mt 6:25-34; Lk 12:22-31].

f. The consistent teaching of the Saints:

1.] St. Augustine marveled at the beauty of this Spirituality and discovered one day at the end of one of his long quests for human grandeur: **O, my God, our heart is always restless until it finds repose in You!** [cf. *Confessions*, 1,c. 1]. The *Imitation of Christ* puts it this way: "I wish to teach you the path of peace and true liberty ... choose to possess less rather than more; take always the last place, after all others; desire always and pray that the Will of God be perfectly accomplished in you. The man who does this has entered into the domain of Peace and repose [cf. III, 23:1-3, cf. 22: 4-5].

2.] St. Benedict makes this Spirituality the foundation of his Rule and he develops it at some length in his celebrated Chapter on Humility, which he opens with a citation from Ps 131: 1,2: 'Basically, one loses God by self-exaltation, the fruit of egoism and of pride - the exaltation of one's own thoughts, or pride; the exaltation of

one's own words, by bragging; the exaltation of one's own actions through disobedience; the exaltation of one's own desires, through ambition; the exaltation of one's efforts through presumption- it is most necessary to be attached to God as an Infant to its mother, and to allow Him to work in us His progressive abasement from pride through the ascension, even to the most high summit, of the degrees of humility.'

3.] St. Hildegard makes this declaration about this Spirituality: 'I count myself as nothing; I turn towards the living God, so that He might deign in all things to keep me from harm...'

4.] This spirituality led St. John of the Cross in his *Spiritual Canticle*, to fashion with every effort of which he was capable, his spirit a divine milieu, where his terrestrial existence could become mute; in sweet silent music and in harmonious solitude.

5.] St. Bernadette Soubirous stated: I love all that is small!

6.] St. Therese of Lisieux speaks of this Spirituality, which she made her own, and whose depths have been sounded in recent years by many scholars.

a.] Remain small, means to recognize one's own nothingness, to await all from the good God, not to be too much afflicted for one's fault, not to seek one's own fortune, not to be upset by anything... never to wish to be self-sufficient ... to feel oneself incapable of gaining one's life, eternal life...' [cf. *The Story of a Soul*, p. 154].

b.] For me to think too big, it is impossible. I have to maintain that my imperfections are beyond counting. But I wish to seek the means of going to heaven by a small way that is straight and short. We are living in an age of inventions: there is no longer the fatigue of marking one's steps on a stairway; for the rich, there is an 'elevator', such as I would like to have to reach Jesus, for I am too small to climb the harsh stairway of Perfection.

c.] Then I sought in the lives of the Saints the indication of this Elevator, the object of my desires... This is what I found: As a Mother caresses her infant, so I will console you. I will carry you on My bosom, and I will bounce you on my knee [cf. Is 66:13]. The Elevator that will carry me up to Your arms, O Jesus! Therefore, I do not have to grow up; it is necessary on the contrary, that I should remain small, that should become more and more so...

7.] Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity: this spirituality of the Little Flower has been profoundly lived by a number of contemplatives, such as Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity: I have only to recollect myself to find Him within me, and this is what brings me happiness. He has placed in my heart an infinite thirst and a great need to love that He alone can achieve. Then, I go to Him, as a small infant to its Mother, so that He might fulfill, He might supply me with all that I need, by taking me in His arms. It seems to be that it is necessary to be most simple with the Good God...'

g. Pope Pius XII has excellently characterized this spirituality in the name of the contemporary Church: Just as in the natural order, an infant growing up gradually comes to understand, that he can never be self-sufficient, that he has to live in a superior docility [cf. Letter of August 7, 1947, to the National Congress of St. Therese studies]. Along these lines, Fr. C. Spicq, OP, states: while the malicious are hard, haughty and arrogant - the biblically 'poor' is a person who is defenseless. Conscious of his weakness and his misery, he submits docilely and without rebellion to the events which may even hurt him, or those who oppress him [cf. Ps 147:6]. In conformity with the ordinary custom of little people which he experiences, such a person is affable in his efforts, and modest in his conduct ... The habit of undergoing an unfortunate lot and of accepting the decisions of Providence favors the humility, and this attitude of religious submission is perfect, it develops into a kind of serenity and sweetness.

h. The Christian could come to know at what point this little Psalm could easily serve as a point of entry with the Heavenly Father - as it is described, in very few words, the state of the soul that our Father has set out for us. Burn your bridges - see just how many useless things you have!. It is surprising. Bind yourselves to poverty, to obedience. That blessed poverty which is that of the soul which seeks neither praise, nor estimation, success - but solely the Will of God. To be One with Him, not having but one Will with Him. This is a Vocation - this is His appeal to us.

i. A rhetorical question: am I towards my Heavenly Father, as "filial" as perhaps a child of five years, who climbs upon the knees of his grand-pa, plays on him like a horse, with his arms around his neck...? O my God, give me to understand more deeply the mystery of your paternity.

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## [B] The New Testament: Christ's Life and Prayer

Presentation: The Example of Our Lord Himself in His Paschal Mystery

[1] As all Christian virtues, abandonment has its source in the Gospel - in the teachings and examples of our Lord Jesus Christ. On a number of occasions, St. Francis de Sales presents Christ as the Model of Holy Abandonment in the various stages of His mortal life:

- in the Crib [cf.. *Entretien* XXI];
- in His Infancy [ Love of God, Book IX, c. 14];
- in the Flight into Egypt [cf. *Entretien*, III]'
- and above all, during those terrible sufferings that concluded His earthly sojourn: "... Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit...!" [cf. Love of God, Book IX, c. 15].

[2] This imitation of our Lord is the great challenge of believers: He teaches all who would follow Him how to be abandoned to the Will of God in suffering - all are challenged to repeat His Self-giving words - which Mary used in responding to the Angel in her Annunciation; and again as her message in Cana of Galilee: Do whatever He tells you!. Christ first offered them in His Instruction on the Lord's Prayer: Thy Will be done! - and finally, the phrase culminates in Gethsemane and Calvary: Your will be done, not Mine! [cf. Lk 22:42] - Not what I will, but as You will it! [cf. Mt 26:39].

[3] The supreme example, of course, would be His expression on the Cross: into Your hands I commend My Spirit! Through the doctrine and by the experience of the saints, each believer- assisted by special grace - can in some way, imitate Jesus Christ in His abandonment: for some, it is life's vocation. In the trials of human life, the Lord's grace can lead the faithful through a variety of levels, or stages of the faith, lead one to the oblation of their deepest self-interest: make of your bodies an oblation to God's Mercy [cf. Rm 12: 1, ff.] - join your spiritual sacrifices to Christ's oblation [cf. 1 P 2: 2, ff.].

[4] For many thoughtful believers, such sacrifices cannot be done with ordinary grace - but, that each of the faithful is called to pass through stages, each of those more intense and more purifying than what went before. As for the perfection of Holy Abandonment, no one could reach that level without the special assistance of God. In the supreme level, the sacrifice - in imitation of Jesus Christ - is consummated.

[5] Here the reflection will center around Jesus' instruction regarding the Will of God in His prayer - and then His actual living of this in His own Prayer:

- [I] the Lord's Prayer;
- [II] the Prayer in Gethsemane.

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### [I] The Lord's Prayer [cf. Mt 6:7, ff.]

#### {A} General Considerations [cf. also CCC ## 2759-2865]

1. On Christ's lips, this invocation had a profundity of meaning that it seems the disciples only discovered with time. With the Lutheran scholar, Joachim Jeremias, many interpreters believe that every time Jesus refers to His Father in direct address, most likely He would have used the affectionate, intimate term **Abba** .

a. The original term is found in three texts:

1.] The source might indeed have been Mark's rendition of the scene in Gethsemane: "... **Abba** ! [Father], He said. Everything is possible for You. Take this cup away from Me. But, let it be as You, not I, would have it. [cf. Mk 14:36].

2.] It is also found in two Epistles attributed to Paul: "... it is the Spirit of sons and it makes us cry out: **Abba** ! The Spirit and our spirit bear united witness that we are the children of God..." [cf. Rm 8:15] - "... The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts - the Spirit that cries **Abba**, Father..." [cf. Ga 4:6].

b. For Christ Himself, this term is the expression of the Mystery of His own Divine Filiation within the bosom of the Most Blessed Trinity - shared now with all who would accept Him through His oblation of the adoption price of His own Most Precious Blood, shed through His Sacred Stigmata. The first Christians used this same term to express **adoptive filiation**, that associates them to the Person and Prayer of Jesus Christ.

c. The early Church was convinced that a prayer of this nature could be formulated only with the help, and through the activity of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, even in the Early Church, this term: "Father, **Abba** - had profound theological implications:

- for Christ Himself, it means His "**natural**" Trinitarian Filiation;

- for Believers, it implied **Adoptive Filiation**.

2. The Introductory "**Our**" in the Lord's Prayer here is clearly extended to all His disciples of all times - to all who would accept a share in His Divine Filiation, and all that that would imply for their lives.

a. Some would hold that Christ would be excluded here, in the strength of His clear statement addressed to Mary Magdalene, after His Resurrection: "... He said to her: 'But go, and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to **My** Father and **your** Father, to **My** God and **your** God..." [cf. Jn 20:17].

1.] A number of careful interpreters find the background for this statement deep in the OT: "... Ruth said to Naomi: 'wherever you go, I will go - wherever you live, I will live. Your people shall be my people, and **your God, my God ...**'" [cf. Rt 1:16].

2.] However, the context of Jn 20:17, seems clearly to be that Jesus is returning to the One Who is at one and the same time, His Father and our Father, to His God and to our God. Yet, it is true that:

- never before, or elsewhere does Jesus use a formula that would risk confusing the Filiation of His Divine Person with the Adoptive Filiation of His disciples;

- precisely, however, in Jn 20:27, God is presented at one and the same time, as Christ's Father and the Father of all disciples.

3.] These two distinct divine "Paternities" seem carefully distinguished in the formula: "My Father and your Father". This precision seems that it had for its purpose that of avoiding any ambiguity in the "Our Father".

a.] If one would consult a Biblical Concordance, it would appear that Jesus often distinguished between "**My** Father" [18 times in Mt; 4 x in Lk; 25/26 x in Jn] - and "**Your** Father" [13 x in Mt; 2 x in Mk; 3 x in Lk 2/3 x in Jn] - without ever bringing together the two formulae in one common **Our** Father.

b.] In the present case, then, one is led to conclude that the "Our Father" pronounced by the disciples brings them together, all in one collective invocation to their Common Father - but, still does not include Christ in it. Furthermore, one of the Petitions of the "Our Father" which concerns the pardoning of sin, would not apply to Jesus Christ. Thus, many interpreters see in the "Our Father" as that Ecclesial,

eschatological Prayer taught by Jesus to the disciples for their collective usage, for the Church - but that this could not have been the Personal Prayer of Jesus Himself.

c.] But, one response to this might be that most interpreters still maintain that this was indeed Jesus' own, Personal Prayer that He has handed on to all who would follow Him: the us of the "Our Father" does not exclude Him: He was pierced through for our faults [cf. Is 53] - He identifies with sinners, by being "cursed" through hanging on a tree [cf. Ga 3:13] - sin was put to death in the innocent One on the Cross [cf. Rm 8:3+; 2 Co 5:21 +; Col 2:14 +].

d.] For Jesus Himself, God the Father is at the same time, the Father of all Disciples, all the Faithful in a unique sense. This can be established by a great number of variations of Matthew's texts [cf. 18:14] concerning the divine Paternity. This permits the conclusion that the conscience of the Early Church had no hesitation in affirming that the "Our Father" was the Prayer - both of the Disciples, as well as that of Jesus Himself, addressed to their common Father.

3. Thus, the Lord's Prayer is not merely - nor even primarily- a collective, vocal, eschatological, ecclesial Prayer for Christians. It is the echo of the very personal prayer that Jesus would offer throughout His mortal life - by His Mission, He made this personal prayer that was His very own, to be the personal prayer for each and every disciple, as He taught it personally to His "own", whom He loved to the very end.

a. Most would seem to see the "Our Father" in this light: it is the Lord's own prayer, the echo of His Personal Prayer - and He has made it the personal prayer of all who would follow Him.

b. The gospel precision that carefully clarifies the distinction between Jesus' unique, "natural Filiation" - and the "Adoptive Filiation" for everyone else - needs not also to be insisted on here, in the "Our Father." Our Adoptive Filiation is indeed a personal share in Jesus' own Natural Filiation, in His "Essential" Filiation. In like manner, we can say that our filial prayer is as an analogous participation in the Trinitarian Prayer of Jesus. This seems to be behind St. Paul's words: the proof that you are children is that God has sent His Spirit, the Spirit of His Son into our hearts - it is the Spirit that cries out *Abba* [cf. Ga 6:4]

c. All the Fathers of the Church and early commentators have insisted on an evident consequence of this common, divine Paternity. Since all have the same Father, then all human beings are really "brothers and sisters", divinely called to love one another, and to treat each other as such. This is the fundamental principle that inspires

all of the morality and the spirituality of Christianity. The Gospel presents this explicitly: "... you are all brothers [cf. Mt 23:8, ff.] ...since you have only one Father, and He is in heaven..." This theme has been eloquently developed down through the centuries - with evident implications for the theology of charity.

d. There will always be need to clarify the more the true nature of this Divine Paternity and the broader amplitude of this human fraternity. Some questions that need prayerful reflection are: God is indeed our Father because He has created us. Hence, as far as fraternity is concerned, this could not be limited then, only to those who explicitly accept God as "Father." God is also "Father" to those far from Him, choosing sin over grace.

e. It is very clear that creation does indeed constitute the divine Paternity to some extent - all human beings are indeed brothers and sisters to one another, as is already made clear by the Evangelist: "... But, I say this to you: love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you - in this way, you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for He causes the sun to rise on the bad as well as the good..." [cf. Mt 5:44, ff.].

f. There has been some discussion of the rendition of the "Our Father" in Lk's presentation - in that it seems to be addressed to the followers of Jesus Christ, perhaps in some contrast with the followers of John the Baptist: "Lord, teach us to pray - just as John taught his disciples..." [cf. Lk 11:2]. In Mt's rendition [cf. Mt 6: 7, ff.], another contrast is made: "In your prayers, do not babble as the pagans do - for they think by using many words they will be heard..."

4. Christian prayer is essentially **a share in the life and mission of Jesus Christ** - all become brothers and sisters in what He has accomplished for the world - in a most particular manner, when one can say authentically, in faith, hope and love: "Our Father" with the sentiments Christ had in offering this prayer. Some would want to extend this kind of fraternity even further - surely to all Christians, even those "anonymously" [if that is the right word!] following Christ. All those who sincerely seek the truth, and to all those who sincerely do what they can, God does not deny the grace [cf. St. Thomas, I-II, q. 109, a. 6, obj. 2; LG 16;17' GS 22; AG 7-9; RMi # 10; CCC ## 1257-1261].

a. There is a particular value in sharing in Christ's own life of Filiation - adoption is transmitted to us by Christ Himself. There is already a natural fraternity among human beings - Pope John called *socialization* [the inter-national gathering for various motives, as culture, sports, business, recreation] - as one of the promising signs of our time. So, there is no attempt here to deny the natural fraternity of all human

beings - or, to make juridical membership in the Church some kind of an exclusive saving Noah's ark for the storms of our times, just for a privileged few - Jesus died "for the many", i.e., "all", the Universal Savior.

b. The only real solution to every possible difficulty here would be to extend the "Our" in the "Our Father" to include every human being - all are called, invited to come "follow" Him, "imitate" Him, put on His Mind [cf. Ph 2:5, ff.]. All are being extended the call to become His disciples, to listen, and to put into practice His Beatitudes. Indeed, already "blessed" are the pure of heart, the poor in spirit, those who mourn, suffering persecution in the name of His Justice.

5. The Early Church included the "Our Father" in its Baptismal Liturgy, as well as in the celebration of the Eucharist. This is surely because the newly baptized are plunged deep into the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ, and His Trinitarian Mystery, though the re-generation afforded by the Sacrament of Baptism. Surely the baptized, those who specifically follow Jesus Christ, have a special right/obligation/challenge/ vocation - to pray the Lord's own Prayer. With Christ present in the Eucharist, Christians can certainly echo in a more resounding way, uniting their voices to the very Person of Jesus Christ, present in a most special manner, in the Eucharist.

a. A good number of the Fathers might have restricted the privilege and the right to the "Our Father" to the "saints" - to those who indeed try to conduct their lives as sharing in Christ's own Filiation. Around the year 250, St. Cyprian wrote: the new man, regenerated and given over to God by the grace of baptism, can now indeed pray: "Our Father" - simply because such a person has just become a son/daughter of God in a new more complete manner. In appealing to God as "Father" in heaven, such a person attests in his/her first stuttering utterances that he/she has surrendered earthly relationships in favor of the heavenly.

b. For St. Augustine [± 450] one could not pray the "Our Father" if he/she were not yet "born". In his Sermon 59, he stated that the "Our Father" is not yet the prayer of the Catechumens - but will become so only after their new birth of Baptism.

c. Much closer to our own time, Karl Barth wrote that the "Our Father" is not just any ordinary prayer: there is much emphasis to be given to the "Our" and to "us." God is indeed "Our Father" in a particular manner" by bestowing the privilege of this Prayer, He can then make some real demands. It is through the mediation of Jesus that we indeed have become His children, and He has become "ours." It all depends on whether or not we will follow in His footsteps, living His life. This prayer implies

communion with Jesus - that we enter into His discipleship, mission. It is Jesus Who invites us, permits us - commands us to come and follow Him. It is Jesus Christ Who permits us to use His very own Prayer in addressing His very own Father. This Prayer invites us to adore Him, to pray to God as His children - to make the words of His only-begotten, most beloved Son - "our" own.

6. In a most unique manner, the Heavenly Father is Jesus' "own" - Jesus is His unique Son. Only through adoption, does the follower of Christ receive His Father. God becomes the Father of those Who become His disciples, imitate His way of life. To be a follower of Christ, one must accept the total Christ, be a vital, living part of the community He died to establish.

a. To modern ears - rightly attuned to ecumenism and socialization, in the sense that Pope John XXIII understood this - it might seem too exclusive to limit the "Our Father" in this way. Because of creation, in some way God is already the "Father of all", in that He gave life, nourishment, up-bringing. Humanity does seem to be the glorious crown of the created universe - so some would limit the Divine Paternity to His creative function. However, even the created universe is open toward - has a natural [passive] capacity also for Jesus Christ. There are levels of the Divine Paternity, depending upon the extent that one would accept Adoptive Filiation. In this sense, we are not children of God by nature alone - but enter into the more intimate relationship with the Father through grace, a unique share in the Filiation of His own Son.

b. In 1960, Romano Guardini insisted much on the distinction between the Prayer that Jesus addressed to His Father personally - and the one addressed to Him through His disciples. We can only come to the Father with the Lord's Prayer, when we are brought there by the Spirit of Filiation, that enables all to say *Abba* ! From the moment the believer gives back His extended greeting - and when we try to establish our personal relationship with God, all distance dissipates. Jesus has made a gift of His own relationship to the Father to each and every person who will agree to come and follow, imitate Him, putting on His "mind." Yet, Jesus' own personal prayer to the Father remains a mystery - one that we can never penetrate in comprehensive fashion, even when we pray His prayer, and express ourselves in the terms of His "Natural Filiation."

c. Surely Christians and non-Christians alike are not excluded from the Divine Paternity. Nonetheless, in order to become the adoptive children of the heavenly Father, it is necessary for us to become truly the adopted children, and to take up the Cross of Jesus Christ every day, and follow Him.

d. To live the final density of the “Our Father”, the following biblical challenge is laid before the believer:

- the Son is One with the Father [cf. Jn 10:30; 17:21];
- the Son’s Prayer is one of adoration for the Father’s Glory [cf. Mk 14:36; Jn 17:4];
- Jesus has come on earth specifically to give to human beings the power to become the children of God [cf. Jn 14:12];
- He has come to gather the dispersed children of the Most High [cf. Jn 11:52];
- Jesus’ coming has made of all human beings brothers and sisters and in a more intense and elevated manner [cf. Jn 20:17];
- the “Our Father” is a formula that expresses the new relationship uniting human beings to God;
- by the Incarnation, God, the Creator, offers to all the possibility of re-birth to a new life [cf. Jn 3:5-16; 10:10];

e. While it is true that the formula: “Our Father” can be in common with anyone who thinks of God as Creator - on Jesus’ lips it expresses His unique relationship, which is offered to all as a participation. The fullest meaning of the “Our Father” would be living in some way, within the life of the Trinity.

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### **{B} The Third Petition: “Thy Will be done!”**

1. The Third Petition of the Lord’s Prayer is that His Will be done. This has deep and extensive OT background:

“...you asked no holocaust, or sacrifices for sin; then, I said: Here I am! I am coming! [cf. Ps 40:7 - cited by Heb 10:9].

‘Bless Yahweh, all His angels, heroes mightily to enforce His Word, attentive to His Word of command ..servants to enforce His Will ...’ [cf. Ps 103: 19, ff.].

“... I have fled to You for shelter; teach me to obey you, since You are My God; may Your good spirit guide me...” [cf. Ps 143: 9, ff.].

“... But now give thanks to Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, and do His Will...” [cf. Ezr 10:11].

“... the Lord’s Will is sovereign...” [cf. Ps 135:6].



“... I am God, unrivaled, God Who has no like ... I say: My purpose shall last... [cf. Ps 46”10].

“...My Beloved will perform His pleasure...” [cf. Is 48:13, ff.].

“... Cyrus, my shepherd... he will fulfill My whole purpose... [cf. Is 44:27, ff. - cited by Ac 13:22].

“...Whatever will be the Will of God, He will perform it ...” [cf. 1 M 3:60].

2. Perhaps the Semitic languages are much clearer in this distinction regarding the Will of God:

- the subjective sense: the divine faculty of willing;
- the objective sense: the “content”, what it is that God wills.

a. The divine faculty of willing is sometimes to as ‘innards’ “guts”[the Italian *reni* ] - the divine “heart”. In the objective sense, it is not so much the product of some abstract decision - but, much more, the rather spontaneous and instinctive tendency. The faithful are called upon to give this preference, to seek out the “divine good pleasure.”

b. In the classical prayer, the central concern seems to be not so much the psychological power of choice, but much more **the concrete object willed by God** - that which He desires, loves. The “**content**” is what is understood by the Greek word ***thelma*** . In most modern languages, the divine “will” perhaps most commonly is understood in the sense of what it is that God would want in these circumstances. The term: “the divine good pleasure” smacks of a certain ‘condescendence’, haughtiness - totally absent from God. If the word “will” is rendered in the plural, the sense might be more in accord with the intentions of prayer - but, it might also open the door to caprice, with a multiplicity of objects.

c. Some would want to translate the word: “... may Your holy desires be realized...”. However, “desire” seems much too weak to apply to God in that it is often contrasted with “Hope”, which is a future good, difficult, but possible. It is “difficulty” that separates from desire, which is much closer to “velleity.”

3. The NT often speaks of the Divine Will and it is found often in connection with “to do”, “become”. The Synoptics praise particularly those who “do” the Father’s Will: “... Who are My mother and My brothers? ... Here are My mother and My brothers. Anyone who does the Will of God, that person is My brother, and sister and mother...!” [cf. Mk

3:45]. - It is not those who say to Me: Lord, Lord - who will enter the Kingdom of heaven - but, the person who does the will of My Father in heaven..." [cf. Mt 7:21].

4. In the **Prayer of Gethsemane**, there are some interesting variations:

"... But let it be as You, not I, would have it ..." [cf. Mk 14:36].

"... My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass Me by. Nevertheless, let it be as You, not I, would have it ... if this cup cannot pass by without My drinking it, Your will be done!..." [cf. Mt 26:39, 42].

"... Father, he said, if You are willing, take this cup away from Me. Nevertheless, let Your will be done, not Mine ..." [cf. Lk 22:42].

a. In a different way, the 4th Evangelist insists on the intimate tie between Jesus and His Father's Will: "... My food is to do the will of the One Who sent Me..." [cf. 4:34] - "... My aim is not to do My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me ..." [cf. 5:30]. - "... I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him Who sent Me ..." [cf. 6:34]. - "... anyone who does the will of God, remains forever..." [cf. 6:38].

b. The Epistles contains similar insights: "... be obedient .. as to Christ ..." [cf. Ep 6:16] - "... God, here I am! I am coming to do Your will (cf. Ps 40: LXX). You will need endurance to do God's Will and gain what He has promised..." [cf. Heb 10:6, f., 36]. - "... may He make you ready to do His will in any kind of good action..." [cf. Heb 13:21].

c. Hence, the NT emphasis as well is on just what is the "content" of the divine will: "... Now, the will of Him Who sent Me is that I should lose nothing of all that He has given to Me, and that I should raise it up on the last day. Yes, it is My Father's will that whoever sees the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life and that I shall raise Him up on the last day..." [cf. Jn 6:39, ff.]. - "... What God wants for you is to be holy..." [cf. 1 Th 4:3] - "... keep away from fornication - [It is indeed the will of God that makes people holy ...]" [cf. Mt 6:10; cf. 2 Th 2:13; Ep 1:4]. - "... Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things, give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus..." [cf. 1 Th 5: 17, ff.]. - "...God wants you to be good citizens..." [cf. 1 P 2:13, ff.].

d. In synthesis: it seems that the Will of God for the NT writers is to keep the commandments - and the will of God for Christ is to lead all to everlasting life. In petitioning that God's Name be hallowed, we pray that we might be led through the divine good works to extend His glory: "... your light must shine in the sight of men, so

that seeing your good works, they may give praise to your Father in heaven ..." [cf. Mt 5:16].

5. In asking for His Kingdom to come, we are asking that it might also come for us - in the hope and prayer that the Divine Will, the Kingdom, might find no obstacle that we might indeed be governed in accord with His Will.

a. So, "They Will be Done" - is in perfect harmony with the two preceding petitions of the "Our Father": "Hallowed be Thy Name" and "Thy Kingdom come". The Will of God is, in brief, His reign, and His Reign ought to procure all glory for His Name. As in the earlier Petitions, there is no subject to these verbs - and this intended omission, allows the Church to make the most broad application possible. The intense prayer of the Church is that the Will of God might be done everywhere, always, and by all. We do not pray, therefore, simply that creatures carry out the Will of the Creator - but, we are asking that God Himself carry out His Will. We are asking God, as in a Prayer of Abandonment, that we be made docile and obedient in bringing our wills in harmony with His. This is why not a few translations read this passage: that the Divine Will **be** carried out - **be** accomplished - **be** fulfilled, "realized" in us. Such a translation is not necessary - as the open style of the original would imply this already.

b. There is no implicit fatalism in this term: in the sense that since God is already omnipotent, and that His will will be done anyway - then, let it be done! Such a spirit, however, may not be terribly far from the sentiments of Judas Maccabbaeus: whatever be the will of heaven, He will perform it - it is better to die in battle than to watch the ruin of our land [cf. 1 M 3:60]. This is similar in spirit as well as to the appeal made to Paul, not to go to Jerusalem: "... For my part, I am ready not only to be tied up, but even to die in Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus. And so, as he would not be persuaded, we gave up the attempt, saying: The Lord's will be done!" [cf. Ac 21:14].

6. It is perhaps in **Gethsemane** that we learn the full weight of the formula employed in the "Our Father": if it is indeed not possible for this cup to pass away from Me unless I drink it, then Your will be done [cf. Mt 26:42]. On the lips of Jesus, there is no fatalistic resignation but the **free Filial submission** of His human will to the Divine Will of the Father, as Jesus had already professed, three verses earlier: not as I will, but as You would have it! [cf. v. 39].

a. Despite the horrible natural repugnance over what was waiting for Him, Jesus positively chooses that which His Father wills, and He will contribute to the

realization of this Divine Will. The Greek imperative of the “Our Father” indicates a human will that demands that the Divine Will be efficacious, cost what it may.

b. Hence, the Petition: **Thy Will be done** is the prayed hope that the will of God might indeed be effectively realized. One prays - and almost “commands” God - that He carry out His Will and that each of us might collaborate to bring that about. In its context, this 3rd Petition continues the first two: the Second Petition [“Thy Kingdom Come!”] - adds to the First [“Hallowed be Thy Name”]. The coming of the reign of God for all implies sanctification, a consecration to the service of God. This sanctification transforms us, elevates us in a fundamental manner - but, at the same time, this being raised up to a new life gives us the capacity, and imposes the obligation to render an effective service, that we might undertake duties animated with this new spirit of the Risen Lord.

c. Thus, the Third Petition: “Thy Will be done” - adds to the Second: “Thy Kingdom come!” The Reign of God that is already within us, and which is still coming - is the ultimate bearer of the divine will. God comes to accomplish in us His Will, which is our sanctification. He comes to endow us with a superabundance of the messianic goods. It is these blessings of the New Covenant which constitute us as pertaining to His Reign. There is required of us, however, that we be opened up to this divine “advance”. Through the Reign of God that we receive, the divine will takes full possession of us, leads us, draws us, with His own inner inspiration.

d. Our challenge is to follow this divine impulse through an effective Abandonment of each moment. This sublime obedience - in imitation of Christ’s own loving relationship with His Heavenly Father - is but a prolongation, a lived attitude of inner correspondence through which more and more the divine will becomes a concrete and vibrant reality within us. It becomes a truly active presence, as we begin seeing Jesus as **A Value** - then, grow some, and see Him as **an Important Value** - the ultimate ideal is that He be **the Only Value!**

Summary: The intimate and close relationship between the 2nd and 3rd Petitions of the “Our Father” shows the most profound tie between the Reign of God [heaven] and the Will of God. For some interpreters, this is why St.. Luke has not reproduced the “Our Father” in much detail, enumerating all these Petitions that are already so closely interconnected. His tendency, “style”, is to suppress that which appears superfluous. For Lk, once one has asked for the coming of the reign of God, one is implicitly asking at the same time for the full realization of the Divine will.

For many Rabbis, however, it is the Will of God that is tantamount, and which constitutes the essential prayer here. There is a citation in Samuel and Chronicles that is close to this thought"... Eli said: He is Yahweh; let Him do what He thinks good [cf. 1 S 3:18] - "...Joab said: Take courage and stand firm for the sake of our people and the towns of our God. And May Yahweh do as He thinks right...." [cf. 1 Ch 19:13].

This attitude is part of **Matthew's rendition of the "Our Father"** - he is the most "rabbinical" of the Evangelists- the committed believer wills only the Father's Will. There is involved in this the **obsequium** of our own personal will, and the elimination of what would be all self-centeredness. The effort here is to base our lives on the will of God. There is in this the firm decision in this will in accord with our possibilities.

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## [II]    The Prayer of Gethsemane and Salvific Suffering

[cf. A. Feuillet, *L'agonie de Gethsemani. Enquete exegetique et theologique suivie d'une etude du 'Mystere de Jesus' de Pascal*. Paris: Gabalda 1977, pp.238-248, passim].

1.     The problem of human suffering "embarrasses" the order of creation, as well as the brilliant technological advances of our own time. In this perplexing torment of humanity, the need of a sound "philosophy" - and even more, of a profound biblical contemplation, show themselves to be of the utmost importance. In our faith, we believe that divine revelation - understood in its global message, culminating in the Person of Jesus Christ, is the ultimate explanation of human life.

2.     As part of our contemplation of Gethsemane, some coming to grips with this mystery of human pain seems to be in order. All the more perplexing is the mystery when is it the "Suffering", or the "Slaughter of the Innocents", commemorated liturgically so soon after the Nativity of the Lord.

a.     Some attempts to "explain" the mystery of human suffering are the following:

- suffering does remain an "**evil**", and should be alleviated at all costs;

- nonetheless, it can afford one the possibility of deepening one's understanding of the human condition. In this sense, "**Suffering is the School of God**" - it enables one to make progress in the understanding of the whole mystery of God: Suffering is *paideia*, wisdom.
- Suffering **purifies, it is redemptive**;
- it enriches, brings one into greater **solidarity** with others: it can deepen one's relationship with humanity;
- it can open up one toward **eschatological realization** - we do not have here a lasting home!
- for believers, it can have a **Christological** dimension.

b. Philosophy advances the rather surprising statement that evil, in general, is not simple absence, but it is a deprivation of a good that should be found in being, as existing. Considered just as a "privation", then, evil really does not "exist"! However, anyone who confronts it has a profound experience of this "deprivation" - for the many such as these, life offers a profound, even daily "experience of deprivation." Corporal suffering, moral pain, crowned then with death, are among the most terrible realities that human beings have to face. Certain prolonged sufferings have led to rebellion [e.g., the Maccabees]; for others the loss of faith. The problem of massive evil of the innocent provokes terrible questions that do not allow "easy", "off the cuff", "shooting from the hip" answers [cf. Elie Weisel, *Night*. ]

c. In a lived experience, the philosophical idea that evil is really an "absence" and that it does not have an "efficient", but only a "deficient" cause, would not offer much consolation. In our faith, we do not believe that God is not the Cause of Evil.

d. Abraham HESCHEL : recent attempts to explain the riddle of suffering "involve" God in it to some degree. Heschel has written:

1.] "... Impressive as is the thought that God is too sublime to be affected by events on this insignificant planet, this stems from a line of reasoning about a God derived from abstraction. A "God of Abstraction" is high and mighty, "First Cause", dwelling in the lonely splendor of eternity. Such a God will never be open to human prayer, nor be affected by anything which He has caused to come into being. This would all be beneath the dignity of an "Abstract God" . This is a dogmatic sort of dignity, insisting upon pride, rather than love - upon decorum, rather than mercy.

2.] “In contrast with the *primum movens immobile*, the God of the Prophets cares for His creatures, and His thoughts are about the world. He is involved in human history and is affected by human acts. It is a paradox beyond compare, that the Eternal God is concerned with what is happening in time [cf. Is 57:5]. The grandeur of God implies the capacity to experience emotion. In the biblical outlook, movements of feeling are no less spiritual than acts of thought...” [cf. *The Prophets*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. pp. 259. cf. also *The Theology of Pathos*, o.c., pp. 221, ff.].

3. **The Book of Job** is consecrated to the Wisdom Tradition and to the struggle with the vexing problem of evil, the suffering of the innocent. The conclusion, at least a partial one - is the fact that human reasoning - even that steeped in Sacred Scripture - can never appease certain human sufferings: “For huge as the sea is your affliction, who can possibly cure you...” [cf. Lm 2:13].

a. In extremely “bold” language, Job [and others] curse the day of his birth [cf. 3:1, ff.]. His friends try to calm him down, using the traditional explanations, often based on earlier divine revelation, and the usual earlier interpretations. However, Job still cannot understand his own situation. His revolting experience in no way, is alleviated, using all the traditional “remedies” and “explanations.” Suffering remains, humanly speaking, an intolerable enigma, if one expects that his/her explanations of it are meant to alleviate it. It is a common experience that human beings are powerless to offer consolation in the times of terrible distress. This is a drama of salvation that goes on between the individual sufferer and God: **hope** is that virtue by which the individual meets his/her human limitations, by abandoning one’s existence into the hands of God.

b. The Book of Job has been read with immense profit through the ages: for the suffering and distress of the innocent continue to plague human consciousness. Job proclaims the emptiness of all human reasoning to the learned of his own time, and of all times: “...How often have I heard all this before! What sorry comforters you are! Is there never to be an end to your airy words? What a plague your need to have the last word! I, too, could talk like you, were your soul in this plight of mine. I, too, could overwhelm you with sermons... and speak words of encouragement until my lips grow tired. But, while I am speaking, my suffering remains - and when I am not, do I suffer any the less? And now, ill-will drives me to distraction...!” [cf. Jb 16:1, ff.].

c. One “astonishing” aspect of Job is that even after these “tirades” of Job, God still comes to respond. While the divine answers are not directly in response to the problem of suffering, neither are they abstract reflections on the beauty of creation. It is still necessary that even the sufferer should admit that he/she may be talking more out

of ignorance [cf. Jb 38-41]. If there is any divine “condemnation”, it might be the more directed toward those who would try to offer consolation from their own position of strength, health, wealth, power. To be pardoned, they have to appeal to the one who has suffered: “...I [the Lord] burn with anger against you and your two friends [Job’s “consolers”], for not speaking truthfully about Me as My servant Job has done... he will offer prayers for you...!” [cf. 42: 7, ff.].

4. **The Suffering Servant** [cf. Is 42; 49; 50; 52:13-53:12]: the Jerusalem Bible would associate his Suffering Servant with Job - probably composed later. In truth, the image of Job is only one type of the future Passion and Death of the Lord. What they may all have in common is that **their trial has made their intercession efficacious**. Both of these OT figures indicate clearly that God is close to His suffering servants. He is part of their daily human experience. The abyss of “creaturality” calls out to the rest of human minds and hearts, to come to a greater solidarity with this world, and the majority of people in it.

5. **Jeremiah** the extreme cruelty that he experienced is also among the OT attempts to “explain” the suffering of the innocent. It is possible, at least in the view of some interpreters, that Is 53 reflects the recently martyred Jeremiah, “led like a lamb to the slaughter...” There are evident comparisons made between Jeremiah and Job:

- Jr 20:14-18 = Jb 3:1-16; 10:18, ff.;
- Jr 12:1-3 = Jb 21: 7, ff.

Job seems to echo the complaints of Jeremiah: “... My brothers have been fickle as a torrent, as the course of a seasonal stream...” [cf. Jb 56:15; Jr 15:18 - applied to God].

6. **The People of God** need NT revelation to take them further along this unveiling of the perplexing mystery of human suffering:

a. However, it should be noted from the outset that the Son of God did not become Incarnate, simply to resolve the age-old riddle of human suffering, or to give some totally satisfying explanation for it. The Incarnation is much more the revelation of divine love, in response to human sin and need - but basically, it is inspired by absolutely sovereign Love.

b. It is true that the God of Love has “set up His tabernacle among us”, and is like us, in all things “save sin”. The Lord Himself has become part of this immense tragedy of human history, bringing to it a sanctifying and elevating sublimation.



c. St. Augustine offers an extraordinary insight [although his authorship is doubted by some] in a Commentary on the "Good Thief." He manifests astonishment that the Good Thief could have recognized the Savior of the World, hanging from the Cross, sharing his plight.

1.] His "recognition" of Jesus does not come so much from the studies of the sages, but far more from the recognition that Jesus gave to him sharing his fate: Jesus has looked at me, and in His look, I understand everything! The Good Thief was able to "see" what had been denied Jeremiah. He is thus offered as a "model" for all suffering Christians and human beings, in general.

2.] In their trials, human beings are never alone. Baptism gives us the faith that to "be crucified with" Jesus does not mean "along side of", or merely: "in the company of." This was the situation of the Good Thief. In Baptism, we are indeed "con-figured- formed" to Christ, and truly live "in" Him, and He "in" us. The Christ of the Agony of Gethsemane and of Golgotha has made His "own" all the sufferings of all time. He is mysteriously 'present' in the joys and anguish of His People. Jesus gives to all suffering, all life and all death - a particular meaning of immense value.

7. **The Advent of Jesus Christ:** it is true that with His coming, the NT offers an incomparably richer teaching on the sufferings of human beings, far beyond the most sublime heights of the OT. However, far more than this, the NT places one in intimate personal contact with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and truly man. The Jesus of Gethsemane and Calvary is in some way, "united to every human being" [cf. GS 22] and He invites each person to respond to this coming of His into our world. In a good sense, it can truly be stated that all the physical sufferings and the moral agony of human beings, are present to Jesus in His Agony.

a. "Jesus knew and loved us each and all during his life, his Agony and his Passion, and gave himself up for each one of us: 'The Son of God ... loved me and gave himself up for me.' [Ga 2:20] He has loved us all with a human heart. For this reason, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pierced by our sins and for our salvation [cf. Jn 19:34], 'is quite rightly considered the chief sign and symbol of that ... love with which the divine Redeemer continually loves the eternal Father and all human beings' without exception" [cf. CCC # 478; D-S 3812; 3924 - Pius XII].

b. The OT Psalms that treat of the anonymous just persons who have suffered throughout the OT centuries of preparation, all culminate in the Person of Jesus

Christ. They were all figures preparing the way for the Suffering Servant/Messiah, Who would take on Himself the burdens of the world, and all its wounds into His own life. Beginning perhaps with the "peak point" of OT suffering, the Servant Poems with extraordinary clairvoyance speak of One Who was yet to come, Who would make of His own life the **Asham**, the Atonement Holocaust [cf. Is 53:10].

c. This Servant has taken on Himself our maladies [cf. Is 53:4: perhaps the full meaning of these "maladies" would be that it is a figure for **sin**]. The Prophet is thinking that this Servant is taking upon Himself the faults of humanity, was being charged at the same time with their sufferings. The over-all biblical idea of suffering is that it does have some connection with sin, either the originating change of orientation, or actual sin. But, this does not mean that all human suffering is "punishment" for some specific sins.

d. Is 53 indicates basically the ultimate Messianic Victory. The Servant promises the definitive victory for humanity over all suffering, all sin. The "Proto-evangelium" had already promised this victory, when the Serpent would be defeated [cf. Gn 3:15].

8. The total victory of Jesus Christ over sin, suffering and death, was already anticipated in various ways during His public life:

a. This victory implies a break with sin [cf. Mk 2:1-2, par.; Lk 7:36-59]. Forgiveness of sin is made manifest in seeing a lame person walk - seeing this, it may be easier to believe that sin has been forgiven. The miracles He performed were also "signs", teaching expressions. The miracle indicated the power Jesus has to pardon. All His miracles are bound intimately to His Message of Salvation. They express the deeper meaning of His coming, they are the "Reign of God" in act.

b. In healing the sick, and in raising the dead, the implication is that the Redeemer has taken on human suffering and has conquered it. Sickness and death came into the world through sin - by manifesting His absolute power over them, Jesus reveals His power also over sin, which caused them.

c. In the presence of Jesus, death loses its terrifying aspect. It is almost like a "sleep" [cf. Mk 5:39; Jn 11:11-15].

1.] There is a special text from **Mt [cf. 8:16, f.]**, which applies a line from the Suffering Servant to Jesus: "... and yet ours were the sufferings He bore, ours the sorrows He carried (cf. Is 53:4) - through His wounds, we are healed...[v. 5] ... That

evening they brought Him many who were possessed by devils. He cast out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah... He took our sicknesses away and carried our diseases for us...”

2.] The translation found here in Mt is from the LXX which renders “sins” rather than “sicknesses”. It would seem that Mt has taken this translation directly from the Hebrew. Mt does not use the words: “sicknesses and diseases” anywhere as euphemisms to designate the sins of humans. From this, some would conclude that perhaps the idea behind Isaiah’s original text of Is 53:4, the Prophet really meant our “sicknesses”, our physical [and mental] illnesses.

3.] This interpretation of what the Suffering Servant bore offered by Mt seems somewhat surprising. It would not seem to be enough to state that Jesus “took on” our sufferings in this context, merely by some kind of a mental act of “sympathy-empathy.” It is not enough to say either, it would seem, that the motivating force moving Jesus to heal was that He just “felt sorry” for those who suffered.

4.] A deeper insight might be the fact that in every suffering human being, there is the face of Jesus Christ. Mt’s interpretation of Is offers a profound theological reality. Jesus, the Suffering Servant, has come to take on Himself **the expiation of all sin**. Furthermore, He has also come to **alleviate the terrible effects of that sin**. Jesus has come to “**heal**”. The prophecy may already be present in Is 53:4 - Jesus will also become “one” with all suffering humanity.

9. A passage in Mt [cf. 23:24-36; cf. also Lk 11:49-51] speaks of the suffering of the innocent: “... This is why, in my turn, I am sending you the prophets and wise men and scribes: some you will slaughter and crucify, some you will scourge in your synagogues and hunt from town to town...”

a. In Lk’s rendition of the Agony of Gethsemane, there was implied the union in Christ of the Prophets of all ages, as well as the anonymous “**Innocent Just**” through the OT centuries. All the “innocent blood” from the beginning of the world, from Abel on down, is re-dressed in the terrible Agony and the ultimate glorious victory of Jesus Christ. Luke places the Passion of Jesus Christ at the center of the religious history of humanity, and sees it as the example, exemplary cause - the “source” of strength and grace for the Martyrs of all the subsequent ages, as well as for those who preceded Him. The Suffering Jesus is the great font of strength for all suffering painful, chronic, incurable diseases.

b. These reflections would lead almost of necessity to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah - he is the culminating poet of both the Martyrs and the Prophets of the OT, a kind of “idealized Jeremiah”. The Agony of the OT centuries finds an extraordinary model in the Suffering Servant of Yahweh.

c. The Passion of the Suffering Servant seems to be some kind of synthesis of the prophetic movement that preceded Him - and perhaps a kind of type for the “**Martyrdom Spirituality**” [of the Maccabbees, Daniel] that followed. The Servant was Himself the “**Covenant**”, and also the “**Atonement**” offering the **Expiatory Sacrifice**. His offering would have an unheard of fecundity for sinful humanity. His oblation would be of immense “Messianic Benefit” for the perfect reconciliation of all human beings with God. The suffering of all ages are mysteriously “drawn up” by the Risen Christ into Salvific Suffering [cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris*, February 11, 1984].

10. The Apocalypse: is to be read in a similar manner as this text of Mt [cf. 23:34-36], but with a broader perspective. Keeping in mind it is strictly **eschatological orientation**, it offers a complement to the Gospel perspective. All the blood and suffering of the anonymous just through the ages, shed unjustly, unfairly, and all the otherwise inexplicable human pain, even to the end of the world - all that has even been endured, up through the present - all innocent victims in some sense, are **re-capitulated in Jesus Christ**. He is the Suffering Messiah, the **Lamb Immolated**, prior to the beginning of the world. All the despotic powers [symbolized perhaps by the prostitute, Babylon] - all the pain - all the innocent can find their redress in the Lord Jesus Christ ascended now to the right hand of the Father. John uses the technical word “**Immolated**”: this can describe the Passion of the Lamb, as well as the sufferings of all human beings in union with Jesus Christ [cf. Rv 5:6, 9, 12; 6:9; 13:8; 18:24].

### Summary

[1] Christian contemplation notes a two-fold participation in the redemptive sufferings of Jesus Christ:

- the freely chosen, accepted participation of the saints, who made the conscious effort to be associated with their Master;
- the involuntary participation of so many who have to suffer, without ever being able to understand the mystery that overwhelms them [cf. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Out of Control. Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century*. NY; Scribener's-Stewart 1993].

[2] The Saints of all ages have entered into this mystery, willingly trying to offer themselves in union with Christ, striving to penetrate the mystery of His Person and Mission. In their minds and hearts, these believers through the centuries have made the conscious choice to renew their Baptism by being immersed into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the agony of their minds, hearts and bodies, in the abyss of their apparent dereliction, in faith, they cling to their privileged heritage. The Beatitude announced by Jesus Himself: “Blessed are those who suffer persecution for My sake” - these words, and the belief that in some mysterious manner, all suffering, believed to be a closer imitation of the life of Jesus, sustains so many.

[3] Those who experience this terrible endless “Night”, or “Spiritual Winter” - those who seem to have been reprov'd in their entire earthly existence [cf. Kafka's *Trial* ] are called , in faith, to share in the destiny, to drink from the same Cup as the Lord Jesus Himself.

[4] The Redemption of Jesus Christ is already super-abundantly complete. The price of salvation has been paid in the death of Jesus. As Head of the human race, Jesus has **re-capitulated** in Himself all the sufferings of all human beings. In the mysterious divine will, humanity has not been “dispensed” from suffering to win its own redemption. However, the mystery of Jesus Christ has made all human suffering meritorious of eternal life, and for the up-building of the reign of God. Those who do suffer are never really alone.

[5] All human sufferings in some way have already been experienced in the life of Jesus. By the grace of the theological life, all human existence comes to share intimately in the very life of Jesus. Human suffering is a **con-crucifixion**, leading toward a **con-resurrection** in Jesus Christ. The People of God are redeemed and are called daily to participate in this mystery of Redemption, communicating, sharing it, in each passing age. The Cross of Jesus Christ remains central to Christianity:

**Ave, Crux! Spes Unica!**

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## [C] THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

### The Influence of St. Thomas Aquinas in St. Gaspar Bertoni's Charism"

#### Missionarii Apostolic in OBSEQUIUM Episcoporum

#### Abandonment to God, Availability to the Church

[An Italian version of this appears as follows: *La formula 'in Obsequium' nel linguaggio di S. Tommaso.* in: ANGELICUM LXIX (1992), pp. 453-470].

#### Introduction:

Before the final approval of LG 25 - so much discussed subsequently - a very particular scrutiny was given to some of the expressions:

"... fideles autem in sui Episcopi sententiam de fide et moribus nomine Christi prolatam concurrere, eique religioso animi **obsequio** adhaerere debent. Hoc vero religiosum voluntatis et intellectus **obsequium** singulari ratione praestandum est Romani Pontificis authentico magisterio etiam cum non ex cathedra loquitur...

"... singuli praesules... nexum inter se et cum Successore Petri servantes... quod adhuc manifestius habetur quando, in Concilio Oecumenico coadunati, pro universa fidei et morum doctores et iudices sunt, quorum definitionibus fidei **obsequio** est adhaerendum..."

The difficulty of rendering this passage into English may be noted by comparing two English translations of the Dogmatic Constitution:

"... the faithful are to accept the teaching (of the Bishops in communion with the Roman Pontiff) and adhere to it with a religious assent of soul. This religious submission of will and of mind must be shown in a special way to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking *ex cathedra* ..."

"... This authority is even more clearly verified when, gathered together in an Ecumenical Council, they are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church. Their definitions must then be adhered to with the submission of faith..." [1].

In the "Flannery" translation, these pertinent passages are rendered in a slightly different way:

“...the faithful ... are obliged ... to adhere (to such teaching) with a ready and respectfully allegiance of mind. This loyal submission of will and intellect must be given in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* ...”

“... This is still more clearly the case, when assembled in an Ecumenical Council, they are, for the universal Church, teachers and judges in matters of faith and morals, whose decisions must be adhered to with loyal and obedient assent of faith...” [2].

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In the gradual formulation of his charism, St. Gaspar Bertoni [1777-1853] - Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, was canonized on November 1, 1989], the words ***in obsequium*** are mused most often His charism might be described as “Abandonment to God, Availability to the Church” [3]. Much influenced by St. Ignatius of Loyola, Fr. Bertoni also received deep insights for his spirituality from the Angelic Doctor, as well as from the Word of God.

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### 1. ***In obsequium*** in the Vulgate

To translate the history of ancient Israel, the Latin makes use of these words a number of times In the story of the army commander of the King of Aram, healing comes to Naaman through the interest of a young girl in the service of his spouse [4]. The terms are found again when the officials of Judah come to pay court to the king [5]. As the army of Judas Maccabaeus laid siege to the Citadel of Jerusalem, some of those under attack made their way to the king and stated that they had been content to serve the king's father [6]. In the collections of the sayings of Ecclesiasticus, the praises of wisdom are sung: whoever serves her, ministers to the Holy One [7]. Later in the same book, in glowing account of Israel's history, the honor paid to Cabel ends with the principle that all the sons of Israel should see that it is good to follow the Lord [8].

In the New testament, outside of one unusual text in John [9] found in Christ's discourse on the hostile world, He warns the Apostles that anyone killing them will think that this is a holy duty for God [ ***obsequium*** ].

It is in Paul, however, that there may be found the most rich use of the terms ***in obsequium*** . It occurs several times in his Letter to the Romans. When Paul speaks of the privileges of Israel, he states that they were adopted, given the glory and the covenants, and the Law and the ritual were drawn up for them [10] - a variant reading for ritual is ***obsequium***. Letter in the same Letter, he asks for prayers so that the aid that he carries to Jerusalem might be accepted by the saints. In a variant reading of the

Vulgate, this refers to his ministry [11]. Perhaps most importantly, though, for the purposes of this present study, Paul invites the Romans to make an oblation of their entire lives, as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God [12].

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians, Paul offers a kind of “apologia” for his ministry, and responds to the accusation that he is weak - he maintains that his every thought is captured, brought into obedience to Christ [13]. Then, in his Letter to the Philippians, there is a reference to faith, their own sacrifice and offering [14]. These texts will have much influence on St. Thomas.

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Modern exegetical and theological reflection have been fascinated with the mystery of Christ’s “Loving Obedience” toward the Father, perhaps offering Trinitarian insights, remembering the definition of the Council of Florence: “... everything (in the Trinity) is one where there is no opposition of relationships” [15]. The very “being of the Son”, of Jesus Christ, is intimately tied in with His carrying out the Father’s Will [16]. Christ’s obedience unto death in realizing the Father’s Plan is a kind of “constitutional obedience” - Christ’s entire earthly existence does offer a revelation into the Mystery of the Trinity, with the *kenosis* serving as the new image of God [17]. In developing the principle revealed by Jesus that ‘whoever sees Him, sees the Father’ [cf. Jn 14:9, ff.], exegetes maintain that Jesus’ obedience finds its principle and ultimate foundation precisely in His Filiation [18] - Jesus is “turned toward His Father” [cf. Jn 1:18]. His Mission is most often represented as “obedience” toward the Father, which manifests His inner life [19]. The oblation that Jesus offers, according to the Document to the Hebrews, is a supremely “personal” gift on His part, and is a manifestation of His salvific love, revealed in His self-giving - this has its ultimate source in His filial docility toward His Father [20].

By the “obedience of faith”, each believer enters into communion with this loving obedience of Jesus Christ - in Him, each one pronounces an “amen” to God. It is through the life of faith that one “follows/imitates” Jesus Christ [21].

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## 2. *In Obsequium* in St. Thomas

There are two tests in particular where St. Thomas develops more extensively his understanding of *in obsequium*. In III Sentences he discusses the nature of *latria*, and offers a variety of insights for consideration. He states that *obsequium* can be offered



to different persons, but that in a special and supreme manner it pertains to God, in Whom there is the supreme reason of majesty and dominion. The service ( **obsequium** ) that is due to God merits the special name *latría* . It can be understood in three ways:

- when it stands for that which is manifested to God's honor, such as sacrifice, genuflections, and the like - this is simply the "material" of the virtue;
- secondly, it can be used for the act of the virtue, its manifestation;
- the term is used to describe that habit by which the **obsequium** is offered - this is the virtue of the *latría*, known by four separate names:

- it is called **pietas** , whenever it refers to the effect of devotion;
- **theosobia**, or **eusebia** refer to the divine worship intended;
- **religio** is the determination of the works of worship offered to God;
- it is called **latría** when it means that service is exhibited in recognition is due to God as Creator [22].

St. Thomas again discusses **obsequium** at some length in his Commentary on Romans 12 [23]. He reflects on these words of St. Paul:

"... Obsecro itaque vos fratres, per misericordiam Dei ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile **obsequium** vestrum ..."

It is by the mercy of God that the ministry has been committed to each [cf. 1 Co 7:25]]. Following St. Augustine, the Angelic Doctor points out that the visible sacrifice through which each person offers one's own self and goods **in obsequium** of God. Each person has a three-fold good that can be offered:

- the good of one's soul: this is offered through the humility of devotion and contrition, as is prayed in the *Miserere* [cf. Ps 51:17]. where the Psalmist's sacrifice is presented as "this broken spirit ... this crushed and broken heart..."

- one's exterior goods, through alms-giving;

- when one exposes bodily life to death for the Reign of God, as Christ offered Himself as an oblation [cf. Ep 5:2] - and when Paul states that he rejoices over the sacrifice, or the **obsequium** of the Philippians; faith [cf. Ph 2:17];

- secondly, when one gives his/her body over to fasting and vigils [cf. 1 Co 9:27];

- thirdly, when the body is committed to works of justice and carrying out divine worship.

The Host that was immolated to God, according to the old law, had to have four characteristics:

- it has to be integral and uncorrupted;
- it had to be immolated;
- pleasing to God;
- fourthly, seasoned with the salt [of wisdom].

St. Thomas interprets St. Paul's *rationabile obsequium vestrum* to mean that discretion is needed in making of one's body a "host", through martyrdom, through abstinence, or through any work of justice. In all of this, the goodness and justice of a person are found principally in interior acts, by which one believes, hopes and loves. These interior actions are to be exterior in the manner of end, or purpose. The theological life is the principal *obsequium* that one can offer to God. This way of life prohibits conformity to this world, and asks for the interior reformation [conversion] of one's mind with the discernment of the divine will.

a. Models of *Obsequium* :

1.] Christ's *obsequium* redounds to the Heavenly Father: Particularly in his Commentary on John, and the scene of the washing of the Apostles' feet, St. Thomas analyzes profoundly this *obsequium* of humility. In this, Christ shows Himself to be their minister, servant [cf. Mt 20:28] - and on the mystical level, this pertains to the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. He has come to save humanity from tribulation by laying aside His majesty and assuming human smallness. This is symbolically presented in the putting off of the outer garment, putting on the towel. In washing the feet and returning to table, Christ shows the Paschal Mystery, dying on the Cross and raising up again by returning to table [24].

Christ's *obsequium* of humility offers important lessons: the type of humility was most sublime, in that the divine majesty was set aside to wash the feet of the servants. The fullness of the *obsequium* was shown in washing and drying the feet performing the task Himself and not through others [25]. The *obsequium* of Christ's humility needs to be imitated - in order to be a servant as He is, as in removing His outer garment, He reaches that much has to be laid aside [26].

So great is the dignity of Jesus Christ that His **obsequia** shown to the Apostles redounds ultimately to the glory of God, and all that will ever be done for the faithful through Christ redounds to the Father. This is shown in all that is done to the least of Christ's brothers and sisters, is done also for Him [cf. Mt 10:40] - and the **obsequium** exhibited to Christ redounds to His Father [27].

In the Old Law, it was prescribed that the oblation be doubled on the Sabbath, and offered in the Temple. The Apostles were totally dedicated to greater than the Temple, namely to Christ Himself - Christ's Body is this Temple [28].

In Chapter 26, Matthew prepares for the Passion of Christ, which he accomplishes in three ways: first, by the words of Christ Himself, predicting it; secondly, by the evil counsel taken together by His enemies - and thirdly, by the **obsequium** offered by the woman who anoints His feet. St. Thomas explains that the expensive ointment that represents the good deeds of the believers rendered precious when offered to God [29] - this is the **obsequium** being asked of the Church.

The Blood of Christ is offered for the spiritual **obsequium** of God, it is offered in His service. In the Old Law, the blood of the animals could cleanse only of the external stains such as contact with a dead body. In the New Law, God is life [cf. Jn 14:6] - Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, offers this service [30]. The notice Pilate put on Christ's Cross was in three languages:

- in Hebrew, in that Christ dominated over all theology, in that the knowledge of divine things was handed over to the Israelites;
- in Greek, to show that Christ dominates over all philosophy;
- in Latin, to show that Christ is the supreme moral principle, as the Romans were known for their moral science.

This was done so that all intellects would be led into captivity, into the **obsequium** of Christ [cf. 2 Co 10] [31].

St. Thomas concludes this idea in the *Summa* teaching that Christ's Passion in two ways is the cause of our reconciliation: first, by taking away sin, by which humanity became God's enemies - and secondly, inasmuch as the Passion is a most acceptable sacrifice to God. The proper effect of a sacrifice is to appease God, just as anyone would overlook an offense committed on account of some pleasing act of homage [ **obsequium** ] that might be shown [32].

2.] The Holy Spouses, Mary and Joseph: In contrast to the Gentiles who came to the fruit of grace without serving [ **obsequio** ] the Law, the Jews obtained it by keeping and serving [ **obsequium** ] it, is St. Paul's teaching to the Galatians [33]. He also taught the Romans that the dignity of the People of the Old Law was that in their worship, they offered Him homage [ **obsequium** ]. This is how they served Him while all other peoples served idols [34]. In the call of the Prophet Isaiah, St. Thomas teaches that the sending of the Prophet was an **oblatum obsequium**. The voice of the Lord is heard asking: 'Whom shall I send? Who will be Our Messenger? [ *Et quis ibit nobis* ?] St. Thomas comments that the first part of the question: *Quem mittam* ? - refers to the unity of the divine essence - and the plural [ *nobis* ] reveals the plurality of persons. The prophet offers himself as the oblation [35].

It is in this tradition of faith and service that Mary and Joseph are chosen. In her election, Mary willingly gives her free acceptance for a sedulous and prompt **obsequium** [36]. In her response to the Angel, she offers to God the free gift of her obedience [37]. It was indeed fitting that Mary and Joseph should be married and their Espousals was indeed a true matrimony. In the purpose assigned by God, marriage must also see to the upbringing of children. Mary and Joseph fulfilled the duties of husband and wife, by which they help one another in rearing their off-spring [38]. Furthermore, the Holy Spouses needed to be instructed concerning Christ's birth before He was born, since it was their duty to show reverence to the conceived child, and to serve Him even before He was born [39].

In Joseph's marriage to Mary, we find the heart of the biblical message concerning him. The Angel instructs him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit [cf. Mt 1:20, ff.]. St. Thomas explains the three tasks which the Angel performs here: divorce between the Holy Spouse is prohibited; he reveals something of the Mystery of the Incarnation and tells Joseph of his own future **obsequium** regarding the Child [40]. The Angels shows that the mystery is primarily between the Holy Spirit and Mary - but that he, Joseph, also has an important role, his **obsequium** of the Child is made known to him [41]. Joseph's particular **obsequium** is briefly touched upon then, by Matthew. When the first-born comes to birth, they called His Name, Jesus [42]. In his response to the question why did the Holy Family flee into Egypt - it was to give the ancient persecutors of Israel, the "First-born of God", the possibility of rendering service to the Only-begotten Son of God [43].

3.] The Angels: it is of the very nature of the Angels to minister and to be subjected to God. In some way, St. Thomas teaches, the Apostles witnessed this in Christ's Passion [cf. Lk 22], in the Resurrection and in the Ascension. The Angels ascend

and descend in so far as they ministered unto Christ and offered their homage to Him [ ***obsequendo et ministrando*** ] [44]. In His darkest hour, Jesus claims that He could have twelve legions of Angels. In St. Thomas' Commentary, he points out that all who do the will of God may be called Angels, or messengers [cf. Is 18:2] - and all who serve [ ***obsequuntur*** ] are indeed angels [45]. After the Resurrection, on entering the empty tomb, the Apostles find two Angels - St. Thomas interprets this to mean: that this was also to instruct the Church that all the orders of the Angels, both those assisting and those ministering, offer their services [ ***obsequebantur*** ] to Christ [46]. In one of those very lengthy articles and responses of the *Prima-Secundae* [47], St. Thomas instructs concerning the role of the Angels in the Holy of Holies of old. There was a table, called the Propitiatory raised above the wings of the Cherubim. At the prayers of the high priest, the people received propitiation. It was held up, so to speak, by the Cherubim, in obedience [ ***quasi Deo obsequentibus*** ], as it were, to God.

4.] Other New Testament Personalities: The Magi are described as offering their ***obsequium*** not to any earthly king, but only to the Heavenly King [48]. In John the Baptist's gesture of humility, stating that he was not even worthy to loosen Christ's sandals, St. Thomas sees in this the very lowest ***obsequium*** [49]. Lazarus is presented as "our friend", and St. Thomas describes this as flowing from the many benefits and ***obsequia*** that the deceased had rendered to him [50]. In his Commentary on John, the Angelic Doctor makes frequent use of ***obsequium***, and its derivatives, to express the relationship of different people toward Christ. Martha and Mary are singled out for the ***obsequium*** exhibited toward Christ [51]. Mary is presented as offering an important ***obsequium*** in the anointing of Christ's feet, and in the effect this had in permeating the house with the sweet odor of the balm [52]. There is great humility in this service the woman renders in preparation for His death and burial - her action is called ***obsequium*** [53]. This action on the part of the woman is a delicate service rendered to Christ [54]. Judas, though, is displeased with this ***obsequium Christi*** [55]. St. Thomas reasons that Judas was not happy with the presence of Christ that asked for a specific ***obsequium***. Christ makes clear to him that in a little while He will be gone, and that Judas will no longer be burdened with His presence [56]. John's Gospel gives special praise to Joseph of Arimathea. St. Thomas points out that while the disciples did lose confidence in Jesus during His passion, Joseph expresses his trust, by publicly offering his services - ***publice obsequendo*** [57].

5.] The Apostles: Jesus, the Divine Good Shepherd, shows that He knows His own and that His flock really knows Him. The flock is His by predestination, vocation and grace. They offer Him service in their love [ ***obsequuntur*** ] [58]. The Apostles are in a special category - they were called by Jesus personally, and they left all

things to follow Him [cf. Mt 19:27]. Their response was the diligent service they offered Him out of love [ *diligenter et reverenter ei obsequebantur* ] [59]. Even though Paul was called after the Resurrection, he presents himself as a “servant of Jesus Christ”. St. Thomas points out that there are two kinds of “servants”: those who minister out of fear, against their own will; and those who serve out of love. This is the service of friends who seek to bring benefit and to serve the friend because of his well being. In this, St. Thomas quotes Aristotle’s idea of “friendship” [60]. Faith is indeed a sacrificial offering - in converting others, the Apostle offers to God a sacrifice to those he converts. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep - the Lord did this to complete the service [61].

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b. **Obsequium** : An essential Ecclesial Attitude

The uniqueness of the glory of the Word is brought out in four ways:

- first, in the testimony which the Father gave the Son;
- secondly, it was brought out in the service of the Angels;
- thirdly, it came through the submission [ *obsequium* ] of nature. For all nature obeyed Christ and heeded [ *obsequebatur* ] His slightest command;
- fourthly, we see it in the way He taught and acted [62].

Hence, all of nature is *in obsequium Christi* - and, in a special way, was the star of the Epiphany, created and placed at the service of the recently born Christ. This star was made for His *obsequium* [63]. In the Plan of God, even evil itself is at the service of divine justice [ *obsequebatur divinae justitiae* ] [64], though even a venial sin [of ingratitude] removes a virtuous act of obedience [ *obsequitur* ] to God [65].

With *obsequium* so present in Christ Himself in His attitude toward the Father, and in so many biblical personalities, St. Thomas very logically applies it to the members of the Church:

- Bishops: since the bishop institutes ministers to the altar and founds the Church, there pertains to him particular divine services [ *divinis obsequiis* ]. as in divine worship he acts in the similitude of Christ. The bishop very specially is said to be “the spouse of the Church” as is Christ [66].

- Priests: in the conferral of the Order, the bishop performs two duties: he prepares the candidates by instructing them regarding their proper office, and hands on the power of Order to them. This “preparation” consists in three actions: blessing, the imposition of hands and anointing. By the blessing, the candidate is deputed for the divine services [ *divinis obsequiis mancipatur* ] [67]. St. Thomas also offers an article in which he expresses concern regarding simony: whether it is lawful to grant spiritual things in return for an equivalent of service [ *obsequio* ], or for other remuneration. In the first objection, the Angelic Doctor quotes St. Gregory who states that the equivalent of service [ *munus ab obsequio* ] denotes the interests of the Church. In the response to this objection, the word *obsequium* appears about five times:

‘...If a cleric renders a prelate a lawful service, directed to spiritual things [e.g., to the good of the Church, or benefit of her ministers], he becomes worthy of an ecclesiastical benefice by reason of the devotion that led him to render the service, as he would by reason of any other good deed. Hence, this is not a case of remuneration for service rendered, such as St. Gregory had in mind...” [68].

- Ministries: St. Thomas comments on St. Paul’s first chapter to the Philippians [v. 20, *magnificabitur Christus in corpore meo* - that Christ is magnified in two ways in our bodies: in one way, as we dedicate our body to His service [ *ad obsequium eius* ]; and, in another way, by risking our body for Christ [69].

- Discipleship: when Christ gets into the boat, for St. Thomas, this represents either the Church, or the Cross: the disciples of the Lord follow Him in the Church through their keeping of the mandates: *obsequium* [70].

- Members of the Church: receive from Christ, the Head of the Body - and the Head receives from the members through their *obsequia* [71].

- Servants: are called to minister and to offer their *obsequia* to their superiors [72]. There is a fear that is in accord with reason and it is this that legitimately servants manifest that they be not deficient in the services [ *obsequia* ] they owe [73].

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c. *Obsequium* : and the Consecrated Life:

In a definition of a vow, St. Thomas states that it is a certain ordination to the one making the profession to the worship, or service [ *obsequium* ] of God [74]. By the

religious life, a person deposes all of life to God's Service [ *obsequio* ] [75]. Religious communities can indeed be established for the works of the active life, in that each person who is a part of it individually intends all that pertains to the divine service [ *obsequium* ] [76]. In one of the objections raised against religious teaching and preaching, St. Thomas quotes St. Gregory who stated that it is impossible to fulfill ecclesiastical duties [ *obsequiis* ]. In his response, the Angelic Doctor shows that sometimes religious may be occupied in such service [77].

By serving [ *obsequuntur* ] their neighbor for God's sake, religious are obedient to the divine love [78]. St. Thomas clearly teaches that the religious state is directed toward the perfection of charity. The services [ *obsequium* ] which we render to our neighbor, in so far as they are referred to God, are "sacrifices" that redound to God Himself [cf. Mt 25:40], and religious can be in the world only for the sake of serving God [ *propter divinum obsequium* ] [79].

St. Thomas thought it was fitting for a religious order to be founded for preaching, or hearing confessions. What is required is that all orders be directed to the good of our neighbor, and the service [ *obsequium* ] of God. In the service [ *obsequium* ] no sacrifice is more acceptable than zeal for souls. If some are willing to minister to the faithful gratuitously, they can be supported by charity. If none can be found, the ordinary prelate is bound to support them [80]. Communities may be established for the purpose of study, in reference only to that doctrine which is according to Godliness. It is not fitting for religious to seek any other learning, as their whole lives are dedicated to the service [ *obsequiis divinis* ] of God [81]. Whether religious communities may possess goods, the Angelic Doctor teaches that the Lord did not forbid all care, but only such that is excessive is harmful. The possession of much wealth increases the weight of care, which is a great distraction, and hinders one from being given over wholly to God's service [ *in Dei obsequium* ] [82].

In showing that it would be licit, under certain circumstances, for a parish priest to enter religion, St. Thomas teaches that the obligation of perpetual vows stands before every other obligation, and it belongs to bishops and religious to be bound by perpetual vow to devote themselves to the divine service [ *ad vacandum divinis obsequiis* ] [83]. Clerical monks may also be devoted [ *obsequentes* ] to the sacred ministry [84]. St. Thomas also asks whether professed religious are held to obey their lawful superiors in all that is directly contained in the rule, and also those matters indirectly contained there, as all those things that pertain to their mutual assistance [ *ad mutua obsequia* ] [85]. The entrance into religion, then, pertains very much to God,



since thereby a person devotes himself entirely to the divine service [ *divinis obsequiis* ] [86].

The perplexing matter of the duties of religious toward their parents is discussed several times by St. Thomas, from different perspectives. The obligation toward parents are often described by the use of the term *obsequium filiorum erga parentes* [87].

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d. *Obsequium* in the Life of the Faithful: the act of faith is suitably distinguished as “believing God, a God, in God”. Particularly when the object of faith is considered in the intellect being moved by the will, an act of faith is to believe in God. Here, the First Truth is referred to the will through having the aspect of a final “end.” To believe God in a God, and in God is one and the same act, having different relationships to the object of faith [88].

Prayer and service pertain to the worship of faith [89]. Faith is surely not against reason, but is above it - faith does not deny, or destroy reason, but is captured and brought into obedience to Christ [cf. 2 Co 10:5] [90].

In a beautiful teaching on Prayer, St. Thomas shows how it expels sadness and increases hope - for whenever the king admits anyone into his intimate circle and conversation, one acquires a greater confidence in petitioning and obtaining [91].

In showing that sacred doctrine might indeed be a matter of argument, St. Thomas responds to the objection that if the basic argument of theology is from authority, it would not be unfitting as is seen in this analogy: since grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it - natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers [*obsequitur*] to charity [92]. In demonstrating that perfection consists in the observance of the commandments, the Angelic Doctor shows that there is already a perfection inherent in nature which is developed by growth - similarly, there is a perfection of charity realized by its being intensified. There is that spiritual growth whereby a person refrains even from what is lawful, in order to be the more freely dedicated to the service [ *divinis obsequiis* ] of God [93], This is the area of the counsels.

Meditation is the cause of devotion in so far as through it one conceives the thought of surrendering oneself to God’s service [94]. In commenting on the last verses of Hebrews 12, St. Thomas teaches that we have been given grace to worship

God in the way He finds acceptable, in reverence and fear - this induces that ***obsequium*** that is required of us. God is supremely served by interior ***obsequium***, as noted in the *Miserere* : the Lord does not scorn the spirit, the heart that is being offered [95].

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### 3. *In obsequium* in the Modern Magisterium

The words express three realities: the full homage of intellect and will in faith; a religious submission of will and intellect, even when the doctrine has not been proclaimed in definitive manner; and the sincere obedience and reverence of religious to the authority of bishops.

a. Vatican I: in its definition of faith, the Council used this formula: "... we are bound to yield by faith the full homage of intellect and will to God Who reveals [96]. For some interpreters, this *obsequium* of the will pertains to that previous submission by which a human being, recognizes that human reason is not the supreme rule of all truth. Through the will, a person accepts using another manner of knowledge permitting contact with total Truth. This "salutary faith" was described in these terms in which the Council of Trent offers a description of the act of faith: "... adults... are awakened and assisted by divine grace, they conceive faith from hearing [cf. Rm 10:17], and are freely led to God, believing to be true what has been divinely revealed and promised ..." [97].

Faith, then, is clearly based on the authority of God - while Vatican I defined faith more in itself, Trent saw it dynamically as that which prepares for justification [98].

b. Vatican II and Post-Conciliar Documents:

1.] ***Dei Verbum***: in this Dogmatic Constitution, the Council refers back to Vatican I, as that Council in its turn had quoted the Council of Trent. *Dei Verbum* uses *obsequium* twice in its early articles: "...Hearing the Word of God with reverence, and proclaiming it confidently, this most Sacred Synod takes its direction from these words of St. John [cf. 1 Jn 1:2-3] [cf. DV 1]. The Council continues then in Chapter I: "...The 'obedience of faith' [Rm 16:26; cf. 1:5; 2 Co 10:5-6] must be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals', and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him..." [99].

In addition to reiterating the previous conciliar definition, these words of DV 5: [...se totum libere Deo committit ...] in the recent Council teaching, seem to refer to that "spirit of faith" already evident after Vatican I. It has been described as that disposition to live in conformity with one's faith, a filial abandonment into the hands of God, a confidence in the effectiveness of prayer. This involves the gift of oneself- to God, implying continuing conversion, a complete renewal of one's manner of living. This "new birth", an attitude of totality toward God, underlines the importance of confidence,

dependence on the Absolute, the generous openness to that gift that God offers in penetrating the life of a believer [100]. Such an attitude of faith present by Trent and Vatican I is the germ of the beatific vision, and makes of it a gradual realization of the truth believed [101]. St. Paul's expression: 'obedience of faith', cited in DV 5, is already faith, hope and charity [102].

2.] Lumen Gentium 25: has been much discussed since the Council [103], but this is beyond the scope of the present study. A number of Canons also apply the principles of LG 25: Canon 218 speaks of the due allegiance to the Magisterium of the Church [*servato debito ... obsequio...*] Canon 752 clearly distinguishes between the "assent of faith" and the "religious submission" [*religiosum tamen intellectus et voluntatis obsequium...*] even when the Supreme Pontiff, or the College of Bishops, declare upon a matter of faith, or morals, but do not intend to proclaim that doctrine by a definitive act. The very next Canon speaks of the adherence of the faithful "with a religious submission of mind" [*religioso animi obsequio adhaerere tenentur ...*] to the authentic Magisterium of their bishops in union with the Roman Pontiff. The precise nature of this religious submission is not further specified, but is asked of teachers of sacred doctrine and of all the faithful.

3.] Canon 678, § 1: pertains to the obedience of religious to bishops: "... In matters concerning the care of souls, the public exercise of divine worship and other works of the apostolate, religious are subject to the authority of the bishop, whom they are bound to treat with sincere obedience and reverence..." *...devoto obsequio ac reverentia...*].

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#### 4. *In Obsequium in St. Gaspar Bertoni*

Fr. Bertoni, priest of the Diocese of Verona, Italy, and Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ, was beatified by Pope Paul VI, on All Saints' Day, in the Holy Year, 1975 - and canonized, on the same date, by Pope John Paul II in 1989. Fr. Bertoni's spirit was studied around that latter date at a Symposium held on the occasion of the Canonization [104]. An ardent student of St. Thomas, Fr. Bertoni was also much influenced by the Constitutions and the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and his Apostolic Mission to the Church.

In the Ignatian Constitutions, the entire Part VII is dedicated to the "Missions" [105] and the frequent recurrence of the *obsequium* as described there by the Jesuit

Founder [106], and his *servitium, auxilium, obsequium*. In the Ignatian charism, the Missions of the Holy Father are the “intention of the Fourth Vow” [107]. The “Mission” is defined in the *Epitome* of Part VII [108].

The Stigmatine ideal was described by the second Superior General, Fr. Giovanni B. Lenotti [1871-1875], as a parallel to the Company of Jesus, which is in a special way dedicated, directed to the service [*ossequio*] and to the dispositions of the Roman Pontiff, as the Stigmatines are *in obsequium Episcoporum*. [109].

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One of Fr. Bertoni’s own images in the following/imitation if Christ was the persevering effort to “draw a portrait of Jesus Christ” in one’s own life [110]. Fr. Bertoni achieved this in his personal life by offering his service to God, acceptance of long illnesses and his entire life as a Holy Abandonment. For him, *obsequium* is a key expression of this spirituality. As Christ’s own *obsequium* redounded to the glory of the Father - so Mary and Joseph, the Holy Spouses offered their precious *obsequium* to Christ. Fr. Bertoni presented the challenge of offering an ecclesial service, an availability to the Church, through his *in obsequium Episcoporum*, in the assistance of Bishops. For the Apostolic Missio, the bishops incarnated the divine will for the Stigmatine Founder in the choice of the specific service this community is called to render.

Whether it was the *obsequium* of his own life - or the services offered to the Church through the bishops - the ideal of the Stigmatine charism is to serve Christ and the Church, as an *obsequium* that redounds **to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!**

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**END NOTES**

1. *The Documents of Vatican II.* Walter M. Abbot, SJ, General Editor. NY: Herder & Herder/ Association Press 1966, pp. 47, ff.
2. *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents.* General Editor, Austin Flannery, OP, Dublin/Clonskeagh: Dominican Publications/ Talbot Press. 1st Printing, pp. 379,ff.
3. cf. Joseph Henchey, CSS, "Abandonment to God and Availability to the Church: St. Gaspar Bertoni [1777-1853]", in: *ANGELICUM* LXVII (1990), pp. 87-108.
4. "... puellam parvam, quae erat in obsequio uxoris Naaman..." [cf. 4 Reg. 5:2; cf. also Ps 123:4].
5. "... qui delentus obsequiis eorum acquievit ei..." [2 Par. 24:17].
6. "... ambulare in praeceptis eius et obsequi edictis eius ..." [1 Macc. 6:23].
7. "... qui serviunt, obsequentes erunt sancto ..." [Eccli 4:15].
8. "... bonum est obsequi Domino..." [Eccli 46:12].
9. "... qui interficit eos, arbitretur obsequium se praestare Deo ..." [Jn 16:2].
10. "...legislatio et cultus [obsequium] et promissiones..." [Rm 9:4].
11. "...et ministerium meum pro Ierusalem acceptum..."[or: obsequii mei oblatio accepta fiat in Hierosolymam...] [Rm 15:31; cf. also Ph 2:30: "... erga meum obsequium..."]
12. "... Obsecro itaque vos, fratres, per misericordiam, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam Dei placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum..." [Rm 12:1; cf. also 1 Pet. 2:5 ff.].
13. "... et in captivitatem redigentes omnem intellectum in obsequium Christi ..." [2 Co 10:5].
14. "... it obsequium fidei vestrae..." - "... deerat erga meum obsequium [ministerii erga me]" [Ph 2:17, 30].
15. Council of Florence, Decree for the Jacobites: "... omniaque sunt unum, ubi non obviat relationis oppositio..." [D-S 1330. Denzinger-Schönmetz, *Enchiridion Symbolorum Definitionum et Declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*. Editio 36. Barcinone/Friburgi/Romae: Herder 1876 - "... everything (in them) is one where there

is no position of relationship..." - *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*. Revised Edition. Edited by J. Neuner, SJ, and J. Dupuis, SJ. Staten Island, NY: Alba 1981, n.325, p.11.

16. Kazimierz Romaniuk, *L'Amour du Pere et du Fils dans la soteriologie de Saint Paul*. Rome: Biblical Institute Press. Analecta Biblica 15 A. 1974, pp.264, f.: "... sa mission etait de faire la volonte' du Pere..." [cf. Jn 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; 15:10; 19:30]. "... etre Fils signifie precisement obeir..."

17. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*. in: *Mysterium salutis. Nuovo Corso di dogmatica come teologia della storia di salvezza*. Vol. 6. *L'evento Cristo*. Brescia: Queriniana 1973, pp. 184, ff. cf. also: 'Esistenza nella kenosis come obbedienza fino alla morte di croce...', pp. 236,ff.

18. Ignace de la Potterie, SJ, "Obbedienza e filiazione in Cristo", in " *Il mistero del cuore trafitto. Fondamenti biblici della spiritualita' del Cuore di Gesu'*. Bolgnoa: EDB 1988, pp. 47, ff. : "... l'obbedienza trova il suo principio e il suo fondamento ultimo proprio nella figliolanza di Gesu ... La specificita' filiale di Gesu' si manifesta proprio in questo ... tutto quello che dice, fa ... viene dal Padre ...; come Persona, Gesu e' solo il Figlio del Padre ..."

19. Ignace de la Potterie, SJ, "The Biblical Basis of the Theology of the Heart of Christ. Jesus' Sovereignty, His Obedience to the Father, His Filial Consciousness", in: *Towards a Civilization of Love. A Symposium on the Scriptural and Theological Foundations of the Devotion to the Heart of Jesus*. San Francisco: Ignatius 1985, pp. 59, 63, ff.; 67: "... His inner life, which was composed of obedience to the Father and love for the Father, was the human expression and perfect image of His divine life, that is to say, the life of the Son who is eternally turned toward the Father (cf. 1 Jn 1:2; Jn1:18)."

20. Albert Vanhoye, SJ, "L'oblazione di Gesu' sacerdote", in: *Spiritualita' oblative riparatrice*. Bologna: EDB 1989, pp. 57-75. cf. especially, pp. 65, 73.

21. Jean-Marie Faux, SJ, *La Foi du Nouveau Testament*. Bruxelles: Institut d'Etudes Theologiques. 1974, pp.261-269.

22. III Sent., d. 9, q.1, Sol 1 - secundum impressionem Petri Fiaccadori - Parmae. New York: Misurga Publishers 1948 - Vol. VII, I - p. 105, b.: "Similiter cum obsequium diversis possit exhiberi, speciali quodam et supremo modo Deo debetur..."

23. In Epist. ad Romanos. Cap. XII, Lectio 1 - Vol. XIII, pp. 120, ff.: "... visibile sacrificium, quod exterius Deo offertur, signum est invisibilis sacrifici, quo quis se et sua in Dei obsequium exhibet..."

24. Super Evang. Io. Caput XIII, Lectio 2, n. 1 - Vol. X, p. 527 b: "... praemittitur praeparatio Christi ad humilitatis obsequium ..."
25. ib., n.2. p. 528 b: "... ponit Christi obsequium ..."
26. ib., Lectio III, l. pp. 530, a, b: "Postquam Dominus extendit humilitatis obsequium..."
27. ib., n. 9, p. 533 b: "... obsequia eis impensa quoddammodo videantur redundare in Deum ... obsequium Christo exhibitum redundat in Patem..."
28. Super Evang. Matt., Caput XII, Lectio I, l - Vol. X, p. 116 a, b: "... quia fiebat ad obsequium templi et Dei..."
29. ib., Caput XXVI, Lectio I. Vol X, p. 241 s: "...tertio facto et obsequio ..."
30. In Epist. ad Heb., Caput IX, Lectio III. Vol XIII, p. 740 b: "... sanguis Christi ad spirituale obsequium..."
31. Super Evang. Io., Caput XIX, Lectio IV, 2. Vol. X, p. 618 b: "... in obsequium Christi, ut dicitur in 2 Co 10 ..."
32. Summa Theol III, q. 49, a. 4 c: "...propter aliquod obsequium acceptum quo ei exhibetur..."
33. In Ep. ad Gal, Caput III, Lectio 9. Vol XIII, p. 412 a: "... sine obsequi legis ..."
34. In Epis ad Rom., Caput IX, Lectio 1. Vol. XIII, p. 92: "... et obsequium, quo sc. Deo serviebant ..."
35. In Isaiam, Caput VI, n.2 - Vol. XIV, p. 457 b: "... Secundo ponitur oblatum obsequium ..."
36. III Sent., d. III, q. II, a. 1. Vol VII, 1, p. 45 b: "... ad obsequium...'Ecce ancilla Domini'..."
37. III, q. 30, a. 1 c: "Tertio, ut voluntaria sui obsequii..."
38. III, q. 36, a. 2, ad 2um: "... et obsequii nascituro ..."
39. III, q. 29, a. 2 c: "... sibi invicem obsequuntur ad prolem nutriendum ..."
40. Super Evang. Matt., Caput I, 4. Vol X, p. 16 a: "... ipsius Joseph futurum obsequium..."
41. ib., n. 4, p. 17 a: "... ipsius Joseph obsequium ..."



42. ib., Caput II, 5. p. 19 b: "... Sequitur obsequium. Lc 2..."
43. ib., p. 25 b: "... ut obsequeretur Unigenito. Is 19,1..."
44. Super Evang. Io., Caput I, Lectio XVI,4. Vol X, p. 329 b: "... Angeli ... inquantum ei adsunt obsequendo et ministrando ..."
45. Super Evang. Matt. Caput XXVI, 6. Vol. X, p. 236 b: "... Quicumque enim obsequuntur Deo, Angeli dicuntur. Ps 103:4 ..."
46. Super Evang. Io. Caput XX, Lectio 2, n.2. Vol. X, p. 626 b: "... omnes Angelorum ordines ... Christo obsequuntur..."
47. I-II, q.102, a.4, ad 6um: "... quasi Deo obsequuntur..."
48. Super Evang. Matt. Caput II,1. Vol X, p. 22 a: "... non praestaverunt [Magi] obsequium regi terreno ..."
49. Super Evang. Io. Caput I, Lectio 13 4.Vol. X, p. 317 b:"... quod est minimum obsequium ..."
50. ib.,Caput XI, Lectio III, 1. Vol. X, p. 491 a, b: "... beneficia et obsequia ..."
51. ib., Caput XII, Lectio I, n. 3, 4. Vol. X, pp. 505, b, f.: "... ponit obsequium Cristo exhibitum..."
52. ib., n.4, p. 506 a: "... [Martha et Maria} ... obsequium ..."
53. ib., p. 507 a: "... caput Christi iungit qui ipsum obsequitur ..."
54. ib., Lectio II. p. 508 a: "... et obsequium huius mulieris..."
55. ib., n. 6. Vol. X, p. 507 a:"... effusum in obsequium Christi ..."
56. ib., p. 508 b:"... tulit obsequium Christo impensum..."
57. ib., Caput XX, Lectio VI, a. Vol X, p. 622 a.: "... publice obsequendo..."
58. ib., Caput X, Lectio IV, 2. Vol. X, p. 480 a:"...'Et cognoscunt me meae...' me diligentes obsequuntur..."
59. ib., Caput XIX, Lectio IV, aa. Vol. X, p. 620 b: "... (Apostoli) secuti sunt Iesum... diligenter et reverenter obsequebantur..."
60. In Epist. ad Rom., Caput I, Lectio I. Vol. XIII, p.4 b: "... Paulus servus... servitus amoris ... est beneficere et obsequi amico ..."

61. In Epist. ad Phil. Caput II, Lectio IV. Vol. XIII, pp. 517, a-518 b: "... erga meum obsequium.."
62. Super vang. lo. Caput I, Lectio VIII, n.2. Vol X, p. 307 b: "...Tertio vero ad naturae obsequium..."
63. Super Evang. Matt. Caput II, Lectio II. Vol. X, p.21 b: "...ad obsequium eus factam..."
64. Ad Heb. Caput XI, Lectio VI. Vol XIII, p. 767 b: "...etsi obsequatur ... divinae justitiae..."
65. II-II, q. 107, a. 3 ad 1um: "... homo Deo obsequitur..."
66. IV Sent. d.24, q.3, a.2, q.1a. 3, ad 3um. Vol. VII, II, p. 901 b: "...mancipare aliquid divinitus obsequiis... Episcopus specialiter sponsus Ecclesiae dicitur, sicut Christus..."
67. ib., q. II, a 7, p. 898, b: "... Per benedictionem, divinis obsequiis..."
68. II-II, q. 100, a.5, ad 1um: "...munus ab obsequio..."
69. In Epist. ad Phil. caput I, Lectio III. Vol. XIII, p. 509 b: "... corpus nostrum deputamus ad obsequium eius..."
70. Super Evang. Matt. Caput VIII, Lectio 3. Vol X, p. 86 a: "... per obsequium mandatorum..."
71. III Sent., d.13, q.2, a. 1, obj. 6. Vol VII/I, p.139: "...ut nutrimentum et alia obsequia..."
72. In Epist ad Gal., Caput VI, Lectio 2. Vol. XIII, p.438 a: "... inferiores debere superioribus et obsequi ... prompte... perseveranter ... commuiter..."
73. II-II, q. 125, a. 1, ad 2um: "... ne deficiat ab obsequiis..."
74. ib., q. 88, a. 5 c: "... votum ...in divinum cultum, seu obsequium ..."
75. ib., a.12, ad 1um: "... homo totam vitam suam Dei obsequium deputat..."
76. ib., a. 188, a.2, ad 1um: "... ad divinum obsequium spectant..."
77. ib., q. 187, a. 1, ad 3um: "... docere et praedicare pertinent ad ecclesiastica obsequia..."
78. ib., a. 2 c: "... dilectioni divinae obsequuntur..."
79. ib., q. 188, a. 2 c, ad 3um: "... obsequia ... dicuntur esse sacrificia..."

80. ib., a. 4 c, et ad 4um: "... et ad obsequia... gratis ...ministrare..."
81. ib., a.5, ad 3um: "... ad religiosos, quorum tota vita divinitus obsequiis mancipatur..."
82. ib., a. 7 c:"... qui est vacare divinis obsequiis..."
83. ib., q. 189, a. 7 c: "... ad vacandum divinis obsequiis..."
84. ib., a. 8, ad 2um: "... sacris mysteriis obsequentes..."
85. II Sent., d. 44, q. 2, a. 3. Vol VI, p. 789 b: "... quae pertinet ad mutua obsequia..."
86. II-II, q. 189, a. 3 c, et ad 3um: "... per hoc homo totaliter mancipat divinis obsequiis..."
87. St. Thomas several times returns to the matter of religious caring for their own parents, making use of obsequium: 1-II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 4um; II-II,q. 101, a. 2 c; a. 4 ad 3um; q. 189, a. 6 c et ad 1um.
88. II-II, q. 2, a. 2, c, et ad 1um et 4um: "... credere in Deum..."
89. In Epist I ad Tim., Caput II, Lectio I. Vol. XIII, p. 592 a:" ... ad cultum fidei, ex orationibus et obsequiis..."
90. III Sent., d.23, q. 2, a. 4, ad 3um. Vol VII/1, p. 252 a:"... captivans in obsequium Christi, ut dictum est in 2 Co 10..."
91. In Ps 40., n.6. Vol. XIV, p.312 b: "... ad familiare obsequium et colloquium..."
92. I,q. 1,a. 8, ad 2um: "... naturalis inclinatio voluntatis obsequitur caritati..."
93. II-II, q. 184, a. 3, ad 3um: "... ut liberius divinis obsequiis vacet..."
94. II-II, q. 82, a. 3 c: "... homo concipit quod se tradat divino obsequio..."
95. In Epist. ad Heb., Caput XII, Lectio 5. Vol. XIII, p. 783 a: "... Maxime autem servitur Deo per obsequium interius, Ps 50, et Lc 1:74..."
96. D-S 3008; *The Christian Faith*, n. 118, p. 42.
97. Sessio VI, Cap.6: "... Disponunturautem ad ipsam dum excitati divina gratia et adjuti, fidem ex auditu concipientes, libere moventur in Deum, credentes vera esse quae divinitus revelata et promissa sunt ..." cf. D-S 1526; *The Catholic Faith* , n. 1930, p. 557.

98. Roger Aubert, *Le probleme de l'acte de foi. Donnees traditionnelles et resultats des controverses recentes*. 4ieme ed., Louvain/Paris: Nauwelaerts/Beatrice - Nauwelaerts 1969, pp. 157,ff.

99. DV 1: "... Sancrosancta Synodus verbis S. Ioannis obsequitur dicentis ..." Flannery: "... the Sacred Synod assents to the words of St. John..."

DV 5: "... Deo revelanti praestanda est oboeditio fidei (cf. Rm 16:26; Coll. Rm 1:5; 2 Co 10:5-6), qua homo se totum libere Deo committit 'plenum revelanti Deo intellectus et voluntatis obsequium praestando (Vat. I, 3008), et voluntati revelationi ab Eo data assentiendo..." ["... By faith,, a man commits his entire self to God..." - Flannery].

100. cf. Aubert, o.c., pp. 691, ff., especially p. 695.

101. o.c., pp. 703, ff.

102. cf. Jean-Marie Faux, SJ, *La Foi du Nouveau Testament*. o.c., pp. 289, ff.

103. *The Kung Dialogue. Facts and Documents. A Documentation on the Efforts of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith and of the Confrence of German Bishops to achieve an appropriate Clarification of the Controversial Views of Dr Hans. Kung [Tubingen]*. Washington DC: U.S. Catholic Conference 1980; cf. also Charles E. Curran, *Faithful Dissent*. London: Sheed & Ward 1987.

104. 'Symposium Bertonianum' *In occasione della solenne canonizzazione del Fondatore degli Stigmatini, S. Gaspare Bertoni*. [Sabato, 28 ottobre 1989. Pontificia Universita' S. Tommaso. ANGELICUM] Verona: Edizioni Stimmgraf.

105. Septima Pars. De iis quae pertinent ad admissos in corpus Societatis ad proximorum utilitatem per vineam Domini distribuendos. nn. 603-654. cf. also Antonio M. DeAldama, *Repartiendose en la vina de Cristo. Comentario a la Septima Parte de las Constituciones de la Compania de Jesus*. Roma: Centrum Ignatianum; cf. also Dionigi Spanu, *Inviati in Missione. Le istruzioni data da S. Ignazio*. Roma: CIS 1979.

106. Jesuit Constitutions, Pars VII, Caput I: "De Missionibus Summi Pontificis":

n. 603: "... quacumque maius Dei et Domini nostri obsequium et animum profectum... ubi magnus divinae gloriae et obsequii proventus speratur..."

n. 608: "... et maius Dei obsequium mittere cogitaret..."

n. 609: "...a Summo Pontifice mittatur ut Eius Sanctitas ad maius Dei et Sedis Apostolicae obsequium fore..."

n. 611: "... sint ad huiusmodi missionem aptiores; ... ad Dei obsequium..."

n. 612: "... missionem suam et scopum ... ut in omnibus ad Dei et Sedis Apostolicae obsequium utilius suum impendat ministerium..."

n. 614: "...sed etiam Summi Pontificis missionibus iuvare poterit; ut melius quod ad Christi Domini nostri obsequium quaeritur, consequatur..."

n. 615: "... qui sanctam intentionem Pontificis in Christi Domni nostri obsequium..."

n. 616: "... divini obsequii poshabebit ..."

107. ib., cf. n. 605.

108. Societatis Iesus Constitutiones et Epitome Instituti. Roma: Apud Curiam Praepositi Generalis 1949. cf. Epitome, Pars VII, Titulus II: De Praecipuis modis distribuendi nostros in vinea Domini. Caput I. De Missionibus, p. 553: "...Missiones dicuntur expeditiones apostolicae iussu Summi Pontificis, vel Superiorum Societatis susceptae, ad maiorem Dei gloriam et animarum auxilium, ut plurimum extra loca residentiae nostrae..." [n. 612, 1].

n. 612, n. 2: "... ubi maius Dei obsequium ... speratur..."

109. cf. G. B. Lenotti, "'Flnis: Missionari Apostolici in Obsequium Episcoporum'", in: *Collectanea Stigmatina. Collezione di documenti e studi riservata agli Stigmatini*. Roma: Curia Generalizia 1961, pp. 408, ff.: "...Si vede chiaro che l'intendimento del P. Bertoni deve essere stato di istituire una Congregazione, la quale, come la Compagnia di Gesu' e' in modo speciale dedicata, indirizzata all'ossequio e alle disposizioni del Romano Pontefice, avesse ad essere dedicata e determinata in modo tutto speciale e segnalato al servizio ed ossequio dei Vescovi ... I Nostri non facciano il voto di obbedienza al Vscovo, ma cerchino in ogni guisa che possano aiutarlo, assisterlo ossequiosamente, in modo particolare a lui dedicati ... Due le principali armi del Missionario: la spada della Divina Parola e la spada dell'Orazione... La Spada della Divina parola: ... nel confessionale, nelle carceri, sul pergamo, sul palco, dagli altari, negli Esercizi, Missioni, Oratori, Ritiri, conversazioni familiari, ecc., animandola dallo Spirito del Signore..."

110. Personal Diary, *Memoriale Privato*, February 26, 1809, in: *Lo Spirito del Beato Gaspare Bertoni*. Verona: Stigmatini 1914. Reprinted 1977, p. 229: "Dobbiamo fare un ritratto i noi stessi di Gesu'Cristo..."

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