

A Little of Our Experience with the Tireless Apostolic Missionary

Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS

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Rev. Joseph Henchey, CSS

All started with our devotion to St. Gaspar Bertoni, since we moved close to a Stigmatine Parish in Campinas, SP, Brazil, in 1991. Then it happened that, on early 2001, my husband Vicente and I moved to Texas, USA, due to his job. Then, trying to make contact with the American Stigmatines, finally on early 2003 we found out a website honoring St. Gaspar Bertoni, created by Fr. Henchey, who immediately gave us a warm welcome after we contacted him through the site. He had just published it, just after returning home from his many years serving in Rome.

Afterwards, we started a frequent communication with him, and later on that same year we had opportunity to visit him in the Stigmatine property in Waltham, MA. He was serving in a Seminary at the neighbor city of Weston, and it was when visiting his office there that we started our plans to work together. When showing us the huge collection of his works in hard copies in the book-cases, he said: "I would like they could be useful to the present and future generations of Stigmatines'. At that moment, having in mind the importance of those studies for the Stigmatine Congregation and the Church, we realized we could do something to help him to accomplish that.

Returning home, I started to edit his works, in order to make them more readable. He had typed them himself, and because his eye-sight problems, there were many typos and other issues that required a review. I started also some translations into Portuguese. Little by little, the works in his website were being replaced by edited ones. Not long after that we assumed his website, and a little later also the one of the American Stigmatines [www.stigmatines.com].

Fr. Henchey used to fill all his vacations in the Seminary travelling widely to preach retreats and giving courses, lectures and spiritual direction to priests, religious and the laity. He used to stay a week with us during his long summer trips, when we could make more plans together and Vicente could give him technical assistance in his computer and internet issues.

It was wonderful to be with him during the celebrations of his Priestly Golden Jubilee, in 2006 (see picture). Just after that, he moved to serve in the Mundelein Seminary, next

to Chicago. In 2009 he was appointed to serve at the Dunwoodie Seminary, in Yonkers, NY, and in the nearby Stigmatine Parish in White Plains. We traveled and helped him to setup his office, computers and network in all these new places, making sure he could count on all the technological resources he needed.

While we always did our best to give him the support he needed in his ministry, we were certainly the most benefited in this experience, as he gave us his spiritual direction, what is absolutely invaluable. As lay Stigmatines, we had the opportunity of being always close to him in his journey as a tireless Stigmatine Apostolic Missionary. Through him we had opportunity to know better the wonderful charism of hope of St. Gaspar Bertoni. All of this is a treasure to us.

Fr. Henchey is now in heaven, but he will be always alive through the great legacy he left to all of us, through his huge collection of magnificent works. He developed many studies on the charism of St. Gaspar Bertoni, the Stigmatine Original Constitutions, the history of the Stigmatine Congregation, our patrons the Holy Spouses Mary and Joseph, the Sacred Stigmata of O.L.J.C., the Stigmatine Seal, and so on. For many years he was the Spiritual Director of the Stigmatine Laity, through lectures and monthly letters. All his works are available in his website 'A Tribute to St. Gaspar Bertoni' (www.st-bertoni.com), and our apostolate is to continue taking care of his works and website for the rest of our lives.

May the example of Fr. Henchey continue inspiring all of us, Stigmatine religious and laity, to carry out our mission of making St. Gaspar Bertoni better known in this world!

Tereza & Vicente Lopes

From Cape Canaveral, Florida, USA



L-R: Vicente Lopes, Fr. Edwin Limpiado, Archbishop Moacyr Vitti, CSS, Fr. Joseph Henchey, CSS, Archbishop Timothy Dolan [former student of Fr. Henchey and now Cardinal of New York, NY] and Tereza Lopes – on March 26, 2006, just before the beginning of Fr. Henchey's Priestly Golden Jubilee celebration in Woburn, MA, USA.