

Reflections for the Solemnity of

# St. Gaspar Bertoni



## St. Gaspar's "Integral" Stigmata: The Risen Lord

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## Solemnity of St. Gaspar Bertoni

June 12, 2018

*... Look for me in the Wound of Christ's Side...*

[From a Sermon preached by St. Gaspar Bertoni, April 5, 1807 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Easter]

*... By His Wounds, ours are healed... [cf. Is 53:5; cf. 1 P 2: 24, f.]*

*... if you wish to see me, look for me in the wound of the side of Christ - for it is there that I dwell; and it is here it will be easy to find me. You will search for me in vain in any other place ... [cf. MssB # 1312].*

### PRESENTATION

[1] This phrase from St. Gaspar's writings seems to imply a mystical, or spiritual way of contemplating on the Scriptures – the meaning seems to be in the lives of Saints, that like Mary, they treasure these things in their hearts [cf. Lk 2:19] – they ponder God's Word [in this case, St. Gaspar praying over the Sacred Wound in Christ's sacred side, finds in it a kind of spiritual "haven", a kind of refuge, an inspiration – an anchor [!] drawing upward to carry the daily heavy Cross of suffering [cf. Lk 9:23].

[2] In order to open our minds and hearts for this Solemnity of our Founder so blessed in the Stigmatic heart and spirit, we might wonder what St. Gaspar really meant by his "dwelling in the sacred side of Christ". He seems to imply that this revealed mystery was made known to us on Calvary [Jn 19] – and revealing again this Wound with its blood and water, was still present in Christ's Risen Body on Easter Night [Jn 20] – it is the source of our Apostolic Mission: *As the Father sent Me so I now send you! He said this showing them his hands and side* [Jn 20].

[3] St. Gaspar's spirituality seems to have peaked in the Sacred Stigmata of Jesus Christ, and particularly, the Wound in His Side, inflicted after Christ was already dead – St Gaspar pondered the "integral" Paschal Mystery: both its sorrowful dimension of Good Friday afternoon – as well as in His Risen Body of Easter Sunday night, as the source of His Apostolic Mission. For Augustine, the blood and water flowing from the side of Christ had sacramental implications: Baptism and Eucharist. While the theology of the integral Paschal Mystery was not much in vogue in the literature of St. Gaspar's life time, it had already been sublimely presented by St. Thomas Aquinas [cf. III, q. 53-57 – about 22 separate articles], and clearly lived by St. Gaspar.

[4] In a beautiful Sermon for the Feast of the Sacred Heart, St. Gaspar stated:

... His side, opened after His death, is used to show us that Heart, that same Heart wounded by the lance, that wound retained in His Glorious Body, render the Heart so sweet, evident, divine so much so that it is impossible to venerate the Wounded Heart, without remembering and venerating His immense love ...[cf. MssB # 1771].

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**[A]    The Tearing up of the Old Temple Veil:  
the End of the Initial Covenant and Priesthood**

1. There are many scholars who think that St. Mark's Gospel may have been the first one –he would be the one who indeed was the first to write about some unusual circumstances immediately Jesus' death on the Cross: ... *And Jesus, having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost. And the veil of the Temple was rent in two, from the top to the bottom* ... [cf. Mk 15; 37, f.]. Was this some praeter-natural occurrence – some kind of divine intervention? - or: did the massive, considerable temple tapestry simply get torn to shreds when the fallen bricks of the Temple being reduced to the disaster of not a stone left upon a stone. [cf. Mk 13:2]. We don't know the answer to this, as the Scripture does not make this known to us.

2. However, it may be rewarding to look up this verb "torn" in other NT passages: in the Jesus' Baptism, the heavens were torn [Mk 1:11], declaring Jesus to be the Son of God – a similar event happens in Jesus' Transfiguration on the way to Calvary [cf. Mk 9 2-10]. These episodes seemed to have been prefaced by the two creation stories: in one of them, the light tears open the darkness of the primordial Night in the first creation story of the First Day [Gn 1] – and then secondly in Gn 2, the sluice gates above and those below were torn open to water the promising vine and the branches of the Lord Jesus.

3. The totally torn Temple Veil, from the top to the bottom, meant the end of the old-time religion – the earlier Liturgy comes to an end, as did the earlier Priesthood of Aaron. This is also true when the High Priest on hearing Jesus' testimony that He is the Son of God, tears asunder his priestly vestment [cf. Mt 14:63] – indicating the end of the old Order of Aaron, which gives way to the new Priesthood of the Order of Melchisedek.

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**[B]     John's Unique Idea: Then developed by Hebrews:**  
**- Not the Tearing of the rather substantial Temple Veil**  
**– but the Sacred Side of Jesus Christ**

**1.     In John's Gospel** none of these seems to happen quite this way. First of all, John does not have the temptation scene at the beginning of his Gospel – nor, the Gethsemane passage near the end as the Synoptics do.

[a]     Thus, the Temptations of Jesus and His Agony in the Garden are called a "biblical inclusion" – meaning between these two awful periods of trial and temptation, the Gospel unfolds in one total trial in the life of Jesus. John's Gospel does this in his "Gospel of Signs" [cc. 1-12] shows a gradually increasing intensity: the Word was the real light - but His own people did not accept him [Jn 1] – In Jn 2, Mary tells the servants at Table: *You do WHATEVER He tells you to do* – this is her own FIAT [and our QUODCUMQUE] - now becoming the message of the Apostolic Mission - Jn 4, is a the story of the woman of Samaria with the same time of day frame as that of Calvary in Jn 19: Jesus is tired; He is thirsty; asks for a drink – as the end of the day unfolds [Jn 4] – in Jn 7 Jesus speaks of the streams to living waters flowing out of His side, on the last and greatest day of the Festival. In Jn 10, there is the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His followers. In Jn 12, there is the Grain of Wheat that must die in order to produce fruit.

[b]     So in Jn's Gospel there is no tearing of the Veil – instead, the soldier pierces the side of Christ with his formidable Roman lance, thus opening the Tabernacle of the Trinity [the size of the male fist] with the waters of Baptism and the Precious Blood of the Eucharist flowing forth abundantly as the new streams of salvation [cf. Is 1: 3, ff.]. John has no tearing of the veil, but we learn in Jn 2, at Cana of Galilee: ... Jesus was speaking of the Temple that was His Body... [v. 20]. And as we know, with the Torn Veil, the old Temple and Priesthood have been super-ceded by the New.

[c]     This new Priesthood of the order of Melchisedek no longer allows substitute sacrifices as with the blood of lamb and goats – now the priesthood of the Baptized and the Priesthood of Sacrament of Holy Orders are asked to make an oblation of ONE'S OWN LIFE unto the Mercy of God [CF. Rm 12:1] it is from this verse that St. Gaspar found his much revered formula, in obsequium.

**2.     The Document to the Hebrews:** Surprisingly enough it is only the unusual Document to the Hebrews that develops this idea of JESUS CHRIST AS PRIEST - as well as identifying the Pieced Veil of Christ's Body – to "remove the Veil" is the etymology of "revelation" - we live and die in this new Temple and we are asked to

carry on as long as we live the oblation, immolation of all our lives, our age, our ailments. Through the Open Side flow the treasures of the most Blessed Trinity: Baptism and Eucharist and all the sacraments.

a. Hebrews goes to great lengths in presenting the Pierced Veil of the Body of the Lord – showing that this is the fulfillment of the earlier OT descriptions of what the Tent of Meeting was like and of what it was composed [Exodus] – then again, there are descriptions of the sanctuary in Leviticus - then, the Prophet Ezechiel 47 speaks of the mysterious temple in the desert sands - from the right side of which flows the streams that will re-vivify the barren Desert and turn it back into the Garden of Paradise, the Lord's "own Garden"!

b. There were so many descriptions that the unknown Author of Hebrews tries to juggle them all, but seems to give up! – This is not the time to go into detail about this! [cf. Heb 9:5]!!! The Pierced Veil/ Christ's Sacred Side are a recurring Hebrews' theme:

[1] *... so that we, now that we have found safety, should have a strong encouragement to take a firm grip on the hope that is held out to us. Here we have an anchor for our soul, as sure as it is firm, and reaching right through beyond the veil, where Jesus entered before us and on our behalf, to become a high priest of the order of Melchisedek, and forever...! [cf. Heb 6:19-20].*

[2] *... there was a Tent, which comprised two compartments: the first in which the lamp stand, the table and the Presentation Loaves were kept, was called the Holy Place; then, beyond the second veil, an innermost part which was called the Holy of Holies, to which belonged the altar of incense, and the Ark of the Covenant, all plated over with Gold ... [cf. Heb 9:2, ff.].*

[3] *... In other words, brothers, through the blood of Jesus we have a right to enter the sanctuary, by a new way which He has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, that is to say, His Body... [cf. Heb 10:20]...*

c. On the other hand, the theme of Jn 12:23-32 [... What I shall I say: Save Me from this Hour? ... it was for this very reason that I came. Father, glorify Your Name...!] - the real triumph of Jesus will be the fruit of His sacrificial death and it is this which dominates the entire Christology of Hebrews. This was celebrated in the Temple of His own Body:

... He is the reflection of God's glory and bears the impress [karakter] of God's own being, sustaining all things by His powerful command... now that He has purged sins away, He has taken His seat at the right hand of the divine Majesty... [cf. Heb 1:3, f.].

.... He has passed through the greater, more perfect Tent, not made by human hands ... He has entered the sanctuary once and for all ... taking with Him ... His own blood, having won an eternal redemption ... How much more will the blood of Christ, Who offered Himself, blameless though He was to God through the eternal Spirit, purify our consciences from dead actions ... so that we can worship the living God... [cf. Heb 9:12-14].

**3. This Sacrifice of the First Good Friday** is continued for all eternity – the great High Priest has entered into the Celestial sanctuary, and is at the right hand of the Father, totally in prayer in this Eternal Eucharist for the Mercy of God – the Faithful on earth are already in the life-long procession leading to an eternal share in all this:

... It is not as though Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary, which was merely a model of the real one; He has entered heaven itself, so that now He appears in the presence of God on our behalf. And He does not have to offer Himself again and again as the high priest goes into the sanctuary year after year ... He has made His appearance once and for all, at the end of the final age, to do away with sin by sacrificing Himself... [vv. 24-28].

... He, on the other hand, has offered one single sacrifice for sins, and has taken His seat forever, at the right hand of God, where He is now waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. By virtue of that one single offering, He has achieved the eternal perfection of all who are sanctified... [cf. Heb 10:12].

... Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, Who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection, for the sake of the joy which lay ahead of Him, He endured the Cross, disregarding the shame of it, and has taken His seat at the right hand of God's throne. Think of the way He persevered against such opposition from sinners, and then you will never lose heart and come to grief. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting. To the point of blood shed... [cf. Heb 12:2, ff.].

[Epilogue] ... I pray that the God of Peace, Who brought back from the dead Our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood sealed in an eternal Covenant, may prepared to do His Will in every kind of good action; effecting in us all whatever is acceptable to Himself through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen! ... [Heb 13:20, f.].

a. Similarly, just as Jesus Himself lovingly obeyed His Father, in accepting His mandate to die, it is from the Father that He receives His only infinite glory [cf. Jn 8:54]. The Father is at the Font of the Plan of salvation, as He is of the glorification of His Son [cf. Jn 12:28; 13:32].

b. These thoughts are summarized in a new way and applied to the Great High Priest by *Heb*:

*... He submitted to death so that by God's grace His experience of death should benefit all humanity. It was fitting for God, for whom and through Whom everything exists, should, in bringing many sons to glory, make perfect through suffering the Leader of their salvation. For Consecrator and Consecrated are of the same stock...! [cf. Heb 2:9-10].*

*... Here I am! I am coming to do your will! [cf. Ps 40, the Disciple's Prayer]. He is abolishing the first sort to establish the second And this Will was for us to be made holy by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ made once and for all... [Heb 10:9-10].*

c. As the central idea of the Christology in Hebrews is original, it is this: Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, has penetrated the Celestial Sanctuary, where He uniquely facilitates access to all those who are attached to Him and who follow Him in a life-long Liturgical Procession toward the Celestial Sanctuary by obeying His word as long as we trudge on in this life [cf. Heb 10:19-22]:

*... We have, then, brothers, complete confidence through the Blood of Jesus in entering the sanctuary, by a new way which He has opened for us, a living opening through the curtain, i.e., His flesh. And we have the High Priest over all the Sanctuary of God. So, as we go in, let us be sincere in heart and filled with faith, our hearts sprinkled and free from a trace of bad conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us keep firm in the faith we profess, because the One who made the promise is faithful. Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works. Do not absent yourself from your own assemblies, as some do, but encourage each other; the more so as you see the Day drawing near... [Heb 10:19-23].*

**4. Temple atmosphere of the entire NT:** Indeed, all the Proclamations of the Birth and the Infancy of Jesus in Lk 1-2, gravitate around the Temple atmosphere, in a truly prayer-filled, Hymn-filled setting: *Benedictus; Magnificat, Nunc Dimittis*. It is in this Sanctuary and in the celebration of this Liturgy that the Precursor is announced [cf. Lk 1:5-10]. It is in these contexts that the Divine Descendant of David is presented, offered to the Lord in His House [Lk 2:22], received there by Simeon

and Anna [2:27, 37]. It is to this same Temple that Jesus journeys in Pilgrimage with His parents in the last of His pre-teen years. When He is questioned why He was 'lost' for three days in the Temple, His answer was that He had to be about His Father's business in His house. There is much to compare here with King Solomon's OT Enthronement: this was covered in Ivory: Christ the King had the Cross as His Throne – Christ the Priest had the Cross as His Altar – Christ the Prophetic word had the Cross as His Pulpit, Podium

a. Prior to accomplishing the decisive action of His Vocation, which is the redemption of the human race, Jesus makes His Messianic and Priestly entrance into the Temple. [cf. Lk 19:29-46]. This fulfills the ancient history typified in Solomon's [The Prince of peace] Consecration:

*... Zadok, the priest, the Prophet Nathan, Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, and the Cherithites and Pelethites then went down: they mounted Solomon on King David's mule and escorted him to Gihon. Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the Tent and anointed Solomon. They sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted Long Live King Solomon! The people escorted him back, with pipes playing and loud rejoicing and shouts split the earth... [1 K 1:38-40]. [cf. also Zc 9:9, .ff.]*

b. The Prophet Nathan had come to enthroned Solomon, at the Fountain of Gihon, at the foot of Mount Olives, and had poured out on his head the sacred oil brought into the sanctuary. A new kind of King, Prophet and Priest is being promised as he mounts the donkey of his father, and then entered into Jerusalem to the blaring sound of trumpets and accompanied by powerfully resounding triumphant chants preparing the way for Jesus on Palm Sunday!

5. **The cortege of Jesus is much more modest** [cf. Mk 11:1-11; Mt 21:1, ff; Jn 12:12-16] – His procession is not a military parade, but a liturgical priestly procession of the Great High Priest to the Eternal Altar of Sacrifice, into Jerusalem, and then beyond to Calvary. This manifestation which the hostility of the Pharisees is powerless to prohibit; makes up part of a sacred ritual, established by the eternal will of the Heavenly Father. This is the solemn Entrance into the Sanctuary prior to His bloody sacrifice. During this last week of His life, Jesus does not withdraw from the sacred precincts – He is already establishes as the Supreme High Priest, and He speaks there as a Prophet, and acts there as a Royal Judge. The 'theocratic' authorities, totally over-whelmed by His audacity, seem to have abdicated all unto His hands [cf. Lk 19:47-21:37] – as we are called to surrender the rest of our lives unto His Will. Following His departure into heaven, the Messianic Community

shows itself to be assiduous in the Temple and its offices: *they were constantly in the Temple praising God* [cf. Lk 24:53; Ac 1:14; 2:1, 46; 5:52].

**6. One of the Most significant actions of Jesus** during His mortal life is His Purification of the Temple -- this House of Prayer, and Dwelling of His Father. He justifies this, citing the OT Prophets:

*... all who observe the Sabbath, not profaning it, and cling to My Covenant: these I shall lead to my Holy Mountain, and make them joyful in My House of Prayer...* [Is 56:7].

*...Do you look on this Temple that bears My Name as a den of bandits...?* [Jr 7:11].

The Synoptics seem to place this event on Monday of Holy Week [cf. Mt 21:12, f.; Mk 11:15-17; Lk 19:45-46] as they place Jesus' coming into Jerusalem for the final Passover. In reality, it is pointed out, it is by this Messianic and High Priestly solemn manifestation that the Christ had the intention of beginning His ministry, as St. Jn makes clear in his gospel [cf. Jn 2:4,11]: *...My Hour has not yet come ... this was the first of Jesus' signs: it was at Cana of Galilee. He revealed His glory...*

a. In place of designating the Temple as the House of God, in conformity with the OT custom, and also because He makes it truly so, also by making the New Temple His very incarnate Person [cf. Mt 12:4; Mk 2:26; Lk 6:5]. Jesus eventually presents Himself as 'the son of God' in the integral Messianic sense.

b. The Sanhedrin, who had been informed about the Precursor's witness [cf. Jn 1:19-28; cf. Mt 3:1: *... Look, I shall send My messenger to clear a way before Me. And suddenly the Lord, Whom you seek, will come to His Temple; yes, the Angel of the Covenant for Whom you long...*] were totally incapable of ever even imagining the possible authentic identity of this New High Priest of Mercy. When He entered into the Temple, He takes possession of an inheritance which is truly His.

c. The initiative of purifying it is normal, on the part of the One Who presents Himself as the Messiah. Far from presenting Himself as a usurper, or as an ambitious pretender, Jesus accomplishes His Mission on His own, and acts in full authority. He comes across as the Master of the Father's House [cf. Heb 3:6].

d. Now, Heb conceives in a similar manner Jesus' entrance into the Celestial Sanctuary. Jesus has access into this unique Holy of Holies as Son. By full right, He alone has full access there – He is the only One with the power to penetrate into the very presence of God. He substitutes His own Incarnate Person

in substituting for the traditional guardians of the earthly Temple, the powerless ministers of the ancient Jerusalem Liturgy. The Document to the *Hebrews* has the same apologetical and polemical concerns as the Evangelists do, and as St. Jn does in notable manner.

e. Jesus is subjected to the questioning of the Sanhedrin asking Him to justify His own conduct in the Temple: ... *What sign can you show us that you should act like this ...* [Jn 2:18]. *Heb* responds by the power granted to Him by God Himself and by His oath as Son Whom the Father has instituted as the Great High Priest, with full right and all power. The historical manifestation of Jesus as the Royal Priest in the Temple – takes place both at the beginning of His ministry of salvation – as well as in His triumphant entrance into the Holy City, Jerusalem. This can be considered as the Type of His entrance in to the Celestial Sanctuary into the very presence of God, on the day of His resurrection.

7. In this context, **Jesus immediately** – in response to the Sanhedrin - immediately **has recourse to His Death and Resurrection**:

*... Jesus answered: 'Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied: 'It has taken 46 years to build this Temple and are You going to raise it up again in three days?' But, He was speaking of the Temple that was His body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed the Scripture and what he had said...* [cf. Jn 2:19-22].

a. His Paschal Mystery is His immediate allusion in this context - this will be at the same time the decisive sign of His Messianic Character and the condition and the beginning of the New and Eternal Spiritual Liturgy that He establishes. It might be observed that among the complaints that will be retained against Jesus Christ in the tribunal before Caiphas is His clear claiming anew regarding His unique Divine Filiation is associated with that of the reconstruction of the Temple [cf. Mt 21:61-63]. It will be noted in Mk [14:58], the two epithets: made by the hand of man - not made by the hand of man. This is taken up in Heb 9:11, 24 and in an analogous context that of the Purification of the Sanctuary continuing now until the end of the time within the Church there is implied here a technical attribute of the Temple of Jerusalem in the NT [cf. Ac 7:13-14, 48]. It is according to the Christian tradition that it is necessary to attribute this interpretation of a Spiritual Temple identified with Jesus Himself. [cf. Jn 2:19; Mt 12:7].

b. Here again it is Jn who has inspired more directly the theological reflection of *Heb*. Since the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel places on the lips of Jesus this statement:

*Destroy this Temple* - He had in mind that sanctuary constructed of stone and mortar, where the Levitical ceremonies continued. This would serve up until: *I will raise it up in three days!* Here, it is the Body of Christ that is intended, of course, the Christ in Glory by the resurrection: He was speaking of the Temple of His own Body [cf. Jn 2: 21; 10:17; Heb 10:20] - *I offer My life in order to take it up again...!*

c. And there is indicated here that the New Economy of Salvation will be taken over exercising the same role as the former earthly temple, which served as the center of the Mosaic religion. Throughout the Gospel of St. John, Jesus compares Himself to the Temple in a veiled manner and commits to His own Person the entire Liturgy and all exercise of religion. Jesus Himself takes the place of Jacob's Ladder [cf. Jn 1:51] - *From His Side will flow the streams of living water* - as the Messianic Temple will provide the source of the streams of salvation [cf. Jn 7:38; cf. Ezk 47:1-12; Jl 4:18; Zc 13:1; 14:8]. This theme is systematically developed by *Heb* under other metaphors.

d. The entire Liturgy is organized by being celebrated in a Sanctuary. In removing the animals from the Temple and in purifying it, the Lamb of God, the Lord is insinuating a new form of Liturgy, one that is different from the old - where the victims of substitution will no longer be animals without reason, and this is the consequence of the fact that the New Sanctuary will no longer be material. This purification is therefore equivalent to the announcement of a suppression of the former. It will be Jesus Christ Himself Who fulfills all this, Who will be offered as the Sacrificial Victim, and Who, in His Resurrection, will inaugurate the New Liturgy. Our Stigmantine spirit invites to follow Him always.

**8. The Celestial Liturgy:** The entire Christian Liturgy will from now on be summarized in Him celebrated in heaven. So, too, in the Heavenly City described by the Apocalypse the Lamb is expressly designated as the Temple [Rv 21:22], i.e., the place of reunion and the intimacy of God with persevering believers: *That they may be one, as we are One, Me in them, and you in Me* [cf. Jn 17:22-23]. According to *Heb*, all the ancient liturgical institutions of Israel are hereby abolished, the animal victims are suppressed. Now, there is only the one Celestial Liturgy, and one sole Celebrant, the eternal High Priest-King-Prophet by Whom all the believers are led into the presence of God.

a. It would seem that the immediate listeners would not have directly understood all the implications of what He was saying. They needed His prophecy to be interpreted in its fulfillment. The Apostles themselves would only have come to grasp the implication of all thus later on: *...and when Jesus had risen from the*

*dead His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the words He had said... [cf. Jn 2:22].*

b. The Holy Spirit would have to inspire into them the full intelligence of the Lord's Gospel of Truth [cf. Jn 14:26: ... *the Holy Spirit will teach you everything and remind you of all I said to you...* [cf. Jn 14:26] - this would be provided for them only after the Resurrection: ... *He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in Him were to receive; for there was no Spirit as yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified ...* [Jn 7:39].

c. Having received His light, the author of *Heb* speculates on the symbolism which St. Jn attaches to the event and became the best interpreter of his thought. Beyond all doubt, as for Gethsemane, he does not refer explicitly to the historical fact of the purification of the Jerusalem Temple, but his implicit allusion leaves little doubt. The text attaches to the incident an importance that is so considerable that for the 4<sup>th</sup> Evangelist, the purification of the Temple by Jesus is the equivalent of a New Consecration: ... *it was the time when the Feast of Dedication was being celebrated in Jerusalem. It was winter...* [cf. Jn 10:22].

d. Jn has no fear in advancing this paradox: the inauguration of the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ in heaven as like today, the on-going Purification of the Temple: ... *It is not as though Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary which was only modeled on the real one; but it was heaven itself, so that he could appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf ...* [cf. Heb 9:23]. From this fact on, the entire New Liturgy depends on this decisive act and serves as its deployment: so much so that the old sacrifices of animals are indispensable for the purification of the earthly temple, while it is necessary that it be the Blood of the Son of God.

d. His death, followed by His Resurrection, permits all of us to enter now into the Temple of the heavens, the Celestial Sanctuary. We are called now by Jesus Christ to continue Priestly Office as long as we live on earth and to celebrate all of this eternally in heavenly Thanksgiving for God's Mercy [cf. Heb 9:24]. It would seem that nothing could harmonize more clearly the two Covenants. As to Original Tent of Meeting in Exodus – Solomon's Temple – the Temple of Leviticus, all were meant to reflect God's residence up above – and all of this serves as a Type of what's coming for us in heaven.

e. The New Liturgical Economy corresponds to the Old, and is inaugurated by an analogous ritual. More precisely, when Jesus purifies the Heavenly Sanctuary, the Christ renews the gesture that He had accomplished in

Jerusalem at the beginning of His terrestrial ministry and bestows on it, its ultimate meaning, fulfillment and its authentic efficacy.

f. From the moment that the Great High Priest disposes of His Blood poured out on the Cross, the ultimate efficacy of the Heavenly Purification occurs. As Jn 2:19 [...*in three days I will raise it up...*!] prophesies the resurrection, and this efficacy places the purification of the Temple in relationship with the death of Jesus and insinuates that the humanity of the Risen Savior will indeed be the center of the New Liturgy - the Faithful will no longer adore the Father either on Mount Moriah, nor on Garizim [cf. Jn 4:21-24].

**9. The Sacred Side of Jesus is the “Entrance” into this Celestial Sanctuary:** According to *Heb*, in purifying the Temple of Heaven the Christ opens too all the Faithful access to God through His pierced side. His Sacrificial Death accomplishes the perfection of His Priestly Office, by disposing of the most holy Victim that ever was, His flesh and His Blood. This is the conception of the Christian and Celestial Liturgy according to *Heb*, and is absolutely in conformity with that of the Apostle of the religion in spirit and in truth - there seems little doubt that Heb depends on Jn!

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## CONCLUSION

### St. Gaspar’s “Integral” Stigmata:

#### The Risen Lord

[1] It seems that for St. Gaspar Bertoni he truly lived by the Sorrowful Stigmata of Good Friday by his lifelong martyrdom of physical suffering – and with it in hope, suffered and shared with the Stigmata of Easter through the Apostolic Mission in God’s will: as the Father sent Me, now I send you!

[2] Fr. Bertoni’s pastoral appeal in the Mystery of the Resurrection is to Seek what is above!

1300: If you have risen with Christ, I have to take on the sonorous expressions of St. Paul and put them on my own lips: .... Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God... [Col 3:1] - .... mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth... [v. 2]. - ...for you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God... [v. 3].

[3] Our 'Resurrection' begins here on earth, through Conversion:

1305: Having thus proposed the future resurrection, St. Paul requires another resurrection of us, a new institution in the present life, for the changing of our ways. When, in fact, an impure man becomes chaste, or an avaricious person becomes merciful, or a wrathful individual becomes meek, there takes place in these instances of conversion a resurrection which is the principle of the future. And how is this resurrection? Because one dies to sin, and resurrects to justice. The former way of life is cancelled, and the new and angelic way almost flourishes anew. Thus, we can say with St. ANSELM: intemperance has died in such a person, and sobriety has risen up; in that young man impurity has died, and purity has risen... On hearing 'new life', let each one seek out in himself a different approach, and great changes.

[4] We bring this about working in cooperation with God's grace; through the Burial of our Sins, we 'rise' for the superior gifts of "Above" through Penance with Him here and now:

1308: This is the counsel of our apostle, and he proceeds: *... For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection...* [Rm 6:5]. With this word 'planting', there is implied also the eventual fruit that is expected in us and from us. Just as the Body of Christ buried in the ground, had for its fruit the salvation of the world - so we, too, planted anew in Penance, we have borne the fruit of justice, of adoption, of sanctification, and of numberless gifts. We will bear also later on the fruits of the resurrection.

1312: To cite still another example, CORNELIUS a LAPIDE relates the story of the Holy Count, Eleazar (Nb 26:63), immobile in his mountainous solitude, lived there a celibate life with his virgin wife, Delphina. She sent him letters to find out how he was getting along. He responded: I am healthy of body and safe. If you wish to see me, look for me in the wound of the side of Christ. For it is here that I dwell; and here it will be easy to find me. You will search in vain in any other place.

Do you see, my hearers, the just idea of a person risen with Christ? Could such a person even yearn for the lowly realities of this life? Could such a one seek for anything else in this life, other than the supernatural and heavenly goods, among which he will live eternally?

- [5] The long Spiritual Winter of sin gives way to the New Spring-time of grace:

1314: Even more fitting is the example that St. AUGUSTINE uses to elucidate this passage, that later St. ANSELM would copy. In the bitter winter even the green tree seems dry to the sight. As the summer approaches, the living root once again is vested with fruit. This is our life, that is much like that winter, when the sun is further away from us and concealed behind the clouds. This sun for us is Christ.

- [6] For Fr. Bertoni, we are constantly being called to a New Life:

1315: We are much like the plants, dry on the outside, and without foliage, without honor, and without the appearance, or the luster of beauty. However, within we have living roots: charity, planted in God, as in a vital, stable, and living earth. The summer will appear, as the glory of Christ comes. And the plants will be seen to come to life again, rising up, and once more give their fruits and vital foliage. There will be the glorious traits of beatitude, both in the spirit as well as in the flesh. Come on now, exclaims St. AUGUSTINE [104], come now, most sweet Jesus, that this pact with You be a firm one for me: that I might die totally to myself so that You alone might dwell within me. Within, totally in recollection, I will keep silence, so that You alone might speak in me. I will be totally at repose, so that You alone might work in me. The Apostle cries out: ... And I live now, not I; but Christ lives in me... [Ga 2:20].

- [7] The spiritual reasons for our joy are that we are already Risen with Christ:

1317: You, though, my hearers, you also prove how true is that which I promised you at the beginning: that my sermon should have been a reason for much joy among you. And so, to keep my word perfectly of abbreviating it as much as possible, I will soon conclude [and I can do this handily, and you are absolutely right, wise that you are!]. At any rate, it is totally fitting for you, and with all diligence to persevere in your holy proposal to tend in a lively way, toward heaven, without even turning an eye to this earth. If you have indeed risen with Christ, seek those realities that are above you, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God: taste those heavenly goods and not the earthly ones [Col 3:1, ff.].

- [8] Fr. Bertoni repeats this as his 'battle-cry': Onward to heaven!

1318: Heavenward, then, my beloved brothers and sisters, to heaven your thoughts, to heaven direct your affections. Elevate your hearts to heaven, where your treasure is, where your glory is, where your life is. The riches of

this earth will flatter you, its honors will enchant you, all of which this earth offers you. But, this is not your life. When our life will indeed appear, we will then seek the delights, the leisure, the repose. And then we will find the riches, but without thorns; the pleasures, but without sadness; the honors, but without jealousies. We will be inebriated by the divine delights [Ps 35:9]. And we will be seated in the beauty, in the tranquil order of peace [Is 32:18]. And in the very bosom of God we will have rest from our fatigue, without any necessity to disturb us, without adversities that wear us down, without any worries to upset us.

1322: ... To heaven, to eternal life, to heaven, you have been called. You are already well along your way, and moving along with giant steps. Follow through to the goal, to your heavenly home. You have been enrolled by God for an eternity to be the citizens of heaven, domestics, heirs of God. Upward, then, with all vigor, with all your strength, hurry onward, hasten your steps. The saints await you, already sure as they are of their happiness and solicitous also for yours. Christ awaits you, and has already prepared a place for you - rather, a throne. Why do you hesitate, why look anymore to earth? To heaven, to heaven! If you have risen with Christ...

517: Heaven awaits, that I see opened up above your head. Jesus is sitting there at the right hand of God [Ac 7:55]. He is holding between His hands a crown, and He is inviting you to win it with the victory over that passion of yours. I can see all the saints, who are encouraging you onward to come to where they are now. Do not be afraid, they are saying, do not put it off. Even to us, this ascent seemed too difficult, but the grace in which we placed our confidence has made it very easy for us, all sweetness, by extending its living arms out toward our weakness. Many of us living in this land have sinned just like you have and perhaps even more than you have. However, since fortunately in good time we have renounced the vain pleasures of this world, confiding in the mercies of God. And this is why we are now here to give praise to those mercies forever.

[9] St. Gaspar brings this integral understanding of the Paschal Mystery in his meditations on the Sacred Heart:

# 1759 The prudent and most wise Bride of Christ, the Church, made ingenious because of her love, desired most ardently to see her Spouse, Jesus adored and beloved - and she studies further the more sweet and universal means and the more easy and efficacious incentives. And since human beings, made up of reason and the senses, are not moved very much by matters that are

purely spiritual in order to have them filial in love with these sublime and invisible realities, she makes use of visible realities: such would be the Infant in the Crib, Christ moribund on the Cross; but also His Blood alone, His Name, His Wounds, the Christmas crib, the thorns, the lance, the Cross.

1771: The love of Jesus is much better symbolized by His divine heart. This is the source of that blood shed out of love for us, given life by a most holy soul, deified by the hypostatic union of the Word. That which is to Him totally proper is His being which has always been the most perfect instrument in which there are rendered, and have been rendered, sensible the invisible and ineffable effects of His charity.

His side, opened after His death, is used to show us that Heart, that same Heart wounded by the lance, that WOUND RETAINED IN HIS GLORIOUS BODY, render the Heart so sweet, evident, divine, so much so that it is impossible to venerate the Wounded Heart without remembering and venerating His immense love

[10] Sermon on the Sacred Heart: Fr. Bertoni preached for the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Among his thoughts, we find the following:

... The humanity of Jesus Christ is not adored separately and for itself; but always as united to the divine Person, and because of this; the Incarnate Word receives with his flesh a single and identical adoration...

The object of the Feast of the Sacred Heart consists in that wonderful and truly divine union of realities, formed both of that human and wounded heart of Jesus, as well as of His most holy soul, through which His heart lives, and also by the Person of the Divine word... His heart is the symbol and the seat of those sufferings and the anguish endured by that heart...

The prudent and most wise Spouse of Christ, the Church, made ingenious by her love, most ardently yearns to see her Spouse adored and loved and still seeks more universal and appealing means, as well as simpler and more efficacious incentives to bring this about... such as the Infant in the Crib, the dying Christ on His Cross; but also His Blood, His name, His Wounds ... the Cross...

... It has never been the custom of the Church to solemnize with a proper Mass and Office the divine attributes, the interior virtues and abstract perfections of Christ - but, only under some sensible object that would clearly represent these, or some fact evident to the senses, or some mystery that would the more vividly impress itself. For example, the Church does not venerate the patience of

Christ without a symbol, or mystery: as Wounds, the Passion, the Cross...

Jesus' love is much better symbolized by His Divine Heart ... The open side, after His death, customarily shows us that Heart, the same Heart wounded by the lance, that wound preserved in His glorious body make of it such an appealing, evident, divine symbol, that it is impossible to venerate the wounded heart without remembering and venerating His immense love... The abyss of misery calls out to the Abyss of Mercy...

## FINALE

[11] Fr. Bertoni often treated of his own immense personal sufferings in terms of the sacred Stigmata, as being wounded, but not dead! In his Letter 104 of May 15, 1826, he wrote to Mother Naudet:

9447: Dear Reverend Mother,

I render supreme thanks to the charity of Your most illustrious Reverence, for the Novena and for the fascicle that you have lent me. The Lord has been helping me for a time much against my merits, with the prayers of His faithful servants. My health has begun to go downhill, but He wills me wounded, and not dead. In this way I will be able to serve Him, and not to abuse His graces, and to do that penance which is necessary for me to do.

Letter 130: His Wounds [March 9, 1828] of Life:

9510: ... I do offer the Holy Mass, but I do not think that I can say that I am getting much better. My legs are not well, as the wound on the right swells a bit, with a kind of vague pain, which I really do not want to heed. I have been going patiently along up to this point, but now I see that nature is not helping me very much so I take the liberty of asking you to pray a Novena once more with the Holy Prince, because it does seem that the Lord allows me to keep going on the strength of these extraordinary helps...

[12] While many of his letters to his intimate friend, Fr. Louis Bragato, were for the most part destroyed, Fr. Bertoni did offer some precious insights in this regard – as in his Letter 2, of November 18, 1835:

9689: Only keep in mind continuously, that bearing some distinct mark of honor which God imposes upon you, as does our Sovereign, that the greater you are, so much the more humble yourself in all things [Si 3:20]; and if you cannot be in our small house bodily, be there spiritually as in the clefts in the rock [cf. Ct 2:14], in the Wounds of our most lovable and humble Savior, where

I leave you, embracing you with all my heart.

[13] These principles permeated Fr. Bertoni's entirely consecrated life as is evidenced by the advice also in a retreat he gave to the seminarians - for the second Prelude, Fr. Bertoni offers this:

... Imagine that you see Him, as He appeared to some of His disciples, so full of life, and with the scars of His Wounds, inviting you, too, to heaven, to where He is now going: 'I go to prepare a place for you...' [cf. Jn 14:2]

In the course of his Meditation to Priests and Seminarians, the preacher considers Christ's Resurrection as the model of our sanctification [cf. Rm 4:25]. In His glorified state, Jesus has retained the marks of his Sacred Stigmata:

... For Christ, it was a victory ... The glorious life is a new life: to be transformed into that... is achieved by a profound change. 'When Christ was raised from the dead, we might live a new life...' [cf. Rm 6:4]... Christ has entered with the signs of His wounds: 'this is the price', He says, 'with which I bought this Kingdom. It cannot be had for anything less....

[14] For the Canonization of St. Veronica Giuliani [1839], Fr. Bertoni was invited to preach:

... With certain extraordinary individuals, it has pleased the Lord to manifest the spiritual nuptials with sensible signs, and with certain formalities that are observed in human marriages, as in the life of St. Catherine of Siena, and a few other saints of the highest sphere. In order to dispose her the more for such an honor, God granted her many graces and visions: of Jesus Christ, who comforted her and stipulated the nuptial pact; of the Virgin Mary, who appeared to her seated on a magnificent throne with St. Catherine and St. Rose, assuring her of her impending nuptials, and showing her the wedding ring, and instructing her on the most sublime virtues.

On Holy Saturday, Jesus Christ also appeared to her, informing her of her nuptials on the next day, and showing her also the precious ring ... When the time came for Communion, in which the marriage would be contracted, she was enabled to hear the Angels singing the sweet melody: Come, o Spouse of Christ...!

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### The End!

The mysticism of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni was a “Mysticism of Ecclesial Service”, expressed through the Pauline [cf. Rm 12:1, ff.] and Ignatian ideal of obsequium. The Stigmatine Founder lived a consecration of abandonment toward the Most Holy Trinity, and a total availability toward the Church. His “total service of God” in the fulfillment of the divine will, was expressed in the purpose he proposed for the community he founded: *Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance [obsequium] of Bishops.*

The human sufferings of life are meant to be offered in union with those of Jesus Christ [cf. 1 P 2:3, ff.]. He will lead us to unite all of ours with the prayers of the Church, through Christ our Lord. This inspiration is the ultimate source of Christian Hope, as it will lead to everlasting life. Fr. Bertoni’s prophetic integrality in his Contemplation of the integral Paschal Mystery is the basis of our hope by His Wounds, ours are healed [cf. Is 53:5, cf. 1 P 2:21, ff.].

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