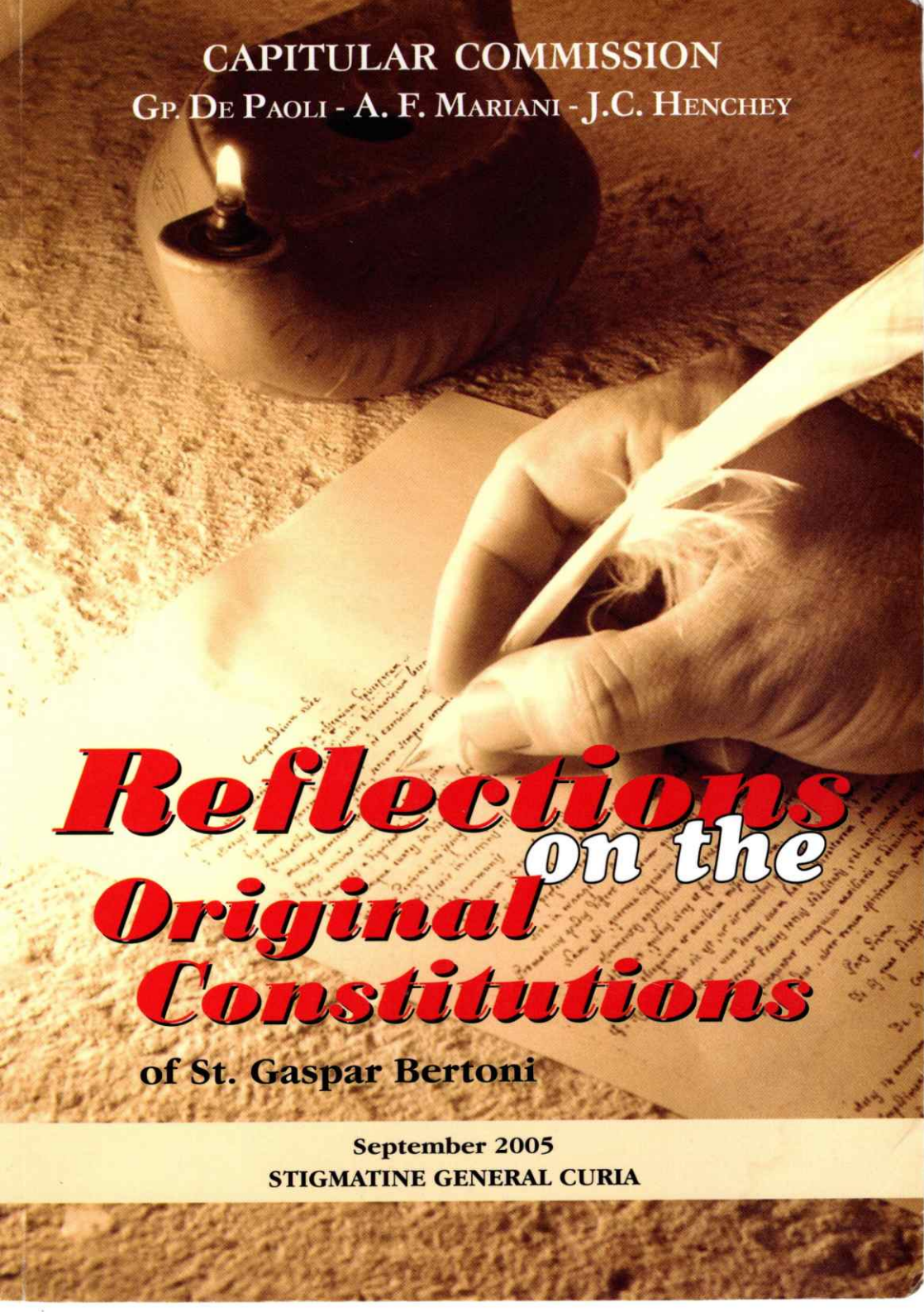




CAPITULAR COMMISSION
GP. DE PAOLI - A. F. MARIANI - J.C. HENCHEY

Reflections **on the** ***Original*** ***Constitutions***

of St. Gaspar Bertoni

September 2005
STIGMATINE GENERAL CURIA

REFLECTIONS
on the Original Constitutions
of St. Gaspar Bertoni

Capitular Commission

REFLECTIONS

on the
Original Constitutions
of St. Gaspar Bertoni

September 2005
Stigmatine General Curia



CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED STIGMATA OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

GENERAL CURIA

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Dearest Confreres,

after the "pocket" edition of the Founder's Constitutions and the important critical edition of them, the *Intercapitular* Commission for the Studies on the Founder's Constitutions, composed by fr. Giampietro de Paolo, fr. Joseph Henchy, fr. Mariani Alberto Francisco and fr. Bruno Facciotti and lead by fr. Antonio Piccirillo *General Vicar*, has gathered in a new book several studies concerning the Founder's Constitutions, as a result of researches and reflections of each member of the commission during these years.

The written works are preceded by an important document (Convergences), indicating the main points of agreement of the Commission itself about the interpretation of the Founder's Constitutions, also to show that eventual different points of view inside each study converge towards the only goal to help us to better understand this fundamental text of our Father, written for us "drop by drop".

I thank with my heart our confreres for the great and precious work done in these years with much perseverance and dedication.

These studies are really very important and their efficacy and vitality will be understood in the long run.

The effort to translate them into the three most spoken languages of the Congregation shows the desire to allow our confreres to understand them in the clearest possible way.

I hope these “efforts” will help our Provinces, especially in the field of the first formation, to know the life, the works and the writings of our Saint Founder always better, infusing in our heart a deeper love for him and for our Congregation’s life.

Renewing my thanks for the work done, I ask all of you to study it carefully and seriously.

Invoking the support of the Holy Spouses and the intercession of St. Gaspar Bertoni, I send my kindest regards to all the communities.

Rome, September 30, 2005

Fr. Andrea Meschi
Superior General

COMMISSION FOR THE ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FOUNDER

From October 2 – 12, 2003, a Capitular Commission gathered at Waltham MA. Its purpose was ‘to study the *Constitutions* of the Founder in a scientific manner, as the prime Document upon which Fr. Bertoni wished to form his Institute [**General Deliberation, 9**]. The following members took part in this meeting:

Fr. Anthony Piccirillo, Vicar General;
Fr. Gianpietro DePaoli, from the Sacred Heart Province;
Fr. Joseph Henchey, from the Province of the Holy Spouses;
Fr. Albert Francis Mariani, from Holy Cross Province;
Fr. Bruno Facciotti, from the Province of St. Mary of Hope.

Each of the members was called upon to present to the group the work he had prepared in writing, the subject-matter being in accord with what had been previously agreed to among them:

Fr. Gp Depaoli: presented a two-fold study:

- 1.] ‘Mission’, Popular Missions, Apostolic Missionary
- 2.] Apostolic Missionaries for the assistance of Bishops. The plan of St. Gaspar Bertoni as understood by his sons.

Fr. B. Facciotti: presented a synopsis of the various texts, preliminary drafts, of the *Original Constitutions* drawn up by St. Gaspar Bertoni. [This work remains incomplete].

Fr. J. Henchey: ‘St. Gaspar Bertoni and his *Original Constitutions*: A Study of the Sources and Content.

Fr. A. F. Mariani: A Historical-Scientific Research Project: On the Interpretation of the End” and the “Manner” of the Founder’s *Constitutions* [Deliberation 9].

The invitation of the Council of Superiors [Sezano, September 2002], asked the Commission ‘to make every effort to bring out more that which unites the members of our Congregation, rather than to

maintain personal opinions which divide us, and to present the results of their research in a language understandable to all the Confreres.' The Commission members, through a fraternal dialogue and loyal exchange of views, have gathered here the essential points of their agreement, for a reading of the *Original Constitutions*. There follows here their agreement on a synthesis as well as a few proposals .

POINTS OF AGREEMENT

1. The **Apostolic Mission** is, as it was for the Apostles, a participation in the Mission of Christ; for every person and for every Institute, this constitutes a mandate of unique originality.

2. The translation made by Fr. Bertoni regarding the practical insertion into this Apostolic Mission is provided by the **figure of the Apostolic Missionary**, in his being conformed to Christ and to His Mission.

3. The *portrait* of the Apostolic Missionary is progressively depicted in Fr. Bertoni through a **series of spiritual, mystical and apostolic experiences** culminating in the Mission at St. Firmus. However, this had already begun during his years as a seminarian, 'in wishing to lead a religious life', in teaching catechism to the children, his dedication to the Marian Oratories, his work at St. Sebastian's, in the 'model, or the symbol', that the Lord showed him, in the translation of the relics of St. Gualfardo, in his commitment to the spiritual direction of the Sisters in the Convent at St. Joseph's, in his experience noted in his Diary, 'Look at This, My heart', in his meetings with other priests, and his Retreats for them, his cooperation in the formation of seminarians, and in his dedication to the schools at the Stimate.

4. The originality of the *figure* of the Missionary in Fr. Bertoni's Plan is given in the coming together of the two elements of CF 1: **Apostolic** and *in obsequium Episcoporum*.

In the word **Apostolic** here reference is being made to the commitment of the Apostolic Missionaries in an organic activity of evangelization [in support of the ordinary pastoral activity], according to

the demands of times and places. This commitment is characterized in the words *in obsequium Episcoporum*, which expresses communion and the apostolic service to the Bishops.

5. The Modality [*modus* : CF 2] – Fr. Bertoni found the modalities of the ecclesial service for the Apostolic Missionary in the Decree he received from the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith and he offers these for the reflection of all of his sons:

*The Manner: under the direction and dependence of the ordinaries of the places where it will their task to give Missions. To these Ordinaries, the men must obey in all that pertains to the exercise of the **Apostolic Mission**, in receiving from them the permission, with the necessary faculties, and always observing their dispositions regarding the place and the time for exercising that ministry.* [From the Decree of Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith. December 20, 1817].

6. The *munus apostolicum* [= the apostolic service]. The plan of Fr. Bertoni opens up into a vast ministerial horizon: the celebration of the sacraments [CF 162]; service to the Christian Community, contained in the formula *Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium* [CF 164], and the Christian formation of the youth [165-166]. Fr. Bertoni, at the same time, in order to guard the missionary dimension of the *Euntes Docete* [cf. Mt 28:19], 'does not admit of the ordinary care of souls' [CF 290]

A ministry translates the ideal of the Apostolic Missionary of Fr. Bertoni the more it is inserted into the dynamic ecclesial plan of evangelization, and/or of re-evangelization [diocesan or national projects pertaining to the Christian communities, the Clergy, religious institutes and youth groups].

7. St. Gaspar Bertoni, formed in the Ignatian spirituality from the time he was a young seminarian, under the direction of Fr. Galvani, cultivated a profound love and zeal for the Church. He was given the title 'Apostolic Missionary' through the Popular Mission in which he participated at St. Firmus. He was likewise a missionary to the youth, a guide and director for the clergy, a convinced supporter of the need of the renewal of the Christian community. Imbued with the Word of the

Lord, he prophetically noted the need of responses that would be more adequate to the needs of the times: he fathomed the more deeply with his friends from the clergy the study of the theology of St. Thomas and the Moral of St. Alphonsus. And in a series of intensifying mystical and apostolic experiences, that Plan for a Congregation of Apostolic Missioanries matured. Fr. Bertoni remains the 'living rule' for all his sons; in his *Constitutions*, his missionary spirit is transparent as there is the oft-repeated demand for a spiritual and doctrinal perfection, toward which it is required for each to tend in an incessant way.

8. The *obsequium Episcoporum* is, in the first place, a service and communion with the Bishop, an expression of ecclesial availability and confident abandonment to God. There is also further contained here the commitment to a preparation that would be lived to the greatest extent possible, asking each confrere to tend to the perfection of his ministry, that is called to mind in the formula, 'Apostolic Missionary.'

9. The Congregation, in its history, was not always able to give evidence with equal fullness the richness of Fr. Bertoni's original project. This was due to a variety of factors: sometimes the social, cultural and religious context; or, due to the limited resources available. At some times, the Congregation was more greatly expressed in commitment to schools and to the Christian education of the youth; at other times, in the Holy Parish Missions; and at times to formation of the Clergy and work in seminaries; at times, too, in the ordinary care of souls, and to the Missions '*ad gentes*'. However, it is only just to recognize that the Congregation has conserved in its quest and also in suffering, the desire a more faithful translation of its charismatic identity.

PROPOSALS

1. To publish in a kind of pocket edition, by June 2004, the *Constitutions* of the Founder in the various local languages.

2. To publish the *Synopsis* being prepared by Fr. B. Facciotti.

3. To publish before the next General Chapter of 2006, the Founder's

Constitutions of the Founder [in Latin, the local languages, with notes, references and introductions.

4. To publish a text containing the contributions of the studies, [as these were presented at Waltham] for a better understanding of the *Original Constitutions*.

The Commission submits to the judgment of the Superior general, for an eventual approval, these POINTS OF AGREEMENT and PROPOSALS.

In gratitude to the Holy Spouses for their assistance, our wish is that the work that unfolded here might be useful for the benefit of the entire Congregation.

Waltham, October 11, 2003.

St. Gaspar Bertoni



COMPENDIUM RUDE

of his
ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS

Rev. Joseph Charles Henchey, CSS

THE AUTHOR



Rev. Joseph Charles Henchey, CSS, was born in Woburn, Massachusetts, USA, not far from Boston, in June 2, 1930.

He entered the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata on January 6, 1946, and was ordained a Stigmatine Priest in Rome, Italy, in July 1, 1956.

He spent 32 years in Rome - 10 years as General Councilor - and also taught at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas [*ANGELICUM*] [PUST] in Rome for more than 20 years. Among his illustrious students were two Brazilian Stigmatines: † Most Rev. Moacyr José Vitti, CSS, present Arch-Bishop of Curitiba, in Paraná State, and † Most Rev. José Alberto Moura, CSS, Bishop of Uberlândia, in Minas Gerais State, both in Brazil.

Now Fr. Henchey is Assistant Spiritual Director at Blessed Pope John XXIII National Seminary in Weston, Massachusetts, for second career men, desiring to spend their last years as priests.

For all of his Stigmatine life, Fr. Henchey has been a student of St. Gaspar Bertoni, the founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata.

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SUMMARY

The title of this section of St. Gaspar Bertoni's – the *Compendium Rude* - might best be understood as a kind of general introductory synthesis to his entire Original Constitutions. In these first eight Constitutions there are noted the principal elements of the 12 Parts of his Constitutions which follow.

This style of writing may be compared in some way to St. Augustine's *Enchiridion* - or, to St. Thomas' *Compendium Theologiae* - a kind of general synthesis of the subject matter being treated. Fr. Bertoni followed the style of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who, in his Constitutions prefaced the entire volume with what he called the *Formula* - this is a series of paragraphs worked out by the Founder, the submitted to the Holy See. These statements were later returned by the Holy See to the Society of Jesus – and St. Ignatius used some of them as the preface to his work – to which he gave the title the *Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus*.

Here Fr. Bertoni, in his *Compendium Rude*, offers us a kind of 'Preview of Coming Attractions', the main points – that will follow in his 314 Original Constitutions.

ABBREVIATIONS, QUOTATIONS AND NOTES USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Abbreviation or Quotation	Meaning
# (##)	Number(s) of the CF
+	The "+" sign in the Jerusalem Bible is an indication meaning that there is much more information that can be obtained in its footnotes at that text.
AG	Document of Vatican II on the Missions - the Document is entitled: <u>AD GENTES</u> , meaning "To the Nations"
Art.	Article
bis	Second time
c. (cc.)	Chapter(s)
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
cf.	Confer
CF	Constitutions of the Founder
CS	Collectanea Stigmatina - these are 4 volumes [as in: CS I, CS II, CS III and CS IV] - it was compiled by one of the greatest Stigmatine historians, Fr. Joseph Stofella ⁱⁱ , CSS, beginning around the year of 1952.
CSJ	Constitutions of the Society of Jesus [St. Ignatius' Constitutions]
f. (ff.)	Follow page(s) or verse(s)
Ibi (or "ib")	It is an abbreviation of the Latin " <i>ibidem</i> ", and is an editorial short-cut, which means: there; in the same place.
Id	"Id." is a writer's tool meaning "idem", in the same place, or book
Lib.	Book
MP	Founder's Private Memorial
MssB	Manoscritti Bertoniiani - all typed in five volumes by Fr. Luigi Benaglia ¹ , CSS - these are all the writings of Fr. Bertoni - they have also been printed out by computer in five volumes with marginal numbers for easy reference.
n. (nn.)	Number(s)
NB	NOTA BENE [" <i>note well!</i> " - " <i>pay attention!</i> " - usually used in English and Italian manuscripts - from the Latin]

NT	New Testament
o.c. (op. cit.)	“opus citatum” – the work already quoted - it usually means a work cited earlier in the work.
OT	Old Testament
p. (pp.)	Page(s)
Ps (Pss)	Psalm(s)
Psalms number	The Psalm number refers always to the Latin Vulgate. When are quoted two numbers, the second one refers to the modern Bibles, where the Psalm 9 was divided into two.
q. (qq.)	These are abbreviations for: <i>Question/Questions</i> - these are abbreviations usually used with St. Thomas Aquinas.
ss. (ff)	Follow pages (or verses) [from the Italian <i>seguenti</i>]
v. (vv.)	Verse(s) of the Sacred Scripture

Notes	Meaning
Footnotes	Author's complementary notes regarding terms and nouns used in this document, in numeral sequence (1, 2, 3...), in the same page (or following), at the bottom.
Endnotes	Author's complementary notes regarding terms and nouns used in this document, in Roman numeral sequence (I, ii, iii, iv...) at the end of the document.

PRESENTATION

ST. GASPAR BERTONI
AND HIS
COMPENDIUM RUDE

Fr. Joseph Stofella, CSSⁱⁱ, [1885-1966] is remembered among the most gifted and diligent historians of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ. He prepared the first public edition of the *Original Constitutions* of the now canonized Founder, Fr. Gaspar Bertoni -1777-1853] ¹. Among his 'historical notes' ², Fr. Stofella writes:

...The Servant of God took a line for the Formula of the Institute from the words of the Decree of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, December 20, 1817, which had conferred on him the title of Missionarii Apostolici, integrating this with the incisive addition, in obsequium Episcoporum...

It is in the hope of presenting more fully the 'content' and meaning of Fr. Bertoni's *Compendium Rude*, [CF ## 1-8] and its being *explicitated*, developed throughout the course of the 314 *Original Constitutions* that this study is dedicated.

¹ *Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni, Fondatore dei Preti delle Sacre Stimate di N.S.G.C. Testo originale latino con traduzione italiana, introduzione storica e note.* Verona: AMB. Anno Santo - giugno 1950.

² Cf. *ib.*, pp. 18, Note 33, ff.

ORIGINAL CONSTITUTIONS GENERAL PLAN

[A] IGNATIAN INFLUENCE

Throughout much of his life, St. Gaspar Bertoni developed a most vibrant devotion toward St. Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Society of Jesus³, and the Jesuit Saints who followed him. It is well documented, for example, that the young Jesuit Saint, Aloysius Gonzaga, served as the model of the infancy and childhood of Gaspar Bertoni⁴ - thus, the knowledge of St. Ignatius and familiarity with the traditional forms of the spiritual doctrine proper to the Jesuit Founder go very far back in Fr. Bertoni's life - if not to his infancy - then at least to his early childhood. Saint Aloysius would then be chosen as the natural Patron of the Stigmatine Founder's *Apostolic Mission in behalf of the Youth*⁵.

It is well substantiated that Fr. Bertoni was much inspired throughout his adult and priestly life by St. Ignatius of Loyola - one of his

³ cf. P. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, CSS, "La divozione del Servo di Dio per il Fondatore della Compagnia di Gesù", in *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. IV, fasc. II, pp. 248-249. This "Ignatian" influence most likely was begun in Fr. Bertoni through the spiritual director of his own early school years, Fr. Louis Fortis, temporary teacher at St. Sebastian's, Verona. When the Jesuits were reinstated, perhaps around 1814, he rejoined the Company, was elected Provincial of Rome, and then, Fr. General in 1820 - he died in 1829. [cf. FR. JOSEPH STOFELLA, in *Collectanea Stigmata*, Vol. 1, fasc. 2, note # 3, on p. 106].

⁴ cf. *Cause of Canonization*, Doc. XXI, p. 204. cf. also FR. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, CS I, p. 101.

⁵ cf. Fr. Bertoni's preached Sermons honoring the Patron of Youth at least on three occasions early in his priestly life: "Love for God", to be imitated as lived by St. Aloysius, for the 2nd Sunday of the Saint, the IIIrd of Pentecost - June 27, 1802 - MssB ## 649-671 - cf. also *Pagine di Vita Cristiana*, Vicenza 1947, pp. 174-183; "St. Aloysius' Purity", proposed to be imitated on the IIIrd of his Sunday's, June 5, 1803 - MssB ## 794-817; "Notes for a Panegyric in Honor of St. Aloysius Gonzaga" - MssB ## 1572-1708.

“principles” was to choose a Saint of the same vocation as a kind of mirror⁶. Regarding the Jesuit Founder, there is another central entry in this same Spiritual Diary by Fr. Bertoni just about six weeks later, when he was beginning his annual retreat with some of his companions⁷. They made a visit to the Saint’s altar in these Autumnal Ember Days set aside for the Spiritual Exercises of the Veronese Clergy and the candidates for Ordination to the Priesthood that year. In Fr. Joseph Stofella’s Commentary on the Stigmatine Founder’s Diary, he remarked that this day in St. Gaspar Bertoni’s life was of prime importance. From this indication onward, it seems that on this date - September 15, 1808 - Fr. Bertoni looked on this as the date of his insertion into the adorable plans of the Lord⁸.

This Ignatian influence is noted again about two years later, when the former Benedictine Abbot, His Excellency, Innocent Liruti, Bishop of Verona, summoned Fr. Bertoni to his office, perhaps in May or June of 1810. The Bishop assigned Fr. Bertoni to preach the fall retreat at the Seminary. Through a chance meeting with the Oratorian, Fr. Antonio Cesare, Fr. Bertoni received a copy of the Saint’s great classic, *The Spiritual Exercises* - which he then very carefully copied, word for word⁹. This first course of this classic for a retreat to priests and seminarians was for the Stigmatine Founder a kind of investiture of a

⁶ cf. Fr. Bertoni’s *Memoriale Privato*, July 30, 1808 [Liturgical celebration of the Jesuit Founder]: ... *Per fare l’esame bisogna pigliarsi un Santo della medesima vocazione come per ispecchio: allora si trova di che confessarsi ogni giorno: tutto che si manca da quella perfezione è difetto...* [cf. Cause of Canonization, Doc. XXXV, n. II].

⁷ cf. *Memoriale Privato*, September 15, 1808: ... 15. *Introduzione agli Esercizi. In una visita coi compagni all’altare di S. Ignazio molta divozione e raccoglimento con gran soavità interna, e qualche lagrima, benché la visita fosse breve. Pereami che il Santo ne facesse buona accoglienza, e ne invitasse a promuovere la maggior gloria [di Dio], siccome egli fece, e per le stesse vie, benché non in tutti que’ modi ch’egli poté usare. Parvemi che volesse dirci. ‘Su, via soldati di Cristo, accingetevi di forza, pigliate lo scudo della fede, l’elmo della salute, la spada della parola divina, et pugnate cum antiquo serpente. Fate rivivere il mio spirito in voi, e in altri per vostro mezzo.’*

⁸ cf. FR. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, “Il ‘*Memoriale Privato*’ del Ven. Gaspare Bertoni [1808-1813], in: *Collectanea Stigmatina*, Vol. IV, fasc. 1, p. 40.

⁹ cf. FR. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, “Ven. Gaspare Bertoni. *Esercizi Spirituali agli Ecclesiastici*”, Preface, in: CS I, p. 100, 102, 103.

very special Apostolic Mission to the Clergy which in one form or another, would last as long as his life ¹⁰.

It should be noted that still another member of the Company of Jesus exerted major influence on Fr. Bertoni's formative years. This would be the Jesuit Bishop, Gian Andrea Avogadro - from whom Fr. Bertoni received an enduring 'sacramental ministry': the Sacrament of Confirmation, Sacred Tonsure, the four Minor Orders [in vogue in those years], and all three major orders of that time: Sub-diaconate, Diaconate and Priesthood ¹¹, all from Bishop Avogadro.

Among Fr. Bertoni's manuscripts, there has come down a copy of the *Exercise of Perfection*, of the Jesuit spiritual writer, Fr. Alphonsus Rodriguez. This unusual hand-written document manifests examples of Fr. Bertoni's own marvelous penmanship, along with that of two early companions, Fr. Matteo Farinati and Fr. Gaetano Allegri - three young priests who enjoyed an early close association also in their reflections on Ignatian spirituality ¹². Throughout other writings of Fr. Bertoni, there have been noted citations and extracts from no less than four different biographies of St. Ignatius. All of these indications in Fr. Bertoni's life are evidently the fruit of much study and spiritual reading accomplished with his pen in hand. His purpose seems to have been, according to Fr. Stofella, that of following as closely as possible in the footsteps of Saint Ignatius in the ways of the Lord ¹³. The first biographer of the Stigmatine Founder, Fr. Gaetano Giacobbe, noted that the admiration and study that Fr. Bertoni dedicated to St. Ignatius' life and works resulted in his *copying word for word*, some of his writings ¹⁴.

Fr. Stofella goes on to say that St. Ignatius was indeed considered to have had the same vocation as Fr. Bertoni. The Stigmatine apostolate - Retreats, Parish Missions, Marian Congregations, the instruction of youth, work in Seminaries and the spiritual direction of priests and religious - all would be accomplished with the Ignatian imprint. The very design

¹⁰ cf. FR. STOFELLA, *ib.*

¹¹ *ib.*, p. 101.

¹² *ib.* p. 106, note # 5

¹³ *ib.* pp. 101, f.

¹⁴ *ib.*, p. 103.

- and for the most part, the norms and the spirit of the Congregation that Fr. Bertoni founded, depend principally from the laws and the example of the Company of Jesus. From various practical notes that Fr. Bertoni wrote down in his own hand, it is clear that these were gleaned from the various biographies of the Saint written by Jesuit authors such as Fr. Bartoli and also Fr. Maffei. From these, certain spiritual characteristics of St. Ignatius became evident in the spirituality of Fr. Bertoni: his great assiduity in praying, reading and writing - his expressly noting that study needs to be understood as a great service of God. In the Stigmatine Founder, there developed the union of a most refined prudence, an extraordinary diligence with a total abandonment of himself to God: all bear the Ignatian imprint¹⁵ This would be an indication of St. Gaspar Bertoni's *Apostolic Mission of any ministry whatsoever of the Word of God*.

One further note in this regard is that in the very serious illness that Fr Bertoni suffered in October of 1812, the daily prayer suggested to him word for word by Fr. Luigi Fortisⁱⁱⁱ was the well known *Suscipe per manus...*¹⁶ composed by St. Ignatius. One of the corner-stones of Fr Bertoni's entire spirituality is this one dear to St. Ignatius of Loyola: 'very few are they who know what God would do with them if he were not impeded by them in His plan'¹⁷.

In his long correspondence with Mother Leopoldina Naudet [from 1812-1834], his letters were either that of practical counsels or authentic spiritual direction. This is an indication of his Apostolic Mission toward those in the Consecrated Life. In both of these areas, the mention of St. Ignatius of Loyola is fairly common. Fr. Bertoni states that he personally is reading the Biography of the Saint during an illness of May 1828¹⁸.

¹⁵ cf. FR. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, "La divozione del Servo di Dio per il Fondatore della Compagnia di Gesù", in: CS IV, p. 248.

¹⁶ cf. P. STOFELLA, ib. - CS IV, p. 234.

¹⁷ cf. P. STOFELLA, ib. - CS IV, p. 249. Fr. Fortis is cited as preaching the Triduum in honor of St. Ignatius, in Fr. Bertoni's Letter 33, dated July 25, 1813 - p. 90.

¹⁸ cf. *Epistolario del ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni*. Stigmatini: Verona 1954, Letter # 142, p. 240: ... *La santità vien pian piano, ma intanto non si peggiora; e, io posso qualche poco alzarmi da letto, sebbene mi sia interdetto il muovermi dal sofà... La ringrazio pure del Bartoli, ma avendo voluto leggere la vita di S. Ignazio...*

Earlier he had noted that there was an edition of *The Spiritual Exercises* that had been published to which some alterations and additions had been appended ¹⁹.

Fr. Bertoni told Mother Naudet of the example of the great Saint, who would compare the weak flame of his own intelligence under the bright sunlight of Divine Wisdom ²⁰. As she composed the Rule for her community, Fr. Bertoni again cited the example of St. Ignatius, telling her of the supreme bond of charity ²¹. The Saint reminds Mother Naudet regarding the long interval of time in the Ignatian Rule prior to the definitive admission of any candidate ²². As she wrote her Rule, St. Gaspar offered her a brief synthesis of spiritual theology, citing St. Ignatius ²³.

For Fr. Bertoni, St. Ignatius was the great teacher of prayer, and so very often he quotes the Jesuit Founder's teachings. Fr. Bertoni is being called to another ministry at the seminary, and is asking Mother Naudet to accept this separation. He recalls the example of Fr. Fortis ⁱⁱⁱ of praying with him the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius, during Fr. Bertoni's earlier serious illness ²⁴. He would also quote to his spiritual directee the central principle of St. Ignatius of not anticipating the will of God, but of

¹⁹ ib., Letter # 35, of August 24, 1813, pp. 92, f. In one of his more important letters, # 25, the Saint speaks of the progress in the spiritual life made by L. Naudet and that she must adapt the *Spiritual Exercises* accordingly. This Letter speaks of the Love for Study and he reminds her of one of his favorite themes, she has been favored with a special invitation to the Holy Nuptials - cf. o.c., p. 72. f.

²⁰ cf. ib., Letter 39, pp. 100, f.:... *Questa è pure la condotta che nel maneggio de' grandi affari, teneva il gran Servo di Dio, S. Ignazio Loyola, e... sotto gli occhi nostri, il Servo di Dio, Pio Settimo...*

²¹ cf. ib., Letter 47, June 5, 1814: ... *Sicchè Vostra Signoria vegga, nell'atto che si svincola - com'è volontà del S. Padre e di S. Ignazio - di un legame inconveniente, di lasciare intatto, anzi di stringere al possibile più forte, quel vincolo di carità, il quale è libero e non si deve mai sciogliere...*

²² cf. ib., Letter 9, p. 42.

²³ ib., Letter 6, p. 35:... *Le virtù teologali, ossia divine, sono appunto di quell'ordine: e quindi la cura, la sollicitudine di S. Ignazio che gli atti di queste virtù non cessassero mai, e gli abiti non si minuissero...*

²⁴ ib. Letter 3, Nov. 26, 1812, p. 29.

always following it²⁵. In suggesting that Mother Naudet trust in God, Fr. Bertoni tells her that the Arch-priest [Galvani]^{iv} has taken on the prayerful assistance of St. Ignatius²⁶. St. Ignatius is the great example of surrendering the senses in sublime prayer²⁷.

Of major interest, however, is Fr. Bertoni's Letter 54, written on August 17, 1816 in which he describes for Mother Naudet the kind of Congregation that he believes the Lord wants from him, and also its rule:

*...The Arch-priest Galvani^{iv} is totally committed to the spirit of St. Ignatius. He has offered me the Stimmate^v as an opportune place to establish a Congregation of Priests who would live under the rules of St. Ignatius...*²⁸.

However, it would be a long time before these rules would be written. In his 9th Letter to Fr. Luigi Bragato, dated May 11, 1841, the task is underway:

*...Also pray much for all of us, and for that which I am now writing, and for what I am writing bit by bit, that the Lord might will to turn this to His honor. We do our part, in accord with the grace that God gives for this, and God will certainly do His part - and I do not even want to know what it is that He wishes to do. I am at peace, believing firmly that God can do whatever He wills, and that He always accomplishes what is best, even though this is so often far removed from our very narrow point of view, and at times, even contrary to this. I will bless the Lord at all time, His praise shall forever be in my mouth [cf. Ps 33:2]. And please help me that I might praise and serve Him day and night [Rv 4:8; 7:15], dwelling together in His house through all eternity: the figure of this world is passing away [1 Co 7:31]. Farewell! ...*²⁹

²⁵ ib., Letter 25, March 6, 1813, p. 73: ... *Onde io avevo prevenuta Vostra Signoria a non porre le mani dinnanzi a Dio, se pure doveva prepararne le vie, secondo gli utilissimi detti di S. Ignazio*...

²⁶ ib., Letter 70, p. 151.

²⁷ ib., cf. Letter 126, p. 222.

²⁸ ib., p. 139.

²⁹ cf. *Epistolario*, o.c., p. 325

The fact of this writing, “*in little drops*” [*piccole goccioline*], “bit by bit”, is clear to anyone who would analyze the Manuscripts Fr. Bertoni left behind - there are *various copies of the Original Constitutions*, composed by Fr. Bertoni that have survived - and many notes worked and re-worked again, with copious indications of changes, additions and omissions, on the earlier copy. His *Original Constitutions* were much pondered, prayed over and repeatedly perfected. However, in the end, they were still left incomplete.



[B] THE CONTENT OF THE FIVE 'CHAPTERS'
OF THE IGNATIAN *FORMULA*

PRESENTATION

The definitive *Formula* prefacing the Jesuit Constitutions is constituted by the Papal Bull ¹ of Julius III, *Exposcit Debitum*, dated July 21, 1550. This document made up of nine rather lengthy numbers, is divided into **Five** Chapters, or central ideals for the Community, as follows:

- I. The '**End**' of the Company and its Fundamental Regime [nn. 1 & 2].
- II. The Special **Missionary Mode of Obedience** to the Supreme Pontiff [n. 3 – 5].
- III. The exercise of **Corporative Obedience within** the Company [n. 6].
- IV. **Missionary Poverty** within the Company and the regimen of the scholastics ² [nn. 7-8].
- V. **Miscellaneous**: Other Points more in particular, of this Form of Life [e.g., **no specific Religious Habit; nor Choral Recitation** of the Liturgy of Hours, etc.] [n. 9].

Now, more in particular ³⁰:

³⁰ cf. *Constituciones de la Compania de Jesus. Introduccion y notas para su lectura*. Ed. S. Arzubialde, J. Corella, J.M. Garcia Lomas. Bilbao Mensajero-Sal Terrae 12, pp. 13-23, *passim*

[I] — THE ‘END’ OF THE COMPANY AND ITS FUNDAMENTAL REGIME

1. The first law in dignity and authority in the Institute is the *Formula* of the Institute, the *Fundamental Rule* of the Company, expressed first by Paul IIIrd, and then, more exactly and distinctly, by Julius IIIrd, and approved by many successors in a specific manner. This makes of the Company a community of Pontifical Right. Historically, the *Formula* constituted the first expression of the kind of life to which the first companions of Ignatius experienced themselves being called by God.

2. The Company of Jesus is described in this First Chapter of the *Formula* not in any abstract logic, or deductive definition. Rather, these first two numbers are like the ‘seal’ of the Company. These numbers represent the lived inspiration, that strongly motivates anyone who would enter the Company. The living out of the Vocation is compared to the building of the **Tower** [cf. Lk 14:28-30]. The charism of St. Ignatius made its way onto paper, after first being lived in the hearts of its Founder and first members, and translated into their lives. This is a charism that is only understood when it is truly lived and experienced in both the hearts and the heads of those who are gifted to possess it through the **special grace** of their vocation. A privileged moment in order to understand what the Company of Jesus is only when one can see it incarnated in human beings, in their life-style. After a very long time in various levels of formation, one **progresses** to the fullness of its life. In this level, one needs to be endowed with the one desire of giving all his life, love and service to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Church, His Spouse.

3. The Society which one joins by making solemn vows of chastity, poverty and obedience was *founded chiefly* for this purpose ³¹:

- to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith;

³¹ cf. ANTONIO M. DEALDAMA, SJ, *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. The Formula of the Institute*. Rome: CIS-St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources 1990, pp. 37-54,

- for the progress of souls in the Christian life;
- and in doctrine.

This is the double, or triple aim the Constitutions mean when they speak of giving *aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their fellow-men* [cf. CSJ n. 2, f.] – helping and disposing souls to gain their ultimate end from the hand of God, our Creator and Lord [CSJ n. 156] – aiding human beings to reach their ultimate and supernatural end [cf. CSJ n. 813].

4. The candidate for the Jesuit life is a person who wishes to become a member of the Society:

... Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society – which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus – and to serve the Lord alone, and the Church, His Spouse, under the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth...

To serve as a soldier of God: is a medieval expression meaning religious life. In the Prologue of his Rule, St. Benedict addresses the Novice who is ‘about to join battle for Christ, the true King’. There are many and various rules under which the faithful wage war for God in the Church. The Augustinian Rule speaks of the various cathedral and religious Churches [canons and monks] do battle for God. The expression is from St. Paul:

...sicut bonus miles Christi Iesu. Nemo militans implicat se saeculi negotiis, ut ei placeat, qui eum legit... [2 Tm 2:4].

passim. It goes without saying that the prime intention of St. Ignatius was to serve God in establishing a *Company of Jesus* – competent men, who would live as Jesus Christ did, with the same relationship that He lovingly expressed toward His Father, as the Jesuit would toward the Pope, and the Apostles toward Jesus Christ - F. SUAREZ, in his *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, studies Ignatius’ intention: ... 8. *Qua ratione intelligendum sit Christum Dominum vitam egisse...* 9. *In quibusdam Societas communis vitae modum, a Christo servatum, imitatur* – Cum ergo Societatis finis proximus sit et simillimus fini incarnationis Christi, scilicet, animarum salus, et [it ut a dicam] efficacia redemptionis circa illas, merito etiam Christum imitata est in hoc modo exteriori vitae communis... Quo ergo Societas propensius huic muneri incumbit, eo amplius cum hominibus conversatur, quia non solum in civitatibus habitat, et ad se venientes benevole excipit, sed etiam per vicos et plateas eos quaerit, et per universum mundum peregrinatur, ut omnes Christo lucretur, in quo et Christum et Apostolos imitatur... [cf. Lib. I, cap. IX, pp. 606 b, ff.].

The word *Company* was common at Ignatius' time in Italy to designate a pious association: the 'Company of Divine Love' [the Theatines] - St. Ignatius would refer also to the 'Companies of Sts. Francis/Dominic'. The military connotation of a 'company of soldiers' came later on – and in some circles, contributed immensely to the misrepresentation of both the Institute and its Founder. Thus, the Jesuits simply preferred the name: *the Company of Jesus*.

Under the banner of Christ: echo those of the liturgical hymn, *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* but, there is also a hint of the two standards from the *Spiritual Exercises* [n. 136] of St. Ignatius.

We desire to be designated by the Name of Jesus: Jesuits are in the 'Company of Jesus' in the sense that they are His Servants, and that the Company is named after its leader - and a soldier's Company is named for its Captain – and a squadron is named for its Chief.

To serve the Lord alone, and the Church, His Spouse: the Society is called to serve the Church, in as much as it is the Spouse of Christ, is one reality with Him - as Paul puts it: *Erunt enim, inquit, duo in carne una. Qui autem adhaereat Domino, unus Spiritus est...* [cf. 1 Co 6:15, f.]. This is the *Christus totus* of Augustine. By serving the Church, the Society serves Christ and His Vicar on earth.

5. The specific Aims and Specific Mean³²: the Jesuit is a member of a Society founded chiefly for this purpose:

- to strive especially for the *defense* and the *propagation* of the faith;
- for the *progress* of souls in *Christian life and doctrine* – by means of:
- *public preaching, lectures, and any other ministration whatsoever of the Word of God*;
- and further, by means of the *Spiritual Exercises*,

³² cf. SUAREZ, Lib. IX, *Introductio*, pp. 958-969 a: ...*Cum duplex sit, seu duas praecipuas partes habeat Societas finis, propriam scilicet suorum religiosorum perfectionem, et proximorum salutem, media utrique parti accomodata requirit, ut bene et perfecte instituta sit, et ideo, postquam libro praecedenti de mediis ad priorem finem ordinatis diximus, de his quae propter proximos suscipiuntur, dicendum est. Duo enim sunt in quibus Societas proximos juvare principaliter solet: doctrina, scilicet, et virtus...de Doctrina etiam in I, cc. 5 et 6, satis dictum est, quia cum tractatione de scholaribus Societatis conjuncta erat; solum ergo superest ut de aliis mediis, quae ad excitandos*

- the education of Children and unlettered persons in Christianity;
- and the spiritual consolation of God's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments.

a. **Defense** and **propagation** of the faith – is logical in the sense that this is the first goal – to secure faith in the hearts of believers – and to render believers faithful.

b. Fr. Bertoni's ideal flows from this: the **Progress** to which he dedicates Part IV of his *Original Constitutions* [cf. CF ## 47-68], both **Spiritual** and **Intellectual**, eventually leads to the **Juridical** Progress of Membership, as levels of pertaining to the Congregation [cf. Part V – CF ## 69-82] – and eventually, the **Apostolic, Ministerial, Missionary Progress**, toward the Grade, and the **perfectum opus sacerdotale**, [in Part IX, ## 158-186].

c. Practically speaking, everything is reduced to the *Ministry of the Word of God*, and the *administration of the Sacraments*, administered under obedience, dependence toward, and faculties from, the Bishops, appointed by the Holy Spirit [cf. Ac 20:28] – sometimes seen in their *prophetic*, rather than simply their *cultic* aspect. This makes the Apostolic Mission truly *Christological*, as the Father had sent His Son:

- *Ministration of the Word of God*: is clearly a biblical ministry [cf. Ac 6:2; 20:24]³³;
- **Sacred Lectures**: usually on a Book from Scripture [as Fr. Bertoni shared with the Seminarians of Verona, reflecting on *Genesis*,

affectos. et ad proximorum sanctificationem proxime ordinantur. tractemus.

Possunt autem haec media, ut ex VIIa Parte nostrarum Constitutionum, c. 4, sumitur, distingui in interiora [seu, mera spiritualia], et externa.

Prioris generis sunt bonum vitae exemplum, sancta desideria, et orationes continuae pro salute proximorum, et sacrificia propter eundem finem Deo oblata, quae media omnibus religionibus communia sunt...

... Media ergo externa, quae in praedicatione divini Verbi. Sacramentorum administratione et spirituali proximorum instructione, potissimum consistent, explicanda a nobis sunt, et simul declarabimus privilegia et facultates quas ad haec ministeria exercenda Sedes Apostolica Societati concessit...

³³ Preaching is often the summary of **all** ministry of the Word of God: St. Gregory the Great [In Cantico Canticorum, n. 13] states; ... *veniens Dominus quia sapientiam suam per carnem voluit praedicare...* [ib., n. 16] ...*sapientiam [saecularem] sancta*

Matthew, using the commentaries of St. John Chrysostom; and *1 Kings* based on St. Gregory the Great];

- *the Sacraments*: the Jesuit Constitutions mention only Penance and Eucharist.

These aims and means might all be summarized under the single word: *Evangelization*³⁴.

6. Three Adverbs in the Ignatian Formula:

...*potissimum...praecipue... nihilominus...* some would wrap these under the idea of 'redundancy': ... *founded chiefly for the defense ... and to strive especially ...* Some try to unravel this redundancy: by applying *potissimum* to the *aims* – and *praecipue* to the *means*: but *the Latin does not seem to allow this exegesis*. All the ministries are presented as *means* since they are introduced in the original Spanish by *per* [by means of]. In the end, there is a single aim: *evangelization*.

7. *Gratis Omnino*: the early Society was seized by the ideal that the Company of Apostles aimed at imitating their life-style [cf. Mt 10]. Thus it is concluded that the ultimate aim, charism, of the Society is to preach the Gospel in *imitation of the Apostles*³⁵.

ecclesia despicat, humillimam praedicationis Dominicae incarnationem appetat.... Suarez strikes the same note: ... Quod enim sint Praelati aut Diaconi, materiale quid est [ut sic dicam]: formale autem quod eis ex proprio munere competat officium praedicationis exercendae, sub quo omnia ministeria comprehenduntur, quibus proximorum salus directe procuratur. Illud etiam ex his testimoniis constat, praeferendum esse munus doctrinae et praedicationis Psalmodiae seu cantui ecclesia-stico...[cf S., Lib. I, cap 8, n. 6, pp. 599 a, f.].

³⁴ cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. December 8, 1975.

³⁵ Cf. M.-H. VICAIRE, OP, *L'imitation des Apotres, moines, canoines, mendiants*. Paris: du Cerf 1963; cf. also Suarez: ...*Prima circumstantia explicatae materiae [Votum obedientiae ad Summum Pontificem], non requirere viaticum...* *Secunda circumstantia, ire sine excusatione, tergiversatione...* *Tertia circumstantia, ire quovis mittantur...*cf. Lib VI, c. 4, nn. 10-12, pp. 857 b, f.].

[II] —THE FOURTH VOW *AD EXTRA* – SPECIAL MISSIONARY MODALITY³⁶ OF OBEDIENCE TO THE POPE³⁷

1. The Jesuit ideal is to *imitate the relationship of Jesus to His Father - and the Apostles toward Jesus*. The entire Society and its individual members are campaigning for God under faithful obedience to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. This means that all are being called to live out their commitments under faithful obedience to the Pope. This is a particular kind of dependence, not common to the religious state in general, even though all are called to obey the Pope.

2. Reasons for the Vow: there are three noted in the text, all comparatives for the *greater glory of God*:

- *for the sake of greater devotion and obedience to the Apostolic See;*
- *for greater abnegation of our own wills;*
- *and of a surer direction from the Holy Spirit.*

This clarification was all in response to a Cardinal Ghinucci's opposition in saying that all Christian were called to obey the Pope – not just Jesuits. For the Jesuits these three motives made them unique –

³⁶ SUAREZ explains this *Missionary Obedience*, *ad extra* – this *Missionary Modality*: ...[*Conditio Missionis: Prima circumstantia explicatae materiae, non requirere viaticum* [cf. CSJ n. 573] ... *Unde videtur haec explicatio, ex parte qua respicit paupertatem, ad Votum Quartum pertinet - nihilominus, tamen, ut pertinet ad circumstantias et modum missionis, cadit etiam sub votum missionis*... cf. Suarez, Lib. VI, c. 4, n. 10, p 857 b].

³⁷ For Fr. Bertoni, there is Part IX of his *Original Constitutions*, ## 158-186. For the ideas related in these notes, cf. deAldama, SJ, *The Formula of the Institute*, op. cit, pp. 55, ff.]. Regarding the Fourth Vow, Suarez states: ... *Religiosus non videtur irreligiose facere appetendo maximum vinculum, et obligationem magis indissolubilem cum Deo; vel certe quia illud est quoddam testimonium publicum probitatis et sufficientiae ad omnia munera, seu ministeria suae Religionis*... [Lib. VI, c. 1, n. 3, pp. 837 b].

they were called to serve the Pope *more than others* ³⁸.

3. *Modality of the Fourth Vow*: it is a *special* vow - the common vow of obedience binds all religious to obey the Pope, as he is the first superior of all religious. The spiritual aspect of the vow is more important than the merely juridical aspect. By reserving the *Missions* to himself, the Pope bound the Vicar of Christ – and hence, to Christ Himself – more immediately and more intimately. The Jesuit is called to carry out without subterfuge. The entire meaning of this Fourth Vow of Obedience to the Pope was, and is, in regard to the *Missions*.

4. **Observance**: before those who will come to us take this burden upon their shoulders, they should ponder long and seriously, as the Lord has counseled, whether they possess among their resources enough spiritual capital to complete this tower [cf. Lk 14: 27-30] – i.e., whether the Holy Spirit Who moves them is offering them so much grace that with His aid they have hope of bearing the weight of this vocation.

5. **Availability** ³⁹: all ought to be prompt in carrying out this obligation which is so great, being clad for battle day and night. Promptness, and clad for battle day and night – are biblical ideals repeated in the classics of spirituality. They are called *die noctuque succincti lumbos* [cf. Ex 12:1, ff.] – all being ready for the Exodus journey of the *Apostolic Mission*. This has the Paschal Lamb as its goal. It is this mobility and availability proper to the Society which has determined so many of its characteristics: the exclusion of formal choir recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours – and the perpetual care of both parishes and religious communities.

³⁸ cf. DEALDAMA, *The Formula...* o.c., p. 57.

³⁹ cf. AA.VV., *'En torno a una consigna: Disponibles – El Corazon de nuestra identidad'*: CIS; Roma 1978.

[III] — THE COMMON VOW OF OBEDIENCE *AD INTRA* — TO THE RELIGIOUS SUPERIOR [*CORPORATE OBEDIENCE*]⁴⁰

1. All should likewise vow that in all matters that concern the observance of the Rule they will be obedient to the one put in charge of the Society. This clearly defines the two areas of obedience existing in the Society: a *missionary* obedience to the Pope, and a *corporative* obedience to the Superiors of the Society.

2. In that veneration due to Christ: after His Resurrection Jesus Christ is *present* in the world in manifold ways [cf. AG 7; CCC ## 1088; 1148; 1374; 1378-1379; 2691]: He is present as often as His disciples gather in His company [cf. Mt 18:20]. He is present in the person of the minister of the sacraments — He is present in the preaching of the Apostles [cf. Lk 10:16] — He is present in the sick, hungry, the thirsty, those in prison, or in need [cf. Mt 25:35]. Monastic tradition has always considered the superior as the representative of Christ, from Whom he has received his authority. For St. Benedict, the Abbot takes Christ's place in the Monastery. This may well be the most repeated idea in the Ignatian Constitutions: the superior takes the place of Jesus Christ [cf. CSJ nn. 84; 284; 342; 424; 657; 618; 765].

⁴⁰ cf. DEALDAMA, *The Formula of the Institute*, o.c., pp. 67-73].

[IV] — ...*PRAEDICARE IN PAUPERTATE*... ⁴¹

1. From experience we have learned that a life removed as far as possible from all contagion of avarice and as like as possible to evangelical poverty is more gratifying, more undefiled, and more suitable for the edification of our fellowmen. We likewise know that our Lord Jesus Christ will supply His servants who are seeking only the reign of God what is necessary for food and clothing.

2. The Gospels tell us:

- that during His hidden life, Jesus *earned His livelihood* working as a poor artisan;

- it also tells us that during His public life *He had nowhere to lay His head* [cf. Mt 8:20] and lived on alms alone [cf. Lk 8:1, f.]. It is this *second* type of poverty that, according to the first Gospel, Jesus gave to His Apostles as a norm when He sent them on their apostolic Mission: you received without charge, give without charge; take neither gold nor silver, nor copper for your purses, for the workman deserves his keep [cf. Mt 10:8-10].

- there is a *third* type of poverty in the NT, especially advanced in the *Summaries* of Ac, that may rightly be called *evangelical* because it came about as the result of the *preaching of Jesus Christ*: that of the early Church in Jerusalem, whereby Christians gave up private property and *possessed everything in common* [cf. Ac 2:44-45; 4:32, 36-37].

[V] — *MISCELLANEA: THE MONASTIC CHOIR, RELIGIOUS HABIT & LIFE IN COMMON*

1. *The Choir*: since all the members should be Priests, they should be obliged to recite the Divine Office according to the ordinary rite of

⁴¹ Id., pp. 75-89. cf. also: GUNTER SWITEL, SJ, *Praedicare in Paupertate*. CIS: Rome 1972.

the Church, but privately, and not in common or in choir. The Benedictine theologians maintain that the praying of the Divine Office was part of the worship of each Church and hence, the responsibility of those who served that Church: Canons, whether secular, or regular. As for Monks, the Office was rather a peak moment in their prayer life, since the Monk is supposed to be always in prayer. This spells out the specific character of the Jesuit vocation: though priestly, it is not primarily connected with worship but rather *prophetic* – its role in the Jesuit life being *Missionary*, evangelization - flowing from its *cultic*, missionary service and *worship* [*obsequium*].

2. **Religious Habit:** also in what pertains to food, clothing, and other external things, they will follow *the common and approved usage of reputable priests* – so that if anything is subtracted in this regard in accordance with one's need or desire in spiritual progress, it may be offered, as will be fitting, out of devotion and not obligation, as a reasonable service of the body to God [cf. Rm 12:1, ff.]: ...*Obsecro itaque vos, fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationabile obsequium vestrum...*

The norm here is *honestas clericalis* - in its ultimate purpose, this is meant to be a norm referring to the *Apostolic Missionary austerity of life*.

[C] ST. GASPAR BERTONI:
VARIOUS HAND-WRITTEN COPIES

The edition of the *Original Constitutions* was prepared for printing by the Stigmatines in the Holy Year of 1950, in the Founder's original Latin, with Fr. Joseph Stofella's Italian translation, and copious historical notes, published in April of the following year⁴². In his historical notes of Introduction, Fr. Stofella offers this comment:

...The Servant of God took for the Formula of the Institute the Decree of the Propagation of the Faith, dated December 20, 1817, which conferred on Fr. Bertoni the title Apostolic Missionary - this then was completed with the addition, in obsequium Episcoporum.

As far as the substance of this work is concerned, the Stigmatine Founder drew it generally from that excellent Model⁴³ which is the Company of Jesus, through the Commentary on the Jesuit Constitutions, entitled De Religione Societatis Iesu by the Jesuit theologian, Fr. Francesco Suarez.

To these sources, should be added a Section of 4 chapters ordered toward the internal and external discipline of each individual. The source of these pages is the Summa of St. Thomas Aquinas [cf. CF ## 120-137] and other quotes from the Angelic^{viii} Doctor. Thus, we can say that the entire Rule [of Fr. Bertoni] is for the most part from these sources, along with Scripture.

⁴² *Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni, Fondatore dei Preti delle Sacre Stimate di N.S.G.C. Testo originale latino con traduzione italiana, introduzione storica e note.* Verona: Scuola Tip. A.M.B. 1951

⁴³ GASPAR BERTONI, Letter 51, dated December 21, 1814, in: *Epistolario*, o.c., p. 122.

However, the work of the Servant of God in this code was the entire endeavor of selection, or the drawing up a Compendium [an "abridgment", "introductory synthesis"?], or an adaptation of the Jesuit FORMULA, and the entire effort of ordering its parts. If he did indeed prefer the formulations of others, this was because of several reasons: he found them responding to his own personal conviction, and because he thought these were better accepted by the authorities of the Church - and also because they offered him a means of maintaining better his old slogan of remaining "humble and in the background". This old adage [buseta e taneta] eventually became for him an experienced need. In the mosaic which resulted from all this, it remains true nonetheless that the Servant of God recognized the plan just as he had envisioned it - and as he himself described it - he had received it through an inspiration from Heaven⁴⁴.

Precisely in the very act in which he handed over to his followers the code of that Rule, the moral authority of the Founder remains in its entirety in no less a manner than if the whole code had exclusively flowed from his own thought...⁴⁵.

While Fr. Bertoni characteristically copied many of his texts, it is good to call to mind here also this other comment of Fr. Stofella regarding the Stigmatine Founder's *Spiritual Exercises* preached in the autumn of 1810 to the Clergy of Verona:

... Regarding the fonts that Fr. Bertoni used in compiling his retreat notes, could anyone wonder: 'But, these notes of the Founder, are they not just a copy?' The answer is a resounding 'no': and even if they were, they always present the teaching that Fr. Gaspar made his own. None of the authors indicated by him as sources were in their original setting ever directed specifically for seminarians, or priests. And speaking generally, the same derivations - very often but few in number and presented as a kind of compendium -

⁴⁴ cf. *Original Constitutions*, # 185; cf. FR. GIOVANI MARIA MARANI, *Cenni intorno alla Congregazione* [1855].

⁴⁵ cf. P. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, "Introduzione. 3.] Fonti delle Costituzioni", in: *Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio, D. Gaspare Bertoni... Testo originale latino con traduzione italiana...*, o.c., pp. 18-19.

were then nourished by new scriptural and patristic texts, and thus with an entirely new doctrine **adapted** to his special audience. In the citation of the sources, perhaps more than anything else, there is evidence of the delicate scruples of conscience of St. Gaspar. As for their originality, perhaps there is here a bit less than would be found in other works of this type... The retreat is truly a **compilation of texts**: some from the Jesuit writer, Bartoli, taken directly; some from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, quoted either directly or as presented by other authors, such as explicitly noted by the Servant of God himself. However, there is always permeating throughout his characteristic scruple of attending to the authentic norms established and recommended by Saint Ignatius...⁴⁶.



In the booklet of the *Original Constitutions* printed in 1951 may be found the *Manoscritti Bertoni*⁴⁷. Here the reader finds evidence of how the final Code is preceded by another one - *laboriously worked over*, and *much emended* - proof-positive of Fr. Gaspar having written his beloved booklet little by little [*a piccole goccioline*]. These have been entitled as follows:

*Notes for the Constitutions*⁴⁸ - these have come down to us, much worked over by the Founder, in preparation for the definitive text;

*Autograph Copy of the Constitutions*⁴⁹. This latter is the definitive text which the Stigmatine Community has accepted as the *Original Constitutions of the Founder*. It is readily admitted that this "official

⁴⁶ cf. P. GIUSEPPE STOFELLA, Preface, *Esercizi Spirituali agli Ecclesiastici...* in: CS I, fasc. II, p. 104.

⁴⁷ cf. Vol. V, ## 9846-9970.

⁴⁸ *Appunti per le Costituzioni* [MssB ## 9846-9907]

⁴⁹ *Autographum Constitutionum* [Mss B ## 9908-9970]. [It is somewhat surprising that there are very few biblical quotes in the printed edition - whereas the *MssB* give evidence of ample biblical support].

text” of the *Original Constitutions* was left “imperfect, incomplete” at the death of the Founder, June 12, 1853.

In this initial study on the sources of the texts, the interest is on the over-all plan of the *Original Constitutions* of St. Gaspar Bertoni, Founder of the Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The effort here will be to present a kind of introductory reflection on the *Original Constitutions* as compiled by Fr. Bertoni and compare them with the sources that he used. Later there will be further reflections comparing the *Notes* with the *Autograph Copy* - and, as far as possible, the sources for their content, in so far as these can be traced with the resources presently known.



SUMMARY

The over-all picture derived from this study seems to be a description of:

The Apostolic Missionary to the *Youth*

The Apostolic Missionary to *Seminarians, Priests*, and to those who follow the *Consecrated Way of Life* - either in preparation, or presently lived - a commitment to all consecrated service to the Church.

The Apostolic Missionary in *Every Ministry of the Word of God Whatsoever* - Parish Missions, Pulpit, Podium, Professor's Chair, Catechetics, Private Conversational Word of God.



[D] THE TEXT OF THE *COMPENDIUM RUDE*

[I] — FOUR SEPARATE RENDITIONS

PRESENTATION

Identification: In the MssB, there are *four* different versions of the *Compendium Rude*, interspersed with a remarkable *6 element-paragraph* [called simply the *Autografo*] that *develops* these seminal ideas a bit further, and grammatically, putting them *into a more complete sentence format*. This offers evidence that this document was *much pondered* and more and more “fleshed out” with the passing of time. In another study [by Fr. Bruno Facciotti, CSS], these differences will be pondered, dedicated entirely to a comparison of the various renditions of the *Original Constitutions*. For now, the emphasis will be more on simply noting the differences:

1. **MssB 9846:** here the document is a single line, introducing what seems to have been an earlier outline of the fuller contents of the Founder’s *Constitutions* as he envisioned them. This is preceded by the number “1” - and then there is a kind of rough outline for a *Table of Contents [Indice]* for the Constitutions made up of 24 numbers in all, with the addition of “The Seventh Part” regarding the vows in general and then two captions on Poverty: The Manner of Poverty in general [Art. 1], and the Manner of Poverty with regard to this community [Art. 2]. The final order decided upon by Fr. Bertoni would be somewhat different, as will be seen, and there is no Part Ten [two sections regarding “Unity”], offering both *negative* and *positive* means]; nor Part Eleven, a short chapter on *Familiar Conversation*; and finally no Part Twelve, [Concerning the Regime]:

1. *Compendium*: in which the End, the Means, the Manner, the Grades, and the Regimen [of the Community] are contained.

2. The *Autografo*: MssB 9847: there is contained here a six line, hand-written exposition [in Fr. Bertoni's own hand] of what seems to be a further expression of the *Compendium*, or maybe just a brief, but somewhat fuller description of some of the more essential elements of the Stigmatine life. It reads as follows:

1. The End of this Union, or Congregation of Priests, is to serve God, our Lord, and His Church, gratuitously, in so far as any hope and expectancy of any earthy reward.
2. In every exercise in behalf of souls, observe exactly the direction of the Bishop, and obtain from him the ordinary faculties and permissions.
3. Be ready at every request of the Bishop to preach, to hear confessions, to instruct, whether in the city, or out in the countryside, in any place of the Diocese, in the Seminary, or among the people.
4. In order to do all this with ever-greater readiness, be unencumbered from the ordinary care of souls, whether in particular communities, or perpetual assignments, in parishes, or other places. This is all the more pressing wherever there would be the obligation of residence, and to which there would be attached some ecclesiastical dignity.
5. In order to obtain this End, first of all, each is to attend seriously to that perfection required of our state.
6. And attend also as seriously, in the second place, to the acquisition of all ecclesiastical knowledge, especially moral theology.

The elements of the Stigmatine Rule briefly noted in this *Autografo* are many:

1: This is the central challenge of *gratis omnino*, a totally gratuitous service - so important to the general principle of communicating the Word of God in Poverty [cf. CF ## 1; 3]. To serve the Church is to serve God.

2: This is the *obsequium Episcoporum*, a corner-stone of Fr. Berton's program, paralleling the Ignatian *ad obsequium divinum, Ecclesiae, Romani Pontificis, Ecclesiae* - this is a plan of a variety of apostolic services under the direction of Bishops [cf. CF ## 2; 185, etc.]. The ultimate paradigm of this "obedience" is *Christ the Lord toward His Heavenly Father – Mary and Joseph toward Christ*.

3: This seems to be a simple combination of *quocumque* - anywhere in the Diocese or the world [cf. CF # 5] - and *quodcumque*: any ministry whatsoever of the Word of God [cf. CF, Part IX, *De Professorum Gradu*, especially CF Chapter II, ## 163, ff.]. This is the challenge of availability, being prepared for all [*Parati ad omnia*].

4: In order to be "free" for the Apostolic Mission, there is a very strong rule for *Immunity* [cf. CF # 4] from ministries requiring residence.

5: This is the Founder's great principle of *on-going conversion, continuing spiritual formation* [cf. CF # 6] - this principle is more developed as the *Original Constitutions unfold* [CF, Part IV, c. 1: *De Profectu sui ipsius*, ## 47, 48; 228, etc.].

6: This is the same principle of the Founder applied to *the life-long intellectual formation* [cf. the same CF Part IV, cc. 2-6, *De Profectu in ecclesiasticis doctrinis*, ## 49-68] - the great goal of a "more than ordinary knowledge" required in the membership [cf. CF ## 49; 159], and perfection in all branches of sacred sciences, within the corporate membership.

[III] BRIEF HISTORICAL PROLOGUE⁵⁰

[1] Challenging Events: As Fr. Gaspar Bertoni acquired the means upon which to support the material life of the Congregation, there immediately flowed in upon him *a sea of duties, legal cases and arguments*, to put it as Fr. Gaspar himself did in his letter to his beloved Fr. Bragato, as the year 1842 was drawing to a close. The Stigmatine Founder continued:

*Nevertheless, one goes ahead, as best he can, still in the dark, but we hope to be led forward by the good Lord who guides all this, into the light, whenever that will come ...*⁵¹.

There is some hint at what was going on in these times in the life of Fr. Bertoni, when he had previously written in May 11, 1841 to Fr. Bragato:

*...Pray much for all of us, and for that which I am writing little by little, provided that the Lord would want this, and that it would redound to His honor...*⁵².

⁵⁰ For these thoughts, cf. Fr. JOSEPH STOFELLA, *Note per servire alla storia del Ven. Servo di Dio, Don Gaspare Bertoni*. Serie VI, pp. 54-64.

⁵¹ This letter has no date – however, with his reference to the school in the text, and to the lessening of the number of students, would probably place the date in November, or December 1842. The legal entanglements arose from the taking possession of the property of Sezano-Stallavena. Among the legal difficulties there were those with the Basani brothers, who had rented the property before Fr. Bertoni had acquired it – and there was another problem with the government. There were also problems with others who had some claim on the land. Cf. *Epistolario*, p. 326.

⁵² Cf. *Epistolario*, Letter 9 to Bragato, pp. 324, f.

This has generally been interpreted as the Founder's reference to the writing of the first Rules and Constitutions for the Congregation Fr. Bertoni had in mind. We cannot state how long he spent on this endeavor. Every indication shows that this took much time: there is already a hint of this in the Founder's expression: *a piccole goccioline* – [literally, *by little drops*] *little by little, bit by bit* – and there is also support for this in the words of Fr. Marco Bassi⁵³. His comment was that Fr. Bertoni had poured out his every loving care, severe studies, long meditations and assiduous prayer on this endeavor.

During all of these vicissitudes, there continued to accumulate serious tribulations for the small Community. On February 27, 1842, Fr. Louis Biadego died, at the age of only 34, with a reputation for holiness. About a week later, the much loved seminarian, Louis Ferrari, died on March 6th. During the following year, Fr. Vincent Raimondi – already ordained and a *professor at the Seminary*, left the Congregation to become a Jesuit. During this time, two blood brothers, who also served the community as Lay Brothers, left the Stigmatine Community. In 1844, after four long illnesses, Fr. Modesto Cainer died, at what seemed to be the premature age of 45 years of age. Fr. Charles Zara described him in the House Chronicle – he was remembered as being *the Saint Martha of the Community*. In 1846, after five days of real terrible sufferings, Fr. Francis Cartolari died, at the age of 51. In 1847, for reasons of health, Fr. Charles Fedelini, only 37 years old, left the Congregation, and returned to his family. He had spent 21 years in the Community, and was dearly loved by the Founder. He had served already for some years as a *renowned professor of Moral Theology in the Diocesan Seminary of Verona*⁵⁴. He would return 8 years later, but by then, the holy Founder was dead – Fr. Fedelini's departure was a great blow to Fr. Bertoni.

⁵³ Fr. Bassi had been a student at the Stimmatine as a boy – he entered the Congregation already an ordained priest in 1856.

⁵⁴ It is noteworthy that a good many of these early Fathers had worked in the Diocesan Seminary of Verona. Three of these mentioned were professors: Frs. Raimondi, Zara, Fedelini.

With all of this, the end result was that the Priests still members of the Community at the Stimate were *reduced to six, to staff two Houses: the Stimate, and the House of the Dereletti*. And it will be remembered that from 1835, Fr. Bragato [perhaps at the time, Fr. Bertoni's most intimate collaborator] was living in the Royal Court of Vienna – having been '*sacrificed*' by Fr. Bertoni at the request of the need of his Bishop for this *specialized service to the Church*. To all this must be added the series of physical reverses suffered by Fr. Bertoni. From this time onward, the year 1842, he never again left the house and very soon, he became a veritable prisoner in his room: up until his final illness that lasted over three years.

There might be added to all this story and other great troubles, those severe trials which derived from the difficulty of those times and certain individuals who were part of them. In the year 1848, the Priests living at the Stimate were looked upon with serious suspicion as enemies of the National *Risorgimento*^{ix}. Even though these Stigmatines were truly loyal to the constituted authorities, they were constantly under watch and two of them were actually put in prison: Fr. Charles Zara and Fr. Francis Benciolini. The accusation levied against them amounted to the fact that they maintained close contact with the young Austrian soldiers – that was considered to be 'subversive'. The sole result of these priestly contacts was that some of these young men returned to the Sacraments. Bro. Paul Zanoli proved himself to be very efficacious in using the *conversational Word of God*.

As would be clear already, Fr. Bertoni was forced to limit more and more the effectiveness of the little school that was being conducted there now for some time. In 1843, he was *forced by circumstances to close the school entirely*, and the students went over then to the newly re-opened Jesuit schools. He was also forced to *limit other ministries* in which his collaborators were involved – through all this, he continued his project of composing *little by little* the *Original Constitutions*. When any of the confreres would decide to leave, he would repeat the well-known Stigmatine saying of children in the local Veronese dialect: *Lowly, lowly – as the foxes have their dens...a little hole in the ground...!* He would also ask those who would remain, quoting the words of Jesus:

Do you, too, wish to go? The door is open – I will remain here alone! To encourage them in their *arduous and difficult* life, the holy Founder would remark: *Let us trust in God, let us let Him intervene, as He is able to do all!* Fr. Zara⁵⁵ noted: ‘He even came to the point of saying that if he had known for certain that on the morrow the world would end, he would nonetheless have continued on with his undertaking.’ Fr. Zara quoted the expression attributed to Abraham: *He hoped against hope!* Fr. Bertoni was profoundly convinced that his entire enterprise would be realized in God’s own time – as he stated explicitly in his Constitutions⁵⁶ – a biblical text that he often used.

[2] Content of the *Original Constitutions*: the saintly Stigmatine Founder, in his own words, was convinced that he *was not of the stature to found a religious community*, yet did not want to pull back from the enormous effort that would give a Rule of Life for his Institute: he withdrew from this challenge as little as possible, in that he gave whatever it was physically possible for him to carry it through to the end.

For the key idea of the Institute⁵⁷, the Formula for it came from the Decree of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, to which

⁵⁵ cf. ZARA *Chronicles*, 2 Volumes.

⁵⁶ cf. CF # 185: *this work which was begun and inspired by the Holy Spirit will be brought to completion* [cf. Ph 1:6].

⁵⁷ A question has arisen especially based on Fr. Marani’s *Compendio* of the Founder’s Charism dated 1854: [... *I principali capi nei quali la Congregazione presta ai vescovi aiuto, sono i seguenti*...CS II, pp. 161-165]: does this Decree from the Holy See, of Dec. 20, 1816, found in CF # 2 mean that the preaching of parish missions is the *idea matrice* for the community, as explicitly so understood by Fr. Marani [all else, *praeter missiones*]; or, is the emphasis here the manner of ecclesial. missionary obedience – a missionary modality, regarding the qualified postolic service to be rendered to the hierarchical Church:... *quod ad exercitium attinet Apostolici muneris, ac licentiam prius, cum facultatibus ab Episcopis recipere, servata semper eorundem Ordinariorum circa loca et tempus ejusmodi munus exercendi moderatione*... [CF 2]?? [cf. ‘Chapter II, of the Jesuit Formula’ – immediately following the *finis*, St. Ignatius explained the Fourth Vow, and the Special Obedience to the Church through the Jesuit *obsequium Romani Pontificis*. This broader view of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission was espoused in a number of General Chapters, even well before the controversial XIIth Chapter of 1890

the Founder was indebted for the title conferred upon him personally, of *Apostolic Missionary*. For the most part, the rest of the composition was drawn from that *so excellent a model which the Company of Jesus is...*⁵⁸. The actual text that Fr. Bertoni used was to compile a kind of *compendium* of the major work of Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ^x, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*⁵⁹ - who most likely was also Influenced by Fr. Jerome Nadal, SJ⁶⁰ ^{xi}. St. Ignatius' choice for the first theologian of the Society to explain its Constitutions and spirit. To these principal sources, there is need to remember the special development that Fr. Bertoni brings to his legislation on the Vow of Chastity⁶¹. These are all taken from the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas⁶²: this would be the major listing of the sources that Fr. Bertoni used.

However, the work of *selection*, of *adaptation*, of the drawing up a *compendium* and the *ordering of the material* was indeed the personal work of the Stigmatine Founder. He *always preferred the formulae*^{xii} of others because he would find them clearly responding to his own personal thought. He thought it was always better to accept the expressions of the authorities in the Church⁶³. Spiritually, this is also some indication of his mentality expressed through that children's game

[cf. Proposal from the House of the Stimate, Feb. 24, 1874, and unanimous responses from subsequent General Chapters.

⁵⁸ Cf. Letter 51 to Mother L. Naudet, December 21, 1814. Cf. *Epistolario*, p. 122.

⁵⁹ Paris: apud Ludovicum Vives, Bibliopolam Editorem 1860 -. Tomus XVI. 1 and 2.

⁶⁰ Cf. JEROME NADAL: *Contemplatif dans l'action. Ecrits spirituels ignatiens [1535-1575]*. Paris: Desclee/Bellarmin 1994; P. Hieronymi Nadal: *Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu*. Edidit Michael Nicolau, SJ. Romae MHSI 1962; JERONIMO NADAL, SJ, *Scholia in Constitutiones S.I.* Edicion critica, prologo y notas de Manuel Ruiz Jurado, SI. Grandada 1976; P. Hieronymi Nadal *Orationis Observationes*. Edidit Michael Nicolau, SJ. Romae: MHSI 1964.

⁶¹ Cf. *Original Constitutions*, Part VII, Section III, CF ## 120-137, 4 brief chapters.

⁶² II-II, qq. 160, 161, 166-168.

⁶³ It is interesting to note here St. Augustine's view on *copying* from renowned masters: 'Those who cannot compose their own sermons should learn by heart and preach those of acknowledged masters'! - cf. The Works of ST. AUGUSTINE. *Teaching Christianity, De Doctrina Christiana*. Hyde Park NY: New City Press pp. 239, ff.; cf. also JAMES BRODERICK, SJ, *The Life and Times of Blessed Robert Francis Cardinal Bellarmine, SJ*. London: Burns, Oates & Washburn 1928, p. 60

of old Verona: *lowly, lowly...* - this phrase was often on his lips, expressing the workings of his humble heart. The end result of his work on the *Original Constitutions* was a kind of mosaic. While this is true, in that mosaic, Fr. Bertoni wished to express the way of life as he envisioned it – it was a plan that he was convinced had been inspired to him by God Himself. In this hand-written document which he left to his sons, as a code, in that rule there may be found intact in its entirety the moral authority of the Father Founder, no less than had everyone of these texts found their origin in his own heart and mind.

The ‘*End*’ of the Institute he founded is given in his *Compendium Rude*, which is something like a *Prelude* to his Rule:

The End: Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum. [CF # 1]. And immediately there follows the *Missionary Modality* – the *votum Missionis* [CF # 2] - an *Abandonment to God*, and an *Availability offered to the Church*:

The Manner: under the direction and dependence of the Ordinaries of the places in which they are to give these missions. To these bishops they must manifest all that pertains to the exercise of the apostolic endeavor; [the Apostolic Missionaries] are to receive the permission from these Bishops beforehand, with the necessary faculties, always maintaining that moderation received from these Ordinaries regarding the time and the place of their task. [CF # 2 - The source for this is then explicitly cited: the Decree of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. December 20, 1817].

The *direction and dependence on the Bishops* is to be understood within the limits of the Decree of the Propagation of the Faith, and as it was lived in the customary practice of the authentic Apostolic Missionaries – i.e., for *all* that is to be done in the broad exercise of the *apostolic ministry*: within these extended limits of the Apostolic Mission, of every aspect of the Word of God whatsoever, there is to be integral obedience.

Fr. Bertoni made no effort to hide the difficulty of such a broad ministry. In order to explain the content of the *Compendium Rude*, Fr. Stofella chose a Constitution from Part IX, Concerning the *Grade of*

the Professed, [CF ## 158-186] – Chapter VII, Concerning the Principal Purpose of the ‘Professed’ [Priests], [CF # 185] ⁶⁴ as a special Commentary on the *Compendium Rude*:

[a] *Cum ejusdem Sodalitatis scopus sit, Ecclesiae sub Episcoporum directione, obsequium praeestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera...* this broad program, to offer assistance to Bishops through the **various** and **proper** duties of its vocation, will at times prove to be:

[b] *...haec autem quandoque ardua et difficilis res sit...* ⁶⁵: the reason why this is *arduous and difficult*: this is due to the constant challenge of balancing the *contemplata aliis tradere*, the need for the *more than ordinary knowledge*, the demand to be in constant formation for the *varia et propria* and the *graviora ministeria* - striving ever forward toward having those qualities that would merit the *Grade*, being always committed to on-going preparation toward *serving* in the *perfectum opus sacerdotale*. The arduous and difficult nature of the Stigmatine vocation appears immediately appears immediately following in this important text:

[c] *...si ad fragilitatem hominum comparetur quibusdam forte periculis exposita esse videatur...*: if it seems that this vocation is compared to the fragility of men as being powerfully exposed to certain dangers. However, the conclusion is immediately forthcoming:

[d] However, Fr. Bertoni, based on Suarez, adds this comment: *...non tamen propterea imprudens aut temerarium est propositum devotionis nostrae...* However, nevertheless, this **broad program** is *not imprudent or temerarious as being proposed to our devotion*. The reasons are then forthcoming what it is not imprudent or temerarious for these reasons:

⁶⁴ For the most part, this CF # 185 is from Suarez, Lib. VI, c. 4, n. 25, p. 862 a.

⁶⁵ cf. P. HIERONIMII NADAL, *Commentarii de Instituto S.I.*, edidit M. Nicolau, SJ, Romae: MHSI 1962, pp. 801, ff.

[e] {1}...*Primo quidem, quia non humanis viribus, sed Spiritus Sancti **gratia** implendum creditur...*: the first reason why this enterprise is not believed to be 'dangerous or temerarious' is that it does not depend on human strength, but on the [special] grace of the Holy Spirit to be carried out. Following this comment, Fr. Bertoni again makes use of a biblical text that seems to have been in his heart [cf. Ph 1:6 – which he often quoted] – this is an indication of his personal conviction that the inspiration for the Congregation was from God:

[f] ... *qui enim coepit et inspiravit illud, ipse perficiet si per nos non steterit: nam haec est specialis **gratia huius vocationis** quae potentior est omnibus periculis et difficultatibus*: for He who began and inspired this good work, He Himself will perfect it [cf. Ph 1:6]⁶⁶, if He is not impeded by us: for this is *the special grace of this vocation* which is more powerful than all the dangers and difficulties: there follows then the second reason why this undertaking is not imprudent or temerarious, and this is an act of faith. For St. Gaspar Bertoni believed – based on Ac 20:28 - that...

[g] {2}...*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...* Therefore for this intention we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, nor to do to this place or to that, or to exercise these, or those activities, but *to follow the direction of the Orthodox Bishop* whom the Holy Spirit has placed to govern the Church of God. As for the Bishops being chosen by the Holy Spirit, this is based on Ac 20:28.

[h] The saintly Founder adds: *quod medium satis cautum est ad non errandum in via Dei* - because this is a means that is sufficiently

⁶⁶ Fr. Bertoni has this idea of *Progress* [Spiritual, Intellectual, Juridical, Apostolic] built into a number of his *Original Constitutions* - the central treatment, though may be noted in his Part IV, CF ## 47, ff.: Spiritual and Intellectual – and then Juridical and Missionary [*opus perfectum sacerdotale*].

cautious in order not to err in the way of God. This is an expression dear to St. Ignatius ⁶⁷.

[i] Then, Fr. Bertoni, following Fr. Suarez, adds a **third** reason which is: {3}... *Accedit tamen religionis providentia, tum in disponendis et probandis personis, tam etiam in eis eligendis et omni opere suffulciendis et confirmandis...* - Lastly, there is added also the providence of the *state of religion*, both in disposing and proving persons, as well as also in selecting them and in supporting them and confirming them: all these things in which for Fr. Bertoni the intervention of the Ordinary has only to oversee, because all this is reserved to the providence of the state of religion ⁶⁸.

As has been noted, this extraordinary commentary which Fr. Stofella understands as a 'fervent commentary on the *Compendium Rude*' is cited from several places in the Commentary of Fr. Suarez. In his Book I, he studies "Concerning the Institution and the Institute of the Society in General"⁶⁹. The Jesuit theologian then asks in c. 7 '*Whether the Society of Jesus embraces the contemplative life, or rather the active life*'⁷⁰. In number 9 of this Chapter, Suarez treats of the 'difficulty' of this vocation, under the title: 'How can the Society satisfy at the same time both its broad activity together with Contemplation?'⁷¹ Here Suarez speaks of the *grace of the vocation* [cf. Fr. NADAL]. The second

⁶⁷ Cf. *Ignatius' Constitutions*, Formula n. 3; *De Missionibus Romani Pontificis*, nn. 605, 624.

⁶⁸ As has been noted from the words: ... *haec autem...eligendis...* may be found *verbatim* in SUAREZ, Book VI, Chapter IV, De Professione, n 25, p. 862 a – on the Special Vow of Obedience to the to the Supreme Pontiff – which contains a reference back to Book I, Chapter VI, n. 9, pp. 592 a-b: How the Society can satisfy many activities together with contemplation. [The Commentary on CF # 185 may be found in the private study: *St. Gaspar Bertoni*

– *Original Constitutions [A Study of the Sources and Content]*, pp. 184-193 of the Web Site, *St Bertoni*.

⁶⁹ This is found in SUAREZ, *De Religione Societatis Iesu*, in Book I which is then divided into 9 Chapters.

⁷⁰ *ib.*, pp. 587-592.

⁷¹ *cf. ib.*, pp. 592 a & b.

reason for hope is *the protection of obedience to the Bishops chosen by the Holy Spirit* – whom Suarez mentions [in his Book VI, c. 4, n. 25 – where he speaks of *the special vow of Obedience*, the Fourth Jesuit Vow ⁷²].

[j] The final words in this CF # 185 are: *...et omni ope suffulciendis et confirmandis...*: the using of every effort to sustain and strengthen those who are chosen for this vocation. So far present research here has not discerned their origin. The Stigmatine Founder believed deeply in the supernatural means provided for the confreres chosen for this special task. He was deeply convinced of the principle contained in Ph 1:6 – that the One Who began and inspired this good work, would see it to fruition. He was convinced, with Suarez, perhaps basing himself on Fr. Jerome NADAL, SJ ⁷³, and his many commentaries on the *arduous and difficult* vocation sustained by a *special grace*. Fr. Bertoni was convinced that he personally was not of the stature to institute a religious community.

[k] Here the title ***Professed*** in Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions refers to those *Priests*, who *at the choice of the Father General* [and later, with the advice of his Council] are promoted to *Solemn Profession*. These men would be those confreres to whom the Saintly Founder entrusted the government of the Institute. These are the *Apostolic Missionaries*, in the most proper sense, the *Professed*.

[l] ***Missionarii Apostolici*** - Fr. Bertoni certainly realized that this title, an honorary distinction, is a property reserved to the judgment of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. In his prudence,

⁷² cf. p. 862 a. Here SUAREZ also quotes the Jesuit Constitutions, Part VII, c. 1, n. 2: cf. n. 606 CSJ

⁷³ cf. Fr. JEROME NADAL, SJ, *Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu*, Rome 1962; ib., *Scholia in Constitutionibus Societatis Iesu*, Granada 1976. [On this web site, his name will appear under STUDIES – where his teaching will be summarized by Fr. Suarez – and then used very freely, and most often literally, by Fr. Bertoni in his *Original Constitutions*]. [Fr. Nadal was a Jesuit peritus at the Council of Trent where the Theology of Grace held an extended center stage].

then, he placed the title, which pleased him very much, in which he saw more a challenging *burden* than an *honor*. His emphasis was on *Missionary Obedience, the Modality of Mission* - as Christ toward his Father. He considered the Apostolic Mission as that *good work* capable of nourishing souls sensitive to the zeal for the greater glory of God, and for the eternal salvation of one's neighbors. He dreamed of a *reserve of evangelical workers* always ready - one by one, kind of a *flying squadron, Noble Guard* - for even the most unexpected demands of Bishops, to go anywhere in the Diocese or the world, for any service of the Word of God whatsoever. They were to be men decisive in their will to offer themselves for God and for the Church of God [*obsequium*] with absolute gratuity of service - they were to remain free from dignities, residences, benefices, perpetual or particular care of souls, or nuns. They would be ready to go anywhere in the diocese, or outside it, in the world.

[m] ***The Means:***

- *Gratuitous Service – Gratis* [CF # 3];
- *Freedom for the Apostolic Mission – Immunes* [CF # 4];
- *Geographical Abandonment - quocumque* [CF # 5];

- *Perfection of One Self* [CF 6 a]: each one's spiritual perfection: through common life; the perpetual exercise of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty; the manner of living regarding food, clothing, a dwelling in harmony with that of *the more perfect members of the clergy* [*honestas clericalis*] according to the various places and for the edification of the faithful, as well as pertaining to Christian parsimony and evangelical poverty.

- *Perfection in Ecclesiastical Doctrines* [CF # 6 b]: *non mediocris, non vulgaris* [cf. CF ## 49, 50, 72, 159].

- *Promotion in the level of membership* [CF # 7 a], always striving forward - first toward the *Priesthood* [cf. CF ## 69-76], then, when these studies are completed, there will be a special year of intense Formation, the *Schola Affectus* [cf. CF ## 152, ff.], onward toward the *Grade* [cf. CF ## 89; 158, ff.]: this will vary, according to the particular

gifts of each one – only some will be promoted to the *Grade*, conferred perhaps even 20 years after all of the above to the point of assuming the *perfect priestly work* [cf. Pars IX, CF ## 158-186], which is the *Apostolic Mission* properly so called – these men are the *Professed*, the *Apostolic Missionaries*; the other priests will be promoted to the *perfect assistance [obsequium] of the Missionaries*.

- *Progress in Apostolic Service*, to the achieving of the *opus perfectum sacerdotale*. [CF # 7 b].

- *The Manner of Government - Community, Corporate Obedience* [CF # 8]: there will be for all a *Prelate for life*, which the *Community will elect for itself*, that is, from among the *Graduated Priests*.

It is clear, Fr. John Lenotti ⁷⁴ observed, in his Instructions to the Novices, that:

... the intention of Fr. Bertoni ⁷⁵ was that of instituting a Congregation, which, just as the Company of Jesus is in a special manner dedicated and determined to the assistance and dispositions of the Roman Pontiff – so Fr. Bertoni's Community was to be dedicated and determined in a totally special manner, and outstanding in its service and assistance of Bishops. However, all this with this difference, that while the Professed of the Company of Jesus make a Vow of Obedience to the Pope, our men do not make the vow of obedience to the Bishop... For it is one matter to be vowed to the Pope who has the government of the entire Catholic Church, and another for a bishop who would be restricted to his own Diocese, and would therefore also have to restrict the sphere of our ministry...

⁷⁴ Cf. J. B. LENOTTI, *Esortazioni Domestiche e Istruzioni ai Novizi*, in: CS III, pp. 408, ff.

⁷⁵ Fr. Bertoni's intention seems clear in his Letter 4 to Fr. Bragato, offering his description of Fr. Marani: ... D. Marani è il giorno di scuola alle Stimate; la sera e i giorni di vacanza ai Dereletti. Alle Stimate fa la sua scuola e studia qualche poco in libreria per le sue Prediche. Ai Dereletti le sere del Sabato e della Domenica confessa e molto e con frutto grande di quella contrada. L'altre sere tiene una Conferenza di Morale con dieci dodici sacerdoti, sul gusto di quella nostra antica di S. Fermo. Dopo la lezione metodica, fa una specie di P. Guerrerri: determina e definisce secondo l'occor-

It was, therefore, quite natural that in the heart of Fr. Bertoni, as in the concert of his various *Rules*, the Ignatian stamp would be predominant, if not indeed exclusive. Furthermore, the *Compendium Rude*, exposed above, is totally Ignatian in character. The Rule, then, as it unfolds, brings this all the more, since the formulae and the texts very often are taken from the Jesuit theologian, Fr. Francis Suarez⁷⁶.

[n] **A Rapid Survey:** as has been noted in other studies, there has been noted a significant dependence on the part of Fr. Bertoni on the texts of Suarez⁷⁷.

- **Prayer:** Fr. Stofella is of the opinion that Fr. Bertoni cut the prescribed Jesuit prescriptions for meditation in half, and placed it at one half hour [cf. CF # 47]. However, the Jesuit rule seems to be speaking about various kinds of prayer. The Jesuit Constitution in this regard reads thus:

CSJ n. 342: *Consequently, in addition to confession and Communion, which [the Scholastics] ^{vii} will frequent every eight days, and Mass, which they will hear every day, they will have one hour, during it, they will recite the Hours of Our Lady, and examine their consciences twice each day, and add other prayers according to the devotion of each one until the aforementioned hour is completed, in case it has not run its course...*

renza, ed è quotidiana, i casi più intricati: e il Signore gliene dà lume e prudenza e franchezza non ordinaria. Il Giovedì esamina, secondo il solito, i Chierici del seminario, e seguita pur accogliendo Penitenti d'ogni maniera ad ogni ora, interrompendo il pranzo, la cena, differendo il riposo. Simigliantemente la Festa, che sta udendo le Confessioni nel Coro di S. Stefano sino all'ora di poter venire a fare l'istruzione a S. Sebastiano, la quale continuerà fino a che piaccia al Signore. La gente lo ascolta molto volentieri, e pare che la parola di Dio non sia gettata, ma ricevuta in buona terra. Innanzi di riprendere il corso delle sue Istruzioni, l'ho mandato a S. Zeno fare l'Ottavario dei morti... [Epistolario, pp. 315, f.].

⁷⁶ Cf. F. Suarez, SJ, "Tractatus Decimus, De Religione Societatis Iesu, Liber I-XI.

⁷⁷ Cf. J. Henchey, CSS, *St. Gaspar Bertoni and Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ. Reflections and Comparisons.* pp. 191. [cf. Web-Site]

- **The Regime:** is almost absolute - *Corporate Obedience, ad intra:*

- a *Prepositus General* for life, with some assisting Counselors, who, however, will not be co-judges – this entire number [cf. CF # 301] is from Suarez⁷⁸. Fr. Bertonni has made his own here the *six reasons* with which the Jesuit theologian shows how the regime wished by St. Ignatius is better.

- a *Monitor, Admonitor:* [cf. CF # 304] - this is taken from Suarez⁷⁹ and the Ignatian Constitutions⁸⁰.

- the Majority View of the Counsel and Decisive suffrage of the greater part of the Graduate Fathers – this is noted in CF # 302 - and is found, of course, in Suarez⁸¹ - who quotes the Bull^{vi} of Paul III, which became the *Formula* n. 2.

- **Formation:**

- *Two Years of Novitiate:* the Stigmatine Founder's Constitutions do not spell this out [cf. CF ## 32-39] – he simply describes what goes on during it. However, it would seem from other sources that the general practice was a two-year Novitiate. Fr. Marani in his *Cenni...* [1855] speaks of two years of Novitiate. The first candidates who entered the Congregation experienced a two year Novitiate before vows: Frs. DaPrato, Bassi, the Vignola brothers. Fr. Carlo Fedelini, who returned to the Stimmatine in 1855, made only one year of Novitiate under Fr. Marani's administration – as would be clear. *This was eventually reduced to a one year Novitiate for all by an early General Chapter.*

- *Formation Experiments, Experiences* - there were six of these described in the Ignatian Rule, CSJ ## 64-70⁸² - a 30-day Retreat; 30 days of service in a hospital; a 30 day pilgrimage; serving in lowly offices;

⁷⁸ cf. SUAREZ, Book X, c. 1, n. 10 – p. 1061 a.

⁷⁹ cf. Book X, c. 2, n. 9 – cf. p. 1065 a-b.

⁸⁰ cf. CSJ n. 770.

⁸¹ cf. SUAREZ, Book X, c. 1, n. 15 – p. 1062 b.

⁸² cf. MAURIZIO COSTA, SJ, 'Gli esperimenti del Noviziato. Esame Generale IV, 10-15 [CSJ n. 65-70]', in: *Uno spirito per il Corpo. Convegno di studio sulle Costituzioni. Autunno 1997, e altri contributi*. Appunti di Spiritualità 47. Costituzioni I. Napoli: CIS pp. 60- 67.

teaching Catechism, in various kinds of preaching and administering the sacraments – and Fr. Bertoni speaks of these last three, particularly in CF ## 38 [Novitiate]; 42 [after Novitiate]; 89 [Conclusion to Part VI, regarding the Vows of the Community]. He mentions explicitly the integral Spiritual Exercises [30 days] [CF # 35].

- **Program of Studies:** Fr. Bertoni treats this under the concept of *Progress*, in accord with that ideal of St. Paul [cf. 1 Tm 4: 16: *attende tibi [...suiipsius] et doctrinae...* [Be conscientious in what you do and what you *teach*!]] – in his Part IV, cc. 2, 5, 7. These are amply covered by Suarez⁸³.

- **A Year of Probation after Studies:** Fr. Bertoni treats this in CF # 152 – and Suarez comments on this Ignatian practice⁸⁴ – this is the *Schola Affectus* – all required prior to the formal ‘Profession’ as an *Apostolic Missionary*.

- **Qualities for the ‘Grade’:** Fr. Bertoni speaks of this in CF # 158, the beginning of the Pars IX – and for Suarez it is clearly treated⁸⁵. This is the Distinction of the ‘Grade’ and Solemn Profession.

- **Apostolic Means:** for the salvation of our neighbors – for Fr. Bertoni these are found in Pars IX, c. 2, CF ## 161-164. For Fr. Suarez, these are well established⁸⁶.

- **The Norms for the Formation of Youth:** these are found in Fr. Bertoni, to which he dedicates three full Chapters in Pars IX, cc. 3-5, CF ## 165-181 – also amply covered in Suarez⁸⁷. Originally, St. Ignatius wanted a Fifth Vow, to teach Catechism to the Youth and the Unlettered.

⁸³ cf. Book V, c. 1, n. 6, pp. 803, a. ff.; for CF ## 49, 50; Suarez, c. 2, n. 8, pp. 809, ff. for CF ## 56-58; cf. Suarez, c. 3, nn. 11, 12, pp. 816 a, ff. For CF ## 60-65; cf. Suarez, c. 4, nn. 9, 10 pp. 822 b, f. – for CF ## 67-68.

⁸⁴ Cf. SUAREZ Book VI, c. 2, nn. 2, 4, pp. 845 a, ff.

⁸⁵ Cf. SUAREZ, Book VI, c. 1, 4, 6, p. 838 a, f. – CF # 158 – *graviora ministeria* – CF # 159 – *eruditio non mediocris... non vulgaris* [CF # 49].

⁸⁶ Cf. SUAREZ, Book I, c. 3, n. 10 – pp. 572 a, ff. – CF ## 161-163.

⁸⁷ Cf. SUAREZ, pp. 827 a – 834 b, *passim*. cf. also pp. 572 b, ff, *Attende tibi et doctrinae...* [cf. 1 Tm 4:16]

- **The Apostolic Mission** is described by Fr. Bertoni in his very important Part IX, cc. 7, 8 as *De Munere Professorum Sodalitatis* [cf. CF ## 182-186] These are presented by Suarez on a variety of pages ⁸⁸. This is described very beautifully by Fr. Bertoni in CF ## 182-183:

...Eorum [Professorum] 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 maxime Ecclesiae utile est, et ideo maxime etiam iis commendatum sit...Confessiones omnium et praesertim pauperum et puerorum excipere et ad Sacramentorum debitam frequentiam inducere...

There is a hint of this text that may be found in Suarez ⁸⁹, where he discusses various aspects in the End of the Society that need to be considered:

... unde ad finem huius instituti pertinet proximum juvare, et instruere in his omnibus quae ad hunc finem necessaria sunt...

Another aspect might be noted in this same Book I, c. 6, where Suarez discusses whether the Society of Jesus is contemplative or active. He reasons as follows:

...Cum ergo spirituales actiones intime habeant adjunctam doctrinam de rebus divinis [haec enim non solum per publicas lectiones, et conciones, sed etiam in secreta confessione et in secreto colloquio ac instructione traditur... ⁹⁰

Suarez later explains the high priority that St. Ignatius placed on teaching *Catechism* to the unlettered and the youth, basing himself on Ignatius' Part VII of his Constitutions, which deals with his ideals for *De Missionibus*:

⁸⁸ cf. SUAREZ, pp. 572 b; 582 a 587 a; 588 b; 591 a; 598 b; 862 a & b; 966; 984

⁸⁹ cf. SUAREZ, Book I, c. 6, n. 6 – p.589 b.

⁹⁰ cf. SUAREZ, ib., p. 591 a.

...iuxta Septimam Partem Constitutionum, c. 4, § 9, et tandem eruditio puerorum, cum Christiana doctrina, adeo in Societate commendata est, ut sit una ex praecipuis obligationibus Professorum, cum tamen non parvum humilitatis exercitium includat... Est ergo opus illud sicut magnae charitatis ita etiam magnae humilitatis...⁹¹.

When Suarez treats of the *sacramental apostolic mission* of the Society, he also emphasizes the special *obsequium* they need regarding *faculties* from the Apostolic See and from other Prelates, as right reason and the sacred canons require:

... Aliud praecipuum ministerium competens Societati ex vi sui instituti ad salutem proximorum, est sacramentorum administratio, ut dicitur Septima Parte. C. 4, § 5; praesertim vero confessionibus audiendis, et Eucharistiam administrando... Decuit tamen, et maxime expediens fuit, ut huiusmodi facultas ab ipsa Sede Apostolica immediate in religionem emanaret, quamvis cum ea subordinatione ad caeteros Praelatos, quam recta ratio et sacri canones postulant...⁹².

This *Apostolic Mission* so deeply inspired by St. Ignatius is ruled for all practical purposes, as Fr. Stofella points out, from the following Constitution of St. Gaspar, that is substantially Ignatian:

...Dum aliquo mittuntur, vel alicubi residere iubentur, nemo nec pro itinere, nec pro statione provisionem ullam expectet sive ab Episcopis, sive a Parrochis, sive a Superioribus, sed liberaliter se offerant omnino praestent...[CF # 184].

This *gratis omnino* is often mentioned by St. Ignatius⁹³ and also by St. Gaspar Bertoni⁹⁴.

⁹¹ cf. SUAREZ, Book VIII, c. 9, n. 13 – p. 966 a.

⁹² cf. SUAREZ, Book IX, c. 1, p. 984 a – b.

⁹³ cf. ST. IGNATIUS, *Formula* 1; CSJ nn. 7, 573, 574, 609, 610

⁹⁴ cf. GASPAR BERTONI, *Original Constitutions*, ## 3; 67; 102; 184.

- **The Union, or the Unity of the Congregation**, in *Part X of the Original Constitutions*, [cf. CF ## 187-266]: this while Part presents itself as a web of citations from the most varied spiritual tradition: Sts. Basil, Augustine, Benedict, and other giants. It would seem that in this Part the saintly Stigmatine Founder is inviting his followers to go back even further than the Company of Jesus – this is an indication of Fr. Bertoni's psychology: in addition to his effort to accentuate the impersonal character that he wanted to impress upon his Rule, and even more to bring out his goal of a much broader basis for the ascetical enterprise that it takes on more and more.

Fr. Stofella notes in this connection that St. Gaspar is identical in *his Part XII, on the Regime of the Congregation* [cf. CF ## 298, ff.] - that these first texts are from Basil: the Superior is like the Abbot [cf. # 298] – it is forbidden to try to investigate the Superior's intentions, which again is an admonition from St. Basil [# 299]. Fr. Stofella interpreted CF # 300 as the Chapter of Faults, but it might be in reference to the General Chapters of the Community – also relying on St. Basil. The great Stigmatine historian knew quite well that these numbers are *literal transcriptions from Suarez*⁹⁵ - whose intention in his writing had been to show clearly that Ignatian spirituality is in full harmony with the long Catholic tradition, and thus is beyond all question.

- **the Observance of the Vows**, Section III, *On Four-Fold Modesty, in so far as this is a Help, or Embellishment of Chastity*: [cf. CF ## 120-137]: this 'original' section of Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions, Fr. Stofella has clearly pointed out is from St. Thomas Aquinas⁹⁶. There are four species of Modesty traced out by the Angelic^{viii} Doctor and their treatment in the *Summa* provide St. Gaspar with titles and the material for the four Chapters of this Section III. Great importance is given to the first Chapter, *On Humility* [cf. CF ## 120-121]. CF # 121 provides the 12 Grades assigned to the practice of this virtue of Humility

⁹⁵ cf. SUAREZ, o.c., Book X, c. 1, ## 8. ff – cf. pp. 1060 b, ff.

⁹⁶ cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, II-II, qq. 160, a. 2; 161, Premise, and a. 6; q. 168, a. 1; q. 169, a. 1.

from St. Benedict, as treated by St. Thomas Aquinas. The Angelic^{viii} Doctor, for his own purposes reversed their order⁹⁷, without omitting his praise of the original order offered by the great Patriarch of religious life, St. Benedict. St. Gaspar writes:

CF # 121: *In the acquisition of this virtue, the confreres are to exercise themselves in those twelve degrees which St. Benedict has placed in his rule, c. 7:*

1. *The first is to be humble not only in heart, but also to show it in one's very person, one's eyes fixed on the ground;*
2. *The second is to speak few and sensible words, and not to be loud of voice;*
3. *The third is not to be easily moved, disposed to laughter;*
4. *The fourth is to maintain silence until one is asked;*
5. *The fifth is to do nothing but to what one is exhorted by the common rule of the monastery;*
6. *The sixth is to believe and acknowledge oneself viler than all;*
7. *The seventh is to think oneself worthless and unprofitable for all purposes;*
8. *The eighth is to confess one's sin;*
9. *The ninth is to embrace patience by obeying under difficult and contrary circumstances;*
10. *The tenth is to subject oneself to a superior;*
11. *The eleventh is not to delight in fulfilling one's own desires;*
12. *The twelfth is to fear God and to be always mindful of everything that God has commanded.*

For St. Benedict – and no less for St. Ignatius – the virtue of *humility* is not only that which we intend ordinarily under this name: the term takes on a much broader meaning – it designates a fundamental, or habitual state, a mentality, for the acquisition of which St. Benedict organizes an entire school of supernatural *flexibility* for the monk. Proceeding from the interior [the degrees ascending from 1 to 7] to the external [degrees 8 to 12] – this would be to read the numbers as

⁹⁷ ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, II-II, q. 161, a. 6 ad 2 um: *Man arrives at humility in two ways. First and chiefly by a gift of grace, and in this way the inner man precedes the outward man. The other way is by human effort, whereby he first of all restrains the outward man, and afterwards succeeds in plucking out the inward root. It is according to this order that the degrees of humility are ordered [in the Summa].*

presented by St. Thomas inversely – Humility in-forms first of all the soul, its faculties and acts – then it fans out its manner even to the body, thus becoming in its plenitude both mother and mistress – or teacher – of the virtues, and by commanding most characteristic dispositions and attitudes of a holy soul, in the face of duties and the most diverse circumstances of the monastic life ⁹⁸.

These are the aspects that pleased St. Gaspar Bertoni in the writing of his *Constitutions*, seeing in these 12 Degrees of Humility a kind of *Jacob's Ladder*⁹⁹: humility was seen as a School of Flexibility [*Availability*], or heroic supernatural *docility*, and when it reaches its culmination, without doubt this would be holiness. Neither St. Thomas' *Compendium* with the inevitable challenges inherent in his text would impede Fr. Bertoni of experiencing within himself that sublime spirit that seems to animate this flowing chapter of St. Benedict, which is the longest, and it could be said, the *essential element of the entire Benedictine Rule*. This is why Fr. Bertoni wanted to make it his own. And it could very well be that it is to this point, so profoundly pondered by the Stigmatine Founder, that there is due *that monastic spirit* that the early Community of the Stigmatine lived in those times. There was great love for retreat, for recollection^{xiii}, for silence, prayer, study and work. They were called to be *Monks in the house, and Apostles outside*: and always with a certain nostalgia for their cells¹⁰⁰. In fact, these *two* elements are present also in their own context providing *the authentic formula for the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission*, and this is the same for all of the saints

⁹⁸ NB: FR. STOFELLA quotes here, providing the French text for these comments: *La règle de S. Benoit, texte latin traduit et annoté par des fils du saint patriarche*. The Abbey of Mardesous. 1933, p. 33, in notes. This Abbey is well known to the Irish as where Dom Columba Marmion served as Abbot until his death in 1923. Dom Marmion, now *Blessed*, was ordained for the Archdiocese of Dublin, in 1881, in St. Agatha of the Goths Church, Rome.

⁹⁹ Comparison offered by St. Benedict himself in his c. 7 *On Humility* quoted by Fr. Bertoni – CF # 121.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. FR. G.B. LENOTTI, *Domestic Exhortations*, "Amore alla cella, *Clastrum est Paradisus*.", in CS III, pp. 548-552.

under consideration here: St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Ignatius of Loyola [*contemplativos en accion!*] and St. Gaspar of Verona: *contemplata tradere* ¹⁰¹!



Having reached this point in our reflections, there comes to mind spontaneously the remembrance of the fact that St. Gaspar Bertoni remained faithful to the invitation of St. Ignatius of Loyola, understood at St. Sebastian's where the Stigmatine Founder was on Retreat, almost two centuries ago, on September 15, 1808 – and this note that he jotted in his Spiritual Diary:

September 15, 1808: *Introduction to the Annual Retreat: To promote the Glory of God, just as he did, through the same ways, even though with not all those manners [modi] that he was able to employ... Make my spirit come alive in you, and in others through you...!* ¹⁰².

[3] ***The Decree of Praise***: even though Fr. Bertoni's work was over, in a certain sense his *Original Constitutions* were left unfinished. Thus, Fr. Lenotti wrote ¹⁰³ that Fr. Bertoni, before his death, had done and suffered so much, and prepared the finances and a house and a library and had written the Rule – and what is more, *he planted the spirit of the Community*. It could be said that his work was essentially completed: even though certain matters had not been developed sufficiently, and these have proven to be not a few, nor of a secondary

¹⁰¹ Cf. ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa*, II-II, q. 188, a. 6. Fr. Bertoni, Part IV, c. 2, n. 1 [CF # 49]. Fr. Stofella notes this in Suarez' Book V, c. 1, n. 6 – p. 803 a: from its opening words, Fr. Bertoni's CF # 49 is taken *verbatim* from Suarez..

¹⁰² cf. ST. GASPAR BERTONI, in: CS IV, pp. 46, ff.: ... *per le stesse vie, benché non in tutti que' modi ch'egli poté usare...*

¹⁰³ NB: here Fr. Stofella mentions this text from Fr. Lenotti, from a source entitled *Storia di ciò che si fece dopo la morte del Fondatore per ottenere l'approvazione del R. Pontefice*.

nature. Those would be supplied for whenever the enterprise would be submitted to the Ecclesiastical Authority, for its *juridical* perfecting. However, this ecclesiastical approbation, as Fr. Marani stated, was much desired by Fr. Bertoni, but because of his sublime humility he never requested it ¹⁰⁴. Following Fr. Bertoni's death, Fr. Marani was elected the *Prepositus*, and was animated, according to Fr. Lenotti, by a particular light and spirit of God, was firm from the outset and decisive in wanting to procure for Fr. Bertoni the glory of the *Approbation of the Institute*. For this reason, he sustained within himself always the will to make use of every means, and to make every effort to achieve this scope: and even if it were not to succeed, he would have at least the comfort and peace of heart that on his part he had done whatever he could, reaching even to that point where it had pleased the Lord to show the path ¹⁰⁵.

Fr. Marani conducted all of this in person in Rome, but enthusiastically supported in this time by Bishop Benedict Riccabona ¹⁰⁶. At first, Fr. Marani went without receiving the slightest approval for the Rules and Constitutions of the Founder, since the ordinary Roman practice at the time, would hardly have approved such a small community. However, in the end, Fr. Marani was able to obtain far more than he – or anyone else, for that matter – ever could have hoped for an Institute that was facetiously described in an Italian saying, made up of *four cats* [¹⁰⁷], as the young community seemed to be. The community eventually did receive a *Decree of Praise*, the first canonical recognition, on the basis

¹⁰⁴ A Comment made by FR. MARANI in his *Report* submitted to the Holy See for this approval. [cf. CS II, pp. 133, ff.

¹⁰⁵ cf. Acts of FR. LENOTTI.

¹⁰⁶ His testimony: "... Dopo il suo cominciamento, questa Congregazione non ha lasciato mai di esistere, e di mostrarsi 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 è 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 apparecchiati a qualunque ministero li chiami l'obbedienza del loro Superiore in servizio al Vescovo..." (cf. *Summarium Additionale*, Documento XXIII, pp. 251-253).

of Fr. Marani's work – and most especially due to the Report of the Bishop of Verona, + Benedict Riccabona ¹⁰⁷.

This favor was granted to the young Community on March 16, 1855 – the day on which the community was *celebrating the Liturgical Feast of the Five Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This seemed to be a providential coincidence. In fact, Fr. Marani in his *Supplication* ¹⁰⁸ sent to the Roman Pontiff on December 15, 1853 – at a distance of only six months and three days since the death of the Holy Founder, St. Gaspar Bertoni [+ June 12, 1853] - had requested for our Community the name of the *Order of the Sacred Stigmata*. Fr. Marani had expressly identified the *Stigmata* with the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The Decree of Praise was eventually published, on April 16, 1855.

[4] *The Solemn Canonic Erection of the Institute* ¹⁰⁹: The Decree of Praise at long last made it possible to schedule and plan for the solemn erection of the Institute. This was celebrated on September 30, 1855. About one year later, Fr. Bragato wrote to his friend, Fr. P. Beeckx, one who indeed loved our early confreres:

... He loved our congregation and loved and esteemed our deceased Founder, of holy memory... which, in that time – this poor Congregation almost petered out, but it acquired new life. It seemed as though the Holy Founder had infused into his sons his own spirit. Almost overnight, they became preachers and missionaries who worked marvels in those places wherever they went to spread the Word of God, and what is even more, because of these fine Priests, a number of young men asked to become members of this plant which had come to life anew and was flourishing... ¹¹⁰

All of this pertains to the point under discussion here – precisely because of the authoritative ^{xv} memory of Fr. Louis Bragato regarding

¹⁰⁷ NB: Fr. Stofella had originally given all the credit to Fr. Marani – but, an unknown hand added a footnote in writing here in these *Note per servire...* Serie VI, p. 62, Footnote # 129 bis, giving the credit to the intervention of the local Ordinary. Bishop Riccabona sent his Letter of Recommendation on July 22, 1854 [cf. ib., pp.151-154].

¹⁰⁸ Cf. MARANI *Supplica*, in: CS II, pp. 134-138.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. CS II, pp. 46-50; 171-175; 182, f.

¹¹⁰ cf. Letter of Fr. Bragato, to the Jesuit Superior General, Fr. Beeckx – Founder's Archives.

the ideal that had been achieved - would have found himself in a very singular manner: of course this would have meant that the Lord would have extended his life and restored his work. But, it would only granted to the saintly Founder to see his sons in heaven.

[5] *The Apostolic Missionary*: a beautiful description of the *Apostolic Missionary* in the mind of Fr. Bertoni may be found in his letter 4 to Fr. Bragato, dated December 1, 1837, in which he tells us beloved confrere the work of his close collaborator, Fr. Marani. There is particular emphasis in Fr. Bertoni's description of Fr. Marani's *Apostolic Mission toward the Clergy, both seminarians and priests*:

... Fr. Marani spends his days in school at the Stimate; evenings and on days free from classes, he works at the House of the Dereletti. At the Stimate, he teaches his classes, and studies in the library for his Preaching. At the Dereletti on Saturday evenings and on Sundays, he hears confessions, and at great length, and with much fruit for the entire neighborhood. The other evenings he gives a Conference in Moral Theology with about ten, or twelve Priests, like in the old days which was our custom at St. Firmus'. After his methodological exposition which he conducts along the style of Fr. Guerrieri: he offers his opinion and resolves, as the situation might demand, and this is every day, the most intricate cases, and the Lord has bestowed on him light, prudence and more than ordinary great charity. On Thursdays, as is the practice, he takes part in the Scrutinies of the Seminarians, and after this, he receives penitents of every manner, and at every hour, even interrupting his lunch, his supper, and putting off his own rest. Likewise on Feast Days he hears Confessions in the Choir area at St. Stephen's up until the time it is time for him to give his Instructions at St. Sebastian's, which goes until to the time which the Lord Himself determines. The People listen to him very willingly, and it seems that the Word of God is not just cast on the ground, but it is received on good ground [cf. Mt 13:8, 23]. Before taking up again the course of his instructions, I sent him to St. Zeno's to preach the Octave for the deceased....¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Cf. *Epistolario*, pp. 315-316. This describes a very broad Apostolic Missionary commitment, and out-reach to Priests and Seminarians, an essential part of the Stigmatine charism. [NB: the Italian for this is found above in Footnote # 75].

It is most helpful also to reflect from one of these very special sons of the saintly Founder the genuine portrait of the Apostolic Missionary, according to St. Gaspar's heart, in the new Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Stigmata of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us consider Fr. John B. Lenotti: he came to the Founder still as a Seminarian [*a timid rabbit!!*], and received his First Formation from St. Gaspar; he was a man by nature and by grace who would have been the very least capable of altering the ideal handed on by the Founder. He was the first Master of Novices in the Congregation, [as the Founder himself had been his!], and then later the Superior General. He tried to put together a Directory for Novices ¹¹² a work that remained incomplete at his death ¹¹³. He also wrote a most wonderful *Proemium* to this work – while it may not stand out for its elegant Latin, the ideal presented is familiar to generations of Stigmatines:

...The End of the Sodality is this: to be Apostolic Missionaries, for the service, or help, of Bishops. Therefore, its members ought to be always ready and prepared, both day and night, at any hint on the part of their own Superior, even in an instant, to go anywhere, whether near, or far, whether within the city, or outside, to undertake any office or ministry conferred upon them: to giving instructions, sermons, the Spiritual Exercises, to any group of

¹¹² Cf. *Note per servire...*, Serie 6 pp. 63, f. : ...*Finis Sodalitatis est: Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum. Membra igitur eius semper diu noctuque parata et prompta esse debent ad nutum proprii Superioris, etiam in ipso instanti, quocunque, sive prope sive procul, sive intra civitatem sive extra, ad quodcumque officium sive ministerium se conferre: ad instructiones, conciones, exercitia spiritualia cuicumque hominum coetui missionesque faciendas, ac confessiones audiendas carceribus detentis et ad mortem damnatis praesto esse ad supplendum huic vel illi cathedrae Philosophiae au Theologiae, necnon ad Paroeciam improviso suo viduatam Pastore pro tempore sustinenda, aliquo munere perfuncto, vel etiam non omnino expleto, alteri locum cedere, ut aliud gravius et difficilius suscipatur. Et id omne, magisque si forte contingat; laeto animo, hilari facie, quin excusationes offerre liceat vel propriae ineptitudinis vel haud sufficientis studii praemissi, quin ratiocinia fiant, quin aliquis exigatur sive accipiat; parati ad omnia ad quae Superior mittat; qui dum necessitatibus Episcopi, cum posit aut idoneos viros habeat, nihil denegabit, identidem studebit etiam Parochorum postulationibus, ubi opus habeant, quantum fieri potest, morem genere...*

¹¹³ NB: His commentary on the *Original Constitutions* may be found in CS III, pp. 386-539. [The English translation appears on this Website, as one of the entries under 'Constitutions'].

men whatever: to hearing confessions of those held in prisons, and to be with those who may be condemned to death; to supplying for this or that Chair of Philosophy or Theology, as well as filling in at a Parish for a time which may be unexpectedly deprived of its Pastor; and whenever a given work has been completed, and even when not yet perfectly accomplished, they should be ready to give up the place to someone else, and be ready to take on some other more grave [graviora] and difficult [ardua et difficilis] assignment. And they should do all this, and all the more so when this should come about: with a joyful spirit, a happy face, without offering excuses of their own ineptitude, or that they have had too little study, without seeking the reasons for all this, and without receiving or demanding any compensation [gratis]. They are to be prepared for all [parati ad omnia] to which the Superior might send them. The Superior should try to meet the needs of the Bishop, and deny nothing to him, in so far as this would be possible and the Community has confreres who are suited for a given task. And the Superior will deny nothing, and indeed will even try to meet the requests of pastors, wherever they may have a need, in so far as this will prove possible, and to provide the means...

This same Fr. Lenotti in his Instructions to the Novices did not cease repeating to them that the Stigmatine Religious is a *religious soldier*¹¹⁴, that each one should have the spirit of the *soldier*: an absolute spirit of generosity and sacrifice, in the total dedication to the glory of his Sovereign. Fr. Marani summarized this in his oft-repeated motto: *Prepared for All* - this was the motto also during the 'heroic years' of the decline of the Congregation.

Over the letter of the Constitutions of St. Gaspar Bertoni, the required Ecclesiastical legislation left its imprint. With the number of religious institutes being established in that time, this legislation gradually became more and more refined. Due to this, especially with regards to the framework of these many new Communities and their initial observances traced in earlier practices, did not survive. Fr. Bertoni hoped to shape his entire juridical structure on that excellent model, which is the Company of Jesus. And some elements did not survive due to human weakness.

¹¹⁴ Cf. CS III, p. 404, ff.

However, no matter what the exterior forms might be adopted, no one would tamper with the over-all spirit of these communities, and least of all, the Church herself. The early Stigmatine Community manifested the following:

- **A Spirit of Authority:** solidly concentrated into the hands of the Superior General, and emanating from him through the various grades of a kind of Stigmatine hierarchy. To this there should correspond, in that motto, *Parati ad Omnia*, a great spirit of submission and an ever more perfect obedience.

- **a Spirit of Filial Confidence** in the Superior as 'Father'. This is so even though the genuine and proper opening of one's conscience to one's superior became more and more with the passing of time regulated by ecclesiastical norms with greater cautions.

- **a Spirit of Poverty:** absolute detachment from the element of money, and of those comforts of life. In order for effective poverty to become authoritatively attenuated, that affective poverty, in anyone who is called to tend to religious perfection, should not suffer any attenuation whatsoever.

- **a Spirit of Mortification:** one that is both active and spontaneous – and not only passive, or forced.

- **a Spirit of Zeal for Souls:** with all the presuppositions of this matter already in place, and with that classical formula in mind: *Contemplata tradere*. There needs also to be the thrust implied in that motto: *Parati ad Omnia* - and this always takes its principle in regular observance, silence, recollection, prayer, study, internal and external penance.

- **a Spirit of Charity:** *in this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another...*[Jn 13:35] There is needed that spirit of mutual reverence: even in that already sanctioned by a distinction of Grade which the letter of the rule no longer allows: a reverence to be poured out on those vested with authority, and on the elderly.

And all of this needs to be impregnated with love and the spirit of the hidden way: according to that old motto of Veronese children: *Lowly*,

lowly... *the dens and their caves...*! ^{xvi} There will always be needed that spirit of humility, which is found in its 12 degrees [cf. CF # 121], a humility including both body and soul, the whole man. And this is all based on that saying of the Lord Himself:” ... *Learn from Me, for I am meek and humble of heart...*! [cf. Mt 11:29].



A SUMMARY

By way of conclusion, two important statements have been made regarding the Founder’s *Compendium Rude*:

[1] Fr. Bertoni based his *Compendium Rude* on the Jesuit *Formula*, made up of Papal Documents for his Institute – and then a paragraph from the Decree of the Propagation of the Faith, dated December 20, 1817, which had conferred on him the title of *Apostolic Missionary*, integrating this with the incisive addition – *in obsequium Episcoporum*¹¹⁵.

[2] **CF # 185**, does provide a ‘warm’ comment on the *Compendium Rude*¹¹⁶ [this will constitute Part IX of this present study].



¹¹⁵ Cf. STOFELLA, Introduction to the *Costituzioni Originali...*, p. 18.

¹¹⁶ cf. *Note per servire* ... Serie VI, p. 57.

[E] THE FINAL RENDITION OF THE *COMPENDIUM RUDE*:
MSSB # 9908, THE PRINTED COPY

There are some significant additions, omissions and changes, both regarding the rendition studied just above [cf. MssB # 9948] - and also regarding the reading of the *Compendium Rude* that survived the final text which has come down to us from Fr. Bertonni [cf. MssB 9908]. Now, more in particular:

[I] The Content

1: The entire line is Latin, with a slight spelling difference for *Missionarj*¹¹⁷ as the Father sent Me, I now send you...! [cf. Jn 20:21 – the central ideal here is Jesus, personally *sent* by His Father]. [In MssB 9848, the ending is “j” - whereas in the final copy, it is double “ii”.

Apostolici: as the Father sent Jesus, so, He sends His Apostles [cf. Acts of the Apostles¹¹⁸] *on His Personal Mission*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ cf. DONALD SENIOR, CP – Carol Stuhlmueller, CP, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*. Maryknoll NY: Orbis 1983

¹¹⁸ cf. C.K. BARRET, *Acts I-XIV* [Vol. I] – *Acts XV-XXVIII* [Vol. II]. The International Critical Commentary London/NY: T & T Clark 2002.

¹¹⁹ cf. RAYMOND E. BROWN, *Priest & Bishop. Biblical Reflections*. NY: Paulist 1970; *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. NY: Paulist 1979; *The Churches the Apostles left behind*. Paulist 1984; RAYMOND E. BROWN -JOHN P. MEIER, *Antioch & Rome*, Paulist 1982; A. B. BRUCE, *The Training of the Twelve*. Grand Rapids MI: Kregel [1871] 2002; OSCAR CULLMANN, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*. NY: Bantam 1958; LUCIEN LEGRAND, *L'Apotre des Nations?* Paris: Cerf 2001; JOHN MACARTHUR, *Twelve Ordinary Men*. Nelson/W. Publishing Group 2002; JOHN P. MEIER, *A Marginal Jew*. Vol. 3: *Companions and Competitors*. Chapter 26. Doubleday 2001, pp. 125-285; FRANCIS A. SULLIVAN, SJ, *From Apostles to Bishops*. Newman 2001.

The significant addition here are the words *in obsequium Episcoporum* ¹²⁰ - *obsequium* is found in the Latin Vulgate for Rm 12:1, make of your "bodies" [life] an oblation to the mercy of God, *almost a Eucharistic offertory* - it is also found throughout the Latin translation of St. Ignatius' original *Constitutions* ¹²¹, the root word being used as one of the synonyms of the Spanish *servicio*, *servir*, *servo*, to translate "service", so commonly used by Ignatius to translate his own "mysticism of service". *In obsequium* also appears in Fr. Bertoni's *Constitutions* ¹²². The "substantive form" of the over-all "End" of the Congregation, both spiritual as well as apostolic, renders each person Christ-like, in His commitment to His Father - and the Apostles' carrying out Christ's own Mission received from His Father.

2: The "manner" [*modus, modalitas, obedientia missionaria*] of living this End is described by Fr. Bertoni with a literal insertion of the Decree he received, dated. Dec.20, 1817, naming him an "Apostolic Missionary". The exercise of the *apostolici muneris* seems to be noted in CF # 11, speaking of certain members being promoted as Professed in the community, to take on the *perfectum opus sacerdotum, assumentem apostolicam missionem* - these are studied under *sacerdotale officium* [cf. CF # 69, ff.] and the *Graviora Ministeria* of the "Professed" Apostolic Missionaries [cf. CF ## 158, ff.], the *varia et propria ministeria* [cf. CF # 185]. All this is studied throughout.

There are two Stigmatine interpretations of this Decree from the *Propaganda* ^{xvii}:

- on the one hand, for some confreres this means that the *Parish Missions*, for which apostolic service Fr. Bertoni received this decree, are the central apostolic work of the entire Congregation - the view in 1854, of Fr. John Marani ¹²³;

¹²⁰ cf. JOSEPH HENCHY, 'La formula *in obsequium* nel linguaggio di S. Tommaso', in: ANGELICUM LXIX [1991], pp. 454-470.

¹²¹ cf. CSJ n. 8, *maius Dei obsequium semper intuendo*; n. 49: *ad Dei obsequium*, etc. etc.

¹²² *Obsequium* in CF ## 1; 151; 195; 237; 220.

¹²³ Cf. *Compendio delle Costituzioni, o regole di P. Gaspare Bertoni*, in: CS II, pp. 161-165.

- for others, also among the early confreres [as is evident from the very early General Chapters], many held that this Decree communicates rather an *Apostolic Spirit of Missionary Obedience* of carefully accepting, following the direction of the Bishops, in the service of the Church. This is expressed as the *modus* of assuming the broad Apostolic Mission, sub *Episcoporum directione, obsequium praestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera; haec autem quandoque ardua et difficilis sit...* [cf. CF # 185] ¹²⁴. There are two major aspects to be pondered here – Jesus Christ and Ecclesial Service:

1. The radical, total following/imitation of Jesus Christ, by abandonment through Him to the entire Trinity

The Spirituality of Fr. Bertoni may be described as a *Mysticism of Service*, honoring God the Father, in imitation of God the Son, following the inspirations of God, the Holy Spirit. St. Gaspar synthesizes this in his Diary:

.... We must make a portrait of Jesus Christ in ourselves... ¹²⁵

The theme in St. Gaspar seems to be, that as the Father sent Jesus, so does He send His apostles [cf. Jn 20:20, ff.] CF 2 presents several verbs and descriptions of ecclesial obedience: *sub directione et dependentia Ordinariorum... quibus omnino parere debeant... ac licentiam prius cum facultatibus ab eis recipere, servata sempre eorundum ... moderatione...*: this means to follow the apostolic direction and to live in missionary dependence on the Bishops, to whom the Stigmatines are to manifest all regarding the Apostolic Mission. The Stigmatines are to receive the permission and the faculties beforehand, and observe always the moderation of the Bishops regarding all that pertains to the apostolic task.

¹²⁴ It might be useful to cite here the oft-quoted entry in Fr. Bertoni's Spiritual Diary: *Pereami che il Santo ne facesse buon accoglienza, e ne invitasse a promuovere la maggior gloria [di Dio], siccome egli fece, e per le stesse vie, benché non in tutti que' modi ch'egli pote' usare...* [cf. MP – September 15, 1808].

¹²⁵ cf. MP, February 26, 1809: *Dobbiamo fare un ritratto in noi stessi di Gesù Cristo...*

St. Gaspar, the *Model of Holy Abandonment* regarding the all Holy Trinity, is also an example of *apostolic service to the Church*. Following the Ignatian interpretation of *Modus*, this provides for St. Gaspar and for the Stigmatines, the *Modus* of the Congregation is the Founder's *sensus Christi* is the *sensus Congregationis* ¹²⁶. As Fr. Gaspar himself was the *living Rule* for the Community – so, *Jesus Christ Himself is Fr. Bertoni's and his/our Mode of acting, Model*. The spirit of the Founder for the Stigmatines is eminently Christological – and the Congregation can say that Jesus Christ is our *forma vitae, vivendi* – this is our manner of imitating the Apostles, who followed Jesus Christ.

The *Modus* provides the Stigmatine specific manner of following/ imitating Jesus Christ. The *Modus* provides a living nucleus, a *faith-choice*, rich with the nuances of a *hope-filled* Apostolic Mission, with a universal *Charity*, to serve the Church *gratuitously, anywhere in the Diocese, or the World*. As Fr. Bertoni wrote in his *Autografo: In every exercise in behalf of souls, observe exactly the direction of Bishops, and obtain from them the ordinary faculties and permissions* ¹²⁷.

This is the *Institutum Vitae* for a Stigmatine. This *Modus* describes for us in broad strokes the nucleus of our spirituality of Abandonment to God, and Availability to the Church. Herein is implied those specific traits that would be essential and proper to the charism, as described, then, throughout the *Compendium Rude* - to be fished out in the course of the rest of the 314 *Original Constitutions*. The entire Stigmatine *modus procedendi, operandi*, has been approved by the Church – this is the Stigmatine *line of conduct*, this is the spirit of the Congregation. There is here in St. Gaspar a marvelous example of *radical evangelism*, a total following after/ a radical imitation of Jesus Christ *sent by His Father*, with indifference ^{xviii} and availability, always seeking the greater Service of God and the Church [*magis*].

¹²⁶ cf. P. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, *El nuestro modo do proceder – il nostro modo d'agire*. Conferenza del P. Generale al Corso Ignaziano del CIS, letta in inglese il 18 gennaio 1979. cf. Notizie dei Gesuiti d'Italia. Supplemento al n. 9/10 – 1979. [This is presented in the web-site: www.st-bertoni.com [under “Constitutions”, NADAL, *Modus*].

¹²⁷ *Autografo* # 2.

2. A radical, total availability to the Church in an ever more intense *Mysticism of Apostolic, Missionary Service* :

This is *Missionary Obedience*, a life-long conscious attitude of fidelity and service to the Church. This is Fr. Bertoni's way of *sentire cum Ecclesia*, feeling with, and serving the Church. To carry out the Apostolic Mission means to be *sent by the Church*, as *mediated through the Congregation*. It asks of each the life-long discipline of *availability* and *flexibility*, without rigid structures. No one Mission is the definitive one, there is a universality of Services [cf. CF 185]. The broad Apostolic Mission is developed by St. Gaspar in Part IX of his *Original Constitutions*.¹²⁸

¹²⁸) cf. CF ## 158-186. The Capitular Commission on the *Original Constitutions* [Convergenze - October 11, 2003 - Waltham MA] offers this interpretation:

6. The *munus apostolicum* [= the apostolic service]. The plan of Fr. Bertoni opens up into a vast ministerial horizon: the celebration of the sacraments [CF 162]; service to the Christian Community, contained in the formula *Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium* [CF 164], and the Christian formation of the youth [165-166]. Fr. Bertoni, at the same time, in order to guard the missionary dimension of the *Euntes Docete* [cf. Mt 28:19], 'does not admit of the ordinary care of souls' [CF 290]

A ministry translates the ideal of the Apostolic Missionary of Fr. Bertoni the more it is inserted into the dynamic ecclesial plan of evangelization, and/or of re-evangelization [diocesan or national projects pertaining to the Christian communities, the Clergy, religious institutes and youth groups].

7. St. Gaspar Bertoni, formed in the Ignatian spirituality from the time he was a young seminarian, under the direction of Fr. Galvani, cultivated a profound love and zeal for the Church. He was given the title 'Apostolic Missionary' through the Popular Mission in which he participated at St. Firmus. He was likewise a missionary to the youth, a guide and director for the clergy, a convinced supporter of the need of the renewal of the Christian community. Imbued with the Word of the Lord, he prophetically noted the need of responses that would be more adequate to the needs of the times: he fathomed the more deeply with his friends from the clergy the study of the theology of St. Thomas and the Moral of St. Alphonsus. And in a series of intensifying mystical and apostolic experiences, that Plan for a Congregation of Apostolic Missions matured. Fr. Bertoni remains the 'living rule' for all his sons; in his *Constitutions*, his missionary spirit is transparent as there is the oft-repeated demand for a spiritual and doctrinal perfection, toward which it is required for each to tend in an incessant way.

8. The *obsequium Episcoporum* is, in the first place, a service and communion with the Bishop, an expression of ecclesial availability and confident abandonment to God. There is also further contained here the commitment to a preparation that would be lived to the greatest extent possible, asking each confrere to tend to the perfection of his ministry, that is called to mind in the formula, 'Apostolic Missionary.'

#3: One significant difference regarding the gratuitous service here is that in MssB 9849, the verb is *servient* - in the final edition [MssB 9908] it will be the infinitive, *servire*. The Founder presents a *Mysticism of Service*. The gratuity in the exercise of the Apostolic Mission is a corner-stone of both the Ignatian rule, and also that of Fr. Bertoni. In all three renditions of the *Compendium Rude* from the hand of Fr. Bertoni, these first three numbers hold the same order: the “End”, the “Manner”, and “Gratuitous Service”. The order of the items in the *Compendium Rude* beings to change now:

#4: In the first rendition [cf. MssB 9846] where the *Compendium* occupies only a single line, the order is: “End”, “Means”, “Manner”, the “Grades”, and the “Regimen” – presenting just five of the principal items.

In MssB #9848, #4 is the quocumque, “geographical abandonment” [cf. Mt 28: 19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:47; Ac 1:8 +; 2:38 +]- just any place where there is a need in the judgment of the Bishops. In the final version, the *gratis* is CF #3.

In MssB #9849, the order changes: CF #4 is the statement that all members need to be *immunes*, in adjectival form. This is the order in the previous MssB #9848, but the abstract state, *immunitas* is used.

In the final edition, the printed *Compendium Rude*, MssB #9908, CF #4, the order is the same as immediately precedes, and the *immunes* appears in adjectival form, qualifying in another way, the Apostolic Missionary. [As for the perpetual care of religious women, cf. CSJ n. 588].

This living *immune from dignities* would also include the title of “Apostolic Missionary” conferred for distinguished apostolic services. It is the ideal of the title that is to be lived.

#5: In MssB #9848 #5 is the *immunitas*, in abstract form.

In MssB #9849, CF #5 is the **Quocumque** [cf. Mt26: 13; Mk 16:15; Jn 1:10; 10:36; 11:27; 12:47; 16:28; 17:21, 23, 25], the same order presently found in the definitive printing. The verb is found in the present participle, indicating dynamic activity. This is the geographical form of abandonment, the living of the totality of the obsequium. [The ideal of an *international membership* is alluded to also in CF #193].

6: This is a composite number made up of several central Apostolic Missionary values:

a. The Means - the Latin *Media* here, is the Italian *mezzi*, in MssB # 9948.

Spiritual Perfection ¹²⁹ [cf. Ph 1:6; Ps 118:66; 1 Tm 4:16]: as has been noted, this is presented in Part IV, CF ## 47 & 48: the former are the “positive” means, such as prayer, Divine Office and Mass; half-hour meditation; 20-minute spiritual reading; thee-fold examen - sermons and domestic exhortations. Annual retreat for 8 or 10 days; weekly sacramental confession; manifestation of conscience to the Superior - fraternal correction. In CF # 48 are listed the “negative” means, the removal of defects, increase in virtues, self-denial, perfect observance of precepts, etc. This was also # 6 in MssB # 9849.

This perfection might also be considered in Parts X & XI, Common Life; the living of the Vows [Part VII], and a number of the Constitutions, regarding life-style, food, clothing, and the life [cf. CF## 6; 32; 69; 100; 133; 134; 137] ¹³⁰.

b: Intellectual Development [cf. Is 43:10; 50:4; Ezk 6:13 (etc); Ho 2:22; Zc 4:13; Jn 10:14, 27: 14:7, etc.]: in MssB ## 9848 & 9849, this is # 7. In the CF this is Part IV, cc. 2-6, ## 49-68. There are also references to this in CF ## 173; 175, ff.

c. Common Life: in MssB ## 9848 & 9849 this is #8 - this is also covered in CF, Parts III, X & XI, ## 43, ff [the “only penance”]; ## 187-197.

d. The Perpetual Observance of the Vows: this is covered at some length in CF, Parts VI & VII, ## 83-151. In MssB ## 9848 & 9849, this is presented as # 9.

¹²⁹ cf. Suarez VIII, cc. 1-9.

¹³⁰ cf. Suarez, I, c. 5; V, cc. 1-3.

e. The Program of Common Life, regarding *Food, Clothing, Rooms*: is to be measured by the more observant clergy. In MssB ## 9848 & 9849, this is presented as # 10.

f. It needs to be pointed out that in MssB # 9849, there is added an entire sentence which does not appear in the final *Compendium Rude*, but is the last entry under Chastity, as Part VII, Section III, c. 4, *Concerning Moderation of Externals, necessary for Life*, [cf. CF # 137]. As will be seen, this is the clearest entry regarding the clothing of religious, close to fulfilling the three conditions set by St. Ignatius: that it be *fitting*; *accommodated* to the place where one lives; and that it not be repugnant to *poverty* ¹³¹. Fr. Bertoni's requirements are that it be "*honest*", that it bespeak *poverty*, that it be suited to the *ministries*, for the people among whom we live, that it be clean and not torn. This sentence, then, does not appear in the final rendition of the *Compendium Rude*.

7: The Promotion of the Grade:

- *Profectus Juridicus*:

- *Profectus Apostolicus* – *gradatim usque ad Perfectum opus Sacerdotum*: [cf. according to different *gifts, graces* - cf. Rm 12:4, ff.; 1 Co 2:12; 12:4-30; 14:1-40; 1 P 2:4]: of Membership as an *Apostolic Missionary*, one of the few *Professed*. Promotion, in general is found in CF Part V, ## 69-82 ¹³².

¹³¹ cf. CSJ n. 577; SUAREZ I, c. 5. For Ignatian "habit", cf. CSJ, nn. 8; 81; 296; 297; 577; 579.

¹³² Qualities required for the Promotion to the *Grade of Apostolic Missionary*: This text was developed by the XIth General Chapter Capitular Commission -1881-1889, for the *Proposed Text* of the renewed Constitutions, Part IV, c. III, n. 4 - prepared for the XIIth General Chapter:

« Chapter IV Concerning those to be promoted to the Sacerdotal Office [¹³² a],
And to the *Grade of Apostolic Missionary in our Society* [¹³² b]...

4. At length, after a Priest member has spent some years in the ecclesiastical ministries, he could be elevated to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary. But, no one is to be endowed with this Grade unless he has completed his thirty-fifth year, and ten years of vows in our Sodality.

Moreover, there are required in him besides outstanding piety, love for regular

This Promotion happened first through the Promotion as students – then, up to the Priestly Ordination [cf. Pars V, CF ## 69, ff.] – then the Vows [Partes VI & VII] – then, the *Schola Affectus* [Pars VIII] – and finally, perhaps 20 years after Priestly Ordination, the ultimate Profession as an *Apostolic Missionary* [Pars IX].

discipline, and zeal for the salvation of souls, that he be endowed with suitable doctrine, i.e., that he has passed with praise his last exams, after having completed the entire curriculum of theology; also, that he be of great merit to the Institute.

Either because he was **engaged in giving the Sacred Missions** ^[132 c]; or, **the Spiritual Exercises** ^[132]; or, for a full three years, he had been the **Director of some House of ours**; or, had been **teacher of the sacred disciplines for four years** ^[132 d] or was **dedicated for many years in instructing the youth**; or, lastly, **he had performed well some other office, or duty for the good of the Sodality.** ^[132 e]

^[132 f] The judgment of this merit is absolutely up to the Superior and the General Councilors, who, by a plurality of secret votes, will promote those to the Grade of Apostolic Missionary, who are endowed with these qualities we have noted above: they will then announce, by Decree, their promotion to the entire Sodality ...

^[132 a] This would seem to reflect what St. Gaspar Bertoni meant in the ordinary promotion of students to the Priesthood - CF # 7. – the section that follows here and which is underlined, would fulfill that which the Stigmatine Founder meant by the *perfectum opus Sacerdotum, assumentes apostolicam missionem* – this was not any one ministry in the minds of so many of these early Fathers, but would include the *graviora ministeria* [CF # 158] - *the varia et propria suae vocationis* [arduae et difficilis] *munera* [CF # 185] – also called the *ministeria accomodata* to achieve the *finis* of the Sodality, the salvation of souls. [CF # 262].

^[132 b] This number 4, Chapter IV, and its title were eliminated, as may be noted from the “List of the Proposals made by the Deputed Commission” because the Holy See did not allow the use of the title *Apostolic Missionary*. This list of qualifications found here in n. 4, however, does reflect the mentality of many of the confreres of this time – however, this broad interpretation of the *Apostolic Mission* is what many early confreres understood as the *perfectum opus... graviora ministerial ... varia et propria munera* of the Stigmatine Apostolic Mission.

^[132 c] There is a certain historical primacy here, as the Founder was inspired to establish the Community from this kind of Apostolic Mission - the *modus operandi* of preaching Parish Missions is to obtain the full authorization of the local ordinary – in the spirit of the *Fourth Vow of the Society of Jesus*.

^[132 d] The whole area of Clergy retreats was also a privileged form of service of the early Community as part of its Apostolic Mission – the early Community also banded together by the theological discussions held among priests under Fr. Bertoni's direction. [It would help if someone could make a detailed study on the Apostolic Mission to the Clergy, and to Consecrated Life - like the brilliant study of Fr. DePaoli on the Parish Missions.

^[132 e] As has been noted, serving in Seminary teaching was much revered by the early Community's Apostolic Mission. »

- regarding the "**Professed**": in MssB ## 9848 & 9849, this is # 11: this is promotion to the *supreme priestly work*, the "*apostolic mission*" - whereas, *the promotion of the Students* is found in CF, Part VIII, ## 152-157; the specific promotion to "Profession" is found in CF Part IX, ## 158-186.

- regarding the *promotion* of the other members, in MssB 9848 & 9849, this is # 12.

8: in MssB ## 9848 & 9949, this is # 13. In the final copy of the *Original Constitutions*, this is CF Part XII, ## 298-314. In MssB # 9849, there are two names for the Superior General: *Praelatus* and *Præses* - and he will name the local superiors and minor officials. This is the Community, *Corporate Obedience*, within the Community - [*ad intra*].



SUMMARY

THE COMPENDIUM RUDE

[CF ## 1-8]

The Title

[1] Both of these words may be studied much more in detail. As a brief presentation here, it might simply be stated that these terms are well known to theologians. *St. Thomas Aquinas* has a much studied work, entitled the *Compendium Theologiae*¹³³. The object and plan of that work are described in its Prologue: as the Apostle taught the Corinthians that the entire perfection of the present life consists in faith, hope and charity, as though in certain chapters *summarizing* [*compendiosis*] our salvation, saying, *Now there are three things that remain, faith, hope and charity* [cf. 1 Co 13:13]. Hence, as the *blessed Augustine* has taught these three are those by which God is worshipped. Thus, St. Thomas intended to offer a *compendious doctrine* regarding the Christian religion. Fr. Bertoni intends here to offer a kind of **summary** of what the Constitutions that follow will contain. St Thomas wrote a *doctrinal resume* on faith, hope and charity, taking much inspiration from St. Augustine's *Enchiridion de Fide, Spe et Caritate*¹³⁴ - intending by this to offer an *abregé*, a *brief synthesis* of the faith. Fr. Bertoni has offered a synthesis of his rule in his *Compendium*.

[2] A classical Latin Dictionary¹³⁵ offers some insights that might be helpful. The word comes from the language of *economy* and offers

¹³³ SANCTI THOMAE DE AQUINO, *Opera Omnia. Tomus XLII.* Cura et Studio Fratrum Praedicatorum. Editori di SanTommaso. ROMA 1979.

¹³⁴ *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera.* Tomus XLVI, Pars XIII, 2. Turnholt Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii 1969.

¹³⁵ CHARLTON T. LEWIS, Ph.D., *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrew's Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary. Revised, Enlarged, and in Great Part Rewritten.* Oxford at Clarendon Press, compendium.

insights that will be studied later, such as that which is *weighed together, kept together, saved*. It is the *sparing, the saving in anything done, a shortening, an abbreviation, an abridgment*.

[3] The same dictionary would translate **Rude** as *rough, raw, unripe, unpolished, early* [outline, abridgment]. St. Augustine also has a classical work found in the same volume as his *Enchiridion*, entitled: *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, meaning the unlettered, the unschooled.

[4] The word is often found in the *Ignatian Constitutions* [cf. nn. 20; 195; 196; 199; 404; 407]. Fr. Bertoni mentions it also in his Constitution for the Formation of Novices: a **Compendium** of the General and Particular Laws of the Congregation, its Constitutions [cf. CF # 33].



[II.] A PLAN for APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES.

Compendium Rude CF ## 1-8]

FINIS	GENERALIS	A.M.D.G.	TRINITY		
			EUCARIST		
		SALUS ET PERFECTIO	MEMBRORUM		
			PROXIMORUM		
	SPECIALIS	AD INTRA	PROFECTUS SUIPSIUS		
			PROFECTUS IN DOCTRINIS ECCLESIASTICIS		
			PROFECTUS JURIDICUS		
		AD EXTRA	MISSIO APOSTOLICA [CF 1]	JUVENTUS CLERUS, CONSECRATI	
				QUODCUMQUE DEI VERBUM	
			MODALITAS MISSIONARIA [CF 2]	LICENTIAM PRIUS	
CUM FACULTATIBUS					
		SERVATA ORDINARIORUM MODERATIONE			
QUALITATES	GRATIS [CF 3; 184]				
	IMMUNITAS [CF 4; 290]				
	QUOCUMQUE [CF 5; 193; 245]				
PROFECTUS	SPIRITUALIS [CF 6a]				
	INTELLECTUALIS [CF 6b; cf. Ps 118; 1Tm 4:16; CF 127][attende tibi et doctrinae]				
	JURIDICUS: Postulans – Novitius [CF 7a]	SCHOLASTICUS			
		COADJUTOR	MATERIALIS		
			SPIRITUALIS		
	APOSTOLICUS [CF 7b]	GRAVIORA			
		ACCOMODATA			
		USQUE AD PERFECTUM OPUS SACERDOTALE			
OBEDIENTIA CORPORATIVA [CF 8]					

[Per *EXPERIMENTA* Ignatiana i.e., *Exercitium progressivum variarum Missionum*
 [CSJ nn. 64-70] [CF ## 72-76][CF 38: Novitiatus;
 CF Post Novitiatum];
 CF 89, Concl. to Part VII] - Ad *SACERDOTIUM* – et solum post longas
 ultiores [20 annos??]
EXPERIENTIAS, ad *PROFESSIONEM Solemnem* [cf.PART IX]

- [1] Exercitia Spiritualia [30 dies]
- [2] In xenodochis [30 dies]
- [3] Peregrinatio [30 dies]
- [4] In officiis abjectis
- [5] In Catechismo
- [6] Praedicatio [variae formae],
Sacramenta

PARS	##	Assunto
I	9-26	Pre-MISSION
II	27-39	Ad-MISSION
III	40-46	(Probation) For-MISSION
IV	47-58	(Progression) Progressive-MISSION
V	69-82	(1 st Promotion) First-MISSION
VI	83-89	[Vows in General] 1 st E-MISSION
VII	90-151	(Vows: In Particular) 2 nd E-MISSION
VIII	152-157	(<i>Schola Affectus</i>) In-MISSION
IX	158-186	Apostolic MISSION
X	187-266	[Charity] Co-MISSION
XI	267-297	(Communication) Trans-MISSION
XII	298-314	[Corporative Obedience] Sub-MISSION

CONTEMPLATIO AD SPEM!



ENDNOTES

Author's complementary notes
regarding terms and nouns used in this document

ⁱ **Fr. Louis Benaglia, CSS** [Verona, 1900 – Verona, 1988], wrote the five typed volumes of the *Manoscritti Bertoniiani*. **Gino** is his nickname, familiar name. I worked with him in 1966-1967 - as he transcribed all of the spiritual writings of the Founder. It was a terribly painstaking work - which he accomplished for the most part at our old Novitiate at Grottaferata, outside of Rome. He, too, was a most accomplished musician. He was preceded in death by an uncle, Fr. Cesare Benaglia, who lived into his 90's - one of the oldest Stigmatines ever. Fr. Gino was about 88 when he died. We can find more information about the Deceased Stigmatine Confreres in www.confrades.com.

ⁱⁱ **Fr. Joseph Stofella, CSS** [Aldeno, Province of Trento, Italy, 1885 – Verona, 1966] – He was certainly one of the greatest Stigmatine Historians. Endowed of sharp intelligence, he always worked in the historical field and especially in favor of the cause of our Founder. At the end of his youth, he revealed a remarkable musical talent. He is author of great masterpieces, like the *“Collectanea Stigmatina”*, *“Vita del Fondatore”*, and the editor of the Founder's *“Epistolario”* and *“Pagine di Vita Cristiana”*. He passed away nine years before to see realized the more beautiful fruit of his work: the Beatification of our Founder. We can find more information about the Deceased Stigmatine Confreres in www.confrades.com.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Fr. Louis Fortis** was St. Gaspar's grammar school teacher and spiritual director. He was from Verona and was living there - as the Jesuits had been suppressed. When they were re-instated by Pius VIIth, Fr. Fortis was elected Jesuit Provincial of the Rome Region - and in the next General Chapter, He was elected Fr. General of the entire Society of Jesus. It is largely from him that St. Gaspar received the very strong Jesuit influence and devotions - to St. Aloysius Gonzaga and to St. Ignatius of Loyola - the 'mirror' of Fr. Bertoni's own vocation.

^{iv} **Fr. Nicholas Galvani** was Fr. Bertoni's teacher of Moral Theology in the Seminary, and Spiritual Director - he was privately wealthy - and among his possessions, was the little Church of the Stimate in Verona, with the small

house next door. In the backfield, was an old Convent once lived in by Carmelites, and dedicated to St. Teresa. Later on, as he approached death, he offered to Fr. Bertoni the property of the Stimate – with the adjoining Convent of St. Teresa's for Mother Naudet.

Fr. Galvani was of Ignatian spirituality – and he wanted Fr. Bertoni to establish a community of men who would live according to the rule of St. Ignatius.

As Fr. Bertoni was beginning to make these plans concrete, he wrote to Mother Naudet – telling her that Fr. Galvani is praying to St. Ignatius, asking the Saint to help him and Mother Naudet.

Fr. Galvani is our benefactor and should be listed in the Necrology for January 6th. We can find more information about the Deceased Stigmatine Confreres and our Deceased Benefactors in www.confrades.com.

^v **Stimate**: I leave it in the Italian - just to distinguish it from the "Stigmata" of Jesus - for me, the "Stimate" usually means the House in Verona - and the "Stigmata" are the sorrowful and glorious wounds of Jesus.

^{vi} The Vatican has a number of writing styles - the most common may be "**Encyclicals**" - the means used by Pius IXth [in 1854] and Pius XII [in 1950] to define the dogmas for the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

A **Motu Proprio** - is usually a shorter document, a statement or a paragraph - directing the Church in a given disciplinary, or doctrinal matter. A **Papal Bull** is a document of some length defining some aspects of Church discipline or Church life. The Early Jesuits worked out a document that described the essential points to submit for the approval of the Holy See. This happened first in 1540, under Paul IIIrd - some emendations were made 10 years later under Pope Julius IIIrd. This, then, with the emendations of the Holy See came back to the Jesuits as an official Papal Bull - placed at the heading of their Constitutions and called a **Formula**.

^{vii} **Scholastics** are usually young Religious, who are in either temporary, or perpetual vows - in preparation for missionary priesthood in the Society of Jesus.

^{viii} **Angelic** - a good many of the great Teachers of the Middle Ages had a special title: as Scotus was called the Subtle Doctor, St. Thomas was called the Angelic Doctor for two reasons: his brilliant, penetrating mind, like the Angels who know 'intuitively' - and because of his angelic pure life.

^{ix} **Risorgimento** is the Italian word for "Renaissance", a period of history meaning the Italian re-birth as a nation. Fr. Suarez wrote under the leadership of the long-time Superior General [February 19, 1581–January 31, 1615], Fr. Claudio Acqu-

viva, a generation or so later. As will be seen, Fr. Suarez' work is a most orderly apologetic, more defensive reflection on the Jesuit Constitutions, defending this 'new' way of life in the Church, which had found opposition even in high Church circles. For example, the Fourth Vow of special obedience to the Roman Pontiff – was not understood as something unique in that in faith, all believers are placed under the magisterial and spiritual direction of the Vicar of Christ.

^x **Fr. Francis Suarez** [1548-1612] was a Jesuit priest who wrote commentaries on St. Ignatius's Constitutions, and in his Book IX St. Gaspar based the Part IX of the Constitutions for the Stigmatine Congregation. The Book IX talks about the Apostolic Missions, and this is the heart of the Jesuit Rule, and also of the Charism of Fr. Bertoni. In the Jesuit Constitutions, it is **Part Seven**, which is on the Missions. For St. Gaspar, it is **Part Nine** - where he emphasizes the special duties of the Apostolic Missionaries.

^{xi} The corner stones of the Jesuit Constitutions as these were understood first by Fr. **Jerome Nadal**, SJ and later, by Fr. Francis Suarez.

Fr. Jerome Nadal [1507-1580], whose name is rendered in Latin as Hieronymus Natalis, was a well-known personality in the early History of the Society of Jesus. Five full substantial volumes are dedicated to his writings of Conferences in the well-known Series, *Momumentis Historicis Societatis Iesu*. For our purposes here, there are three volumes of central interest, that are available, and they are formational, ascetical commentaries on St. Ignatius' [1491-1556] Constitutions:

- P. HIERONYMI NADAL, *Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu*, edidit Michael Nicolau, SI. Romae: apud Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu. 1962.

- P. HIERONYMI NADAL, *Scholia in Constitutiones S.I.*, Edicion Critica, Prologo y notas, de Manuel Ruiz Jurado, S.I., Granada: Facultad de Teologia 1976. Another good source has appeared in French translation, summarizing these volumes, is:

- JEROME NADAL, "*Contemplatif dans l'action. Ecrits spirituels ignatiens* [1535-1575]". Presentation par François Evain, SJ. Traduction du Journal Spirituel, par Antoine Lauras, SJ. Collection Christus n° 81. Paris: Desclee 1994.

Then, the applications will be made regarding these Jesuit theological and spiritual interpreters of the Rule of St. Ignatius – as this appealed to Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, Stigmatine Founder. In the booklet of the Stigmatine Founder's Rule, prepared during the Holy Year of 1950, Fr. Joseph Stofella has noted that a large majority of the Original Constitutions come from Fr. Francis Suarez, SJ – and many of these, *verbatim* (from the Latin, that means "literally").

^{xii} **Formulae** is an accepted plural form in place of *Formulas*.

^{xiii} **Recollection** would mean extended periods of quiet mental prayer – discerning what apostolates to do – how to improve one’s spiritual life – it is a prayerful ‘thinking things over.’

^{xiv} **Four cats** - it is an Italian expression which means very few in numbers and very insignificant in members!!!!

^{xv} **Authoritative** - in 1835, Fr. Bertoni had very men helping him in the development of his Community – Fr. Bragato was the one who was the closest to him. And yet, when the Bishops of northern Italy made known to him that they needed a spiritual director for the royal court of Vienna. So, Fr. Bertoni sacrificed Fr. Bragato – and this, to me, is an ‘authoritative’ decision – one that sets the style of Stigmatine administration: whatever is most useful to the Glory of God and most helpful to the salvation of souls: this should be done – and this makes it ‘authoritative’.

^{xvi} **The dens and their caves** - it was an old Veronese saying, said in their dialect - it is an encouragement to be humble: like the little animals all have their little caves, or holes in the ground in which to hide – this is what a Stigmatine is compared to by the Founder – it is like ‘anonymous’ ministry: doing the best job we can, without hanging around waiting to be praised for the work – leaving all glory to God.

^{xvii} **Propaganda** is one of the Sacred Roman Congregations which help the Holy Father govern the Church. The *Propaganda* is a Latin gerundive meaning: the *Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith*.

^{xviii} **Indifference** is a mental attitude, faith-conviction – to be willing to go anywhere in the Diocese and the world – to do whatever mission we can for the *greater* honor and glory of God and the *greater* service of our neighbors – it is the logical consequence of ‘Holy Abandonment to God, and Availability to the Church’.

P. G.P. DE PAOLI CSS

APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES

GASPAR BERTONI'S PROJECT

VERONA - COMMUNITY "ALLE STIMATE"
Mother House of the Congregation of the Stigmatines
September 2003

FIRST PART

MISSION
POPULAR MISSIONS
APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY

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1 - THE APOSTOLIC MISSION

Introduction

Our reflection about '*the Apostolic Mission*' is hereby stated only in its essential points, just to try to understand its goals and the meaning of their arrangements at biblical-theological level and at charismatic level, in a very special way in the *Company of Jesus* and in *Fr. Bertonni's perspectives*.

1.1- An approximate glance of the biblical meaning of the term¹

I say only '*approximation*' to the meaning of the word, just to recall how wide the theme, which opens up in front of us, is. We are not going deep into the matter at all, but the reflection will be *qualified radically*.

The *New Testament* starts with the apparition of the '*Messenger*', with the **mission** of Jesus, which took place only in Israel. But the characteristics of the *Kingdom of God*, preached by Jesus, are wider than the '*borders*' of the current mentality, by searching for the *poor*, the *sinner*, the *emarginised* and – something very peculiar – for the *non-Israelite*. On Easter evening Jesus gives the **mandate** to the Disciples: "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you*".

The beginning of the mission of the Church, - in the variety of the underlining of the New Testament writings and of the comprehension in modern reflection -, starts from the *resurrection* of Jesus and his apparition to the Disciples (cfr. John cc. 20-21). Jesus had been the

¹ VANHOYE A., *Le origini della Missione Apostolica nel Nuovo Testamento*, in: «Civiltà Cattolica» 3371 (1990), p. 544-58.

'Missionary', the one sent by the Father. He appears to the Twelve to confirm them in the identity of the Risen (between the *historical Christ* and the *Christ of faith*). He tells them and he shows them that, now, being the *Risen one*, he has *all power*. There are two different versions of the '*mandate*', the one of Mt. 28,16-20 and the one of Lk 24,44-49 (the summary of Mk 16, 9-20 is not considered authentic).

The title '*apostles*' confirms the Twelve as '*sent*' to a **mission**. For the Disciples the '**mission**' presupposes the experience of the life communion with Jesus. It has its *origin* exactly from such an experience, and its *aim* is to help people reach the same experience. To '*remain*' with Jesus, paradoxically speaking, one has to have the courage to '*go away from Him*'. (John 15, 9-16)

Do we find in Jesus a certain *personal awareness* of being *sent* to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God to '*pagan Nations*'?. The answer is negative. Jesus limited his public ministry to the territory of the people of Israel. Nevertheless, to this initial *negative* realisation, one has to be added, immediately, a *positive* one: Jesus showed his awareness of an *urgent evangelising mission*, which He conceived and implemented in a very dynamic and very mobile way as well!

To the dynamism of going '*to other villages*', corresponds a different kind of dynamism, very recognisable in his message, with an openness to the world. **All peoples** are called to receive the Gospel message. "*The Mission is the great work of Jesus Christ, through which, after having completed his work of mediation on earth, He draws all peoples toward salvation and makes them share the grace obtained for them*"².

The '**apostolic mission**' is thus strongly radicated in the NT, and it constitutes an unexpected but coherent development of the *universalistic pressure* (already present in various texts of the OT). The new horizon is inaugurated and becomes explicit on the light of the Resurrection; it will encourage the Apostles of Christ to leave Jerusalem

² ROSSANO P., *Teologia della Missione*, in "Mysterium salutis", Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. Feiner, M. Löhrer. Italian translation Queriniana, Brescia 1972, p. 625, n.1. The comprehension of the *mission* by Vatican II, gets closer to that of the Reformation, even in the permanent different comprehension of the *ordained ministry*.

to go 'up to the extreme corners of the world' to establish the 'implantatio Ecclesiae' (the building up of the Church) among all Nations.

Being clearly the Father's will, in regard to the Son, as a sign of God's love for humanity, **Christ's Mission** becomes the **Apostles' Mission**, and through them, the *Mission of the entire Church*, founded on the Apostles.

The **Mission** becomes 'apostolic': in its origin it must be understood as God's salvific work, as christologic event, as *ecclesiology salvific action* (in the power of the Spirit); it is an *essential* element, which starts from Christ, it characterises the Church, which receives from him the *mandate*, and is accompanied and sustained by the Spirit³. "*This represents, surely, one of the best conquests of the XX Century Ecclesiology, which acquired more awareness of its own native elements*"⁴. The Church, by its nature, is *missionary*: it starts from witnessing Jesus 'the Lord', it carries Him along with itself, it preaches Him, it communicates Him, it offers Him to all peoples!. Thus, Christ reaches all peoples, and penetrates human life through his presence and his institutions.

"*The Catholicity of the Church becomes manifest and actual in the mission to all the peoples*"⁵ The **mission** becomes a reality by the direct proclamation, through the prophetic intervention in words and signs, by the witnessing of the Christian communities united in love, by the mediation of the apostle': "...*this is nothing else than the actualisation, in history, of the catholicity of the Church*"⁶.

³ Cf GIBERTI G., *Il problema biblico della Missione*, in: Riv. Bibl. It. XXXVI (1988), p. 259-265.

⁴ It is noticed as acquired in the Decree *Ad Gentes*. ROSSANO P., *Teologia della Missione*, in: «Mysterium salutis», Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. Feiner-M. Löhrer, Italian translation Queriniana. Brescia 1972, p. 606.

⁵ ROSSANO P., *Teologia della Missione*, in «Mysterium salutis», Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. Feiner e M. Löhrer. Italian translation Queriniana. Brescia 1972, p. 605.

⁶ ROSSANO P., *Teologia della Missione*, in «Mysterium salutis», Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. Feiner e M. Löhrer. Italian translation Queriniana. Brescia 1972, p. 615.

1.2.- What is the meaning of 'apostolic' mission?

The use of the word '**mission**' is not simple, it has more than one question mark. Properly speaking, the term '*mission*', the way it is understood by the contemporary Theology, does not exist in the NT. We do know that in the *biblical Greek*, the word "*apostello*" (connected with apostle), has got quite a wide possibility of interpretation and it has got a sure reference to the **mission**. A more specific indication is implicit in Mt.28,19 *poreuòmenoi* (-thentes) *kerùssete* (Mt 28,19). The words we see there are *apostéllo*, *exapostéllo*, *pémpto*, *apòstolos*;; among them *apostéllein* underlines *the divine mandate*⁷: "*apostle*", "*apostolic*" belong to the family of the verb *apostellein*, which means 'to send'.

The Latin tradition connects the verb *mittere* with the adjective *apostolatus*. St. Jerome uses "*Christum praedicare*". The Middle Age uses *propagatio fidei*, *evangelii*, *praedicatio cristianae religionis*. In the modern meaning, the expression "**apostolic mission**" appears among the Jesuits and the Carmelites only in the XVIth Century⁸, even though its reality and its awareness go back to the Apostles, and has got a history as old as Christianity.⁹

"**Mission**" thus, means:

a- in the strict sense, the *mission* "*given to the twelve Apostles*";

b- in a wider sense: *any kind of apostolate*, for example the

"**Parish Missions**"

c- in a common sense, "*foreign missions*", i.e. the "*apostolic mission*" of the Christian sent to preach the Gospel among the pagans.

Something quite fundamental is the knowledge that *Christ shares with his Disciples the mission received by the Father*. Such *mandate*

⁷ TESTA E. N., *Missione nella Bibbia*, «Dizionario di omiletica», by M. Sodi and A.M. Triaca. Ellenici - Velar Ed. Leumann, Torino and Gorle, Bergamo 1998, p. 228.

⁸ ROSSANO P., *Teologia della Missione*, in «Mysterium salutis», Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. Feiner e M. Löhrer. Italian translation Queriniana. Brescia 1972. p. 605-606, n.1.

⁹ See the *status quaestionis* in the *Nota* by GIBERTI G., *Il problema biblico della Missione*, in RivBiblIt XXXVI (1988), per p. 259-265; qui p. 262, n. 3.

is given to them on Easter evening, thus becoming an 'emanation' of the **Paschal Mystery**. If all fruits of salvation come from the Paschal Mystery, much more the 'Mission' being the fruit, (received from the Father and shared with the Apostles at Easter) which is the base of all others.

The '**Acts of the Apostles**' are the *dramatised* and *theologised* history of the **Apostolic Mission**, and of the first steps towards the fulfilment of Christ's mandate : *evangelisation, sanctification* and *government* (of the Church!) become more and more concrete, and the Church becomes more and more aware of its own nature. *The small 'boat' of the Church*, guided by the *wind* of the Spirit, starts moving with courage in the midst of the stormy and dangerous sea of the centuries. It's the seed that starts becoming stem in view of the fruits season.

The understanding of the meaning of each "**mission**" is rooted, therefore, in the NT origins, balancing itself through the sharing to the **mission of Christ**, of which it is an extension and materialisation. From here *each and every vocation* derives and even the *commitment of any disciple* as such. Christ's Doctrine and behaviour constitute the *foundation*, and the essential *reference* for any "**apostolic mission**".

But the word has got its own *development* in the history of the Church. **Apostolicity, apostolic**, though present *from the very beginning*, becomes more and more common with Ireneus and Tertullian, in the new understanding of the Church as '*Community*', started by the Apostles and destined to expand itself from this nucleus and to look back at it, at all times. "*The idea of a kind of 'derivation' of 'missions', starting from the Father to come down to the Church, passing through Christ and the Apostles, is present already in the Early Church; in Clement Romano and implicitly in of Antioch, before appearing in Tertullian*" ¹⁰.

¹⁰ CONGAR Y., *La Chiesa è apostolica*, in «Mysterium salutis», Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. Feiner e M. Löhrer. Italian translation Queriniana. Brescia 1972, p 641-643.

1.3.- Towards a Theology of the 'Mission'

The **theology of 'Mission'** had a revival and a re-thinking, especially with Vatican II. The fundamental elements of such a theme go through the Council Documents, from the *Dei Verbum* to *Lumen Gentium*, *Ad Gentes*, whereby the AG finds its base and expresses a doctrinal and operative component to LG.¹¹ The recent Papal official teaching had very rich expressions about the **'ways of the Mission'**: both Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio*. The former "starting from the perspective of the universal evangelisation indicates the testimony of one's life as the living preaching, the liturgy of the word, catechises, the use of the mass media, the personal contact, the role of the sacraments, the people's piety"; the second, John Paul II, in *Redemptoris Missio*, in the perspective of the mission to the pagans...starts by saying: "Mission is a reality of unity but quite complex, and it is fulfilled in various ways, among them some are of special importance in the concrete circumstances of today's Church and World" (RM 419).¹²

Cf (in the meantime!), the chapter:

Breve storia della Missione nella struttura della Chiesa, in: MUTTERLE A., *San Gaspare Bertoni Missionario apostolico*, Tesi per la Licenza in Teologia presso l'Università di S. Tommaso in Roma, 1992
(Testo dattiloscritto; Moderatore A. Uerga).

¹¹ See the quoted reflection of ROSSANO P., *Teologia della Missione*, in «Mysterium salutis», Vol. 7, *L'evento salvifico nella comunità di Gesù Cristo*, by J. FEINER e M. LÖHRER. Italian translation Queriniana Brescia 1972, p. 605-635.

¹² ZAGO MARCELLO, *Missione*, in «Dizionario di Pastorale vocazionale», by the Centro Internazionale Vocazioni Rogate, Roma 2002, p. 701-717. Quoting Rmi 34, the A. says that "the borders among pastoral care of the faithful, new evangelization and missionary activity are not clearly definable, and it is not thinkable to create any barrier or water-tight compartments among them" (ivi, p. 704).

2 - "THE POPULAR MISSIONS"

Introduction

About the "**Popular Missions**", as a *fulfilment of the mission of the Church*, I am going to develop, though briefly, the following points:

-1.- The origin (. XVI Century, birth of the **mission** as a method cfr. The texts of C. Acquaviva);

-2.- The formation of **missionary methods** (XVII Century: in Italy the Jesuits – especially with Segneri P., *senior*,- in France the Priests of the *Mission of St. Vincent de P.*);

-3.- The development and auto-critic (XVII Century: revision of the methods by creative Missionaries like Leonardo da Porto Maurizio, Paul of the Cross, Alfonso del Liguori);

-4.- The *adaptation* to the social situation (XIX-XX Centuries: Gaspar del Bufalo, Vincenzo Pallotti, Eugenio de Mazenod);

-5.- The crisis and the commitment of the **revival** (second half of the XX Century, revision of the ministerial service in the Chapters after the Council and new evangelisation) "*The phenomenon of the **popular missions** embraces the entire modern age, from the Council of Trent up to Vatican II Council*"¹³

2.1.- Origin (and first vicissitudes) of the 'popular missions?'

We have to distinguish between the "**popular missions**" from the *itinerant preaching*, (though both are missionary activities) , the last

¹³ GUGLIA C. C., *Il Vangelo degli Ultimi*, Dehoniane, Roma 1990, p. 23.

belonging to St. Francis of Assisi and St. Dominic da Guzman, encouraged by Pope Innocent III, which implied the faculty (new in its kind!) of preaching in virtue of their 'religious profession'¹⁴.

Such *preaching* was very *charismatic* and was, for the people, a real call to *penance* and *conversion*, though very different from the usual preaching of the Clerics, even in the best of cases,: "the *preaching* would last a full day, and it was like a trumpet blast, calling to conversion and to confession"...

We could recall for such an *itinerant ministry*, in Germany St. Norbert (1085-1134), In Italy St. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) and later on St. Vincent Ferrer (1350-1419) and St. Bernard of Siena (1380-1444), (when the preaching of the Franciscans and Dominicans was no more 'fresh or attractive', already out of fashion). Especially to these last two, the first '**missionaries**' would refer themselves to, even though the *Itinerants* did not have a proper "*order of themes, reasons, and means ,well co-ordinated and finalised to help the psychological process towards conversion, as it will happen, instead, after the Council of Trent, in St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises and in the Missions*"¹⁵.

The "**Parish Mission**" springs up during the XVI Century, it becomes very practical as a strong means of transformation, by spreading all over Christianity as a *privileged means of evangelisation*. The word '**mission**' is used very often but sometimes with different meanings. It may come to mean the *mandate* received by the Superiors or by the Church for a special *evangelisation campaign*, or the *apostolic-missionary kind of preaching*, as alternative to the preaching of the time; the same term means also specifically the "*Popular Parish Mission*".

¹⁴ Cf COSTA F., *La predicazione francescana*, in «Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione», 7, (1983) col 554; REDIGONDA L. A., *Frați Predicatori*, ivi, coll. 923-924.

¹⁵ MEIBERG A., *Historiae Missionis paroecialis lineamenta*, 1953 (typed in few copies), p. 403, quoted by GUGLIA C. C., *Il Vangelo degli Ultimi*, Dehoniane, Roma 1990 (from which I'm taking these notes), p. 9.

This terminology “**Popular Parish Mission**” is still vague and not very common, it will become more specific the following Century.¹⁶

The “**missions**” develop outside the current Institutions or Legislation, they belong to the charismatic world, with many *chances of creativity*, but always under strict *dependence from the Church Authority*, they are seen and lived as an *extraordinary pastoral activity*.¹⁷ My reflection will deal especially about this third meaning.

The preaching organisation, along the XVI century, opens up to a *new missionary work*. The “**internal missions**”, (so called to distinguish them from the “**external missions**” directed towards the people not yet evangelised,) were called “**popular missions**” as well, (destined to the Christian people, in order to revive their genuine religiosity, by strengthening their faith and moral life). The first official document about the “**popular missions**” is the one published by Fr. Claud Acquaviva, Superior General of the Jesuits, in 1595.

C.C. Guglia summarises the passage between *the itinerant and penitential preaching* to the “**missions**”, in three ways:

a.- from the “*charismatic preacher*”, though accompanied by some co-workers and confessors, to an “*organised and well articulated group*”, with different responsibilities and duties;

b.- from “*one day only*”, to an *organised course with instructions and meditations (for a week or even a month)*;

c.- from a *given liturgical period*, to the choice of *more suitable times*, keeping in mind the seasons and the peoples’ work.

To be honest we have to admit¹⁸ that there is *disparity of opinions* about the *paternity* of the “**popular missions**”.

¹⁶ GUGLIA C. C., *Il Vangelo agli Ultimi*, p.10-11, where he notes besides that this distinction is of B. PEYROUS, *Missions Paroissiales*, in «Catholicisme, 9, 1980, coll. 401-431; at the col. 401 he notes: «assez longtemps, on confond la prédication missionnaire et la mission paroissiale».

¹⁷ Cf. GUGLIA C.C., *Il Vangelo agli Ultimi*, Dehoniane Roma 1990, p.14-15.

¹⁸ Cf B. PEYROUS, *Missions Paroissiales*, in «Catholicisme, 9, 1980, coll. 402-404, come pure GUGLIA C.C., *Il Vangelo agli Ultimi*, Dehoniane Roma 1990, 13-14; FAVALE A., *Missioni popolari*, in M. SODI- A. M. TRIACCA (a cura) «Dizionario di Omiletica», Ed. LDC - Ed. Velar. Leumann (Torino)-Gorle (Bergamo) 1998, p. 961-962.

Some Jesuit Historians attribute both the intuition and the starting of the “**popular missions**” to their Founder, *St. Ignatius of Loyola* and his Companions, after his arrival in Rome (1537), as they quote his Constitutions about “missions”, which, in fact, had been added only later on, in the *Constitutions of the Company of Jesus*, and to the booklet of the ‘*Spiritual Exercises*’, from which they would take the themes for the preaching. Among the Jesuits, the first great “**missionary**” is considered the *Ven. Sylvester Landini* (+ 1554).

Among the *Capuchins* we find the origin of the “**popular missions**” in the preaching of the ‘Quarantore’ (Forty hours), a devotion spread all over Europe by their Order and by the Barnabiti, starting from 1537. In the ‘*Oratory*’, (founded by *Peter de Berulle* + 1629) in France, somebody claimed for himself the merit of having started this kind of pastoral ministry; the same did *St. Vincent de Paoli* (+ 1660).

In reality, *Favale* notes that it is a matter of a flourishing of initiatives and of pastoral methods, sprang in *different regions* and in *different forms*, and even in *different times*, but all of them with the same goal of renewing the Christian communities in their faith, by preventing them from the errors of Protestantism; these are, therefore, various answers to different pastoral urgencies, with proper characteristics and even in continuous evolution

“By “**popular missions**”, properly called, we mean organised and methodical forms of preaching, extraordinary and periodic, sprang up by the end of the XVI century, and lead by well prepared “**missionaries**”, in rural or urban areas, in agreement with the Bishop of the place, for a period of time, sometimes longer sometimes shorter, according to the epochs, environments and religious conditions of different peoples”¹⁹.

The “**missionaries**” are, usually, members of *Religious Orders*, who intend to revive the life of Christian people, by using simple, familiar and effective ways of preaching.

¹⁹ FAVALE A., *Missioni popolari*, in M. SODI – A. M. TRIACCA (a cura) «Dizionario di Omiletica», Ed. LDC – Ed. Velar. Leumann (Torino) – Gorle (Bergamo) 1998, p. 961.

The themes dealt, are the basic truths of our faith, with a particular emphasis on the theme of sin and grace, the 'novissimi' (the last realities)..; and all this accompanied by celebrations and devotions, able to encourage people toward trust and conversion (catechetical instructions, Christ's mysteries – Passion, Crucifix, - our Lady – the Rosary – the drama of sin, commitment for reconciliation, etc...).

Visible and meaningful fruits were the *reception of the Sacraments* of Confession and Communion, the commitment toward charitable and welfare activities. Out of these '*missions*' would rise, among the people of good will, almost always, associations and brotherhood in view of perseverance. The '**popular missions**' always contributed to the rise or renewal of such Institutions.

Persistent enemies of the '**popular missions**' were, later on, or even at the same time, the *rationalism* (in regard to faith and to the supernatural and for the emotional involvement), the *Jansenism* (it would judge them as an exaltation of the feelings, and a '*flash in the pan*'), the '*Caesarpapism*' (it would consider them an ambush to the public order because of the resounding manifestations of devotion and penance).

The crisis that accompanied the development of the "**popular missions**" were linked not only to the socio-religious situations, but also to the difficulties encountered in the historic events, by Religious Orders, which were almost the only protagonists of this *apostolic ministry*.

2.2.- Formation of the methods of the "**popular missions**"

Methods do not come from one's desk, but from the '*apostolic situation*'; they get improved in different ways, according to different places, with the evolving of the situations.

Fr. C. Acquaviva (1581-1615) in the above mentioned *Instructio pro iis qui ad missiones fructificandi causa proficiscuntur*, writes some already existing *rules* about the *life* and the *behaviour* of the '**missionaries**'; he shows especially the *aim* of the '**popular missions**' (a great help to many souls that live in the ignorance and in sin; the teaching of the Christian doctrine, the hearing of confessions), the places in which the '**missions**' will take place (the ones indicated, by going to the Parish Church, to visit the Parish Priest or whoever is in charge, to ask for information about the most common situation of sin).

What follows then, are some *indications* about the *calling* of the people, times, ways of the *preaching*, of confessions, about the *doctrine* for men, women, children, the instruction to the *Clergy*, the life behaviour and the institution of the *Associations*.

In *Naples* (in the famous “**permanent mission**”, up to the suppression of the Company of Jesus), the Jesuit Fr. Francis Pavone (1569-1637), who was the Founder of the ‘*Conference*’, together with Canon Sanson Carnevale (1595-1656), Founder of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missions (Illustrissimi 1646), would distinguish the *meditation* from the *instruction*, and in the sermon they would care especially for the doctrine, then the involvement of the feelings, and at the end the practical thing: a preaching along the streets and squares of the City would prepare the ‘*general communion*’ every third Sunday of the month (cfr. St. Francis de Geronimo, 1642-1716). Other typical things of the Neapolitan world were added, like the *night processions*, *beautiful choreographs*, *eucharistic devotions*, and there were great signs of conversions and penance (very heavy crosses, crown of thorns, lashes etc...)

In *Rome* as well, by initiative of Pope Clement VIII, in imitation of Naples, there was a ‘**permanent mission**’. On the occasion of the 1625 Jubilee the number of Holy Communion at Lateran only (during the month of October) were something like 60.000 and in December, at the Church of St. Mary in Trastevere up to 70.000.²⁰

St. Vincent de Paoli (+ 1660), Founder of the ‘**Priests of the Mission**’ elaborated his own ‘*small method*’: to follow Christ, the Apostles; to go around very informally, preaching like ‘*missionaries*’, by avoiding spectacular forms; he dedicated his time to Catechises, convinced as he was of the urgency and importance of any Instruction. All this, nevertheless, with an impressive articulation of ministries (*group work*); Vincent was gifted with resources of sensitivity and good

²⁰ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*, Milano 1988, p. 90. Cf GUGLIA C.C., *Il Vangelo agli Ultimi*, Dehoniane Roma 1990 which synthesizes the different methods (p.33-44).

organisation, more than being a good preacher. He wanted the Association of charity as well; between 1617 and 1650 the Vincentian Missions were about one thousand.

From St. Vincent took inspiration the group of **French Missionaries**, among whom we cannot forget *St. John Eudes* (+ 1680): "Fr. J. Eudes was not only one of the main actors of the Counter-Reform in France, but he was the 'St. Vincent' of Normandie, as well!"²¹

The attention of the '*Monfort Fathers*', founded by St. Louis Mary Grignon de Monfort (+ 1716), was especially for the '*small centres*' with a capillary catechises, by enhancing the value of the *popular piety and sensitivity*, by proposing, at the end, the renewal of the *Baptismal Promises* and the *Consecration to Mary*.

The Capuchins had a special authorisation from the Pope, to preach the '**Missions**' (Coelestium munerum, by Pope Clement X). They did that according to their specific style, brightness of language, attention to the comprehension on the side of the listeners, the usage of the Bible and the Gospel in particular, eucharistic cult (their famous 'quarantore = the forty hours), the '**missionaries**' had great freedom in their missionary activity, in preaching, hearing confessions...

2.3.- Development, crisis, revision of methods

For centuries the '**missions**' had been the most important event of social life.²² Speaking about the '**internal missions**' the Superior General of the Stigmatines, Fr. G.B. Zampa, (in 1944) quoted Pope Benedict XIV

²¹ PRENTOUT H., *La Normandie dans les souvenirs du passé*, Paris 1981, p. 81, quoted in the huge study of BERTHELOT DU CHESNAY CHARLES, *Les Missions de saint Jean Eudes. Contribution à l'histoire des missions en France au XVII^e siècle*. Procure des Eudistes. Paris 1967.

²² DE ROSA G., *Tempo religioso e tempo storico*, preface by GALASSO G., p. XVI, Roma 1987; quoted in GUGLIA C.C., *Il Vangelo agli Ultimi*, Dehoniane Roma 1990, p. 22, n. 7. For these notes see also FAVALE A., *Missioni popolari*, in M. SODI – A. M. TRIACCA (a cura) «Dizionario di Omiletica», Ed. LDC – Ed. Velar. Leumann (Torino) – Gorle (Bergamo) 1998, n. 229.

(1740-1758), to underline the value of this ministry: "The importance of the 'Missions' is thus exalted by the great Pope Benedict XIV:

«Ad improbos mores corrigendos, qui vel serpere incipiunt vel nimis iam invalescunt, vel tandem diuturnitate confirmati in dioeceses latius occuparunt, nihil magis conferre quam sacras Missiones compertum est. Remedium antiquum illud est, malis curandis aptissimum et fortasse unicum»²³.

But, exactly in the XVIII century, we find *signs of decadence* in the '**mission work**' and consequently a new commitment of *revision of methods* on the side of some creative Missionaries like:

- *St. Leonard da Porto Maurizio* (+ 1751)²⁴: a Franciscan Minor friar, he did not have a new method, but, to avoid that the '**mission**' could become a *flash in the pan*, to the fervour he added also the commitment of reason (an '*ardent and reasoned*' preaching); and even more: spiritual exercises for different categories of people, special attention to the sick, centrality of the Eucharist, spreading of the pious exercise of the *Way of the Cross*²⁵.

- *St. Paul of the Cross* (+ 1775), Founder of the *Passionists*: he follows the draft of the Friar Minor Amedeo de Castro villani (edited in 1720), he a basic catechises in the morning, the '*important sermons*' in the evenings, with special attention to the *Passion*, meditation and devotion which would give meaning to the whole '**Mission**'; though he would allow a public '*discipline*', he would try to avoid or limit exterior manifestations²⁶.

²³ *Manuale Stimatino*, Roma 1944, p. 207. The Superior General, in this *Manuale Stimatino*, has a chapter on the *Domestic Missions* (p.204-230), in the third part (*Stigmatine Activity*), in the 1st chapter (*Sacred preaching*, where in the first paragraph is the *preaching* in general, in the second the *Domestic Missions*).

²⁴ Almost a diary of the Missions, the nineteenth-century *Vita di San Leonardo da Porto Maurizio, Missionario apostolico dei Minori riformati, del Ritiro di San Bonaventura di Roma...* Roma 1867 [by Fra SALVATORE DA ORMEA].

²⁵ Pio XI will propose just St. Leonardo da Porto Maurizio as a *patron to be invoked*, as *model to be followed* [in the *Missions*] «... expedit ut sacerdotes qui cristiano populo verbum facere student, tanti apostolici viri haereant vestigiis ipsoque celesti gaudeant Patrono». Cf *Manuale Stimatino*, Roma 1944, p. 207.

²⁶ Cf la Storia critica di ENRICO ZOFFOLI, *S Paolo della Croce*, Curia Generalizia PP. Passionisti – Commissione storica, Roma 1963.

- *St. Alphonse M. De Liguori* (+ 1787)²⁷, Founder of the Redemptorists. From the '**centralised Mission**' as envisaged by Fr. Segneri, he prefers the 'small centres'; he does not despise the emotional dimension, giving more result to the filial love than to servile fear. He wrote two books: "*Del Catechismo piccolo*" and "*Del Catechismo grande*", to underline his interest to Catechises about the mysteries of faith, the Sacraments, moral life. He insisted much on devoted life, meditation on the Lord's Passion, devotion to Mary. Of great importance the missionary commitment of the Redemptorist Father *St. Clement Maria Hofbauer* (+ 1820) in Germany and Poland.

The "**Popular Missions**" received a serious blow by the suppression of the *Company of Jesus* (1773) and the problems encountered by many Religious Orders, as a consequence of the *French Revolution* (1789) and of the religious policy of Napoleon (*suppressions*)²⁸ and of the '*Giuseppinismo asburgico*'.

2.4.- Revival and adaptation to the new social situation

In the XIX-XX centuries: after the '*napoleonic storm*', the Company of Jesus was re-established again (1814) and thanks to the *restoration* introduced by the Congress of Vienna, the '**missionary activity**' of the Church faced a *new challenge*, caused both by the *old* and *new Religious Orders and Institutes*.

Very inspired, courageous and even prophetic answers did appear. In Switzerland and in Germany the Jesuits and the Redemptorists started again the "**popular missions**", and the Rosminian Fr. Luigi Gentili and Blessed Dominic Barberi of the Mother of God (+ 1849) introduced them in England and in Ireland. The "**popular Missions**" were introduced even in the USA by some Missionaries from Europe, who had followed the Emigrants.

²⁷ An excellent biography is THÉODULE REY-MERMET, *Il Santo del secolo dei lumi. Alfonso de Liguori*, Città Nuova, trad. Roma 1983. See e.g. p. 419-430.

²⁸ See e.g. NASELLI C. A., *La soppressione napoleonica delle Corporazioni religiose. Il caso dei Passionisti in Italia (1808-1814)*, in «*Analecta Gregoriana*», vol. 169. Series Facultatis Historiae Ecclesiasticae: s. B, n. 27). Pontificia Università Gregoriana. Roma 1970, p. 1-9.

Apart from the Jesuits, Redemptorists, Passionists..., new people emerge, like the *Holy Founders* and “**apostolic missionaries**”, thus promoting a new spring for the “*popular missions*”. The list could be long: The Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Peter Joseph de Clavière (+ 1820), The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts, of Peter Coudrin (+ 1837), The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, of C. Eugene de Mazenod (+ 1861), The Missionaries of our Lady de la Salette (1852), The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Issidoun (1854), of Julius Chavalier; the Oblates of the Virgin Mary of Bruno Lanteri (+ 1830); the Missionaries of the Precious Blood, of St. Gaspar del Buffalo (1837); The Society of the Catholic Apostolate of Vincent Pallotti (+ 1850); The Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (1849), of St. Anthony Mary Claret. We should still remember a few more, like Fr. Rosmini....

In such a wide flowering, we find also **St. Gaspar Bertoni** (+ 1853) and his “**Apostolic Missionaries**”. In other Dioceses, like Vicenza, Treviso, Padua, Pavia, Brescia, Verona, Bologna, and Bergamo,²⁹ rise other Groups of Oblates, dedicated to the preaching of the “*Missions*”.

²⁹ This priestly experience is meaningful. It begun in 1773, early in the *Collegio Apostolico* (also thanks to the action of the Franciscan M. Maria Antonietta Grumelli) that clearly drew inspiration from the *Oblati* of Milano. Among the members Marco Celio Passi, Giuseppe Benaglio (+1836, co-founder of the *Figlie del S. Cuore*, and master of the clergy of Bergamo) and his brother Gaetano. Many were engaged to transform the *Collegio* in a *Congregazione*, particularly the Can. Giuseppe Benaglio was interested in this project, but with no results (as S. Teresa Verzeri has described). At the end of the association, the apostolic inheritance passed to the *Congregazione dei Preti del S. Cuore* (1905, following an idea of the Bishop Radini Tedeschi). These priests had to “*Help the Bishop: in the S. Missions; in the care of the Exercises for the clergy; in the supply of the suitable subjects for the spiritual direction of the clerics in Seminary, of the priests outside and of the diocesan feminine Institutes; in the care of the Christian education of the youth in collages, in public schools, in Oratories* “. See the contribution of RONCALLI A., in: *I Preti del S. Cuore di Bergamo*, Bergamo 1959, especially p. 1-20; see also DALLE VEDOVE N., *Il Beato Gaspare Bertoni e l'Istituto delle “Stimate” nella prima metà dell’800 veronese*. Vol. VI, Postulazione Generale degli Stimmatini, Roma. Roma 1991, p. 121-123, where the A. refers to similar experiences in Vicenza, Treviso, besides those in Bergamo and Verona).

In the **enthusiasm of the revival** there is a lot of production, during the entire XIX century, even about the 'method'. *St. Gaspar del Bufalo* elaborates a "*Method of the Holy Missions*" (Rome 1818); the *Passionists* wrote a "*Directory of the Missions*" (1838); *Celestin M. Berruti* publishes "*The method of the Missions*" (1856) and *Fr. F. Giordano*, an Oblate of the Virgin Mary, wrote "*The Mission*" (Tourin 1882).

Regarding the **Contents** there was a certain reduction toward simplicity, against the previous show of erudition or grandiloquence, to take up again the *traditional doctrinal themes* (commandments, sins, Christ's Passion, death and judgement), integrating them with the teaching of a more *articulated Christian Doctrine*, about *God's Revelation*, *Christ the Redeemer*, *The Holy Spirit* the Sanctifier, the *Church*, the *Sacraments*, and the link between *ratio and faith* (trying to contrast the rationalist positivism)

The Church had a renewed awareness of the *Parish Pastoral plans*, a stronger reference to the *Pope*, and a progressive underlining of the *evangelising* urgency. A new impulse toward the *catholic Associations* comes always as a fruit of the "**popular missions**": we could remember here the '*Blessed Sacrament Brotherhood*', the *Marian Congregations* and *Oratories* (St. Louis), St. Raphael, St. Dorothy, The Daughters of Mary, St. Vincent's Conferences, all of them produce more holiness, more commitment and new lay people's initiatives. A certain slow down, in connection with the "**popular missions**", happened during the first world war, which improved just at the end of the world conflict, to culminate eventually with the years before Vatican two, as the times were becoming mature for greater transformations, a challenge for the Church and her *evangelising mission*.

From the *urbanisation process* and the *spread industrialisation*, to the *secularisation phenomenon*; from the *modernity* to the *post-modernity* (passing through the *dramas* of the *totalitarianism*, of the *marxist-leninist Communism*, the *tragedy* of the *war* and of the *extermination Camps*, the *fatigue* of the *reconstruction* and the *euphoria of progress* and of *consumerism*), the face of the *Christian Community*, and, as a

consequence, the entering of the Church in its *evangelising mission*, during the XX century, undergoes a *deep transformation*.

2.5.- Secularisation, crisis, and commitment for the renewal of the “popular missions”

Regarding the *second half of the XX century*, decisive was the revision of the ministerial service in the different *General Chapters*, desired by Vatican II, and the push of the Magisterium toward a *new evangelisation*. The theme is very wide, both for the *Company of Jesus* and for *any other form of Consecrated Life*, referring to the unique experience in the history, lived by all the Religious Orders and Congregations.

A.- A synthesis of Favale on the present cultural and religious situation:

“After Vatican II, wider and wider becomes the crisis which invests not only the civil society, but even the religious way of living of the faithful: what grows constantly is individualism, the flight from responsibilities, the propagation of atheism both practical and existential; the disinterest toward religious problems, the phenomenon of the subjectivation of faith, the distortion of the true meaning of human sexuality, the desegregation of the family; it diminishes the sense of belonging to the Church and the sense of duty; hedonism and permissivism in the moral sphere diminish or try to abolish the conscience of sin; the mass media pushes people toward a mere enjoyment, consumerism and earthly mentality, completely closed to spiritual values. Besides that, the mobility of people, a massive tourism on Sundays, the detachment from the Parish environment, the commitment of work....all this together makes more and more difficult the possibility of the gathering of the people, in given moments, for the Mission.. Finally, the fast change of mentality and of habits induce the same ‘**Missionaries**’ to ask themselves whether the methodology and the themes, which had been in the past the basic reasons for the previous ‘**popular missions**’, with the emotional, moral and practical aspects, are still valid to transform man’s heart or should one try to find out *new methods* and to propose *new themes* that might touch people’s conscience and help them

understand the positive impact that the *Christian message* could have in their lives, if taken seriously, and the contribution it can give in the building up of a more just and fraternal society”³⁰.

B.- “Popular Missions”, still valid today ?

The ministry of the “**Missions to the people**” has gone through a period of great uncertainty, which seems still unsolved, but that have been welcomed and joyously lived in other churches. He who lives the present like a challenge, surely lives also the *challenge* brought forward by the urgency of the *New Evangelisation*, which is at the heart of the Magisterium, if we examine the different *Documents*, a part from the pastoral experience of *Vatican two* (expressly wanted by Pope John XXIII, for this very reason), through the Magisterium of Paul VI (cfr. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*), and of the Synods of Bishops established by him, up to the activity and teaching of John Paul II, from the *Catechesi tradendae*, up to the various documents on ‘*evangelisation*’.

The most meaningful Document which shows the missionary attention of John Paul II is the Encyclical letter ‘*Redemptoris Missio*’, addressed to the entire Church of these days, so much involved in a renewed passion for Evangelisation. All those who dedicate themselves to *the popular preaching* live the commitment of eagerly searching for *new ways* for the proclamation of the Gospel, with intense preparation enriched by study and prayer.³¹

At the National *Meeting for the itinerant Missions* (11-15 Jan. 1993) the then Secretary of CEI, Bishop D. Tettamanzi, spoke on “**The Popular Missions**” in the *pastoral planning of CEI for the current years (90)*”.

Without, nevertheless, bringing specific things, Bishop Tettamanzi entrusted the **Missionaries of the Popular Missions** with the

³⁰ FAVALE A., *Missioni popolari*, in M. SODI – A. M. TRIACCA (a cura) «Dizionario di Omiletica», Ed. LDC – Ed. Velar. Leumann (Torino) – Gorle (Bergamo) 1998, p. 967-968.

³¹ See SODANO ANGELO, Card., Message to the Inter-Congregational Convention on the *Missions to the people* (January 11-15, 1993), in: TACONE FERDINANDO (care of), *La Missione al popolo nella Nuova evangelizzazione*, ed. CIPI, Roma 1993, p.7.

Document of CEI for the years 90s *"The exhortation 'Christifideles laici', in a text which was re-presented by CEI itself (Evangelisation and testimony of charity), where he writes: "The Church, today, has to move forward in her evangelisation, and enter a new historic step on the missionary dynamism". Behind these words we find that New Evangelisation about which John Paul II always insists [...]* We are invited to read, without ever getting tired, the life and the mission of Jesus Christ, his words and actions [...], exactly because He is the 'newness', He presents himself and acts in the past, in the present and in the future as the source and the root of the 'newness' for his Church and for man [....]. We all remember Paul VI's statement in *'Evangelii nuntiandi'*, that tells us that the present situation's drama is the one of the separation between faith and culture. Now the pastoral problem consists precisely, first of all, on how to get, and later how to live and to make people live, this undivided and indivisible unity between Gospel and Charity [...]; and this is one of the most difficult and arduous instances which we have to attend to by means of the **"popular missions"**.

"Go all over the world"... such 'missionary spirit' has its climax in the 'Missio' (or mandate) ad gentes, but it has to be applied even to any local Church, to any Diocesan Community, and concretely to any Parish Community. In such context, it seems to me, that the **"popular missions"** are a very eloquent and spiritual sign of our own ecclesial communities [...] In this sense the **"popular missions"** do exceed the communicative fact through the word, in all its different forms, like radio, television etc., because they require personal testimony, and personal life holiness, which constitute the most convincing way of eloquence of which the Church is gifted!"

Then, Bishop Tettamanzi concluded his speech by handling, as a concrete sign, the Document of CEI to the Missionaries, involved in the **"popular missions"**, because – he said – *"here in Italy, in Rome as well, the most urgent need, today is that of re-making the Christian 'cloth' of our ecclesial communities"*³².

³² O.c., p. 47-67 (passim); very interesting is the contribution of CARDAROPOLI GERARDO, *Il contributo delle Missioni al Popolo alla nuova evangelizzazione. Linee*

C .- Newness of methods in the New Evangelisation

The extra-ordinary “**popular missions**” ministry produced beautiful things, in the past years, and in *different forms*. Many Dioceses have seen, in the “**popular missions**”, the best way to live the Jubilee of the year 2000.

I would like, now, to report two different experiences: the one of the *Oblates of Rho*, expressed in their message “*Visitation Mission, convocation Mission*”, and the one of “*The Trieste Mission*”, very special at cultural level, for its commitment and for the people involved at different levels. Both experiences bring *decisive newness*, on the *methodology* plan.

❖ The Oblates of Rho, born in 1721, take their name from ‘Rho’, a town next to Milan, in which they care for the Shrine of Our Lady of Sorrows, which is their main Office, with a spirituality and formation Centre, at the service of their Diocese.

They have always been involved in the preaching of the “**popular missions**”, and since the year 1986 they propose a re-elaborated, more open, well accepted and appreciated methodology!

The main doctrinal themes of this method are: the centrality of *God’s Word*, the *Church’s missionary dimension*, the *Laity*, the *Family* as a place of charity and prayer, finally the *Parish* as a ‘missionary centre’.

The “**popular missions**” are accompanied by *prayer*, by capillary *communication* system, by *house visitation* with the official ‘invitation’ done through the Bible Groups, guided by the Parish Lay people, helped, in the preparation and in its accomplishment, by Religious, Priests, with the involvement of Family Members, ready to welcome anybody, even the non practising ones.

operative, ivi, p. 105-123. Also as *Stigmatines* we have experience of *Missions to the people*, held in these last years (in Italy, in Brazil...). The witness of those who have worked and are still working there is a reason of consolation and also of research for a further *improvement* and for an availability of cultured Confreres, a project that can only be desired.

At least *two years* before the Mission starts, there is a visit to the Parish in order to *conscientize* the Priests, Religious and Leaders. And this for few months, if necessary, in order to involve as many people as possible. The invitation is done to those who are willing to lead a *G.d.A* (*Gruppo di Ascolto- Bible Groups*) to teach them a certain method for the success of the Mission itself (a first cycle composed of eight Sundays, from the morning to the evening) and a second cycle composed of three residential courses of two days..

This kind of *Leadership Course* is done either at the Missionaries' residence or in the Parish House: and in the *first cycle* the themes are: *Christ, the Church, Mission, God's Word, rhythms of Christian growth, group dynamics and the study of 12 Gospel passages*. In the *second cycle* there will be a deepening in the Bible study, and themes of Catechises. The aim of all this is to enable and prepare 12 *Bible Group Leaders* during the first cycle, and 24 in the second cycle: a monthly gathering for the period of 2 years.

An *evaluation* of this renewed method, done six years later, in regard to 109 **Parish Missions**, showed that: of the 2700 Bible Groups established during the Parish Missions, quite a number of them were still in existence after 4, 5 and even six years.

Some *meaningful results* are the *involvement of many Lay People*, the awareness of the indispensable *missionary dimension*, new attention to the Word of God, experience of Community sharing and comparison, and the rediscovery of prayer. The *active involvement* of 80% of the faithful who, in normal circumstances, would be happy enough just to attend the Sunday Mass. *Negative aspects* would be the fact that *women* were many more than men, the *youth* - between 15 and 35 years- were scarcely present (20-25 %), the little co-operation on the side of the Parish Priests, and the small impact on the outsiders, or marginal people of the Parish.

The problem is always the same, i.e., how to approach, during the *Parish Mission*, the non-churchgoers, the non-baptised, and those who are wondering around among different religious sects. One way could be to visit all the families [....].

"From all this work, we would like to find out the best way of how to adequately form the Laity for this not-easy evangelising job. If our project will work, as we hope, we would furnish our

Parishes, with a very important tool for evangelisation and a group of committed lay people who would be able, not only to talk to Adults about God, but also to help them think and behave as God wants"³³.

Conversion had always been the main object of the **Parish Missions** or **popular missions**, but a *conversion*, as we now understand better, requires also the conversion of the Parish structures, their dynamism and their components³⁴.

❖ The 'popular mission' of Trieste

"The Church of Trieste had in mind 'to get to know herself more deeply, in the context of the valuable things which belong to each individual and could become a *patrimony for all*'. What really matters – said Bishop Bellomi – regarding the **Mission**, is to try to understand the 'heart' of the City, and to get together, to grow together and share, in order to live together and face the future together [...]; if the Church, 'expert, as it is, in humanity', has something very specific to offer for the building up of a better city for man, - (that is, the faithful are able to be 'vanguard' of the heavenly Jerusalem) -, it is true as well that such a job will succeed *only* in as much as it is able to *involve and to touch all the 'other' people* of good manners and good will, who "*are not far from the kingdom of heaven*" (Mc.12,28-34), understanding by this that the Spirit is the golden rule of the Biblical Revelation"³⁵.

Leaving aside the already published documentation³⁶, which shows the studies undertaken in the context of the preparation and development

³³ TACCONE FERDINANDO (a cura), *La Missione al popolo nella Nuova evangelizzazione*, ed. CIPI, Roma 1993, p. 103.

³⁴ For this paragraph see the already quoted TACCONE FERDINANDO (a cura), *La Missione al popolo nella Nuova evangelizzazione*, p. 91-104, (*passim*).

³⁵ VANZAN PIERSANDRO, *Chiesa, società e dialogo nella «Missione al popolo di Trieste»*, in *Civ Catt.* (1990) vol. III, p. 248-257, here p. 249-250.

³⁶ *Trieste. Lineamenti di una città*, by CUSCITO C., GALIMBERTI S., MALNATI E., First part, *La città e l'uomo*; Second part: *La comunità umana e l'esperienza religiosa*, Ed. Lint, Trieste 1989. Complementary is the introduction to the charismatic character of the Bishop, GALIMBERTI SERGIO, *Lorenzo Bellomi. Un Vescovo per Trieste*, MGS Press, Trieste 2000.

of the Mission, I report only a short description and evaluation of Vanzan: “The ‘**popular mission**’ done in the Church of Trieste during Lent 1989, on the theme “*Christ saves today and always*”, deserves to be mentioned first of all for the *methodology* followed”. Here we have the *two phases* and the *modality* being followed: “*In the first phase*, called ‘*itinerant*’, about 700 agents, sent by the Bishop, went from house to house, to announce the Mission to the people, (thus preparing the work of the about 400 ‘**proper**’ Missionaries), visiting 53.763 families, over a total of 95.693, and being welcomed by 88,18% of the cases. In the *second phase* instead, called ‘*domestic*’, they entered the most welcoming families of the 60 Parishes of the Diocese, and they started 1891 Bible groups, of which about 100 of Slovak language. With such **missionary style**, both in the *itinerant* and *domestic phase*, they tried to overcome various problems, by looking for those ‘*strongholds of faith*’, i.e. truths and values – (and this was the content of the Trieste City Mission) – which, at three different levels (underlined by Paul VI’s Encyclical letter *Ecclesiam suam*,) would allow the *encounter* among the separated brethren (Catholic-orthodox-Protestants), between the Christians and other major world Religions and finally between all the believers together and the ‘people far away’, i.e. atheists or agnostics. In short, the Trieste Mission has taken seriously the point of Paul VI’s *Evangelii nuntiandi*, on how the ‘*specific* and the *universal*’ of the Christian Message, may encounter and dialogue both with the non Christian cultures and religions and the world ideologies”³⁷.

³⁷ VANZAN PIERSANDRO, *Chiesa, società e dialogo nella «Missione al popolo di Trieste»*, p. 248.

3 - MISSION AND POPULAR MISSIONS IN ST. IGNATIUS AND IN THE COMPANY OF JESUS

Introduction

It is worthwhile to pay a particular attention to the 'theme' in the Company of Jesus, given the strict link between St. Bertoni's charism and St. Ignatius' inspiration.

3.1.- Mission in St. Ignatius and in the Company of Jesus

(See: Fr. Joseph Henchey³⁸, css, in connection of the aspects of his research.)

I am going to quote, from St. Ignatius' **Constitutions**³⁹ and from the *History of the Company of Jesus*, only some essential elements regarding my theme. It's not a matter of examining the texts, therefore, but of the historic fact, of the understanding and actualisation of the 'proper ministries' of the Company of Jesus, a theme this which is present in *Fr. J. Stoffella* and in *Fr. J. Henchey*, though in a different prospective.

³⁸ HENCHY J., *Missio Apostolica*. S. Ignazio di Loyola, S. Alfonso Liguori, S. Paolo della Croce e S. Gaspare Bertoni [typed text, study and anthology with no date], pages 322.

³⁹ IGNAZIO DI LOYOLA, *Costituzioni della Compagnia di Gesù*. Translation of the official Spanish text, notes and indexes by GIUSEPPE SILVANO S.J. Ancora, Milano 1969.

Among the Stigmatics

- it's quite obvious the strict link with the Company of Jesus⁴⁰.

- it's not really accepted the analogy regarding the contents of the **Mission** in its ministerial actualisation.

I put together only few elements which I think are important for my theme.

It is important to keep in mind that, in the monastic tradition, they always wanted to imitate the '*apostolic life*', but these words did not have the same meaning all the time. The Monks would inspire themselves especially to the '*pictures*', coming from the *Acts of the Apostles*, about the life of the Christian Community. But from the middle of the XII century, people start thinking differently, at the time of the coming of the first '*itinerant preachers*'⁴¹.

"As from the very beginning of the Middle Age, the word 'mission' had already being used as 'mandate'; especially in the XV century the Portuguese People used the word for the Priests who were something like 'Chaplains' of the sailors in their Trans-oceanic expeditions, and as 'itinerant preachers' in the Countries of new

⁴⁰ At this regard it's interesting the note of the *Cronaca della Provincia Veneta*, for the internal use of the Compagnia di Gesù, in which it is repeatedly spoken of the Ven. Bertoni" and of the "magnanimous offerings done by him" to the Compagnia: "The above-mentioned Ven. Gaspar Bertoni was in Verona, a priest of great doctrine and sanctity, who after having gathered around him other pious priests, and formed a community of masters, had opened schools for the youth of Verona, which flourished very much and were a blessing for the city. As soon as our Fathers came, he had given them wonderful proofs of immeasurable love to the Compagnia and of heroic generosity. Since he owned two houses, besides that in which he lived with his priests, he had offered them to Fr. Ferrari, so that he could choose the one he liked the best for the Novitiate and have it as a gift". If these two were not suitable "with pleasure he would have given him the one where he lived with his priests (which was large and well comfortable); and he with his would be happy with only some rooms. If the difficulties showed too high, so that the Compagnia thought almost impossible to open schools in St. Sebastian, he was ready to hand over the Compagnia his own schools, and also, if needed, to supply the means for the maintenance". See the edifying witness in *Breve storia della Provincia Veneta della Compagnia di Gesù dalle sue origini fino ai nostri giorni* (1814-1914), Venezia 1914.

⁴¹ DE ALDAMA A. M., in: HENCHY J., *Missio Apostolica*. S. Ignazio di Loyola, S. Alfonso Liguori, S. Paolo della Croce e S. Gaspare Bertoni [typed text, study and anthology with no date] p. 50.

discoveries. In fact, in the Constitutions (92, 324, 529 etc.) the word '**mission**' which could summarise all this seventh part, means, both 'mandate' and 'preaching' (Cfr. Even 7, NB and 529 NB)⁴².

First of all, what is the meaning of '**Mission**', according to St. Ignatius ?

The word "**Mission**" in St. Ignatius, sometimes takes the etymological meaning, i.e. *the sending of somebody by the Pope and by the Superiors of the Order, as his delegates*; sometimes the word takes the meaning of '*mandate or apostolic commission*' for which one is sent.

"A recurrent thing in the Constitutions insists strongly about the "aim of the Company", searched in any activity and which consists, at the same time, in helping our neighbours, in the service of God and in his major glory, thing to be looked for in any apostolate and in any 'mission' [...]; the various ways of helping souls, proper to the Company, go together with enumeration of its 'aim': preaching, Spiritual Exercises, the teaching of Christian truths to the youth and to the 'far away' people, gratuity of the ministries, etc... all these are essential elements of the 'aim' and therefore of the nature of the Congregation⁴³".

The vow of obedience to the Pope "**circa missiones**" (about the missions), historically had a providential evolution of the ideal of '*mission*', to the point of becoming (according to Fr. De Aldama), "*our aim and foundation*"⁴⁴, whereby the adjective '**apostolic**', without loosing its original meaning, takes a semantic connotation, always present and qualifying the "**Apostolic Mission**", in its reference to the '*papal mandate*. *If the 'mandate' in principle, comes directly from the Pope, – for the Company -, concretely, in normal circumstances, materialises for the Individual Confreres, through the Superior.*

⁴² IGNAZIO DI LOYOLA, *Costituzioni della Compagnia di Gesù*. Translation of the official Spanish text, notes and indexes by GIUSEPPE SILVANO S.J. Ancora, Milano 1969, p. 253, note 1

⁴³ O.c., p.253, nota 2.

⁴⁴ See quoted in HENCHY J., *Missio Apostolica*, ... p. 55.

In dealing with the criteria to be kept in mind in sending somebody to the '**Mission**', St. Ignatius writes that, for the people "*the most suitable subjects would be those who have special talents for preaching and hearing confession, etc...* But regarding the people to be sent, one should choose the most suitable persons, adequate to the individuals and to the things for which they are sent" (Const. VII,c.II, F.)⁴⁵.

The '**apostolic mission**' irradiates its light even on the Ministries proper to the Company.

The Constitutions of the Company distinguish the '*Missions among the faithful*' (even those to the Christian Communities of India or Greece), and the '*Missions among the pagans*' (Const.VII,c.II,C)⁴⁶.

The aim (and gratuity) of the **Missions**: the person sent, has to remember "*that he belongs to a Company, established especially for the defence and propagation of the faith and for the profit of souls in the Christian Doctrine, through public preaching, (sacred) lectures and any other ministry of the word of God: together with the instruction of the truths to children and uneducated people, the hearing of confessions, the administration of the other sacraments for the spiritual consolation of the Christian Faithful. Moreover he must be able to reconcile the dissidents, to assist and serve those who are in prisons and Hospitals, and to accomplish all the other works of charity, as it will seem helpful to the glory of God and to the common good. And this completely free of charge and without getting any recompense for his own work in all the above mentioned activities*" (Const.; from Pope Julius III's Bolla '*Exposcit debitum*', 21 July 1550).

⁴⁵ See GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Milano 1988, p. VIII; IGNAZIO DI LOYOLA, *Costituzioni della Compagnia di Gesù*. Translation of the official Spanish text, notes and indexes by GIUSEPPE SILVANO S.J. Ancora, Milano 1969, p. 262-263.

⁴⁶ IGNAZIO DI LOYOLA, *Costituzioni della Compagnia di Gesù*. Milano 1969, p. 259

Regarding the '*place*' where to send someone to the '**Mission**', "*if the conditions are the same, one has to prefer that part of the very - wide vineyard of Christ our Lord, where the need is greater*" (Const. VII,II,D)⁴⁷.

Fr. De Aldama mentions the affresch of the dome of St. Ignatius Church in Rome, and in particular of *Jesus* who is represented as he shows himself to St. Ignatius at La Storta, *with the Cross on the side*. A part from the apparent triumphalism of the Picture, the '**Mission**', in reality, must be carried, under the flag of the Cross, up to the end:

*"Let us take, as our leader, the same Jesus, our Creator and Lord, to put ourselves under his flag, to preach and to exhort: and that is our profession"*⁴⁸.

3.2.- In the '**Mission**', the '**popular Missions**'

In a valid and careful historic-biographic study, A. Guidetti, describes the '*popular preaching*' of the first Jesuits in Italy; the rising and the wide development of the '**Popular Missions**' in the Company, and finally the evolution of the '**Mission**' Ministry up to Vatican II.

The '*popular preaching*' of the Jesuits has seen different developments and methods: "*While the popular preachers were operating, somebody had already appeared, had operated as an authentic Popular Missionary, and had died already, in 1554 (two years before the death of Ignatius of Loyola), he who has to be considered the '**promoter**' of the popular Missions of the Jesuits, and not only of the Jesuits (the Ven. Sylvester Landini): a giant, still unknown unfortunately, about whom it has been written that, in the course of his not-too-long life, was, among the Jesuits in the*

⁴⁷ IGNAZIO DI LOYOLA, *Costituzioni della Compagnia di Gesù*. Milano 1969, p. 259; see *Cost.* VI, c. II, B. p. 245).

⁴⁸ See in HENCHEY J., *O.c.*, p. 59.

whole of Europe, *the example of all missionaries*, as St. Francis Saviour had incarnated the ideal of the Apostles among the pagans, in the East.”⁴⁹

Taking from Fr. Guidetti⁵⁰, who on this point takes from John Paul II⁵¹, in *St. Ignatius we find expressions that anticipate the essential (flexible) lines of the guidelines of the Superior Generals and of the Rules*, developed later on, according to the needs of the faithful and the inspiration of the *Missionaries*. Concerning the ‘**popular missions**’ in the Jesuits’ Mission, a Document of great importance not only for the Company of Jesus, is Fr. Acquaviva’s LETTER⁵², (the 5th Sup.General of the Company (1581-1615), entitled : *Instructio pro iis qui ad missiones fructificandi causa proficiscuntur*. The Missionaries are guided by the **Superior of the Mission**. The **popular Missions** were given completely in a *gratuitous* way, were sustained by foundations established in Colleges, or by the Provincials, or through other forms of donations.

Between the XVI and XVII centuries, we do find continuity and development concerning our subject. “*In Naples, in the City Mission and in its kingdom, emerge some figures of prominent Missionaries [as B. Da Ponte, + 1644], likewise in the rest of Italy [...in Rome there is] a permanent Mission, in turn in all its quarters, every year, with the aim of a spiritual renewal and the general Communion: thus we*

⁴⁹ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 19. Landini (1503-1554), conquered by the experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*, after many vicissitudes devotes himself to the preaching with great generosity and fruits. Writing to Ignatius he said: “*All the fruits are due to the Exercises of V.P.R.*”, here, p. 25.

⁵⁰ *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p.ix.

⁵¹ “*Following the example of Jesus, who goes across ‘all the towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the Reign (Mt 9,35) the first companions [of Ignazio] sent by the obedience, went as pilgrims in many towns, spreading the Good News and bringing a breath of holy life: it is the beginning of those popular Missions which were to serve the christian people and bring it to a coherence of life; Missions which will have in future a flourishing development and a large, beneficial influence*”. (Speech to the Provincial Superiors of Jesus’ Society, 28 February 1982).

⁵² *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium ad Fratres Societatis Jesu*, I, Gandavi 1847, pp. 114-115 (cit. Guidetti, p. 52, note 3).

find the famous 'Oratory de Carovita', which even in the following centuries will provide great Missionaries"

During the second half of the XVII century, we have Fr. Paul Segneri (1624-1694)⁵³ whose method became famous in Italy and even outside it. We have famous **'Popular Missionaries' in France** (St. John Francis Regis, + 1640; Anne Francis Beauveau + 1669; Blessed Julian Maunoir + 1683; and others); In Spain: Emmanuel Texeira + 1635; Joseph Calatayud + 1636, Joseph Guadarama + 1655, Jerom Lopez + 1658, Tirso Gonzales + 1705 (Sup.General of the Order since 1688). Other famous names could be found in Germany, England, Ireland and Poland as well.⁵⁴

A man who promoted the **'popular missions'** was Fr. Vincent Carafa, Superior General only for three years (1646-1649), with his Letter *De mediis conservandi primaevum Societatis Spiritum* (1646). The means are: irreproachable life, sacred science, faithfulness to the ministries of the Company. Which are *the proper ministries of the Company*?... according to the Institute approved by the Popes: preaching, sacred lessons, Spiritual Exercises, teaching Christian Doctrine to the children and the uneducated, the administration of the Sacrament of Confession and other Sacraments....

I am convinced it is important to underline a statement of Fr. Carafa: there are **two ways for implementing these ministries**, *the first* "going around from one corner of the earth to the other, cities and villages; *the second* by remaining in one of our colleges or houses where the major glory of God is promoted". Nevertheless *the first* is, in a very special way, *proper* to the Company and the fourth vow of the Professed makes it different from other Orders...

"The nobility of this ministry is given by the 'magisterium' and by the example of Christ the Lord and the Apostles. In the 'Missions' therefore, let our (Confreres) imitate the Apostles: associated two by two, let them go on foot, let them live on charity, let them live in

⁵³ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 103-106.

⁵⁴ GUIDETTI A., quotes (p. 63) F. S. VERNZ - L. SCHMITT, *Synopsis historiae Societatis Jesu*, Lovanii 1950 coll. 753-760.

Hospitals, supported by faith, hope and charity in God, tireless preachers to the peoples about the crucified Christ; in such a way the Missions will be of great help not only to the people but they will be useful also for their personal perfection. Another who recommends this holy ministry to all of us, is Fr. Claudio Acquaviva, and let each Province has at least one residence for the Missions, according to the suggestions of Acquaviva”⁵⁵.

Fr. Carafa, the following year, insists over the same point, that in each Province there should be a ‘**Prefect**’ of **the Missions** (an institution which continued eventually!). “*The Generals who succeeded him never forgot this ministry; they would communicate regularly with the Provincials and often even with the Missionaries*”.

Through the XVII and XVIII centuries, up to the suppression (1773), the Superior Generals always continued supporting the validity of this great ministry; Fr. Michaelangel Tamburini, for example, together with Pope Clement IX, encourages Fr. Fulvio Fontana to go to Switzerland and Germany, taking with himself the method of Fr. Segneri, to form, even in those Countries, a school of “**Popular Missionaries**”⁵⁶.

Problems, concerning the ‘**popular missions**’, instead, came from some dictatorial Governments, like the one of Venice and in particular the imperial Government, around the year 1760 (**Cesaropapismo**). The suppression of the Company is already in the air, foreseeable. During the period of the suppression, the one who promoted the ‘**popular missions**’ was the Spaniard Jesuit, St. Joseph Pignatelli (Saragozza 1737 – Rome 1811), who lived in exile, first in Corsica, later on in France and finally in Rome. Once chosen to be ‘Provincial’, he continued with full commitment as a preacher, and especially for the re-establishment of the Company, thus becoming “the main link between the ‘previous’ Company and the ‘re-established’ one (Pius XI, on the occasion of the Canonisation in 1933).

After the re-establishment of the Company, the Superior General Fr. Roothan, wrote to the Provincials asking them to appoint some Confreres in view of this ‘**unique**’ missionary ministry. Later on, in

⁵⁵ Synthesis by GUIDETTI, o.c., p 100-101, where also the source is named.

⁵⁶ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 103 and 131.

1853, under request of the Roman Province, the XXII General Congregation decided to strengthen the preaching of the '**popular missions**'. The '**Missionaries**' and the '**Missions**' started flourishing again, especially in France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Poland, Denmark and Bohemia.

In connection with the **missionary activity** of Fr. Pignatelli, we have now a chance to widen our glance into the 'pastoral ministry' of the Company, by meeting different people and references to the '*missionary activity*' of the Jesuits in the re-established Veneto Province. We are going to meet even the famous *Cardinal Odescalchi* (who became Cardinal in 1834, then eventually a Jesuit!), a friend and a '**Mission**' **co-worker** of the Passionist, *St. Vincent Strambi*. Fr. Odescalchi was a member of the League of the '*Gospel Workers*', whose main aim was to preach the '**Missions**' **to the people**. The League, with St. Gaspar del Bufalo, would be the first nucleus of the '*Precious Blood Congregation*'. Fr. Odescalchi was invited by Pope Pius VI to join Fr. Gaspar del Bufalo to preach the '**Missions**', and consequently, to renounce, for the timebeing, to join the Jesuits, according to his desire⁵⁷.

The *Veneto Province* was re-established in 1846. In these Regions it was forbidden *to preach popular missions*', in the Austrian Empire⁵⁸, because of troubles caused by public gatherings of many people. For this reason, such preaching would be called '*Spiritual Exercises*', instead of '*Missions*'⁵⁹. Fr. *Joseph Ferrari*, the man in charge of the '*Missions*' in Lombardy and Veneto, got a special permission (in 1845, exactly ten years before the total liberalisation), from the Vice-King Ranieri, to hold the so called '*Spiritual Exercises*', which, practically, were the '**popular missions**'.

⁵⁷ GUIDETTI A., *o.c.*, p. 263-265; see Dalle Vedove N., *San Gaspare Bertoni e l'Istituto delle "Stimate"*, vol. 6, p. 42-45 and passim.

⁵⁸ In 1817 the *Popular Missions* were allowed, with the previous governmental approval to be granted to the *missionaries* trusted by the political and religious authority, and with a limit of *time* and *places*; then they were practically abolished on the excuse that the parish priests had not observed the stated rules (see BRUNO BERTOLI, *Dibattito sulla pubblica moralità nel Veneto*, in «Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia». XXXIII/1 (January-June 1978). Herder Roma; p. 124-125, n. 190-191.

⁵⁹ Note by GUIDETTI, p. 282

The Austrian Government (17.Sept.1828) had asked the 11 Bishops of the Veneto Dioceses, "*how to control , through the influence of the Priests [...] the continuous increase of illegitimate children and the decadence of morals, which was becoming so common*". Among the contributions of the Bishops (all very interesting, at the level of morals and pastoral sensibility of those days!), the one of the Patriarch of Venice and others, to hold '*Spiritual Exercises*' and especially the '**popular missions**', which "*always and everywhere – wrote the Bishop of Adria – produced, by the grace of Jesus Christ, wonderful results for the conversion of the most persistent sinners, and for the general improvement of morals*", "*being thus the best way and method* – added the Vicar Capitular of Verona, Fr. Dionisi, - *recognised by the Catholic Church, for reforming people's life*". Very intelligently Fr. Dionisi added that all this would happen "*without any disturbance of the public order*"⁶⁰.

The 'intrusion' of the Austrian Empire in Church affairs which *claimed to be informed about and to approve any report of the Bishops to Rome*, came even to the conclusion or decision that for the pastoral ministry (the Church) was not in need of '*New Religious Orders*': the existent ones were enough. There was therefore the necessity of a 'coverage' in case of new Religious Communities.

In this context, formed by St. Gaspar Bertoni, the new '*Stigmaté*' Community was about to be born. Fr. Bertoni, certainly, could not go against the Government restrictions, which were threatening the existence of the new Community, apart from hindering the ministry of the '**popular missions**'. In the case of the Stigmaté, what saved the situation was *the School*, a work-field for Fr. Bertoni's Sons, whereby they would take care of the Christian formation of the youth..

⁶⁰ For these facts see BRUNO BERTOLI, *Dibattito sulla pubblica moralità nel Veneto*, in «Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia». Year XXXIII/1 (January-June 1978), Herder Roma; p. 70-129, here p.123. It was not rare for the great event of the *Missions* to be taken as politics. The missions heavily organized in *France* during the *Restoration* were considered "disturbing", under the pressure of liberal forces and trends at the time of Louis XVIII. In *Romagna* the *Missions* had been used in the fight against the "Carbonare" and liberal sects; in the *Papal State* against the Brigandage (see there and p. 124, n. 188-190).

Inspite of the storms of 1848 and 1866, the **'popular missions' ministry** could go on *'in great form'*. Such a development was present even in Tirol.

The history of the Jesuit Veneto Province, gives us meaningful elements to better understand St. Gaspar's attitude in regard to the Jesuits and the context of the *Institute born at 'Stigmata'*, during the last years of our Founder's life and following years. Even *the Priests of the Stigmata*, as **'Apostolic Missionaries'**, at long last, could give their contribution towards the development of the **'popular missions'**, as in 1855 the Concordat, which allowed them to exist, was signed. It was the time when this *privileged ministry* took practical and enthusiastic root, from the ministerial perspective of Fr. Bertoni.

A very special commitment toward the **'popular missions'** was showed by the Jesuit General Fr. Francis Saviour Wernz (1906-1914), who in the Congregation of the Procurators of the Company had to say:

"The other particular ministry of our Company (beside the Spiritual Exercises), are the 'internal (popular) Missions'.... This activity is not equally flourishing in all Provinces, but certainly in quite many, it is promoted with great zeal, and, at the same time, one has to hope that our commitment is not only in forming teachers, but also preachers, in a serious and constant work."

The same Fr. Wernz wrote to the Vienna Jesuits (8 Jan. 1911):

"As Fr. C. Acquaviva had already noted, the Professed should be the first, in this ministry (of the Missions), at the highest level of their vocation and of our Institute, because to them «professionis ipsius causa proprie spectat hoc exercitium» and they «aliis exemplo hac in re et duces se illis praeberere debent», so that even the weakest and most busy Confreres, should, according to their strength and possibility, take charge of some (missions) for few days and in the nearest places. You will find this message exposed splendidly,...in the letters of Fr. Acquaviva and of Fr. Carafa, to which I refer you"⁶¹.

⁶¹ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 302.

In the XX century, this *excellent missionary method*, was put together and fixed, as from the middle of the previous century, by Fr. Jerome Pasi (1847-1914, a native of Erbezzo, Verona, a missionary in Albania and Provincial of the Veneto province between 1906 and 1914), and was enriched by Fr. Joseph Golia (himself a man from Verona, a lecturer and preacher, 1882-1951)⁶².

In all Nations, wherever they were present, in *the years before Second Vatican Council*, the Jesuits exercised this '**unique**' ministry of the '**popular missions**': Denmark, Sweden, England, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Spain⁶³. From Fr. A. Guidetti I am going to report some exemplary facts, on the intensity of the *missionary work*:: in the Prefecture of Leon, in Spain, re-established in 1942 (after the well known events of the civil war), there was a fixed group of 13 Confreres, *consecrated only* to the '**popular missions**'. Among them: Fr. Patric Gutierrez (in 30 years, 500 Missions), Angelo Prado (in 30 years, 600 Missions), Rodriguez del Busto (in 28 years, 500 Missions), Sanches Céspedes (in 26 years, 400 Missions). Other famous Missionaries work in Portugal, in Latin America, In United States, and in Canada⁶⁴.

The Sup. General Fr. Ledóchowski, talking to the Procurators (27 Dec. 1920), concerning the '**popular missions**' said:

"The Missions, which we usually call popular, especially after the war, are held with much fruit by our Confreres in different regions, in the cities and in country sides. But it is desirable that to this kind of ministry, so highly esteemed by the Company, be destined Confreres 'quam altissimi' (the best ones!), eminent in virtue and doctrine, and – according to the instructions of Fr. Carafa – over them should be put as 'prefect' a man, a good leader and moderator, very expert in these sacred 'excursions: the requests for 'Missions' come in such a number to our Superiors, that we are unable to satisfy them".

⁶² GOLIA G., *Manuale pratico per Missioni al popolo*, Padova, 1931.

⁶³ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 331.

⁶⁴ See *Breve storia della Provincia Veneta della Compagnia di Gesù dalle sue origini fino ai nostri giorni* (1814-1914), Venezia 1914, in which is caught not only the huge work in the field of the **Popular Missions** by the Provincia Veneta of the C. di G., but also the style of life of the *Missionaries* and the strong sense of *Mission* specific of the Jesuit.

The XXVII General Congregation, in dealing with the 'ministries', very briefly (by quoting the Decrees of the V and XXII General Congregations) had to say: "**Missiones populares** foveantur utpote saluberrimae ad animarum aedificationem ac fructum".

Fr. Ledòchowsk again in 1933, in writing to the Provincials, reminded them that the Company has to give importance to Colleges, but at the same time, that they are not to spend all their efforts in this sector. It is necessary that in each Province, beside Colleges and Universities, should flourish all those activities which, according to the old traditions, are fit for instructing people:

*"Up to these days, our **method in the 'Missions'**, is highly appreciated by Bishops and Priests, but if to this ministry we send only 'average' workers or even (as it does happen!) we send only those who in the house are less useful, little by little the reputation of the Company will disappear, and people will look for other preachers of God's word, better prepared and expert..., and we fail our duty if we are negligent in keeping high our job"* ⁶⁵.

After the second world war, the '**popular missions**' experienced a revival, especially on the occasion of the 1950 Holy Year. Worthy of special mention is the experience of Fr. Riccardo Lombardi (1908-1979), who, in his missionary commitment, managed to reach millions of people. But, because of our aim, it is better to take up again, though synthetically, some general facts. During this period, up to Vatican II, only in Italy, the Jesuits conducted **10.000 Missions**. In France was established the '*Pastoral Centre for internal Missions*', which lasted up to 1967.

If, already before Vatican II, the '**popular mission**' ministry experienced a certain crisis, after the Council it became even worse.

*"The fast change of mentality and morals, encourage the same Missionaries to ask themselves whether the previous methodologies and themes, which had being the inspiration motives of the '**popular missions**', with their emotional, practical and moral insistence, are still good enough to transform the heart of man, or*

⁶⁵ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 309-311.

*whether it is necessary to look for other methods and suggest new themes more suitable for men's conscience and help them understand better the positive goodness that the Christian message, if lived as it should, has in their lives, and the contribution that it can offer in the building up of a more just and fraternal society"*⁶⁶.

Going back, in a specific way, to the case of the **'popular missions'** in the *Company of Jesus*, we'll have only a few hints about the *post-conciliar situation*. The catalogue of statistics register only indicative numbers of the *crisis*, keeping in mind the average number in the years 1934-1954 of 450 annual 'popular missions', in 1970 they are only 32, in 1980 only 13. Again, the Catalogue register only 6 Confreres assigned to the ORP (*Opera Ritiri Perseveranza*), plus a few *excurrens...* (casuals)...

The General Congregation XXXI, the first after the Council (1965), recommends to the Superiors "*with the approval of the general M.R.P., they have to insist that:*

a- they have to submit to the exam of the 'ministry choice Commission' the apostolic works of the Province and of the Region, in order to obtain improvements and allow our Confreres to get more freedom at the service of the Church;

b- the Directors of works have to adapt themselves, sincerely, to an up-dated pastoral, regarding the Spiritual Exercises and the **'Popular Missions'**.

Fr. A. Guidetti, in reporting the text of the *Congregation*, comments thus: "*It's the only occasion, if we are not wrong, whereby the 'popular missions' are explicitly mentioned, both in XXXI General Congregation and in the following ones, XXXII (1974-1975) and XXXIII (1983)*"⁶⁷.

Fr. J. Henchey suggests two important texts: a conference by the Superior General Fr. Arrupe, to the International Congress of Loyola

⁶⁶ FAVALE A., *Missioni popolari*, in M. SODI - A. M. TRIACCA (a cura) «Dizionario di Omiletica», Ed. LDC - Ed. Velar. Leumann (Torino) - Gorle (Bergamo) 1998, n. 229, p. 967-968..

⁶⁷ GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*. Rusconi. Milano 1988, p. 394

(2-7 Sept.1974) on the theme: “*Exercises and Constitutions*”; and another one of Fr. M. De Aldama, held on the same occasion (pg.25ff). One can easily recognise elements which characterise the *commitment* to ‘aggiornamento’ (updating) of the Company.

In the “*most important mission of our Gospel reading*”, it appears very clearly the decisive centrality of the ‘Spiritual Exercises’ (pg.31). It is stated that “*Mission and incarnation are inseparable*” (pg.33). “*The Ignatius Community is not a close Community, but open to the service of the Mission given to her, and still more open to the universal communion of «corpus societatis»*” (pg.37).

And again: *God’s primacy and man’s centrality*, “both, and the same way, *centre of the Mission*”, characterises the Mission: “*Anthropocentrism is thus assumed by Christocentrism*” (pg. 41).

3.3.- The ministries of the Company after the Council and the popular missions

In the *Original Constitutions of St. Ignatius*, the ‘**popular missions**’, internal or parochial, are not dealt specifically, rather they are not even mentioned. But still, they seem included, logically, in the *spirit* and in the *practical realisation* of the Company of Jesus.

Fr. Acquaviva was the first one to start, but he was not the only one. In reality the Jesuits are among *the first protagonists* of the passage from the *itinerant preaching* to the ‘**popular missions**’. Very soon the Order, through the Superior General Acquaviva, felt obliged to determine their *importance, commitment and methods*. Others will often go back to the theme, showing thus the importance of this ministry for the **Mission** of the Company.

With the *ups and downs* in the history of the **Mission** of the Company, the ‘**popular missions**’ always kept *great importance* (sometimes they have been called ‘*unique*’, to show the *importance, almost the irreplaceability*), as implementation of the *ministeriality* of the Jesuits.

How are the ‘**popular missions**’ present in the deepening of the identity and the Jesuits’ Mission, as it have been dealt by the *General Congregations* after the Council ? I am going to summarise some

elements, without pretending to be exhaustive, trying to recall one of the many ways to proceed, in order to keep alive the strict connection between the first beginnings and the *Ignatius tradition*. What is still a question mark for me in this reading, is the lot reserved to the '**popular missions**' in the context of the '*Apostolic Mission*'. The General Congregations went deep into the vocation of the Company, to meet today's world situations, in obedience to the Council. The reflection seems to move especially around the terms "**Faith Service**" and "**Justice Promotion**".

We glimpsed somehow the *relationship* between **Mission** and '**popular missions**' in the *tradition* of the Company. The last few years situation should be recognised on the light of the *Decrees of the XXXIV General Congregation* ⁶⁸, in particular, it seems to me, in the dynamic dimension, which goes with the understanding and definition of '**Mission**':

"Our life is oriented toward Christ's universal mission in the Church and in today's world... It's a mission that has always to be searched for (pilgrimage) and implemented (work). It's a matter - as a fruit of the 'contemplation (of the Exercises) which identifies us with Christ - of staying with Christ, as servants of his Mission, wherever people live and work. This character of research and of action, constitutes "our way of proceeding", which characterises the whole history of the Company" ⁶⁹.

- "The integrity of Evangelisation comprises these three dimensions:
- a) Evangelisation as *proclamation of the Gospel in the perspective of God's Kingdom, preached and fulfilled by Christ*;
 - b) Evangelisation as *dialogue with people of different creeds and cultures*;
 - c) Evangelisation as *proclamation of justice*" ⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ See «Guida alla lettura dei Decreti», short Note di Autori diversi enclosed to the Spanish edition, of the Constitutions of the C. d. G.; in the magazine (domestic) *Gesuiti in Italia*.

⁶⁹ TEJERA M., *Uniti a Cristo nella Missione*, l.c., 1-2.

⁷⁰ ALVAREZ BOLADO A., *Servitori della Missione di Cristo*, l.c., 3-4.

A recurrent word is **evangelisation** (in the articulation of the dimensions), which expresses very well the *mission of faith service and justice promotion*. The Christ who associates us to his **Mission**, is the crucified and risen Christ, in a mysterious yet real communion with the poor and the crucified people of history. If the **mission** springs forth from the constant experience of Christ, its formulation helps us discern the *legitimate diversity of ministries, in the context of the one mission*.

A great contribution toward its understanding can be found in the reflections of the Superior General of the years after the Council, Fr. Arrupe. He evidences the mystique and prophetic root of the **mission**: *mystique*, i.e. springing from the continuous experience of Christ; *prophetic*, being a *faith proclamation* that challenges every culture with the provocative strength of the Gospel.

A characteristic strictly connected with the **Mission** is the *priestly character* of the Company, demanded by the apostolic priority of its identity and of its service; clear is the priestly dimension of the Jesuits' identity and mission. "*Priesthood is a basic element of the mission of the Company, as a body, thus being an Ignatian note of great value in the accomplishment of its mission....It has been founded in view of a ministerial priestly work and our work must be the continuation of the priestly, personal and community experience of the first Members of the Company*"⁷¹. It is stated, at the same time, that the *lay Brothers* must feel committed and ready to go to any **apostolic mission** of the Company, that they can fulfil, according to their charism.

Concrete means for a full integration have been suggested, so that all Members will share, in the same Community, both prayer and domestic works, as well as **the apostolic mission**⁷². Fr. Arrupe goes on saying: "**the apostolic mission** is a precious key, a 'passe partout', a *true master key* to understand and deepen the knowledge of St. Ignatius - founding - Charism"⁷³. *Our vocation is similar to that of the Apostles, a real re-presentation of the apostolic order*, as Fr. Nadal, quoted by

⁷¹ ARRUPÉ, in HENCHEY, o.c., p. 43.

⁷² See ROYÓN E., *Il Fratello gesuita*, l.c., 20.

⁷³ ARRUPÉ, in HENCHEY, o.c., p. 46

Fr. De Aldama would say: "After all what were the Apostles doing ?... Were they not going around preaching ? Is it not exactly what you are doing ?" ⁷⁴.

3.4.- The "Apostolic Missionaries" of Fr. Bertoni and the Company of Jesus

As I am trying to answer some of the questions of my research, I believe it important to try to understand Fr. G.B. Lenotti's ideas, in what he said:

"...It seems clear that Fr. Bertoni's intention was of establishing a Congregation, which, as the Company of Jesus is in a very special way devoted, and everyday to the Roman Pontiff's dispositions, so ours to be devoted and in a very special way dedicated to the service and obsequium of Bishops.; nevertheless with this difference, that, while the Professed of the Company of Jesus make a special vow of obedience to the Pope, ours instead do not make any special vow to the Bishop, but they should, by any means, try to help and assist Him, with reverence, and to be in a very special way dedicated to Him; being the case that one thing is to make a vow to the Pope who is responsible for the whole Catholic Church, another thing is to a Bishop, being confined to only one Diocese, and so to limit the sphere of our Apostolate; becoming thus 'Missionaries' 'in obsequium Episcopi' and not 'in obsequium Episcoporum': even more, in such a case the Bishop, by sending anyone of us, here and there any time, he would destroy us. This is therefore, the essence of our Institute, its aim and its way of reaching it".

Fr. John Perrone, S.J., in evaluating Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions, seems not to understand the real thing; he seems to make a simplification in comparison with the clear distinction made by Fr. Lenotti: "It looks like a 'copy' of the Company of Jesus, except some accidental exceptions [...] The aim of the Union is to provide the Bishops in whose Dioceses they are, with **evangelical Workers**, who should always be ready for any request of theirs; and, to offer the same

⁷⁴ *Monumenta Hist. S.J.*, Nadal IV, 733, in HENCHEY, o.c., p. 59-60.

Bishops, under the supervision of the Superiors, any kind of ministry of which they might be in need..."

Those words "**under the supervision of the Superiors**" are not to be understood simply in terms of "*always ready to any requests of the same Bishops*", unless we expose ourselves to the risk, already foreseen, that *the Bishop "could thus destroy us"*. Fr. Stoffella thus summarised the words: "*Not to bind ourselves to the Bishops, as the Jesuits do with the Pope*": "*In order to avoid dangers for the unity of the Institute*"⁷⁵. Having said that, it would seem difficult and risky (as to its binding strength) the analogy between *our* relationship with the Bishop and the relationship of the *Jesuits* (rather of the *Company of Jesus*) with the Pope.

"...offered me *The Stigmata, as a proper place to put a Congregation of Priests who live under St. Ignatius' rule*"⁷⁶. Fr. Bertoni and his Companions knew enough the Ignatius texts to be able to appreciate the *main contents*, but, at the same time, they were aware of their *own identity*, which we, today, are able to obtain not only from History, but even from the various fonts from which St. Gaspar purposely draws, and from the *apostolic perspective*, which is not simply the same.

The *Rules of the Jesuits* could easily be found in the Stigmata Convent, as well as the Book of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Exercise of perfection* of Fr. Rodriguez (of which Fr. Bertoni made a new edition in 1840), as well as other texts of the tradition and spirituality of the Company⁷⁷. When in 1841 St. Gaspar was busy writing the *Constitutions* for his Institute, under the model of the Company of Jesus, in referring to '*De religione Societati Jesu in particulari*, of Fr. F. Suarez, he would refer equally and he would draw both from the *St. Thomas's Summa* and from the spirituality of the Holy Fathers.

⁷⁵ STOFFELLA G., *Stigmatini*, in «Collectanea Stigmatica. Studi e Ricerche», IV, II, Curia Generalizia degli Stigmatini, Roma 1967 p. 229.

⁷⁶ GASPARE BERTONI, *Epistolario* (by G. STOFFELLA), Letter 54, of August 17th 1816, to Naudet. Verona 1953.

⁷⁷ STOFFELLA G., *Il Ven. Gaspare Bertoni*, p. 133; cf DALLE VEDOVE N., *Come il Ven. Padre concepì il nostro Istituto*, in «Collectanea Stigmatica» IV, *Studi e ricerche su fisionomia della Congregazione secondo la mente del Fondatore*, Curia Generalizia degli Stigmatini, Roma 1967, p. 251-293; here p. 263.

We now recall the visit to the Altar of St. Ignatius in 1808:

"Introduction to the Exercises. In a visit to the Altar of St. Ignatius with my Companions, much devotion and meditation, with some interior sweetness and some tears, though the visit was very short. It seemed to me that the Saint was welcoming us and inviting us to promote the greater glory (of God), as he did, and the same ways, although in all the ways he did use" (Spiritual Journal, 15.9.1808)⁷⁸.

A reading, on the light of the 53 meditation on the *Book of Kings*, already proposed to us by Fr. N. Dalle Vedove, will help us better understand the importance of the terms, present in this page of the *Bertonian Memorial*:

"The tools [... says Fr. Dalle Vedove], are the people, such as 'Jonathan' with the 'sword in his hands' and behind him the 'good and wise preachers', who guide the chosen subjects of a bad shepherd', i.e. in very difficult times. Of such 'tools' for sure he was talking even in the *mystic experience* reported previously. St. Ignatius, as a new Jonathan, drags after himself some courageous Companions for the battle. Fr. Bertoni himself, feels he is personally invited to "*gird himself of the sword of God's Word*", the true weapon of the preachers, to go and fight against the old serpent'. The *fighting spirit of St. Ignatius* is well expressed in Jonathan, who drags his companions in the battle field, that they may share with him the heroism and the glory. These companions of his are specialised in preaching: "*Good and wise preachers, who with their wise sermons defend the people from the hidden enemies [...]. The best plans vanish in talking, or*" (Writings, 6902). Because of this, says Fr. Dalle Vedove, Fr. Bertoni, already sick, in 1812, confides to Fr. Marani (who usually would call him 'very reserved' in his things.), with shyness – comments Fr. Lenotti -, that he had "*a heavenly vision, after the suppression of the Convents in 1810, in which he appeared he would become a 'Founder' of a new Congregation*". And this to confirm him about *the future of his Institute*. The vision seems to be quite concrete in those '*tools for the salvation of souls*', about which

⁷⁸ We are in the early church of the Jesuit, on the day of the beginning of the *Esercizi spirituali* of the clergy, and the visit brings to the one who is the master of the *Esercizi*! The biblical references are from Ef 6,13-17 and Rev. 12,9.

Fr. Bertoni was talking, “good and wise preachers”, “not only in talking, but also in doing, following Christ’s example”.

His thought becomes more precise when talking about the ‘ways’, or ‘means’, “by which the preachers (**the ‘apostolic missionaries’**!), gathered in a Society, would save souls”; “He seemed to tell us: ‘Onward, soldiers of Christ! Gird yourselves with fortitude! Pick up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the divine Word, and fight against the ‘ancient serpent’. Make alive again my spirit in you and in others, through you’. The ‘ways’ and the ‘means’ are suggested as follows:

“Continuous meditation and prayer, in preparing the ways [...], discretion of various suitable means against many evils and enemies, against all the passions which dim the mind and darken the truth” (6908).

The list of the ‘means’ could continue, *ways for the salvation of souls*, but now we are going to take what he says about the ‘ways’, thus closing the picture he used in his reflection:

“First way, much compassion, humility (6936), [...], the good preacher teaches by his example [...], he preaches with strong and awesome sentences. God’s word [...] does not come back empty [...], but it helps reflect, and encourages to imitate. Fr. Bertoni, during impossible times (the suppression of the Orders had just happened!..), speaks of “getting together of companions and disciples of the same spirit”, to form a ‘Society’ of preachers, in which there should be ‘order’: a free ‘presiding’ in everything, and obedience ready for anything” (6920)⁷⁹.

Fr. Bertoni was very much convinced that the desired ‘renewal of the Christian society’ of his time, could not come about, unless from a renewed fervour of the Clergy, and from its sure return to “**Apostolic vivendi forma**” (the apostolic way of living) [...], we have to establish “in God’s army, something like a division of workers, perfect in their faith and in the practice of all virtues, of heroic workers,

⁷⁹ Cf DALLE VEDOVE N., *Il Beato Gaspare Bertoni agli albori dell’Ottocento veronese*, p. 360-362.

imitators of the life of the Apostles, so that with such an army ...they may go and help people and win the devils”⁸⁰.

I find quite appropriate Fr. M.R. Jurado S.J.’s notes, regarding Fr. Bertoni’s intention (except, probably, those words ‘at complete disposal’!) of ‘establishing “a College of Apostles, priests as the Apostolic College, put at complete disposal of Bishops for the kind of ministries, which is not very easy, for Diocesan Priests, to attend to, in the different Parishes”’(Manuscript, pg.4).

I agree with him, when he says: “One can say that the main structure that characterises **Fr. Bertoni’s Institute**, his style and his spirituality, are all based and inspired by the Company and by the teachings of St. Ignatius. But this does not prevent, at all, his own originality or his differences. Fr. Bertoni sorts out, summarises, adapts everything to the fundamental inspiration received by God, for his own Institute” (ivi, pg. 6).

Fr. Jurado goes on, (and we agree with him almost completely!), saying that the ministries of St. Gaspar and his Institute

“are especially: preaching, hearing confessions, to teach in the cities and in the countryside, in any corner of the Diocese, at the Seminary, being ready and available to the requests of the Bishops and under their control in the mission received by them. For Fr. Bertoni was of great importance to preach missions to the people and to conduct spiritual exercises to the Clergy and preaching to the people. But he took care also, with great interest, of the spiritual counselling for the people who would ask for it, youth formation in Colleges [does he mean ‘schools’?], oratories or Marian Congregations, he took care of foreign missions as well [but not in the sense of ‘Ad Gentes’, while still alive, for his Congregation], to face urgent needs, etc. The title “**Apostolic Missionary**”, for him and for others as well in his time, did not

⁸⁰ Istruzioni sul Libro dei Re, meditation 44. See the reflections on these themes in: MARTINIS D., (Sup. gen. 1946-1958), *Lettera ai Confratelli Stigmatini* (23 Gennaio 1955), on the one hundredth anniversary of the *Decreto di Lode* for the Institute, in: «Il Bertonianismo», vol. XIV, Anno XXXIX, supplement to n. 3. 1954, p. 413: “Invisible head and spiritual guide of that group was S. Ignatius di Loyola: his doctrine fed them, his example incited them [... nevertheless] his Work[of Bertoni] would have never been a repetition of the one of S. Ignatius”.

mean 'to limit himself to the popular mission ministry only' (Ivi, pg.6-7)⁸¹.

Concerning the criteria of actuality, he adds: "The concreteness of some ministries, both yesterday as today, depend on the mission received from the Bishop who calls them or sends them to his Diocese. But the judgement whether a ministry belongs or does not belong to the proper ministries of the Institute, one has to do it using the same criteria Fr. Bertoni himself used" (pg.7)⁸².

This means, I would say, that if the concreteness of some ministries depends on the Bishop's request, the judgement about the proper ministries should be given on the light of the choices of the Founder. We could even add, on the light of Vatican II Document 'Christus Dominus', that, among the duties of the Bishops, there is a point that they have to accompany both Religious and Consecrated people in the fidelity to their charism.⁸³

⁸¹ See instead the position of HENCHY J. (as expressed in the *disputatio* with the one of DALLE VEDOVE N.), *L'ispirazione originale del nostro Fondatore riguardante la nostra «Missio apostolica»*, in «Il Bertonian» 1968/1, p. 226-260, more spec. 227-233. Bertoni, with unanimous consent, was the first animator of the missionary movement in Verona, which is a diocese in the vanguard in the movement *ad Gentes*. See DALLE VEDOVE N., *Le radici dello spirito missionario a Verona*, in: «Verona in missione. L'Ottocento. Dalla rivoluzione francese alla prima guerra mondiale», Verona 2000, pp. 107-138, spec. 108. He didn't express this ministry in his Constitutions (except for the universality evoked from the *quocumque euntes in Dioecesi et in mundo*).

⁸² It can be useful to know the perspective in which the *Sinodo di Verona* celebrated at the time of the Bishop Morosini (who rendered it famous); for sure the instructions of the Synod were well known to Bertoni, also for what concerned the Preachers: "*Praedicationis autem munus praeter Parochos in suis Ecclesiis, nullus aut Regularis, seu Saecularis sacerdos audeat assumere, nisi cum litteris Nostris patentibus, et licentia Nostra, et benedictione ostenta a Nobis missus consisterit. Quomodo enim praedicabunt nisi mittantur? Nos vero Regulares viros cuiusvis Ordinis ad praedicandum in Dioecesi Nostra non mitteremus, nisi Superiorum eiusdem Ordinis litteris visis, aliisque servatis, quae in hac re vel Ecclesiasticis, vel civilibus legibus praescribuntur*" (*Synodus Dioecesis abita ab Illustriss. et Reverendiss. D. D. Joanne Morosini, Ordinis S. Benedicti Congregationis Cassinensis, Dei et Apostolicae Gratia Episcopo Veronesi Comite etc. Veronae MDCCLXXXIII*, p. XL). "Remarkable merit of the bishop Morosini is the care he took of the education and the formation of the young clergy in the Diocesan Seminary"; on other regards the figure of this able bishop presents some inquiries for the historical side (see PIGHI G.B., *Cenni storici sulla Chiesa veronese*, II. «Archivio storico Curia Vescovile». Verona, MCMLXXXVIII, p.339-348).

⁸³ See S. Congregation for religious and Secular Institutes, *Mutuae Relationes*, (14.05.1978), n. 52.

4 - COMPARISON WITH THE MINISTRY UPDATING OF DIFFERENT INSTITUTES

Only three examples, among the many we could take into consideration, for a fruitful comparison and for a better documentation. The analogy does not bind us, of course, but it could help us find out a renewal of ways, and at the same time remaining faithful to the tradition.

4.1.- Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the most Holy Redeemer, as they have been elaborated by the XVII General Chapter (1969) committed as it was in the updating of the ministries. In underlining the need both for a *discernment and an updating*, at the same time they refer very explicitly to the **'popular missions'**

1°.- Constitutions⁸⁴

In the *Constitutions*, in few occasions, the missionary nature of the Apostolate of the Congregation is underlined.

Sectio tertia: De modo exercendi opus evangelizationis.

Art. 5. De formis operis missionalis.

C.-13.- In sua missione exequenda, Congregatio inceptis audacibus ac studio intenso operari satagit. Vocata ut opus missionale

⁸⁴ Constitutiones et Statuta Congregationis SSmi Redemptoris a Capitulo Generali XVII exarata, Romae 1969, Cost. 13-16 e St. 017.

a Deo sibi concreditum fideliter per aetates impleat, in ipsa missionis forma evolvitur.

C.- 14.- *Opus quidam apostolicum Congregationis signatur magis dynamismo missionali, evangelizatione nempe veri nomine atque servitio hominum et coetum relate ad Ecclesiam et ad condiciones humanas magis destitutorum et pauperum (cf 3-5), quam quibusdam determinatis formis activitatis.*

The missionary connotation of the apostolate requires availability and freedom from permanent commitments which might hinder it:

C.- 15.- *Vocatio Congregationis itaque expostulat ut sodales liberi sint et expediti, tum quoad coetus evangelizandos, tum quoad media missioni salutis inservientia. Cum ipsis obligatio semper incumbat nova incepta apostolica exquirendi, impediuntur ne in condicionibus et structuris consistant in quibus eorum actio iam non esset missionalis. Sed sagaces novarum viarum inventores erunt, quibus Evangelium omni praedicetur creaturae (cf Mc 16,15).*

The past must be honoured in its missionari expressions, the future is the fruit of an authentic pastoral charity:

c.- 16.- *Propterea magni aestimatur multiformis actuositas in quam decursu temporis sese expressit sodalium missionalis labor, secundum locorum necessitates. Ac futuro tempore quodvis inceptum in Congregationem pariter assumetur, quod eius pastoralis caritati convenire censebitur.*

The last word, on the discernment of the apostolic choices, belongs to the Superiors and the Chapters

C.- 17.- *Iudicium utrum determinatum opus apostolicum, in Provincia assumptum vel assumendum, cum indole missionari Congregationis consonet necne, spectat ad Capitulum (Vice-) Provinciale, in vigilante Gubernio Generali. Inde patet sodales omnes, praesertim in Capitulis coadunatos, periodice sese interrogare debere an media evangelizationis in respectivo territorio expectationi Ecclesiae et mundi respondeant; an et quomodo apostolicae metodi sintae reanovandae, ita ut media valida retineantur, mendosa corrigantur, inepta derelinquantur.*

II°.- Statutes:

Art. 2 De quibusdam formis operis missionalis

016.- *Principium generale*

Ministerii formae, quae in sequentibus statutis memorantur, ubi vim suam efficaciter exserunt, tenaci et magno animo exercendae sunt, necessitatibus pastoralibus eas indefesse adaequando.

After the statement of the 'general principle', follows the indication to the 'popular missions':

017.- *De missionibus ad populum*

a.- *Ecclesia, in proprio sinu peccatores complectens, sancta simul et semper purificanda, poenitentiam et renovationem continuo prosequitur. Ad hunc finem Missiones medium validissimum extitisse historia probat. Ipsae enim, utpote ministerium validissimum pastorale extraordinarium, praeconium salutis et conversionem proclamant (praedicatio kerigmatica).*

b.- *Haec forma apostolatus, ubi correspondeat necessitatibus pastoralibus Ecclesiae in territorio et veram efficaciam missionalem evolvit, fideliter exerceatur.*

The list goes on (018-025) with other concrete ways of Ministry of the Congregation, calling them one by one with some evaluations: *Parish Ministry, Catechetical instructions, Spiritual Exercises, social involvement, Ministries through the communication media, the study of the pastoral and moral Theology, spiritual guidance or direction, and updating of the apostolic methods.*

4.2.- Directory of the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary ⁸⁵

Chapter X speaks of the *Mission*.

n. 84. *Nuestro carácter de Misioneros hace del servicio de la Palabra nuestro ministerio característico. En el convenimos con*

⁸⁵ COCULSA, Madrid, 1975, introduction of the Sup. Gen. Antonio Leghisa, C. M. F.

todos los Institutos apostólicos a quienes la Iglesia ha confiado la misión de evangelizar; pero lo vivimos con uno estilo propio, dado por nuestro Fundador y enriquecido en la historia de nuestro Instituto (DC 23, 25).

n. 85. *El servicio de la Palabra es obra de todos los miembros de la Congregación, según la peculiar vocación de cada uno. El carisma de unidad a todos se expresa en la multiplicidad de todas sus actividades.*

n. 88.- In this number are indicated *los sujetos hacia los que deberemos orientar preferentemente nuestra opción apostólica.*

Different sectors are listed, according to the:

- *social view point*: the poor and the emarginated are mentioned
- *socio-political*: the Countries on the way of development,
- *the evangelisation* of the not-yet-baptised, of the baptised without evangelisation, and the lost Christians,

- *socio-ecclesial*, family and family movements, as privileged 'places' for a faith education,

- *on the 'efficacy' view point*: youth and children as the future of society.

n. 90.- *Nuestro Instituto no se siente ligado a ninguna forma histórica de predicación, ni a ningún método concreto de apostolado. Adopta en cada caso los mas urgentes, oportunos y eficaces en orden a la conversión de los no creyentes, a la renovación de la vida cristiana del pueblo fiel y al perfeccionamiento de los consagrados (PE 50).*

n. 91.- *Los criterios que han de regular la elección de nuestros ministerios son: la orientación general del Instituto a la predicación misionera de la Iglesia en cada tiempo y lugar; la mayor eficacia de la obra apostólica (PE, 49).*

After this, the main apostolic activities of the Congregation are recalled:

direct preaching of the Word, social communication media, Christian education, Parish apostolate, Missions.

In the discernment the Local Communities are involved, as well as the Province and the General Government, through the suggested structures.

After these indications :

Art. 1, deals with the 'Missions ad gentes'

Art. 2, deals with the Direct service of the Word.

In this 2nd art., we find some statements interesting for our research, starting with the distinction in the Ministry of the Word:

n.101: *El Servicio directo de la Palabra es la predicación del mensaje cristiano en cualquiera de sus formas.* [a important, clarifying distinction follows]: *Este servicio puede ejercerse en estructuras estables de la pastoral ordinaria (parishes, boarding schools, etc.) y en formas móviles en orden a potenciar la pastoral (popular missions, retreats, cursillos, ecc.).*

A estas formas móviles non referimos en los números siguientes de este artículo.

n.102.- *Cada Organismo Mayor debe fomentar en la medida de lo posible la creación de comunidades y equipos dedicados al servicio directo de la palabra. Las comunidades especificadas en este ministerio ofrecen hoy grandes posibilidades en la reevangelización de los consagrados. Creados los equipos se pondrán a disposición de la jerarquía para la recristianización de los pueblos (2AP, 125).*

n.103.- *La campañas de evangelización que, como Misiones Populares fueron la primera expresión histórica de nuestro carisma, deben continuar adaptadas a tiempo e lugares con las siguientes características claretianas:*

a) Desinterés apostólico...

b) Austeridad de vida...

c) Solicitud para revitalizar todas las instituciones diocesanas y parroquiales, especialmente las directamente apostólicas.

n. 104 speaks about Spiritual Exercises and then it continues with other sectors above written.

4.3.- Congregation of the Passion of O.L.J.C.

The Congregation, founded by St. Paul of the Cross, has got the specific mission "of proclaiming the Gospel of the Passion by one's life and apostolate" (Cost. 2).

In our Constitutions of 1984 it's quite clear the point of preaching of popular missions and of spiritual exercises as a contribution to the

evangelization: "Following our Founder's tradition we dedicate ourselves to the evangelization and new evangelization of peoples... Our Congregation shall consider those ways of preaching the Word which seem more suitable for the fulfilment of its evangelization commitment... Though it will do that in the various ways suggested by the Constitutions, still the preaching of the popular missions and the spiritual exercises remains our main and more important activity... We take the missionary commitment of proclaiming and establishing the kingdom of God among all peoples" (Cost. 70).

The 1989 Directory says: "According to our Founder's tradition we must engage ourselves in the preaching of God's word toward the people, through the Parish missions, renewal courses, spiritual exercises and the Mission '*ad gentes*' (n° 33). Mention is done to the first-evangelization and the need to find new ways for the new evangelization. For this reason, our Rule asks for special and accurate discernment before accepting parishes, that it may be "a way of expressing our missionary dimension" (n° 35).

To conclude these annotations:

In the '*Apostolic Mission*' (well explained) we do find the '**popular missions**'. They do not exhaust it, for sure, in its ministerial forms, and they are not the *only* expressions. The '*Apostolic Mission*', is the Church's sharing, starting from the Apostles themselves, to the universal-salvific Mission of Christ; its historical realisation – in the fidelity to its essence and its evangelical contents – is linked (in its forms and methods) to times, circumstances and people. The '*Mission*' qualifies the nature of the Church; the **Missions** are but a means, somehow 'unique', toward an always renewed faithfulness to the '*Mission*'.

It seems to me that, in the two simple reflections just reported, we can find a way of facing the problem, even in the context of our history and of our being *Stigmatines*, today, as '*Apostolic Missionaries*'. Any radical interpretation would not be respectful of our history, as it wouldn't be of the strength of renewal of the pastoral charity. In any case, *faithfulness* and *renewal* go together: a failed renewal distanciates itself from the faithfulness, as well as a renewal which does not take roots from history and from the fecundity of the original inspiration.

5 -THE APOSTOLIC MISSIONARY IN FR. BERTONI'S PROJECT

Introduction

The '*person*' of the '**Apostolic Missionary**', in the juridical and ministerial tradition, is quite well defined (*the understanding of its identity and of its apostolic commitment is not a problem*). We have met quite a number of typical '*Apostolic Missionaries*', whose life, (of some of them,) has been officially recognised as '*saint*'; some are Founders of Religious Orders or Congregations, to whom they transmitted their '*passion*' for the Kingdom and their '*missionary charism*' as well ⁸⁶.

5.1.- A general character description

I take from Fr. G. Moroni's description about WHO could be considered an '**Apostolic Missionary**' at the time when St. Gaspar Bertoni was busy writing his Constitutions: ⁸⁷

"The mandate given by Jesus to his Apostles, of instructing and of baptising all nations, is valid for all centuries; for this reason the apostolic zeal never ceased in the Catholic Church and it will continue until, on the earth, there will be pagans and people to be converted, because Jesus Christ promised to be with those whom

⁸⁶ GUGLIA C. quotes a list, according to him "approximate", of the saints, the blessed and of whose the Cause is already started; list not completed but meaningful, see *Il Vangelo agli Ultimi*, Dehoniane Rome 1990, p. 243-252.

⁸⁷ MORONI GAETANO, *Missionari*, «Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni», Vol. XLV. in Venice MDCCCXLVII, p. 216-225

*He sent, up to the consummation of the ages [...]. Although in Italy, as in other Regions, the Catholic Church is the majority, in others there is a mixture of cults, or because of the sea and its Ports, the Congregation of 'Propaganda' [...] keeps some agents in the main cities and sea Ports, in different parts [...]. They are called 'Missionaries' even those Clerics, both secular or religious, who are somehow involved in the **Mission**, or they belong to Congregations or pious Institutes which have as their main aim the '**Urban Missions**', sub-urban or any-kind of Missions [...].*

How much useful the Mission is to the sanctification of the people, Pope Clement XI taught it, on 16th March 1702, in writing to all Bishops asking them to try to get 'the Missions' for the following reasons:

- 1- To be able to reproach the 'abuses', by the help of them...[...]
- 2- To cover up the shortage of the proclamation of God's Word, in the cities...
- 3- Through the experience of the Roman Mission, whereby we saw that when the 'things' of God are explained simply and clearly, people appreciate them, ...share in them and get converted....
- 4- To lead (God's people) to a good general Confession, to enable them to put things in order... especially whereby there were 'invalid' Confessions...⁸⁸.

Fr. G. Moroni goes on saying that many *Institutes* have been established especially for the *Missions*, among them, the The Mission of the pious Workers, the members of the Charity of Rosmini, the Congregation of the Precious Blood Missionaries of Gaspar del Bufalo, the one of the 'Priests of the Mission' of St. Vincent de Paoli...

A more recent description is given by Henry, in *Catholicisme*: the title of '**Apostolic missionary**', since the XVII century is given to Priests who are dedicated especially to the service of the Missions, by mandate of the Congregation of the Propagation of Faith. Most of these Clerics are chosen among the ex-pupils of the Apostolic

⁸⁸ MORONI GAETANO, *Missionari*, «Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica», Vol. XLV, p. 217. 222.

*Colleges of Rome. These Priests, in the territories of their Mission, enjoyed some privileges,, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist and in the administration of other Sacraments. Later on, such Title would be given, 'ad hominem' to some Diocesan Priests who would distinguished themselves in giving 'Parish Missions'. Now-a-days, this title is not used any longer..."*⁸⁹.

In the '*Nomination Decree*' it was described the Authority from which the '*Missionary*' was dependant, and the '*powers*' given to him ,though limited to the Mission territory were he was operating..."⁹⁰.

5.2.- The Apostolic Missionaries in Fr. Bertoni's plan

Who are these '**Apostolic Missionaries**' in St. Gaspar Bertoni's Project ?

We did answer this question already, in the *historic perspective* (who were the '*Apostolic Missionaries*?); now the question is put in a '*charismatic perspective*' (what was the mind of Fr. Bertoni, while writing the *Compendium rube 1*: "*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici* (with a meaningful '*addition*' - as we shall see later on) *in obsequium Episcoporum*"?)

We could take different complementary itineraries; thus we shall go through 5 different passages:

a- Historical context, in which Fr. Bertoni took the '*missionary perspective*'

b-The occasions which he took as a '*providential sign*', and obstacles to the realisation

⁸⁹ See HENRY H. M., *Missionnaire apostolique*, in «Catholicisme hier, aujourd'hui, demain», Letouzey et Ané», Boulevard Raspail, Paris 1982, t. IX, 351.

⁹⁰ Interesting to notice the importance the preachers gave to the title of Apostolic Missionary, not much for the prestige, but for the privileges with pastoral reflex that accompanied it. So e.g. St. A.M. Claret asks (talking in the third person) to the Congregation de Propaganda Fide: "... always busy ... in the preaching and in giving Exercises to the faithful, he desires the Title of Apostolic Missionary with the annexed faculties that he can at present earn more fruits from his efforts" (Archive of the C. Propaganda Fide, Udienze di N. S., year 1841, p.2, vol. 95, f. 834).

- c- *The meaning, in the project of the Compendium rude*
- d- *The meaning of the Constitutions of Fr. Bertoni*
- e- *The understanding in the 'stigmatine tradition'.*

A.- Historical Context in which Fr. Bertoni took the missionary perspective

For a better understanding of the historical context which accompanied Fr. Bertoni's inspiration, I believe it is very useful what Fr. Dalle Vedove offered us in his study of 1955 (par.-III°-IV°-VI°): 'In historical context of Fr. Bertoni's time'⁹¹.

To the details written by Fr. Dalle Vedove, which have been recognised as valid by the Verona Historians, I am going to add here **Fr. Bertoni's Sermon on St. Zeno**, expression of the spiritual and apostolic maturity of Fr. Bertoni, beyond the hymn to the holiness of the Holy Patron of Verona. Here we can easily read the *description* of the '**Apostolic Missionary**', according to the mind of the Founder of the Priests of the Stigmata'⁹².

St. Zeno is one the '*minor*' *Fathers*; we know something about him from St. Ambrose (in connection with the consecration of the Virgins), from Gregory the great (who tells us about a miracle happened during the river Adige flood or overflowing), from Petronio (who left us a beautiful praise sermon), from the Basilica in Verona, which takes its

⁹¹ *Collectanea*, IV, II. Rome 1967; paragraphs II°, III°, IV°, VI° (I° e V° deal with something else), p. 251-264; later, of the same A., *Vita e pensiero del Beato Gaspare Bertoni*, II, especially p. 151-191; 237-263.

⁹² The nice *Panegirico* of Saint Zeno, with introduction and notes is quoted (with language changes) in: *S. Gaspare Bertoni evangelizzatore dei giovani, del clero e del popolo*, (by B. FACCIOITI) in: *Filo diretto I*, Ed. Stigmatine (pro manuscripto), 1996, p. 157-204. The reported text is formed by some observations of mine, introductory to the reading of the bertonian text (p. 158-162). For a further reflection, see DALLE VEDOVE N., *Il Beato Gaspare Bertoni*, V, p. 646-661.

name from him (with its beautiful bronze doors), and from many Churches in north of Italy built in his name, and from the *Retia* (Alpi region), by especially from his own Sermons: 90 sermons, some complete and some in pieces. Among the best ones the 'Allegory of the vine', the 'Allegory of the corn', the 'dedication of the church', the 'charity'. Interesting, historically speaking, the sermon about 'the African martyr Arcadio, which seems to testify that he himself was of African origin.

St. Zeno died around the year 380 (some prefer to anticipate a bit); he was Bishop in Verona, a bit earlier than St. Ambrose (Bishop of Milano). The expression which summarises his pastoral activity, exalted by literature and hymns, is the fact that '*He brought the Verona people to Baptism*'. Though he had not being the first Bishop, but the 8th, still he seems the one who characterises the history of the Church in Verona. Fr. Bertoni was using his *Sermons* in the edition of the 'Ballerini Brothers', a well known book from the literature, historical and dogmatic point of view. St. Gaspar took a lot from it.

What is of interest for us is the way St. Gaspar, after various reflections, has written down his sermon on St. Zeno. We can easily read between the lines the 'elements' of the '**Apostolic Missionary**', visible in the person and ministry of St. Zeno, his virtues and his vocation as a missionary and as a preacher of God's word. Noteworthy is that, in spite St. Zeno officially was remembered as 'Bishop and Martyr', Fr. Gaspar quoted him with these words: "*...if in reality the executioner's sword did not work in him, nevertheless his desire for martyrdom was there and gave him (St. Zeno) the right to get even the glory of martyrdom.*"

The real attention of St. Gaspar (...but the due respect and prudence!) was on the understanding of the situation of the Church, of Theology, culture, society... at the time of St. Zeno. No doubt St. Gaspar, in St. Zeno's Church experience, had in mind to read his own time, the time and situation of his listeners. The very beginning of the XVIII century, with the French Revolution, Napoleon's arrogance, the spreading of the illuministic ideas, was asking the Church (Theology and Christian culture as well) to give her back the doctrinal and cultural patrimony.

How did St. Zeno, in his own time, live his Episcopal service? Fr. Bertoni answers this with an image:

"A little vegetable garden that a farmer cares for, with faithfulness, but with fear, without even the possibility of protecting it with a

wall or a fence. The farmer himself cannot even work openly, without causing suspicion and fears; his neighbour, rapacious and full of jealousy as he is, is always on the alert, with hundred eyes.....The laws of the Nation, supported by the public feelings, were willing to destroy any sign of Christian tradition. The highest Authorities and the Emperors themselves were all eager to carry out such laws and were trying by any means to destroy the faith"

He was referring both to the pagan wave of *Julian the Apostate*, and the presence and resistance of the pagan cult, especially outside the cities, and even the Arian abuses in regard to the orthodoxy, and all these supported by the Emperors' power. On top of the State reasons, as always happens, there were "private passions, the interest of the persecutors, the hatred of the people themselves"⁹³. Fr. Bertoni adds thus: "*we cannot even exclude the presence of the advises that the astuteness of the Philosophers was punctually and cleverly offering*".

Zeno, well prepared culturally, coming from Africa (via Siria, thus says the tradition!), arrived in Verona as a "*brave soldier, armed with a sword, a shield and arrows, being sent to conquer his enemies, with the promise of a sure triumph*". The image of the 'soldier' is familiar to Fr. Bertoni, to indicate the '**Missionary**'; this is proved even by the words he used to describe the '*spiritual experience and the inspiration he had by St. Ignatius Altar*'.

In his sermon St. Gaspar underlines the *strength, the way and the order* used by St. Zeno (... and here we recognise Bertoni's missionary method !) to carry out his battle. In the different passages of the sermon about St. Zeno, emerge very clearly the virtues of the '**Missionary**': the meekness and the cheerfulness.

"Instead of courage, meekness, instead of terror, cheerfulness...: this is the war strategy, suggested by the King himself and by the general Captain who sent him" (Cfr. John 20,21; and Mt. 10,16) "One can not win anger by anger, but by meekness" (2074).

⁹³ Was, Bertoni, too obedient to the to the established authority not to think to the political one of Austria which for decades was conditioning his plan to give life to an Institute of Apostolic Missionaries ?

"Man's reason and experience tell us that when the enemy is strong and furious, he is going to be won... One has to make good use of the obtained battles, without being proud and insolent... One can win completely his enemy only when, after disarming him, he will be able to win his heart" (Cfr. 2073; and N° 2075 takes up the same reason by adding "fortitude" and "prudence").

The one who has victory in his hands and makes moderate use of it. Prudence, moderation, equilibrium, meekness, heart!

"Though courageous, St. Zeno does not start the battle, neither he accepts to enter it when the result is dubious and dangerous, rather he gives up, he goes backward, he endures the weariness, the injuries, the insults of the enemy, the reactions of the soldiers, the suspicions of the people, without getting upset, in the meantime he put together new resources and he call for help...." (2076).

"St. Zeno was like a sharpened sword through God's word, of which he was a servant" (2074) "God spoke to Zeno and his mouth became a sharpened sword through God's word, of which he was a Minister".

In order to be this "sharpened sword" **the Missionary** has to live "in God's shade", by using some means like prayer, fasting, by remaining in the silence of his house, to be able to have the doors open in his preaching (monks in the house and apostles outside?): *"Then, from my mouth will distil the words of wisdom, like fresh rain descend abundantly from the clouds of the sky" (2079-2080).*

The different arguments follow one other : *prudence* will take you not to be in a hurry to obtain the victory, but *"to wait for the right time and the signs that will indicate it"*. He does not forget to underline the 'joy' in the smiling face of Zeno, because *"charity, as it is glad in positive moments, the same way it is glad even in moments of adversity"*. Cheerfulness, understood as a 'deep joy', *"is the decoration and the flower of all virtues" and "as it is loved by God, is loved as well by any person and in a very special way by the Verona People who could see it reflected in St. Zeno's face" (2082).*

"But how could he be so happy" "Very fulfilled and in order must have been that heart, where the joy was so full, the serenity so lasting, the peace so smiling and glad. How to stop rejoicing a person who felt his God so near!? St. Zeno's joy was a fountain

that would keep always fresh, living and flourishing every stage of his life..., accompanied as it was by such a moderation and sweetness that would influence even others..."(2083).

"But... how to get the divine sweetness while in tribulations? In love and contemplation the man is abducted in God and in Him he finds his refuge" (2084).

Probably paragraphs 2087-2090 invite us with more strength to an actualisation in a 'post-Christian' context ("*a serious, long and dangerous war that spreads everywhere and even very near*"), marked by signs of humiliation, ambiguity, contrasts, in which one can easily notice the need of a **New Evangelisation** ... Very interesting n° 2100: "*In those days it was not uncommon to see a saint, as it is today, actually there were many...*"; and what about the crowd of saints, his friends (Gaspar's) and confident, companions of the heroic walk toward holiness so common in Verona ?

The *Sermon* continues with the description of the devotion to St. Zeno, the Churches built in his honour, the miracles attributed to him, his doctrine and fight against the heresy, his celebrations, the flourishing of Christian life in the Verona Community which was growing day by day.

Beautiful, elaborated, solemn, the Sermon was (and still is!) a gift for the Verona People who heard it during the celebration in honour of the Patron Saint of their Diocese. *For us, Stigmatines*, is even something more, I believe I can rightly say that it is almost a "*manifest*", a "*message*" about the identity and the mission of the '**Apostolic Missionary**'. As it happens very often in his writings, even here *Fr. Bertoni transmits his thought, by hiding himself under the words and the life of other peoples*.

Here, in the fullness of his maturity, in a meditated and spontaneous Sermon, through the life of St. Zeno, Fr. Bertoni speaks about his '**Apostolic Missionaries**' and about the different ways they live their Vocation.

In the research done by Fr. Dalle Vedove regarding the care St. Gaspar reserved to the *formation of the Clergy*, which kept him busy all the time, we can easily find more details.

B .- *Occasions which he took as 'providential sign' and obstacles to the actualisation*

❖ 1.- *The mission of St. Fermo*

The Priestly experience of Fr. Bertoni, who lived among the youth in the Oratories, as a precious and careful educator among the Clerics still in formation and the already Ordained Priests, enriched by the contact with faith and Christian life problems proper to the Church of his times, since time back (we did mention already) He was about **to ponder a project** of "*making a chain*", of '*new ministers*', well prepared by the Spirit, provided with *suitable arms*, with very precise *battle plans*,... He found *decisive reasons* in the Mission of St. Fermo, again he found the *opportunity* in the donation of Fr. Galvani to take charge of the School of Stigmata, he found a *confirmation* and a special new light by getting the unexpected title of '**Apostolic Missionary**'.

The Canon Fr. Pacetti once wrote to Sr.M.di Canossa, his spiritual guide, with whom he was often in contact saying: "I do not know whether you are aware of how much I suffered for the Mission of St. Fermo, against which the whole of Hell was fighting [...] The more I was declaring war against Hell, the more it would oppose me, thinking that I was about to take many victims from it"⁹⁴. *The Mission of St. Fermo* was a decisive event on the way of discernment of Fr. Bertoni. To prove it, it's enough the fact that he asked his sons, to pray and invoke every evening the Saints Fermo and Rustico⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ *Relazione* to St. Maddalena di Canossa (June 11, 1816).

⁹⁵ *Memorie dei Padri e Fratelli*, p. 201. The exceptionality of S. Fermo's mission is witnessed also by Fr. Gramego (CS., I, p. 413). The inspiration had by Bertoni for his Congregation in that Mission is reminded by Lenotti in his *Miscellanea* (*Summ. Add.*, p. 132); later by Fr. Zara in his *Memorie* (ASB, Serie 1, N. 2, p. 12); by the *Memorie intorno ai Padri e Fratelli* (Verona 1888, p. 20), where it is said that "Bertoni later wanted his confrères to recite, for perpetual memory and gratitude to the Lord, every night, at the *De profundis* for the dead, two Gloria Patri in honour of SS. Fermo e Rustico, protectors of that church and tat mission", which was done for longer than 150 years). See DALLE VEDOVE, in the conference to the young confrères: *La realizzazione della Missione Apostolica...* 1998.

❖ 2.- The papal title of “*Apostolic Missionary*”

We have already examined the meaning of the papal title in the history of the Congregation of ‘*Propaganda Fide*’. The picture of the ‘**Apostolic Missionary**’ and of the mission which characterises it, is always present to Fr. Bertoni while writing his *Constitutions*. The solemn Profession is only for the ‘*Apostolic Missionary*’, who, in the Congregation, expresses well “*the aim she has*” (CF 85). He who enters the Congregation, is asked to commit himself fully in order to reach the grade of ‘*Apostolic Missionary*’, and the Superiors must encourage the way of the Subjects toward such aim, in as much as they are capable (CF 89).

The opposition of the *Imperial Government* prevented Fr. Bertoni, all the time he was at The Stigmata, to fulfil his plans for the ‘**apostolic mission**’ in the terms clearly and whole heartily expressed in his *Constitutions*. In these *Constitutions* the *title* he received from Rome became a ‘*vocation*’ for all his sons, whom he continued preparing according to the project planned but only partly actualised, waiting for God’s times. His sons, after his death, could eventually open up toward the ‘**popular missions**’, with the results and quantity well described, especially by the Chronicles of Lenotti and Zara.

C.- To catch the meaning in the project of the “*Compendium rude*”

In the *Compendium rude* our Founder reports, with only few differences, the decree of ‘**Apostolic Missionary**’ he received from Rome, through the concern of his colleague in the preaching of the Mission of St. Fermo, the Canon P. Pacetti, on the 20th December 1817.

The text (of the *Compendium rude*), according to Fr. Dalle Vedove, is ‘*very essential*’ (in it Fr. Bertoni is original, he does not depend from Fr. Suarez), for Fr. G. Benaglia ⁹⁶ instead, is “*temporary*”, and

⁹⁶ See BENAGLIA L., *Il compendium rude e i documenti paralleli*, in «Il Bertonian», n. 1, January-June 1968, p. 261-290 and the wide text *Nome e finalità della Congregazione*, in «Collectanea Stigmatina», IV, p. 298-361 (that ends with the formula “*Stigmatini: in obsequium episcoporum*”!).

“incomplete”, as if Fr. Gaspar ‘*had only in mind to put down the idea, planning to develop it only later on*’. The adjective ‘rude’ in itself – according to Fr. Benaglia – is a clear point to show that it was only a *draft* (and this never reached maturity!).

The understanding of this text is certainly favoured by the knowledge of a characteristic in St. Gaspar’s formation and teaching. He refers clearly to the ‘analytic method’ which he had adopted and considered very useful in view of a clearer way of teaching.

In talking to the children he once said: “I have chosen the simplest method, the most useful and natural to communicate my thoughts and to introduce in others minds some clear and distinct ideas, i.e. the method of analysis”⁹⁷.

How to apply it? He himself described it in a letter to Sr. Naudet, in connection to the study of the tragedies of *Corneille* (Epist., pg.386) and he was using it in his teaching at Stigmata, together with his Confreres (“... *one was the language, the way and the form of teaching*”).

In referring to a literature text, to a novel, for instance, - say Fr. Gaspar – this must be *one, complete and pleasant*”⁹⁸.

The *unity* consists on a main action, toward which all the others refer; the integrity requires (thus says Aristotle) that there must be a *principle*, a *means* and an *aim*.

The *principle*, or a prologue, are the *causes* which will influence the action.

The *means*, is the *doing* and the *act* of the *influence* of the *causes* in the *effect* of the *main action*.

From the competition of *means* or *causes* opposite in themselves, that is of *means* and *obstacles*, rises the *development* and the *centre*.

The *aim* is the *development*, the *centrality* and the *dissolvment*

⁹⁷ I take this quotation from DALLE VEDOVE, who speaks about that at p. 374 of *Bertoni* 1, and at p. 44ss. of *Bertoni* 4. Bertoni was aware of the risks that the method rendered fashionable particularly by Cartesio, could represent “*some supernatural truths don’t bear either analysis or reasons to demonstrate and understand them*”. See N. DALLE VEDOVE, *Bertoni* 4, p. 44, n. 118).

⁹⁸ For these paragraphs see: DALLE VEDOVE N., in «Cronaca Tomasi V», Appendix I: *Ancora sul fine della nostra Congregazione*, p. 319-323.

of the action, after which nothing must remain; and what have been said already, must be said and referred with this in mind, so that the *aim* be connected to the *means*, and through the means to the *principle*.

Fr. Gaspar concludes by saying: "Such suggestions will help one understand at once the things written by superficial men, who have but a good fantasy and smooth speech, from the things written by people who are wise and well founded in art, whereby, under a splendid way of writing, one can discover a very fine way of thinking and reasoning"⁹⁹.

Fr. Bertoni's passion for the *essential* finds in the *Compendium rude* a clear example: not a draft in a useless paper, but a definitive scheme, moved automatically into his hand-written *Constitutions*. The elements in it, are for us, corner-stones to be able to recognise his inspiration as a 'Founder': what is the meaning of 'aim'? how is the expression 'Apostolic Missionaries' connected with it? What does the expression '*Obsequium Episcoporum*' express and add? What does it mean '*media*', '*quocumque*' and '*promotionis gradus*'?

Being the *Compendium rude* so different from St. Ignatius', Naudet's and Rosmini's formula, it seems very clear that it must be taken in conjunction with the *Constitutions*.

From what have been said, we can write some obvious observations: Fr. Bertoni started writing his *Constitutions* thirty years after entering the Stigmata. We know how was the life of the first Community around St. Gaspar. The *Constitutions*, therefore, did not come from a 'desk' (though even that is important!), but they are the fruit of an ideal lived and cultivated for years and years.

At the head of the book, and as a beautiful and very expressive synthesis of the 'finis' ('*aim*') one can see the expression "**Apostolic Missionaries**" (identity which expresses the project) with the qualifying (not determining) addition of "**in obsequium Episcoporum**", the meaning of which can be seen in the explanation of the "*Modus*" ('the way').

⁹⁹ O.c., p. 45-46; in particular p. 46, note 124.

In the '*Propaganda Fide*' decree, the expression "**Apostolic Missionary**" has got two very clear meanings; the n° 2, talking about '*direction*' and '*dependence*' from the Ordinaries of the Diocese in the exercise of the '*Munus apostolicum*' (the apostolic duty) clarifies '*in quibus Missiones fieri contigerit*' (in whose Dioceses the Missions are held).

It seems clear the circumstance of the '*obsequium*' in the following sentence: "*quoad exercitum attinet apostolici muneris*" (in what concerns the apostolic responsibility)¹⁰⁰.

D.- The meaning of Fr. Bertoni's Constitutions

The *identity* of the '**Apostolic Missionary**' and of the correspondent mission, is always present to the mind of Fr. Bertoni, while writing his *Constitutions*, about the '*aim*' (CF 1-2), about the characteristics of the '**Apostolic Missionary**' (CF 6-7), about the rules, formation and structure of the Institute (CF 72-76). Such identity characterises his prayer (CF 162), the plan of his work, its preparation and the use of the best manpower available (CF 7, 77), the need for specialisation (CF 89, 57), expressed in the means for the actualisation of the '*aim*' (CF 49-50).

The solemn Profession is reserved to the one who deserves the title of "**Apostolic Missionary in this Congregation, according to her proper 'aim'**" (CF 85). He who enters the Institute is required to commit himself totally to reach the grade of '**Apostolic Missionary**', and the Superiors must promote the way for those subjects toward this goal, in as much as these are capable: the Candidates pronounce the simple vows, but they are

¹⁰⁰ In 1954 Fr. Giuseppe Stofella wrote to the Superior General: "I have to confess you that the impression I receive comparing the *Constitutions of the Ven. Founder* with our *Present Rules* (1954) is quite distressing [...] for the little explicit emphasis given to that spirit of the *Missio Apostolica* (*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium episcoporum*) that for the Ven. Gaspare should be the soul not only of the ministries of the Priests, but of all their actions and of the ones of the Lay Brothers" (quoted in : DALLE VEDOVE N., «Cronaca Tomasi V», Appendix I : *Ancora sul fine della nostra Congregazione*, p. 326).

asked to add the public promise “of accepting in future the higher and more stable grade in the Congregation, if required by the Superiors, after due experiments and tests”(CF 89, cfr.161)¹⁰¹.

E.- The understanding in the Stigmatine Tradition

Cfr. DALLE VEDOVE NELLO, La realizzazione della Missione Apostolica nella nostra storia stigmatina (21.7.1998); for the understanding of Fr. N. Dalle Vedove's idea, cfr. also in the «Cronaca Tomasi V», Appendix I: Ancora sul fine della nostra Congregazione, pg. 318-358, more specifically from pg. 330. For other different ideas or positions cfr. also : HENCHEY J., Missio apostolica (cit. in Bibliografia).

❖ *In order to understand better...*

It is not my job to go through the *history of the interpretation* of the just mentioned themes , in the different events of Fr. Bertoni's Congregation. Still I do like to underline a *note* which, to my understanding, seems a clarification in the difficult dialogue on the theme.

Fr. J. Henchey “*an passionate devotee of our things*” (as Fr. Dalle Vedove had to say), declares himself against those “*who believe that the ‘aim’ of our Congregation is essentially limited to the ‘Popular Missions’*”¹⁰². Among these, he quotes Fr. Dalle Vedove as well, who says that “*our primary and exclusive aim*” are “**the popular missions**”¹⁰³.

Fr. Dalle Vedove, instead , does not agree with the above mentioned statement¹⁰⁴ and adds thus : “*In saying ‘essential’ I mean to say that it is an element, necessarily belonging to the essence of a given thing, but I have never said whether this is the specific element*”.

¹⁰¹ See the nota to the Cost. 49 by G. STOFELLA, in *Costituzioni...*, p. 70

¹⁰² *Il Bertoniano* 1968, n. 1, p. 226.

¹⁰³ There, p. 227.

¹⁰⁴ *Cronaca Tomasi* 5, Appendix, p. 330-331.

Fr. Dalle Vedove then, takes his reflection in the logic and metaphysic sphere, and adds: "It is clear then that, when I speak of '**Apostolic Missionaries in obsequium Episcoporum**, i.e. *well prepared Preachers*, who under the direction of the Bishop, give *Missions to the people*, I touch what, according to Fr. Bertoni, is the *essential and qualifying element of the Congregation of the Apostolic Missionaries*, in other words, the formal constitutive of the Congregation."

He then recalls Fr. Suarez who says that "*the aim of each state, or Congregation, is something like its form, from which one takes its proper identity that constitutes such Congregation and it differentiates it from the others*". In such an argument, it seems clear that 'God's glory' and 'the service of the Church' are the duty and the aim of each Institute, and they cannot therefore be their '*specific*' element ("*Differentia specifica sumitur ex eo quod est perfectius in essentia*").

According to this discussion, the '*specific*' is given by Fr. Bertoni's '*aims*'! The rest, in reality, i.e. *media* (the means), are there '*propter finem*', in view of the aim (CF 7.76.158 are quoted). Thus, if one reads the *Compendium rude* under the light of such speculation or clarification, he will not understand it any longer.

❖ There is a *variety of ministries* which specifies the *ecclesial vocation* of the '**Apostolic Missionaries**': these are '*media*' (means) to accomplish the '*specific mission*' ("*... obsequium prestare per varia et propria vocationis suae munera*" of CF 185 – through the various and proper ministries of its vocation -, *with the 'propria'* - proper - of the CF 5-6; 72-76; 182-186).

We have already shown that, the '**Popular Missions**' have been for centuries the *privileged ministry* of the Company of Jesus and other Orders and Institutes. Are they still the same? We have to realise what is the '*nature*' of this ministry, expressed in the '*popular missions*': the context which made of them an urgency and has called for a providential and general answer to its problem. One has to ask himself, though, about the *contents* and *methods*, about the *protagonists* and *organisations*, *times* and *steps* in the realisation.

The request for *evangelisation* and for a *new-evangelisation* is there even today, and very urgent too. Which would be the answer from a *Congregation* that is 'missionary' by birth? Which answers, in the concreteness of time and places, would correspond more to the answer Fr. Bertoni (together with so many other '**Apostolic Missionaries**') has given through his missionary orisons?

It will be a *very wide ministeriality*, which the more 'proper' will be, the more it will have the courage to face the '*unique evangelising force*' that belonged to the '*popular mission*' (though in very different forms, about which we have spoken already).

I firmly believe that, if this *evangelising force* does not take relevant and adequate forms of *preparation* and of *ministry*, the '*specific*' will not be there, and one would fall into a very risky vagueness.

SECOND PART

**“APOSTOLIC MISSIONARIES
AT THE SERVICE OF BISHOPS”**

GASPAR BERTONI'S PROJECT
INTERPRETED BY HIS SONS

THE PROJECT OF SAINT GASPAR BERTONI INTERPRETED BY HIS SONS

My aim is to read and analyze what the sons of Saint Gaspar have understood of his project, from the beginning to the present times. It is obviously not a new enterprise, but I hope it will be somehow fruitful. I am interested mainly in the most significant passages and writings of official nature or of persons who managed to better explain their own understanding of the expression *Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum* (CF 1), that Bertoni appropriated with the intention of expressing the Purpose of our Institute. I have already written a synthetic work concerning the wide ranged vicissitudes of the *key-expression* of our charism with the title: "*Mission, Popular Mission, Apostolic missionary*".

Now I should like to reflect on the demanding and controversial passages of the *understanding of the project of Saint Gaspar by his sons*. It seems that the vicissitudes, discussions and side taking that have more bearing and importance, have been expressed particularly in two periods: the first in the 1890 *General Chapter* and following years, and in the 1970 *Special General Chapter* as a response to the appeal of the Council Vat II. Without intending to limit myself to these two events I should like to show how they have matured and have influenced the journey of Bertoni's charism.

It is not easy to move about without risking to be ourselves the ones who do the talking, instead of making ourselves the journey's companions of those who preceded us in the Bertonian family. We wish to let ourselves be guided by the Spirit and by history, to read today *the project of Saint Gaspar*, without separating ourselves from the *faithfulness* that it demands, in the *engagement* of spiritual and cultural qualification that it expects, with the *creativity* that it appeals to and to which it disposes. The commitment in responding to the Council

represented for the *Special General Chapter* an historic occasion for studying the charism in view of the revision of the *Constitutions*. The Vatican Council II invited all Institutes and Religious Orders to verify the authenticity of their life-style and their *apostolic mission*, in view of a more dynamic faithfulness and an indispensable *aggiornamento*.

The Institutes had to question themselves, through the *Special Chapter* that was to be prepared in collaboration with all their members (PC 2-4, and *Motu proprio* of Paul VI *Ecclesiae sanctae*, effective from 11 Oct 1966). For this purpose a *Commission* was set up also in our Institute, with the task of preparing a draft of *Constitutions* and a *Directory*¹, and the communities, provincial chapters and individual confreres engaged themselves in this direction. Next the *Special Chapter* was celebrated in 1970, presided by Fr V. Battisti who succeeded Fr Fini who had in the mean time died. Several questions were submitted. In this work I want to consider some, in view of walking back to pick up our history:

What was the journey in understanding the “charism of Bertoni” and the “charism inherited by his sons”, throughout the changing times and situations? What has been understood and transmitted about “Apostolic Mission”, “Apostolic Missionary” and “Ministries” in the project of Bertoni? What did emerge from this research, reflection and from the choices of the Special Chapter? How did the Congregation resonate those decisions?

I try to give an answer to these questions, beginning from the studies, the reflections and the summaries elaborated at the vigil of the Special Chapter of 1970. I want to retrace, still synthetically, the vicissitude of the Bertonian charism during the time preceding Vat II and in the decades that followed it, when also our Institute was engaged in re-reading its history and charismatic identity, confronting itself with “the times and circumstances”. It is a *critical* analysis, as much as the limitations of its

¹ The *Study Draft*, edited by the General Curia (Rome 1967), was presented by the Superior General Fr Gilbert Fini on 4 Nov 1967. The commission was composed of Fr Paul Zanini (Province of the Holy Spouses), Fr Filisberto Campagner (Prov. of the Sacred Heart) and Fr Luigi Benaglia (Prov. of the Sacred Heart). The Chapter was called by Fr G. Fini with letter of 4 Nov 1968.

study allow, of how it was understood through our history. It is evident that I start this work with some pre-comprehensions, some of which are conscious and accepted (though not shared by everybody):

a) The *text of Bertoni* as it stands, in the definitive copy that he left us, written in his own hand, is the starting point and the conclusion of any attempt of interpretation².

b) *Apostolic Mission* is the fundamental concept, but the Bertonian translation that opens up to the understanding of the project of Saint Gaspar, is the expression *Apostolic Missionary* in the concreteness of his configuration to Christ and to his *Mission*, in the time and in the historical circumstances³.

² The text of the *Constitutions* of Saint Gaspar does not need to be reconstructed: it is by the hand of Fr Gaspar, as it has been transmitted to us, and it is the final copy (which was somewhere corrected by Fr Marani). Beyond the discussions between those who have studied it before and more than myself, it seems to me to be so evident that this is the final copy to which we have to refer ourselves. If we begin to give the same value to this text as to the "little pages" of rough copy, we should also ask ourselves whether that rough copy of the CF 1 that has no reference to "obsequium" should be given equal value! We can study the sources, the analogies, the style and highlight the richness and the limitations of them at the level of critical edition, surely. The masterpiece of Bertoni, as this text is, – is in some way sufficient in itself.

³ I have given some attention to this theme in a previous study about this Commission, but there is still need of further deepening both theologically and historically. There is a vast and useful study that I was informed about, and that I was not aware of at the time: it amplifies, enriches and deepens, without however substantially modifying its conclusions: "*Variaciones sobre los neologismos latinos MISSIO- MISSIONARIUS-VIVERE MODO APOSTOLICO*", by Eustimio Sastre-Santos, in "Euntes Docete", LIV/3 (2001), p.169-229. In summary it says: the *Apostolic Mission* it not a ministry nor many ministries, but the participation in the mission of Christ; it has the concreteness of a vocation from above which Bertoni understood fully during his *Mission of St Fermo*, and saw confirmed in the title of *Apostolic Missionary* which the Pope conferred on him. It is accepted that in the participation in the unique *Mission of Christ*, in which each calling and consecration consists, constitutes a mandate of *unrepeatable originality*, as it is demonstrated in the consecrated life by the *multiplicity of charisms* (cf. LG VI, 43).

c) for the hermeneutics of the project of Saint Gaspar, the *spiritual and apostolic journey* that he walked since his first ministerial experiences is decisive⁴. This refers to three components that contributed decisively: the *understanding* of his time, the research and the *progressive illumination* of the ways of the Lord, the *responses that were taking shape in him* together with some companions⁵.

d) Bertoni, as humble as he was and permanently available to the divine action, had a founder's charism and *sketched with clarity* his project and the features that he dreamed for himself and for those who with him *would have made a chain* in sharing his *Mission*⁶.

e) the text of the *Constitutions* depends *substantially*⁷ from the constitutions of the Jesuits, through the *De Religione* of Suarez. However

⁴ We can summarize it as follows: "Fr Gaspar – at the moment of the writing of the *Constitutions* – has had *three fundamental experiences* in his priestly ministry, following three specific mandates: that of the education of the youth by invitation of the parish priest of S. Paolo, that of the formation of the clergy by mandate of the bishop of Verona, that of apostolic missionary by mandate of the pope. These will be the three precise tasks that he will entrust to his congregation with, but the popular missions being a priority, towards which the best members, the cream of the Institute had to be directed" (DALLE VEDOVE N., *Bertoni*, 6 p. 123). We remind of what Fr Lenotti declares: "From this the Stimite had their beginning". *Memorie intorno ai Padri e fratelli...* He stresses that in the experience of St Fermo "formed in his heart the design of a Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries that the Lord called him to found" (DALLE VEDOVE N., *Bertoni* 6 p. 124; cf. in particular No 184, in the note of Fr Stofella).

⁵ We can say this following all the *spiritual and apostolic biography* of St Gaspar, in its stages. The preparation that he wanted for himself and his own (specialization!) is measured by the needs of the times, by an intense spiritual life, but also by a *studiositas* that is a virtue and a permanent call. If we are poor of such values, what are the contents of our generic availability to the Bishops? I have always been personally struck by the homily that Bertoni delivered – with much care – on the occasion of the recovery of the body of St Zeno. I have the perception of reading in it, as by transparency, the *self-portrait* of St Gaspar, as well as the *visage* of "his" *Apostolic Missionary*.

⁶ While it is true that Bertoni said of himself not to be *a type to found congregations*, it is also true that considering the instruction he gave to the Acolites, the inspiration he had at the altar of St Ignatius, the gathering together at the Stimite, the construction of the *convent*, the purchase of the Sezano estate and surrounding, the writing of the *Constitutions...*, he felt as his own the calling that makes us invoke him as father.

⁷ This adjective is used (besides by FR STOFELLA for CF 18), by FR HENCHEY, also in the summary prepared (*ms*) for our Commission of 2003. Cf. the positions exposed

we have to recognize the originality of Bertoni not only in his own texts (most especially in defining the *Aim*), but also in the freedom and autonomy with which he makes use of the sources⁸.

f) The "*Compendium rude*" is the hermeneutic key of the entire body of the Bertonian Constitutions, which form an organic and harmonious whole⁹.

g) The Founder is *the living Rule*, as the norm for the interpretation of the Constitutions;

h) The first companions (who lived with him for decades and were formed by him) have a unique and unrepeatable role in the understanding of his project¹⁰.

i) The project of Bertoni as was sketched by him in splendid and

by Fr J. HENCHEY, *Influsso e tradizione dei Gesuiti nei nostri riguardi*, in *Il Bertoniano* 1968, p. 227-233 and the following studies (without date!), that go back to the theme (insisting from the very beginning on the relationship between Jesuits-Pope, Apostolic Missionaries – Bishop). We could crack an almost serious joke by asking ourselves: did Bertoni become a Jesuit only for the sake of the bishop? Besides the *Apostolic Missionary in obsequium etc.*, does the community not have a different style, for example? More than on the quantity of retrieved texts, we seem to have to ask ourselves about the liberty and autonomy of St Gaspar in using the Jesuits' sources. It is true that Saint Gaspar indicated them as a reference in what he himself would not have determined. "For the Jesuits the word "mission" is a synonym of "ministry"[...]. The Constitutions of the Company of Jesus talk also of the "mission to the people", [...which] are clearly not the aim of the Company", cf. J. HENCHEY, *The purpose of the Congregation, or some objective elements of the charism of the Founder*, a paper published in *Il Bertoniano* supplement to No 2, 1967, p. 205 ff p. 6). What is it that in the *Constitutions* of the Jesuits has not been made our proper, left out, changed and why? I think that Fr Jurado has given us his own evaluation in this regard, about the Bertonian stressing, which engages us in our *diversity* besides our *dependency*.

⁸ If it is true that, in analogy with the Ignatian formula, the *Compendium rude* of Saint Gaspar contains "*the scope and the spirit of the Congregation*" (HENCHEY J., *Il Bertoniano* 1968, p. 229), it seems to me that (better than the otherwise significant *Autografo* and the other two editions of the same *Compendium* which have – I repeat – to be considered as "rough copy") it becomes the key for reading the entire text of the *Constitutions*, and that the interpretation of it should be "*the norm*".

⁹ The aim is "*missionarii apostolici in obsequium episcoporum* (No 1) and the way is expressed in No 2: "*under the direction and dependence on the Ordinaries where the Missions will have to be done*" (cf. BERTONI 6, p. 131).

¹⁰ We possess the precious presence of those who lived with him for decades: Marani, who was his companion, confidant and confessor; Bertoni opened a luminous

proper terms on the charismatic and spiritual level, showed itself progressively *inadequate* as far as the governing aspect was concerned. However, the unavoidable integrations and modifications did not imply, as it happened, a change in the features of the *Apostolic Missionary* as sketched by the Founder¹¹.

The *first chapter* intends to describe the understanding of Bertoni's charism by his sons, throughout the years. In this critic analytical reading I shall follow the *Text* that was prepared for the *Special Chapter* of 1970, until the approbation of the Institute and the *Chapter* of 1890¹². The *Text* can show what reading of history and of the sources was followed or was more shared in that precise period.

The *second chapter* will study the vicissitudes of the charism in the most significant passages of the *General Chapter* of 1890 until Vat II, from the approbation of the Institute and from the *re-elaboration of the Rule* of the Founder in line also with the Canon Law (which was then in the process of being formed), until its application at the formation and apostolic level.

The *third chapter* will consider the works for and of the *special Chapter* of 1970, together with the choices made thereby.

The *fourth chapter* will hint at the developments that followed it, especially on the occasion of the successive *general Chapters* which were always – almost unavoidably – provoked by the question that we want to understand more clearly.

windows on him and his activity (*Letter* of Bertoni to Fr Bragato); Lenotti, who grew at the Stimite, was formed at the school of the Father, was engaged as master of novices, and was Superior General; Benciolini, and those still who knew Fr Bertoni before entering among his sons. As this generation slowly passed away is there anything that got changed?

¹¹ Thirty years afterwards, he felt those features well recalled by the title of honour that had become for him and for his own companions *the calling: Apostolic Missionary* (together with all that followed it, but this in the first place).

¹² Once the spiritual figure, the *charism* and the *apostolic project* of Saint Gaspar have been reconstructed, it rests on the responsibility of *each* General Chapter to decide how "*these*" are actualized operationally in the *novelty of the times and situations*. All this because of the duty of being faithful to the requests inherent in the *ecclesial charism* of the Founder. at the Stimite, was formed at the school of the Father, was engaged as master of novices, and was Superior General; Benciolini, and those still who knew Fr Bertoni before entering among his sons. As this generation slowly passed away is there anything that got changed?

I shall pick up, at the end, as a summary, the most significant passages of the understanding of the Bertonian charism, as a conclusion of the analysis and in continuity with what I have already expressed in the preceding study.

CHAPTER I

ON THE EVE OF THE SPECIAL CHAPTER:
“GOING BACK TO THE SOURCES”

1.1 The preliminary Document: “The ideal of the Founder”

I start the examination of the (partial) reading of the *Document* which was prepared by several people in view of the special *General Chapter* of 1970. The material was collated and written by initiative of the *General Curia* in view of the *extraordinary Chapter* with the title: *The ideal of the Founder*¹³. It is an overview of the problems regarding the interpretation of the *charism*, with a development of themes in which one senses different stresses, though never brought to extreme conclusions. The *first part* has the title of *The Founder's ideal*, and the theme is articulated in 6 chapters that deal with the *Congregation as a gift* (I), the *Founder's charism* (II), its *realization in our history* (III), the *interior action of the Spirit in the Founder* (IV), the *spirit of the Founder in his first sons* (V), *the present position of the*

¹³ The attachment No 28 of the capitular acts of 1970 has some questions that show how the attachment No 29 was given much attention during the preparation work. 1.- Do you wish that a “preface” should be placed before the new Constitutions, which would substantially summarize the six chapters of “The ideal of the Founder”? 2. – Is the aim of our Institute of the contemplative, social or apostolic type as described in No 8 of *Perfectae Caritatis*? What is concretely *Missio Apostolica*? 3. – Is it convenient to give primacy to the apostolate of the Word [here, as often in the Chapter, word is not written with capital letter!], understood as evangelization, specialised preaching in all fields that are useful for the conversion of souls and their salvation?

Congregation in the Church with particular reference to the *Apostolic Missionary in help of the Bishops* (VI).

The *Attachment* goes beyond the information currently gathered from the confreres, but in the same time they interpret their mentality and attitudes. It perceives the difficulties, but it softens them or avoids them. I take the liberty of making some annotations integrating the documentation and the development of the process described by the *Attachment*, in view of making a conclusive summary.

1.2 “The ideal of the Founder”¹⁴

The Document “*The ideal of the Founder*” is vast, and a fruit of coordination and mediation of the general Secretary, substantially shared by the *General Chapter XXIX* which decided for its publication, in a summary form, together with the *new Constitutions*, as in fact it was done (but I am not sure whether it was the same in all editions)¹⁵.

It does not seem to me that the text, in its integrity, was published for everybody’s knowledge outside the *Chapter* in which it appears as *Attachment 29*, accompanied in each chapter by alphabetic letters¹⁶.

¹⁴ The text, in synthetic form and with some development especially in the last part, is recorded at the beginning of the *Constitutions* of 1970, p. XIII-XXXIV, as a decision of the *General Chapter XXIX*, in answer to a question asked in the Chapter; cf. *Enclosure 28*: “Do you want that a “preface” should be put at the beginning of the *Constitutions* which should “substantially” summarize the six chapters of the “*Ideal of the Founder*”? Another annotation: N. Dalle Vedove, who took part together with other six confreres in the writing of the summary of “*The ideal of the Founder*”, says that he was surprised by the exclusion of the term “*mission to the people*” from the final text, to the point that he refused to subscribe to the text. At the end he accepted for the sake of peace, yielding to the solicitation of Fr Nicolodi. At that moment he did not know that the term had also been excluded from the text of the *Constitutions*. Had he known it before – he said – he would not have signed (ms. 03.09.03, on the 75th of his entrance in the Institute!).

¹⁵ cf. *Constitutions and General Directory* [Verona 1970], Premessa, p. 12 and p. XIII-XXXIV.

¹⁶ The typewritten text of some fifty pages, is entitled *the ideal of the Founder*, and is divided in six chapters, each with a proper enumeration. It is part of the *Enclosures* of the Minutes of the *Special General Chapter* of 1970, and carries the number 29, with the addition of a capital letter for the individual chapters and for the appendix to ch. III. It

While recognising the value of the first chapter, I intend to start with the reference to *chapter II: The charism of the Founder*, not to widen too much the main themes.

After affirming the *clerical nature*¹⁷ of the Congregation, the finality of *serving the Church*, according to the diversity of times and circumstances, was declared; especially in a *fourfold direction*: 1) preaching of the Word of God; 2) spiritual assistance to the clergy; 3) Christian education of youth; 4) other useful fields for the Church (CF¹⁸ 57), for conversion (CF 255), for the salvation of souls (CF 277-280).

What *Mission* was Bertoni intending his sons for?

The answer can be found at the end of CF 1: *Finis*. "*Missionari Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*", and in CF 2 as regards the *modus*: "...sub directione et dependentia Ordinariorum locorum, in quibus Missiones fieri contigerit, quibus omnino parere debeant, quod ad exercitium attinet apostolici muneris etc."¹⁹

Our *Text* considers exclusively the "*Missio Apostolica*", emphasizing that it occupies a pre-eminent place, not only in CF 1-2, but also in CF 7, where it deals with the preparation of the candidates ("*until the perfection of the priestly ministry, assuming the Apostolic Mission*")²⁰; CF 71-76 (they are aiming at the "*munus Missionum di-*

seems to have been drawn up by Fr L. Nicolodi, who was then a zealous General Secretary. We shall normally quote it as *Enclosure 29*, with chapter and page. Together with dealing with charismatic themes, there is also a vast and very useful *anthology of documents* of our history (*Appendix to ch III, Documents usefull for the interpretation of our specific charism*. p. 1-13).

¹⁷ Cf. the "*who will live under the Rule of St Ignatius*" (cf. CF 7.49.158.161; *Spiritual Journal* 15.09.1808; *Epist. P* 130)

¹⁸ With the abbreviation CF we shall indicate from now onwards the text of *The original Constitutions of Saint Gaspar Bertoni* published in Verona, with the presentation dated on June 12, 1950.

¹⁹ The numbers 1 and 2 of the *Compendium Rude* is taken from the letter of the *Decree* of the Congregation of 20.12.1817 that confers on Bertoni the title of *Apostolic Missionary*, with the addition – after *Missionarii Apostolici* – of the "*obsequium Episcoporum*".

²⁰ The sense is completed with what follows: "Others, however, whose strength and faculties of mind and body do suffice, are to be promoted to the perfect service and assistance of the Missionaries". (See the relevant note of Fr Stofella to the CF 7).

rigendarum”); CF 77 (“they will help the others to reach the aim of the Congregation”); CF 85 (*The Apostolic Missionary and the aim*); CF 158 (the “graduated” fathers and *graviora ministeria*).

It is stated that we have to deepen the concepts of “*Missio Apostolica*” and of “*graviora ministeria*”, considering also the *great variety of ministries* that Bertoni assigned to his *Apostolic Missionaries* (cf. CF 182.183.185.161-166)²¹.

When we talk of “*in obsequium Episcoporum*”, that is expressed in CF 1 – though it recurs with several variations –, we conclude that it can be connected with the theological and spiritual theme of *obsequium Ecclesiae* (CF 7.57.62)²². In this connection CF 185 is supportive of this: “*Cum eiusdem Sodalitatis scopus sit Ecclesiae cub directionem, obsequium prestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera [...] directionem sequi orthodoxi Episcopi quem Spiritus Sanctus posuit regere Ecclesiam Dei*”²³.

[The expression “*in obsequium Episcoporum*” has not yet received a commonly shared interpretation among today’s Stigmatines. I can say that even in the Special Chapter they modified the texts, they suggested many variations (*obsequium, auxilium*) from the very beginning, but they didn’t agree!]²⁴.

²¹ We must note the request of deepening of the concepts of *Missio Apostolica* and of *graviora ministeria*.

²² This is a theologically rich discussion that we can make: but it is just this. For a wider interpretation one can refer to: “The *direction and dependence on the Bishops* is to be understood within the limits of the *Decree of Propagation of the Faith*, and as it was lived in the customary practice of authentic Apostolic Missionaries – i.e. *for all that is to be done in the broad exercise of the apostolic ministry*: within these extended limits of the Apostolic Mission, of every aspect of the Word of God whatsoever, there is to be integral obedience: (HENCHEY J., *Texts for Discussion*, ms., 2003, p. 35; Henchey – following Stofella – suggests the commentary through *Part IX*, in particular CF 185.)

²³ N. DALLE VEDOVE clearly disagrees from this interpretation. After citing *Constitution S.J.*, VII Part, ch. I.1, he adds: “Thus in the plan of Bertoni only “the apostolic missionaries” as “apostolic missionaries”, are “*in obsequium Episcoporum*”; the other members of the Institute are promoted “*ad perfectum obsequium et auxilium Missionariorum*” (CF 7: the degree of promotion of the individual confreres is different according to the quality of the individuals...) cf. *Bertoni*, 6, p. 128.

²⁴ The expression is to be understood in its relational structure, that is not as an absolute expression. I mean to say that the “*in*” belongs to the expression in the measure

“*Summarizing*”, we refer to the *Autograph* of which G. Stofella speaks in CF, p. 45, no 3. From the *Epistolary* we see a reference both to the *Letter* of Bertoni to the Apostolic Penitentiary (23.12.28; p. 334: “to serve the divine honor and the advantage of the Church in a difficult time”), and to that of Gregory XVI (09.08.1838; cf. also that of 20.04.1840; p. 340: “to commit all of us passionately to the service of Our Lord and his Church”)²⁵.

1.3 Bertoni as Apostolic Missionary is the central figure

It has been rightly affirmed that the Founder is and will always be the *Living Rule*.

In the *Attachment 29* Giacobbe’s biography is quoted, in view of knowing the modality in which Bertoni specifically lived his being *Apostolic Missionary*:

He was fit for giving the Spiritual Exercises both to a multitude of people, with persons of all walks of life and condition, as well as to a selected and special audience. He was equally highly praised when he preached them to a crowd of ignorant and corrupt people or to a choice group of learned and spiritually proficient persons. He passed from the prisons to the seminary, as well as from a cloister of pious virgins to a retreat for worldly and dissolute women. That’s it: wherever he moved to evangelize peace, he was all to all, a man of God, true father of the souls: in one word the Apostolic and holy Missionary. He was in fact a true Missionary both in all kinds of preaching, as well as – and especially – when he preached the properly called Missions. It can be sufficient to remind of the fruits of the Missions of St Fermo that he conducted with his colleague Monsignor Luigi Pacetti, the memory of which is still fresh after forty years”²⁶.

in which it refers to the subject, namely *Missionari Apostolici*. If we lose the reference to the subject, the semantic weight of the expression is also lost.

²⁵ Cf. ch. II of *Attachment* no 29, p. 1-5

²⁶ GIACOBBE G., *Vita del Servo di Dio Don Gaspare Bertoni...* p. 376-377. I have enlarged a bit at the beginning, the quotation of the *Attachment*, which begins with “That’s it” (“Così è”). Giacobbe is a reliable witness, an admirer of and very close to Bertoni. If his writing style is magniloquent and pompous for our taste, and it can

On the point of the *Mission* of St Fermo, Pacetti asked for the title of *Apostolic Missionary* for Bertoni (together with Marchi and Martinelli) with the following motivation: "*The undersigned testifies that the priests Gaspar Bertoni and Giacomo Martinelli, of Verona, dedicate themselves with zeal and much profit for the salvation of souls in the Holy Missions, as they have already done several times with me*"²⁷.

As regards the other *ministries*, particular attention is given in the text – and it is thanks to Bertoni's activity – to the *apostolate for the youth*, the *Marian Oratories*, and the *spiritual counseling*, as well as his activity in the *school* which he carried out with great competence for 24 years²⁸. Among the *Bertonian ministries* we see the tasks received from the Bishop both for the Seminary of Verona and the Clergy: *examiner of ecclesiastical vocations, theologian definitor, pro-*

sometimes require some reservation in the use of adjectives, we cannot forget another important expression of his in the *dedication* of his Biography: "*To the venerable Pastor and Prelates of the Church of God[...], I dare offer this work to You as Your own property, because the Congregation that the wise and venerable Founder dedicated for your service in humility is wholly yours: in obsequium Episcoporum. All this because [his] sons, who are honoured to be named after the Apostolic Missions, submit themselves (= are obsequious) as much as their energy supports them and according to the wisely planned intention of their Constitutions, for help and cooperation in those cares and solitudes that You cherish for the good of the souls that God has entrusted to You.*" Idem, *Vita del Servo di Dio Don Gaspare Bertoni, sacerdote veronese, Fondatore della Congregazione eretta alle Stimate de' RR. PP. Missionari Apostolici*. "Summarium Additionale, Doc XXVI". Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana 1946, p. 302. The previous edition is by Frizerio, Verona 1858.

²⁷ We cannot evidently stress the preaching in the form of *Missions* during the period of St Gaspar's life at the Stimate, when they were not permitted, cf. DALLE VEDOVE N., *Bertoni* 4, p. 100. It was during the Mission of St Fermo that "while preaching with holy zeal and fervour, Fr Gaspar felt more vividly the inspiration of dedicating himself to such type of life" (Zara's *Chronicle*, 1875-1877, which includes some information about Bertoni's life). In *Memorie*, in 1886 (p. 20), it is written that "later on, Bertoni wanted his sons should recite two *Glory be* in honour of Sts Fermo and Rustico (protectors of that church), after the evening *De profundis* for the departed, as a perennial memory and gratitude to the Lord".

²⁸ The text of the *Attachment* 29, ch. II, that we consider, articulates this part of the treatise with the titles: *The Missionary; The Apostle of the clergy; The Apostle of the youth; Other ministries* (p. 5-8)

synodal examiner. He was giving *Spiritual Exercises* to priests and seminarians also from his chair when sick. There is mention of his engagement in *Catechetical Instructions*, the care of *Christian Doctrine*, the tireless *ministry of the Word* that he exercised also when sick, accompanying lay people, priests and religious with his *exhortations and counseling*. (Lenotti and the *Summarium* p. 154ff are quoted here).

As a conclusion it is stated (II, p. 8) that: "The special gift that made Ven. Bertoni to found the Congregation of the Stigmata has been a *missionary charism*, according to the precise statement that he himself left in his Constitutions: "*Apostolic Missionaries in help of the Bishops*", that is missionaries who are intent with all their strength and the particular grace of their vocation in realizing the "*Apostolic Mission*". Here too, the necessity of a deeper explanation is felt:

"It remains to be seen what essentially is this "Apostolic Mission", whether or not there be in it a nucleus that is valid for all times and therefore to be transmitted unchanged from generation to generation" (no. 34f).

Three numbers of the *Attachment* (36-38) highlight other decisively important elements of *charismatic* and *spiritual* nature: a) first of all, the *lively sense* of the Church (respect [= *obsequium*] to the Pope, to the Bishops) and a *burning desire* to renew the Catholic priesthood; b) secondly, the dynamics within the Institute of "*passing from the inferior ministries to the superior ministries*" until reaching the *summit* that constitutes the *scope of the Congregation* (cf. CF. 7)

No. 38 concludes: "*The Apostolic Missionaries in help to the Bishops*" [...] will therefore dedicate themselves to the service of the Church, in direct contact with the sacred hierarchy, especially in the office of teaching the truths of faith, both because of the sacramental character of its members and of a special mandate"²⁹.

²⁹ As it appears from the *Attachment*, also in this context expressions that lack a univocal choice are used. One can conclude that there seems to be the perception that things have to be deepened and clarified.

1.3 What elements of Bertoni's *spirit* are seen to be fundamental

In ch. IV of the *Attachment 29* of the extraordinary *General Chapter* the fundamental elements of Saint Gaspar's spirit are stated. The *centrality of Christ*, in the first place, can be easily expressed by "*We have to make in us a portrait of Christ*": this theme is very much present (MP 26.02.1809; cf. CF 51.109.271). Other fundamental elements that are indicated: *docility to the Spirit and holy abandonment*, devotion to the Holy Spouses Mary and Joseph, the plan of grace and interiority expressed by the *contemplari and contemplate aliis tradere* (CF 49), and again the *ecclesial sense* manifested also in the *obsequium*. As well as the *Ignatian trait*.

With regard to his typical quality as a *Founder* the following *Bertonian notes* are presented: *availability* that is connected to the spirit of holy abandonment, the spirit of *unity* (CF 187 and 189), of *humility* and of hiddenness (CF 121, Benedict's degrees of humility), the *studiousness* (*specialization*; CF 50.56-58.125) ... The *Attachment* begins then to talk about the *realization of the Mission* in the life and spirituality of the first community at the Stimite.

1.4 How was the Founder's spirit understood by his sons

"*Realization of the Founder's charism in our history*" (*Attachment 29, III, p. 1*): it is presented again in *summary* form the description of the Institute "*that Bertoni intended to found*:"

- 1) a clerical Congregation on the model of the Company of Jesus with more restricted tasks,
- 2) with the mission of preaching the word of God,
- 3) and to assist spiritually the youth;
- 4) ready and willing also offer to the Church other various services according to the diversity of the times and circumstances, always in special collaboration with the Bishops".

The text continues by examining what happened at the Stimate (p. 1-4), and summarizing the history after the Founder's death (p. 4-7)³⁰.

An evident worthwhile annotation is to be made with regard to the Ignatian- Jesuit component. When he was put in charge in 1871 to fill some gaps in the CF constitutions about the government (together with Frs Lenotti and P. Vignola) Fr Rigoni justified his choice of the *Constitutions of the Company of Jesus*, as a reference, beside the reason of being more similar to our Institute as regular Clergy and *Missionaries*, "*principally because the Founder himself wanted us to refer ourselves to them, every time that we would not find some prescriptions for particular cases*"³¹.

1.5.1 The realization of the Apostolic Mission in the First Sons

Our fathers started with the *School* (it was an engagement that involved all until 1843)³². But there was also the *Oratory*, the

³⁰ If I am allowed to express an *observation*, I see that here they dealt with the same themes as our present researchers (with more or less historic accuracy), and coming to the same conclusions.

³¹ O.c., p. 1; cf. *Collectanea Stigmatina*, III, p. 148-149. A subsequent commission, that of Fr G.B. Zaupa, will not take into consideration the *Constitutions* of the Jesuits, but several others (cf. further on), after instruction from the Holy See, which will declare that today (beginning of XX century) the form of government of the Jesuits cannot be followed. It is interesting the introduction note of the Commission: "*.. idea Sodalitatis mutuatur a nomine. Huius enim alumni «Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum» vocantur; ex quo satis clare evincitur eos sibi cum gratia Dei proposuisse tanquam sui Istituti objectum: Ecclesiae sub Episcoporum locorum, in quibus Missiones fieri contigerit, directione et dipendentia, quoad exercitium attinte Apostolici muneris, obsequium sive auxilium prestare per varia e propria suae vocationis munera*". The idea of the Congregation is to be surmised from its name! (Zara, p. 17) Some expression of Fr Zara's holy envy for those who go to the missions are interesting. Fr Zara is grounded because of ill health: "The missionaries move about, and the lazy ones remain at home", I, p. 69; "let us pray for the poor missionaries... we can save souls also praying the rosary at home! I, 70; "Look, also the young missionaries start the work... they're lucky" I, p. 84.

³² For the closing of the school and its circumstances, cf. N.DALLE VEDOVE, *Bertoni* 6, p. 207-208.

priestly ministry in the Stimite church which had been restored, the availability and the engagement for the *seminarians* (examination of vocations, preaching and teaching), the *preaching of novenas*, spiritual Exercises and *the fourth class*³³. It would be too long to continue the list!

We should like to open *two windows* on what was happening at the Stimite, which we think are relevant when considered seriously:

The first refers to Fr Marani (it is a letter from Bertoni), as it is registered also by Fr Fiorio, in his *Chronicles*³⁴. Fr Marani was living with Bro. Zanolì at the church of St. Maria del Giglio, and on 1st March 1836, had started preaching what Fr Gramengo called a proper *sacred Mission*³⁵.

The *letter* of St Gaspar to Bragato on 1st December 1837, describes the multiplicity of the ministries of Marani: school, study in preparation for sermons, confessions, conferences on moral theology with a group of priests ("*in the taste of our ancient mission of St Fermo*"), definition of tricky moral cases, examination of the Seminarians, more availability for confessions, instructions at St. Sebastiano³⁶...

The second window is opened for us by Fr Lenotti, with a lovely picture: at the time of the suppression of the *Popular Missions* [practically all the time that St Gaspar lived at the Stimite] the confreres at the Stimite continued to develop zeal for the *Mission* and for the

³³ We must not forget the heroic witness of Fr Matteo Farinati, who was sent to assist the plague victims, on the request of the Vicar Monsignor Dionisi, and who died after having been contracted the disease.

³⁴ FIORIO G., *Cronaca*, p. 38, no. 2.

³⁵ Surely it had not been announced or celebrated with the name and methods and external appearance of the *Popular Missions*, because they had been prohibited by the Austrian Government since 1855.

³⁶ Fr Stofella makes a remark about the problem figure of Fr Marani (CS II, p. 122), which Fr J. Henchey picked up in *Il Bertoniano* 1968, p. 238, as confirmation of the criticism made. In the same page Fr Stofella refers to the judgment that Comboni made about Marani, whereby, among other things, he said that he was "*very learned in the sacred sciences and in the guidance of souls*": why? "*Because he had deeply studied, understood and devoured a great divine book: Fr Gaspar Bertoni*". As regards the relationship that he entertained with his own confreres, it was Fr Lenotti who took the pain of making an "authentic" copy of the *Compendium* of the Rule of the Founder that

Spiritual Exercises, so much so that during the winter evenings, at recreation [!!!], they used to make the *preaching exercise*, with the stage and the Crucifix³⁷.

1.5.2 – Continuation after the Decree of “Praise”

Here I want to add some elements useful for a reading that is not present in our *Attachment 29*. [In his *Cenni intorno alla Congregazione*³⁸: “Lately, the sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars has examined the *spirit* that moves this newly born Institute, the *aim* that it intends and the *laws* that it is governed by, and on the 16th of April has published a decree, in which it is stated that: “*Sanctitas Sua Congregationem ipsam, illiusque scopum per presens Decretum amplissimis laudibus prosequendum et commendandum mandavit*”³⁹.

Marani wrote in Rome. This text “substituted, at that stage, the text of the Constitutions, as an instrumental draft”. We have to notice that it was not an approval, and that the *Decree* referred concretely to the *Testimonial letters* of the bishop of Verona (this is also a useful point of reference for the interpretation of the *Decree of Praise*). Marani, in his roman *Compendium*, had taken the Bertonian *Finis* as *Nomen*, and this remained, notwithstanding any *animadversion*, until the “*veto*” of 1890 (which was confirmed, for example, by the rubber stamps belonging to St Gaspar’s library; The Constitutions Commission of 1911 will talk again of this with reference to the *title* that was extracted from the *finis*.) Stofella warns us: “Marani’s statement was therefore an error, but only in adopting the *title* or in the use of the *name*: while the internal reality of the matter remains always intact.. In fact...” and he refers to the content of the *Compendium rude*.

³⁷ FIORIO G., *Cronaca I*, p. 38, no. 2.

³⁸ The complete title is “*Cenni intorno alla Congregazione de’ Sacerdoti fondata in Verona dal molto Reverendo D. Gaspare Bertoni presso l’Oratorio delle Stimate*”. (= *Short information about the Congregation founded in Verona by the very reverend Fr Gaspar Bertoni at the Oratory of the Stimate*). In the text the following words are added: “*solemnly erected on 30 September 1855*”, Verona, Frizerio, 1855. While in Bertoni the expression says the *finis*, Marani calls it here and in his *Compendium*, the “*Name*”. STOFELLA G., in CS II, p. 181; cf. also the notes. We have to explain the reason of the *Compendium*: “Marani, after receiving the *animadversiones* of Perrone, understood that he could not modify the Constitutions in a short time in view of obtaining the approbation of the Institute. After having sought counselling from competent people, he writes a *Compendium* in order to at least begin the process of getting the Decree of Praise. (*Cronaca Lenotti*, Series I, no. 1, p. 20; cf. “Archivio Bertoniano”. Series III: Sources and bibliography *Cataloghi bibliografici* no. 6 Verona 2003, p. 177)

³⁹ This is the way in which the first stage *Decrees of Praise* are formulated, at that time, in recognition of Religious Institutes. Marani had given to Fr G. Ferrari, Assistant

His very Majesty Francis Joseph, who was then reigning, has deigned himself to sanction it himself with royal Rescript signed on 14 July⁴⁰. Fr Stofella quotes on CS a revised and unfinished draft of the Constitution of Fr Gaspar, by the hands of Fr Marani, Lenotti and Benciolini. It was not completed, but it probably answered a request expressed in the occasion of the granting of the *Decree of Praise*⁴¹.

The period lived by St Gaspar Bertoni at *The Stimante* had begun with the start of Austria's presence in Verona with its interfering government, suspicious with respect to the relationship with Rome and to the ministries and pastoral initiatives that influence the people, in particular the *Missions to the people*.

Few years after the death of the Founder and the election of Fr Marani, the Concordat between the Empire and the Holy See was stipulated together with, finally, the *progressive liberalization of the*

general of the Company of Jesus, the constitutions to be examined, who subsequently will respond to this request through Fr Mignardi saying: "The idea of this Institute is truly excellent and marvelous. The proposed Constitutions are truly worthy of the great Man that wrote them. The aim is: *Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum etc.* The means are: *Perfectio sui ipsius; perfectio in doctrinis ecclesiasticis...*". We choose only one of his observations: "One would some times expect some more cheerfulness (*soavità*)" Cf. CS, p. 272.

⁴⁰ Cf. STOFELLA G., in CS II, p. 181.

⁴¹ Of the text's 24 columns, 16 are written by Marani, 2 by Lenotti and 6 by Benciolini. Some said that Marani did not like to work together with other confreres! It would be sufficient to examine the intense correspondence with his confreres during his residence in Rome in connection with the request of the Institute's recognition. At the beginning he said: "The aim of the Institute is *Apostolic Missionaries in obsequium, seu auxilium* [it is an explanation of the *obsequium* on the part of Marani] *Episcoporum*". The members of the Institute must be always ready at the behest of the Superior: missions, hearing confessions, assisting the prisoners and those condemned to death; supplying in teaching Philosophy and Theology, and in a parish that has suddenly remained without a pastor [...]: all this and even more if need be [...] *parati ad omnia* to where the Superior might send, who, while never refusing anything to the Bishops' needs, as long as he has persons who are fit for the tasks, will try his utmost in meeting also the requests of the parish priests in their needs" (CS II, 245-246. For a comparison with the *Compendium* prepared in Rome, Cf. CS II, p. 155ff, where one can find the text both in Latin, first, and in Italian. Here in CF I, with the *sive auxilium*, we are also given the reference to the Holy Patrons. *The help to Bishops* is described in ten forms of ministry, that follow the first field, separated from the list, and indicated separately with "*praeter Missiones*". In the tenth form of ministry, introduced by "*ubi fieri potest*", with reference to the schools, it is added: "*Ut ab anno 1816 usque ad 1843 factum est*").

ecclesiastical ministries and the end of the prohibition of *the Missions to the people*. During the eighteen years of Fr Marani's superiorship and four of Fr Lenotti's, *it was possible to give plenty of time to the preaching also in the form of Missions to the people*⁴².

That was the enthusiastic context of the *Decree of Praise* and of the solemn *erection of the Institute* (30.09.1855)⁴³.

They did not engage themselves solely in the *Missions*: the *Apostolic Missionaries* (this name was used until 1890) continued on the road described by Saint Gaspar for the apostolic service of Fr Marani. Fr Benciolini worked in the Oratory of Santa Maria del Giglio for half a century. Fr Fedelini was engaged in the *Oratory* and in the *Seminary*. Those who were able worked with the *fourth class*... and so on.

The *Missions to the people* had been in Marani's and Lenotti's program, but they were also after their time. During the time of Fr Vignola's government our confreres attended "*above all to the ministry of preaching in the city and outside*"⁴⁴. "In no other times than during the superiorship of Fr Vignola as many *Missions* were done, together with courses of *Spiritual Exercises*, nor as many parishes were served

To properly understand the "*mediation*" of Fr Marani (that has some times been read as non-linear) one has to keep in mind that the *Report* (prepared together by Marani, Lenotti and Benciolini) was sent to Rome and Vienna in the same time (the title is: *Report of the Stigmatines Institute to the Ecclesiastical and Civil authorities by Fr G.M. Marani, Superior of the same Institute*). This explains how to the broad description of the ministries no reference whatever is made to the ministry of *Missions to the people*). Cf. G. STOFELLA, CS II, 134ff.

⁴² We remind of the activities in the dioceses of Milan, Treviso, Trento, Rovigo, Cremona (Cf. the reports in *Cronaca* of Lenotti and Zara, in ASB).

⁴³ This procedure of the request of the *Decree of Praise* remains a "*knot*" in our history and in the controversy over the interpretation of our *Charism*. Marani was suggested to write a *Compendium of the Cosnstitutions* (CS II, 155-160, edited by Fr G. STOFELLA). I find reasonable the explanations offered about the discrepancy between the position of Marani in the texts he wrote in Rome and those written in Verona. The title is *Congregation of the secular Priests called "of the Stigmata"*. There is no reference to the Bertonian *Finis* in Fr G. Perrone's (reserved) Vote. Marani wrote "*praeter Missiones*" followed by the ministries (10), while Perrone puts *The Missions* as number one, followed by the *other* ministries (that remain 10!). It was perhaps a rather hurried work...

⁴⁴ FIORIO G., *Cronaca*, I, p. 153.

with the explanation of *Christian Doctrine*, that is the *fourth class*". So, when the teachers were free from their school work, they were employed in *preaching*. Furthermore, on feast days almost all had to engage themselves in the *fourth class*⁴⁵. At that time they began also to talk about *Foreign Missions*, in Europe and outside.

After the beginning of the *Reign of Italy*, notwithstanding and even because of the grave and risky test of the *Demanio*⁴⁶, other opportunities for ministry were opened. New foundations were made in Trento and Parma (*Oratory, Christian Doctrine, preaching and confessions, Tridua and Missions* in the diocesan parishes). Then followed (or came back) the schools. After the 1874 Chapter⁴⁷, Fr. Lenotti saw to it that some of our fathers should get the necessary teaching

⁴⁵ GURISATTI P., *Brevi cenni biografici dei Padri Pietro Vignola, Vincenzo Vignola e Giuseppe Marchesini...* Verona 1916, p. 25. There is an interesting note to the quoted text: "But [this adversative refers to what was expressed with enthusiasm about the flowering of the schools at the time of Fr P. Vignola] the aim of the Congregation of the Priests of the Stigmata is not only the instruction and education of the youth, though also the preaching, especially of Missions, Spiritual Exercises, explanation of Christian Doctrine" (op. cit., p.25).

⁴⁶ "The storm (1866-1873)" as it was called in the chapter III of *Breve Cronaca della Congregazione dei Preti delle Stimate di N.S.G.C., ad uso dei membri della stessa Congregazione*, Verona, Buoni Fanciulli 1917 (FIORIO G. Cronaca I). This "storm" is the reason of the departure of Fr Marani – together with other two confreres – to stay in Massalongo's house. This decision of living in hiding was intended to remove any appearance of Institute in a period in which the Government had sealed the Stimate. What was even more evident an appearance was the departure for Tirol of some students with their formators. Trento became a refuge, but also an opportunity for a wider missionary activity, as it appears for example from the witness of bishop Haller in 1875.

⁴⁷ The same Chapter allowed Fr Sogaro to be released from the Congregation to follow his missionary vocation, as will subsequently do Frs. Sembianti and Vicentini (who will be recalled in 1886) and others. Also Fr Vivari made repeated requests to dedicate himself to the *foreign missions*. Cf. Fr GURISATTI, p. 180, no. 1. A curious note of Fr A. Gilli – confirmed verbally by Fr Chiocchetta with regard to the Stigmatines: "It makes one wonder that [the Combonians] should have so much insistently requested the governing body of the Stigmatines [...] to assume a missionary charism [in this case, obviously "ad gentes"] that is foreign to the inspirations of its origins" (*Storia dell'Istituto missionario comboniano. Dalla morte del Fondatore al cambiamento in congregazione religiosa* (1881-1885). Rome 1881, p. 68. Quoted in *Cronaca Zara, Introduzione*, p. 17). Fr Chiocchetta still verbally confirmed to me that, according to him, Bertoni is certainly at the origin of the Veronese spirituality of the 1800's."

licence at Padua. After the 1876 Chapter the elementary *schools* were opened in 1877 in Parma; the *Stimate schools* in Verona (the elementary in 1878, with the 5th Chapter and in 1882 the *gymnasium*); the secondary schools in Bassano, together with much priestly ministry, as in Parma). The realization of the school project was Fr Vignola's task, not only for the *Stimate*, but also in other towns where the *Apostolic Missionaries* made their presence felt⁴⁸.

We have to recognize the fact of the *great development of four schools* in order to understand the *conflict* that emerged among our confreres about the realization of the *Bertonian project*, that will have its own "solution", so to say, almost unanimously shared in the 1890 Chapter⁴⁹.

Because of the development of the works and ministries, together with the growth in number of the *Apostolic Missionaries*, it was natural to question oneself about the journey that was progressing and the variety of answers offered. Fr G.B. Lenotti stressed the thought of the Founder: "*The intention of our Fr Gaspar was always the good of the Church; he was therefore careful to sense the needs of the Church, and he was studying, preaching and praying for this very thing*"⁵⁰.

While questioning themselves: "*What are the fundamental and substantial rules of our Congregation?*", some were aware of the difficulty of the answer, but they kept referring themselves to the *Compendium Rude*, and explained the aim as "*caring after the salvation of souls "per verbum Dei quodcumque ministerium et Clericorum et iuvenum institutionem"*"⁵¹.

⁴⁸ "These schools were flourishing from the very beginning. Besides being frequented by various Institutes of the city, [...] they were honored also by famous, noble and aristocrat families who called themselves happy to be able to send their children to the school of the *Stimate*" (Fr. GURISATTI, *Brevi cenni biografici dei padri Pietro Vignola, Vincenzo Vignola e Giuseppe Marchesini...* Verona 1916, p. 25).

⁴⁹ Cf. Further on, when we shall return to this subject. The solution will come by discussing the *Decree* of Rome, not the CF!

⁵⁰ *Summarium Additionale*, p. 154. Neither the "*obsequium*" that characterizes the *Apostolic Missionaries* (*Compendium Rude*, I), nor the "*sub directione et dependentia*", which binds them in the ministerial service (*ibi*, 2), exempt Bertoni's sons from the laborious engagement of discernment that requires attention to history and listening to the Spirit.

⁵¹ The text referred to is the following: "In a document from the archives, signed by Frs Pietro Vignola, Bassi, Tabarelli, Morando and Sembianti (*without a date*), the question:

It seems to me that an important annotation is given, in the context of that development of the Congregation, in our *Attachment*. In it they refer to the *foreign missions* as an important problem but not the only one: “A sense of uneasiness was revealed along the years. Some Fathers were aspiring for a long time to the Foreign Missions⁵².”

A suggestion to merge with the Combonians was rejected in 1884⁵³. This fact is also meaningful and becomes an element that helps us to understand several incidents.

1.5.3.- The procedure for the approbation continues

After the positive result of the question with the Italian Government a process was started to obtain also the *approbation of the Institute and the CF*. It was decided to try to obtain an approbation that should remain secret with regard to the Government, to avoid other risks. Fr Rigoni was in charge of this. He managed to have an audience with Pius IX, who welcomed him and willingly offered him some directions to follow⁵⁴.

“What are the fundamental and substantial rules of our Congregation?” was answered that it was difficult to determine them, but that *it seems* (underlined) that they are indicated in the *Compendium Rude*. Then they fixed in a particular way the aim in “caring after the salvation of souls « per verbum Dei quodcumque ministerium et Clericorum et iuvenum institutionem »”. (ch. III, p. 6)

⁵² The Frs Sogaro, Sembianti and Vicentini had been destined to this service; cf. the contribution of N. DALLE VEDOVE, *Le radici dello spirito missionario in Verona*, in “Various Authors (directed by G. Girardello and D. Romani) “Verona in missione. L’Ottocento. Dalla rivoluzione francese alla prima Guerra mondiale”, Verona 2000, p. 107-138.

⁵³ G. FIORIO, *Cronaca*, I, p. 181. *Attachment* no. 29, ch. III, p. 6.

⁵⁴ For this, Fr Rigoni obtained from the coadjutor bishop of Trento (where many of our confreres had retired, upon the arrival of the Piedmontese authorities), two letters of a presentation report. Bishop Haller, of Trento, will subsequently become the leader of the German episcopate. In the first (25.05.1875) we read: “We declare that the Venerable Congregation of the Apostolic Missionaries in service of the Bishops, erected in Verona in the year 1855, since its beginning has offered itself for the good of this Diocese. Some priests who belong to this very congregation have undertaken extraordinary preaching, like spiritual exercises and missions, in various places, with zeal, that was crowned also, through divine grace, with gratifying success...”. The second letter – that should no longer talk of a recognized Congregation, – beside its name gives again a positive witness (13.10.1875): “In the Italian region of this diocese we lack a religious Society that should have as its aim the preaching of the sacred Missions and of the Spiritual Exercises and which should meet the need of these populations to be

However the application for the recognition was not successful, because of the death of Fr Lenotti (5 September 1875).

The *Commission* that was established by the IX Chapter and confirmed by the X Chapter (including Frs R. Tabarelli and L. Morando, future Bishop of Brindisi), revised the *Appendix* to the XII part of CF and answers the questions that had been submitted. The text of the CF with the relative *Appendixes* was sent to Rome, accompanied by the disciplinary and economic report of the Congregation, and by recommendation letters of the Bishops of Trento, Parma, Pavia and Verona.

The conveyor and reporter of these was the brilliant young Fr R. Tabarelli, who was also given the task of looking for a foundation in Rome⁵⁵.

confirmed and strengthened in their faith, through extraordinary preaching. The *Pious Union of the Missionaries in service of Bishops* intends to pursue this aim, and the proof that has been shown so far to me by its members, convinces me that it will be reached through the help of the divine assistance with the greatest of success. In fact, the priests of this society who live in this Diocese distinguish themselves both for the holiness of their lives, and for the zeal of souls that they clearly demonstrate, as they enjoy appreciation on the part of Clergy as well as of the faithful" (This text is quoted in *Cronaca Zara, Introduction*, p. 18f).

⁵⁵ Cf. G. FIORIO, *Cronaca*, I, p. 190. From the report of the Superior we have also the composition of the Congregation on 25 June 1888: 35 priests, 6 theology students, 7 student novices, 20 professed coadjutor brothers, 6 brother novices, 20 aspirants.

CHAPTER II

FROM THE XII CHAPTER TO THE II VATICAN COUNCIL

We have so far followed the *Preparatory Document*⁵⁶. I leave it now and I concentrate in a more attentive reading of the passage of the XII Chapter, which coincides with *the conclusion of the iter of the approbation of the Institute*, and which gives value to what followed *to understand the charism of the Founder and his Congregation*. I begin with a reference to the preceding events.

2.1. – The question of the school

During the XI General Chapter, the discussion around the *Constitutions* of the Founder flowed into the school, in those very hot years. The *ministry of Christian education of the youth* was not only (nor

⁵⁶ Practically speaking the *Attachment* concludes the discussion on the understanding of the charism with this description of the approval, except for some different opinions that were still extant. The reading becomes more difficult when it deals with aspects that are less acceptable or more unresolved. One has the impression of some irenic vision of things and the mixing up of contrasting elements. This is an analogy with another period of our history: an *irenic* text that makes reference to the benefits of the approbation... I talk of it now, but it is found in the *Letter* of presentation of the *Constitutions* of 1970, by the Superior Fr G. Cappellina: "The *Compendium Rude* and the 6 points of the Founder's manuscripts, are the synthesis of his thought with regard to the Congregation and represent the kernel of his charism. The approbation by the Church gives the Institute the guarantee that it is God's work and in the same time it gives the mandate to exercise the "apostolic mission" in its name" (p. VII).

necessarily) the school, but the *school*, because of some reasons⁵⁷, had become the object of a particular attention: the example of the *Founder* and of his companions, the invitation of the *Church* to engage in this field, the requests of the *Bishops* (as it appears also from the foundations that have been talked about above), the growing desire also among the *young confreres*, to dedicate themselves to this service and the appreciation received from the families.

There was also, however, those who viewed these things in a different way. Fr Sembianti, for example. He submitted to the Chapter a motion of *regret against the schools* that were absorbing the majority of the fathers, removing them from other ministries. This father's motion,

⁵⁷ These reasons were not all justifiable, but certainly not to be neglected in the historic context. In particular, as regards Bertoni we have to keep in mind (*first of all*), that the possibility of a Christian education through the school is the condition that justifies the engagement in it (Cf. CF 165-166: "*The Christian education of the children and of the youth and of other ignorant persons* should be promoted at all costs by our confreres, with Oratories, with catechesis and also other private institutions. *Where this is possible (ubi fieri potest)*, it is convenient also for our confreres to instruct the youth in humanities. But this should be done following the Rule – that is among the "Short" ones – of St Basil [...], by which those who present [the children – pupils] [must] have such intent and those who accept them [must] be convinced to educate the children that are presented, in the discipline and instructions of the Lord [...]. Outside such purpose and such hope, I think that this is neither acceptable to God, nor convenient and advantageous for us. (Cf. the new stress of CF 167 and the chapters IV and V). (Furthermore) the Founder, who for 24 years taught at the Stimate, had reasons that appeared no longer so urgent at the moment of the resumption of the scholastic engagement of the Jesuits in the city (Cf. N. DALLE VEDOVE, *Bertoni* 6 p. 207-210). The advent of the Jesuits was greeted and favored with joy by many: "Among these – we read in a contemporary document – have to be registered [...] the marchese Bonifacio di Canossa, the count Da Persico, the count Giulio Sagramoso [...] and the most good priest Gaspar Bertoni who offered houses for the schools, and the sustenance of the Priests until the solution of the problem of the College, as he had already done, when there was need of finding a dwelling for the novitiate community". (*Memorie sulla fondazione della Compagnia di Gesù nello stato Lombardo-Veneto*, ms. Of the General Archivi, S.I. in Rome. Cf. N. DALLE VEDOVE, *Bertoni* 6, p. 208 and no. 4). We must observe that to do school is not the same thing as to do Christian education of the youth, and therefore the document of the Stimate of 1874, while representing the thought of eight confreres, mistakes the identification, going beyond the "*ubi fieri potest*" of the Bertonian Constitutions, limiting itself to only remember what was done at the Stimate of those times.

who was known for his missionary vocation “ad gentes”, was judged as an attempt against the schools, because of which the Institute has been gaining an un-hoped for prestige in few years both in the city and outside”⁵⁸.

We can imagine the situation from some events and testimonies:

-A reader of the situation who was surely not impartial, noted in his chronicle: “We are standing on a volcano: a revolution could be exploding at any time”⁵⁹.

-Some of our confreres, among whom was Fr Battisti, for his own motivations⁶⁰, but also Fr Bassi, wrote to the *Congregation of the Bishops and Regulars*, showing in very much negative colours the situation at the Stimite. This happened during the time of the process of the petition for the approbation!⁶¹

-Between 1889 and 1890 seven fathers left the Congregation for different motives⁶².

⁵⁸ Cf. *Attachment* no. 29, ch. III, p. 7.

⁵⁹ It is from the abundant chronicle of Fr Nicola Tomasi, published in the “Archivio Bertoniiano”. I take this observation from the stressing of the *Attachment* no. 29, ch. III, p. 7.

⁶⁰ Fr Battisti, ordained in 1881, was expressing a general uneasiness, that he solved by leaving the Institute.

⁶¹ Correspondence of Fr Bassi with the Holy See (20 January 1890): “...I present myself to Your eminence in a very private manner, as a son to his caring Father, and I come to You after having conferred and written to my most rev. Fr Superior General of whom I am a councilor and “*ammonitore*”, after having talked and written to my local bishop the Cardinal Di Canossa, but so far without any fruit. The latter understands very well my reasons. He approves and believes that my lament is true”. The lamentations were about the fact that the Superior gave little hearing to his councilors (who were less favorable to the schools, but not only about this) in favor of listening rather to other young confreres: having changed “*Apostolic Missionaries*” as the most central aim (Missions) and made it secondary, to the advantage of the schools to which confreres are assigned (of which (= schools) Bertoni says *ubi fieri potest*, not to the detriment of the *principal aim*). The Cardinal Di Canossa send his support to the motion of Fr Bassi on 4 March 1890. Cf. *Cronaca Tomasi*, V. *Introduction* p. 13-15; as well as Zandonai, p. 160f.

⁶² Cf. G. FIORIO, *Cronaca*, *passim*. In a sort of crescendo that is surprising, from 1874 to 1889, the following fathers left: Francesco Sogaro (1874), Michele Lanaro (1875), Bellino Carrara (1882), Eugenio Laudon (1882 and 1889), Bonaventura Vidali and Luigi Battisti (1889), Domenico Vicentini (1890), Giuseppe Sembianti (1890), Gaetano Marocchi (1890) and then Lorenzo Rigatti, Gaetano Nardelli.

2.2.- From the “Decretum Laudis to the petition of the approbation

The *Decree* is dated 6 April 1855⁶³.

As regards the title of the Institute, the Decree of 1855 talked of a “*Congregation popularly called of the Priests of the Sacred Stigmata of O.L.J.C.* About the *aim* it was only said that “it is clearly manifest with what enthusiasm and zeal the members of this Congregation take care of the *proposed aim*. The sense of such form of *Decree* is “to praise and highly recommend the same Congregation and its aim”.

After the *Decree* of praise, although we had been asked to revise the Constitutions..., for reasons to be verified, the work was not initiated. It will be picked up after several years (in that mean time we had the wars, the confiscation of goods, the change of General Superiors, and foundations).

When the work was resumed, Fr R. Tabarelli, the mediator in the dealings with the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, was appointed⁶⁴, who had a prestigious position in front of the Superior General Fr Vignola. Things however did not go well: the Holy See, on 20 Feb 1889 gave order to put together the *Constitutions* and the *Appendixes*, introducing modifications and integrations of no light weight. The commission went back to its work, that was approved by *Chapter XI* on 25.09.1889.

After some temporary spells of residence in Rome Fr Tabarelli became established in the capital on 30 December 1889 together with Fr Guglielmini⁶⁵.

⁶³ Text in: *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale* of 1970, p. 7-8.

⁶⁴ “The Chapter of 1880 had [...] elected a Commission of five members, Pietro Vignola, Bassi, Morando, Vicentini and Tabarelli, but only for the revision of the appendix to part XII of the Constitutions. [...]. Fr Rigoni and Sembianti, in view of the approbation of the Rules, had been put in charge of preparing a compendium of our Constitutions, to be presented especially to the Cardinal Bishop of Verona, so that after his approbation, could be presented to the Holy See” (*Cronaca Tommasi*, V, *Appendix* p. 350).

⁶⁵ G. FIORIO, *Cronaca*, p. 118.

On 14 February he was again in Verona, to examine the text of the *Constitutions* that had been re-elaborated, with the Fr. Superior and the Frs. Sembianti, Morando, Bassi, Perazzani (councilors). At the beginning of March he was able to present the new draft of the *Constitutions* to the Congregation⁶⁶.

By initiative of Fr Tabarelli, the Bertonian *key-expression* that proclaimed the *finis*, *Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum* was dropped from the *Constitutions*. It remained for the mean time only on the title (*the heading*). It is worthwhile to note that (though there is no necessary connection) this happened before the formal request of Rome to remove the title-name "*Missionarii Apostolici*".

⁶⁶ O.c., p. 129. On 15 March the first *Mission* was opened in Rome, in the parish of St. Dorothea (ivi, p. 136). The text of the *Constitutions* has as a title [with characters of different sizes]: *Constitutiones Sodalitatis a R.P. Gaspare Bertoni in Dioecesi veronensi institutae sub protectione B. Mariae Virginis S. Josepho Desponsatae, cui Titulus Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*. Rome... 1890. Inside it is just written: "*Constitutiones Sodalitatis a R.P. Gaspare Bertoni in Dioecesi veronensi institutae*". Under Part I. a title: "*De fine quem Sodalitas Miss. Apostolicorum in obsequium Episcoporum sibi proponit et quibus rationibus eundem finem consequi studeant*". All the three expressions appear cancelled during the work that followed the approbation of the Institute. No word is written about the missionary dimension. Further on, again as a correction, at no. 4 the *gratis omnino* is reduced as follows: "...*nihil exigens, accipere vero potest quod ex occasione sacri ministerii sponte offertur*". In [November 1890] the new edition carries the title: "*Constitutiones Sodalitatis Presbyterorum a Sacris Stigmatibus D.N.I.C.*", on the front and on the first page, over Part I.: *De fine quem sodalitas sibi proponit, et quibus rationibus eundem finem consequi studeant*". The constitution sounds as follows: "...*huius Istituti Sodales vires suas impendere sibi proponunt, ut Episcopo dioecesis in qua sunt, auxilium, quantum licebit, salvo Sodalitatis instituto, sive ii de quibus est sermo in nostris Constitutionibus, praebeant, praesertim ubi agatur de sacris missionibus vel exercitiis spiritualibus habendis; de fideli populo catechismis et concionibus instruendo; de puerorum educatione sive oratoriis et catechesibus, etiam privatis, eorum christianam institutionem pro virili promovendo, sive in Seminariis et scholis, quae in nostris domibus habeantur, eorum pietatem et studia adiuvando*".

2.3. – The approbation of the Institute

The *Constitutions* were not approved even in 1890 (other modifications were requested), but the *Institute* was finally *approved*, yet not with the title of “*Missionarii Apostolici*”, but of “*Presbyteri a SS. Stigmatibus D.N.J.C.*”⁶⁷.

The *General Chapter* was already closed. Just at the vigil of it, on 8 September 1890 Fr General (*motu proprio*) added to the “graduated” fathers ten young confreres, namely *all* that were ordained until 1885, who consequently acquired the right to be capitulars⁶⁸.

On 9 September the Institute was approved. On 17 September Fr Tabarelli arrived from Rome and the *XII Chapter* was almost immediately opened (24.09.1890)⁶⁹. During that Chapter the observations from Rome were accepted, among which the exigency of changing the *Title* of the Congregation. The approbation was welcome with joy, and the application for the approbation of the corrected *Constitutions* was postponed to better times.

It was not only the title that created problems in the Chapter, but the *question of the school* came back again, by initiative of Fr Tabarelli⁷⁰. Beginning from the text of the Congregation’s *Decree*, the

⁶⁷ Fr Luchi writes to Fr Tommasi from Rome, in most secret terms, about the obtained approbation of the Institute, and about Fr Tabarelli he said that: “He had to overcome many obstacles (on the part of the Cardinal Di Canossa who was under the pressure of Frs Bassi, Sembianti and others), but Fr Tabarelli himself will talk on the matter as he is truly fed up by all this. Woe to me if Fr Tabarelli will hear that I told you these things. For God’s sake do not trust anybody, but keep all this for yourself, I plead with you.” Cf. *Cronaca Tommasi*, V. *Introduzione* p. 13-15; also Zandonai, p. 160f.

⁶⁸ To be precise, one confrere did not get the title as he was giving and having problems. He was shortly dismissed.

⁶⁹ O. C. p. 172-177.

⁷⁰ The unanimity was reached not without a *dear price*: the nomination of the “graduated” fathers (the young ones) at the eve of the Chapter, that substantially modified its composition, a tendentious use of the *Decree* of approbation, the defection of some confreres. **The change of evaluation on the part of the Chapter seems to have been decisively caused** (beside the new configuration of the Chapter, as we said before) **by the very reading of the Decree, that was made not in function of the name that was never granted, but in the change of the *finis*** (that did not come from the Holy See, but by the hand of Fr Tabarelli). Cf. the diversity of the *Constitutions* of 1888 (the *Compendium rude*

General Chapter was asked the question about the theme that had become emblematic: “*If in the context of the same Decree one should learn and should retain that the schools are an aim of our Institute equally principal as the Missions and the other exercises of the Sacred Ministry, principally mentioned in the same revered Decree*”. The answer, after hot discussions, was positive almost with unanimity (21 against 23, one contrary and one abstained)⁷¹.

I offer two observations.

Firstly in the ordinary praxis the Holy See does not modify the end of the Institute⁷²; also in our case it simply does not allow *the use as a name*, in the expression *Missionarii Apostolici*, which Bertoni appropriated to express the *Finis*.

Secondly, if all the ministries listed in the decree are equally realizing the Mission, one concludes that at that moment the

as it stands; the CF are printed with the addition of 5 Appendixes, but a title of the Institute is missing), of 1890, revised on the suggestion of the Holy See by Fr Tabarelli and others (the title of the heading repeats the preceding one, but adds “*cui titulus Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*”, but the expression – manifesting the *Finis* – did unfortunately disappear from the text!) and again of 1890 (with the title: *Constitutiones Sodalitatis Presbyterorum a SS. Stigmatibus DNJC.*, without date, but with the contribution of the XII Chapter). Tabarelli had come back with the *Decree of Approbation*, but with the prohibition of using the title *Missionarii Apostolici*. **He used the title that was “refused” and the kind of list of ministries, as a lever for convincing people to decide for the school.**

⁷¹ Tabarelli, secretary of the Chapter, writes: “With 21 votes against one [plus one abstained, and 5/6 confreres justified for their absence) the Chapter declares to recognize and to admit that, as far as it appears from the context of the venerable Decree of approbation, “*The schools are one equally principal aim of our Institutes as well as the Holy Missions and the Spiritual Exercises of the Sacred Ministry; principally nominated in the venerable Decree*”. It appears clearly that the foundation of this was not on the *Constitutions of the Founder*, but solely on an interpretation that I call “forced”, of the *Decree* of the Holy See (the texts of which have to follow certain hermeneutical laws). In one of his diary Visentini justifies himself saying: “*They had changed the title of the Institute, and deviated mostly the aim... Some pushy person wanted to impose himself with the excuse or the pretext that that was the Congregation’s wish*” (Cf. *Cronaca Tomasi*, V Introduction, p. 17-20).

⁷² We shall find this problematic point further on in the Commission which – to be synthetic – I shall call “Zaupa”, complicated in its articulation between *general aim* and *special aim* or *particular*, and from the historic point of view of a superlative overlapping against the juridical norms.

characteristic of *principalitas* belonged, in the Congregation, to the *Missions to the people* and will continue to have it, though... accompanied by the other Ministries mentioned in the Decree⁷³

What was waning away was not the exclusivity of the *Missions to the people*; the Constitutions of the Founder were enumerating a multiplicity of ministries, among which the *graviora*. It was above all the understanding of the figure of the *Apostolic Missionary* that was the key to interpret the Bertonian project, at the level of spirituality and charism, and that was no longer perceived. It was the emptying of that *ministerial progression* up to its summit, that was described by Bertoni in CF 72-76⁷⁴.

2.4.-The turning point of the General Chapter XII (1890)

The *result of the Chapter* was felt as (it seemed so) *conclusive* with regard to the discussion of the schools, *in primis* by the community

⁷³ Fr Dalle Vedove, who reports the text and comments it, says: "It does not matter if, illogically, Fr Tabarelli managed to elevate the schools to the dignity of the *Missions to the people* in that Chapter XII. The Missions, they alone or together with other ministries, never lost their primacy." ("The realization of the *Apostolic Mission* in the history of the Stigmatines", p. 18 and no. 53). The Constitution did certainly receive serious changes (cf. the declaration of the Zaupe Commission) and in some respects a change-over. Even before the Holy See removed the title of *Missionarii Apostolici*, the expression was removed from the text of the revised Constitutions, and was only left on the front page. The *Finis* having been taken away, the *Modus* remained as *Finis*... This opened the way to the disappearance of the *Apostolic Missionary* (beside the title), as *identity* and as *charism*. N. Tomasi (*Cronaca*, p. 7),

⁷⁴ Emotive reasons have always clouded concepts that are so evident. The *struggle* for the school, as appears from the annotations (though partially) of Fr Tomasi, as well as some observation about Fr Tabarelli, allow us to put on the balance plate also this component in the reasons that led to certain choices. That "the schools are one of the principal ends of the Congregation" could come from the fact that for many years we had a school at the Stimate, not on the basis of the CF. The problem develops between the identity of the Stimate community, the growing in the request of this ministry, the conflict that is produced because of the "too many" confreres who are now in the Missions and then in the schools (I think it is a question of discernment and of government, according to me); Cf. J. HENCHEY, in "*Antonio*", Part one: Various themes, A. *The schools*, p. 2-8. The criticism against Fr Tabarelli is based that he relied on the Decree or on the precedents of the school at the Stimate.

of the Stimate⁷⁵. We understand this from a paper that landed among the attachments of the General Chapter V of 1874, where the schools were judged as “one of the principal aims of our Congregation, which was born and was loved because of its teaching”⁷⁶.

If the discussion was about the school, it did not regard only the school, but it stressed the qualified re-appreciation of the *Spiritual Exercises, the Catechesis, the preaching*, at par with the *Missions to the people*⁷⁷.

What was experienced in those years had been a suffering experience, especially because of the divisions and the hardening that accompanied it. It was possible to fully “breathe” again and that was very welcome for the community’s harmony that was re-constituted... but at what high price! “It was a hard test – says the Chronicler⁷⁸ – but it was necessary”; thus “after obtaining the approbation, having established the aim and determined the government’s modalities, one could hope for a new era for the Congregation, in which all members, perfectly harmonized could look after the good and prosperity of the Institute and its increase!”⁷⁹.

⁷⁵ In the Charter all was based on the words of the *Decree of approbation of the Institute*; here we deal with a community that expresses its opinion in view of a Chapter (and with how much guarantee of full faithfulness to the terms used by Bertoni with regard to the schools?).

⁷⁶ It is the already quoted leaflet of the Stimate Chapter, signed by 7 out of 8 fathers. Cf. the article of Fr J. HENCHEY, *Il Bertoniano* 1986, January-June, p. 251 (quoted by our *Attachment* 29). We have to note that we talk about *the school*, not the *Christian education of children*, and that “the discussion was held about the *weight* of the schools, the *personnel* of the Congregation; there has never been discussion about the question of the *validity* of the schools as legitimate Stigmatine apostolate” (J. HENCHEY, cit. p. 254). Were they on this same plain also in 1890?

⁷⁷ During the deepening in understanding the post-conciliar text of the Constitutions, the capitular Commission of 1976-1982, will write: “As the Commission studied the rather tormented history of the formulation of the first numbers of our *Constitutions*, that regard the aim and the specific activities of our Congregation, has gained the impression that the disappearing of the expression “*Apostolic Missionaries in service of Bishops*” from the preceding *Constitutions* – probably cause by mostly external influences, but at any rate ratified by the *General Chapter XII* of 1890, the same that accepted also the reduction of the “*gratis omnino*”, already made by the *General Chapter X* of that same year [in fact of the preceding year] – had marked a turning point that was *not positive* in the legislation of the Congregation. (*Notes*, p. 2).

⁷⁸ This is mainly a reference to those who left and to the deceased; cf. p. 195-196.

⁷⁹ G. FIORIO, *Cronaca* I, p. 196.

Did things go as the Chronicler hoped? Also after 1890 the annotations (quite crude at times) of Fr Tomasi, show a certain preoccupation for the more and more frigid attitude of fr Gurisatti with regard to the school. A note that contributed the some balance in the government seemed to have been caused by *the foundations* (Parma and Trento) that required the presence of some *preaching fathers*, but a solid element of novelty and breaking point with the past was the taking of parishes (or analogous engagements) in the foundations in the USA and in Italy.

There was no *Rule* and there will be none for more than twenty years, but all was going on. Real necessities and the changed patrimonial situation of the Institute seemed to have reduced the impact of the *gratis omnino*, as it had already begun to be in the 1880's⁸⁰. One perceives this in the effort involved in new foundations for the drawing up of contracts.

There was however a development: the opening of the communities of Udine, Gemona, Milan. The *first Colleges* were opened, together with new and always providential Oratories. The *first parishes* came to be (Rome and Milan, on the suggestion of Pius X), and then, without much planning (for some it was a way of leaving the narrow ambient within which the Institute seemed to move), USA and Brazil, initially for assisting the emigrant, especially Italian.

⁸⁰ The manuscript text the the *Constitutiones...*, approved by the Chapter XI (1889) on p. 2, adds on the margin: "*nihil recipiens in compensationem ministerii spiritualis, vel cuiuslibet officii, nisi sponte prorsus et veluti simplex elemosina aliquid offeratur*". The text is reported identically by the Constitutions presented in 1890 for the approbation of the Institute (Const. 4, p. 2 of the manuscript) it will then appear simplified in the printed text following the approbation of the Institute (after the list of the apostolic ministries): "*Haec omnia munera Sodalitas gratis exhibet, nihil exigens in compensationem quorum ministeriorum; accipere vero potest quod ex occasione sacri ministerii sponte offertur*". Such norm will remain in our history, at least for what regards the apostolic ministries.

⁸¹ In 1907, in accepting the care of the Tempio, Fr A. Sella was given the title of parish priest, for a *parish* that included only the interns of the Institute, in view of getting the annexed salary. Fr Tondin was nominated as his successor and the new bishop asked him to undergo an exam for the nomination. Fr G.B. Tommasi (1912) answered that the pastoral care of the Tempio was accepted only nominally, connected with the subsidy and not the care of souls, which is not our peculiar ministry. This was as a condition to remain there, until the very Pius X intervened (here too!). Cf. typed sheet of Fr N. Dalle Vedove of 13 November 2001.

2.5.- The *iter* of the Constitutions is resumed

After almost twenty years we started thinking again of the Constitutions.

In the meantime the first parishes were opened⁸¹. Our presence in USA was spreading and in Brazil, where it was urgent to grow and give working space to the confreres... The cause of Beatification of our Founder was opened⁸², and another *biography* was written beside *The spirit...*, (G. Fiorio)⁸³, the Institute could express itself through figure of great relevance both spiritually and apostolically, that were enviable. Did we *always* remain faithful to the choices of the original project of the Founder?

2.5.1. - The Commission and its work

The new Constitutions were prepared by a *Commission* in charge of revising the text of 1890 (re-printed with slight changes – among which the progressive numeration – until 1907). The Commission started working in 1911; the member thereof were Fr Piccoli, Fr Fiorio, Fr GB. Castellani, Fr Sozzi and Fr GB. Zaupa, future General for three terms. They made an analytical and engaging work (printed in 1914 (?), with the title of *Schema*, accompanied by a fascicle of *Notes*). The final text of the Commission, re-printed in Rome in 1915, carried as *Nomen* in the front page and as Const. no. 1, the expression: “*Sodalitati est nomen*

⁸² Ven. *Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Gasparis Bertoni, Congregationis a SS. Stigmatibus D.N.I.C. Fundatoris. Positivo super introductionem Causae*. Romae 1906. BACILIERI Card. B., bishop of Verona, *Lettera Postulatoria*, 9 September 1905; in *Litterae Postulatoriae della Positivo super introd. Causae*. Romae 1906, p.. 1-3. In the letter there is a beautiful biography of the Founder where he writes: “...the new Congregation of the Sacred Stigmata of OLJC «*ex fine precipuo quem sibi eisque (alumnis) proponebat (Fundator) Missionarios Apostolicos in obsequium Episcoporum appellari voluit*», ASB. Cataloghi Bio-bibliografici, N. 6, Verona 2003, p.. 5.

⁸³ G.FIORIO, *Lo spirito del venerabile D.Gaspare Bertoni*, Milan 1914; *Vita del Venerabile Servo di Dio Don Gaspare Bertoni, Fondatore dei Preti delle Stimate di N.S.G.C.*, Bettinelli, Verona 1922 (English translation by G. NARDON, 1924; Portuguese translation by G. TADDEI, Petropolis 1934. G. FIORIO is the other of other two little volumes of *Breve Cronaca della Congregazione*, the first in 1917, the second in 1955.

Missionarii in auxilium Episcoporum", but in the presentation to the Holy See (1916) *Nomen* and *Const.* no. 1 were substituted by *Presbyterorum a SS. Stigmatibus D.N.I.C.* After a first approbation *ad experimentum* (1917) will follow the definitive one, during the superiorship of Fr Zaupa.

The remarkable work of the *Commission*, was carried on both considering the various editions of the *Constitutions* (in use at the moment of the work of the *Commission*, that is called ours or actual), and widening the comparison with many recent *Constitutions* of other *Congregations* (twenty of them, of which some synthetic description is also given).

Among other Institutes' *Constitutions* that were consulted, the *Commission* does not refer to the Jesuits' one, that was then no longer considered as a reference, because of the restrictions that the *Canon Law* was introducing for the government of the *new Congregations*. A *Schema* of the *Constitutions* was printed and an explanatory text of *Notes*.

2.5.2.- The Title of the Congregation

The first *Note* refers to the *Name*: whether it was convenient to change the title of the Institute. The answer is negative (by majority; the reasons are not always convincing, p. 9-14)⁸⁴.

2.5.3.- The question of the *Finis*

Special Aim according to the Founder⁸⁵: "The *particular aim* of the Institute comes from the Ven. Founder, summarized at the beginning of the *Constitutions* with those words: "*Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum sub directione et dependentia Ordinariorum etc.*" Which concept is repeated where the *aim* of the Congregation is expressly spelled out: "*Ecclesiae, sub directione Episcoporum, obsequium praestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera*".

One realizes (*Notes* p. 16) that comparing "Our *special aim*, as approved by the Church [namely in the Decree of Approbation of the

⁸⁴ As we have already noted, the question of the *Name* or *Title* of the Institute will remain a controversial point until the last moment, in its *pros* and *cons*.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Notes*, p. 14-22.

Institute], with that described for us by the Ven. Founder [...], it is easy to detect some differences ⁸⁶. In fact, while the Ven. Founder writes: “Ecclesiae sub directione Episcoporum obsequium prestare per varia et propria suae vocationis munera”, - and these ministries are at the end to be reduced to four classes, as we said, - in the Decree of approbation ⁸⁷ it is stated [instead]: “Ecclesiae opem ferant ad proximorum salutem per quaelibet ecclesiastici ministerii munia et spiritualia caritatis opera promovendam».

It is the first time that this is admitted. The Commission adds: “The difference is stressed in no. 2 of Const.: *Hinc huius Instituti Sodales vires suas impendere sibi proponunt, ut Episcopo dioecesis in qua sunt, auxilium, in quantum licebit, salvo Sodalitatis instituto, sive iis de quibus est sermo in nostris Constitutionibus, praebeant, praesertim... [ubi agatur de sacris missionibus vel exercitiis spiritualibus habendis; de fideli populo catechismis et concionibus instruendo; de puerorum educationis sive oratorii et catechesibus, etiam pri-vatis, eorum christianam institutionem pro virili promovendo, sive in Seminariis et scholis, quae nostris domibus habeantur, eorum pietatem et studia adiuvando]».*

Therefore, what follows is not limited to some works, or classes of works, with exclusion of others, but simply a listing of the principal ones, with the view of highlighting them: the only limitations are in no. 1^b [*exclusa tamen tum animarum tum monialium ordinaria et perpetua cura*] and in no. 5 [*Interdicuntur Sodales dignitatibus, residentiis atque beneficiis*] of the same Constitutions. It is however true that all real difference will disappear, if one could reduce «*quaelibet ecclesiastici ministerii munia et spiritualis caritatis opera*», to the four classes of works indicated by the Ven. Founder. They offer as an example the *Patronato Operaio*, which would not be included in the education and literary instruction of the youth, with the view of showing the impossibility of such reduction.

⁸⁶ We shall stress again the recurrence of this expression, which will come back in the writing of an anonymous person (perhaps recognizable!) in the 30's, even if he is careful to minimize its importance.

⁸⁷ The Decree in its final draft reproduces the text prepared by Tabarelli in the Constitutions that were submitted for the Approbation of the Institute.

As one can see, basing themselves on the contemporary practice, they introduce the distinction between *general aim* (common to all Institutes) and the *special aim* (or particular, proper of an Institute), and they state: “*Our special aim consists in giving a special help to the Bishops in their apostolic mission of saving souls. There can be no doubt on this point, because it is expressly stated in the Constitutions of the Ven. Founder and it has been approved by the Church itself*”⁸⁸.

Some modifications are highlighted and the following is stressed: “the expressions “*Apostolorum successoribus... Apostolorum principis successori*” remind us of our *special aim* as it was expressed at the beginning: “*Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*”⁸⁹.

“These material words can and should be abandoned, but not their content”⁹⁰-[!!] Moving from the fact that the “*title*” of *Missionarii Apostolici* had been refused, the Commission decided to avoid the expression *Apostolic missionaries* also to describe the “*end*” (which is instead done by Bertoni!). Thus, only the *qualification* of “*obsequium Episcoporum*” will remain (*for more than fifty years!*).

2.5.4.- “*Obsequium*”

Still one word for the expression “*in obsequium...*”. This term “should be connected with our *secondary aim*, that is of a *special-respect, attention, deference, condescendence, etc.* – to the Bishops, intending always “*servatis servandis*”.

2.5.5. - “*... varia et propriae suae vocationis munera*”

The report of the Commission dealt with the CF 185 in these terms: “From the words “*per varia et propria suae vocationis munera*”

⁸⁸ I am of the opinion that it remains, at least, problematic to demonstrate in what does the *specific* of this formulation consist, which is so *generic* and all-inclusive.

⁸⁹ One is not sure whether to appreciate more the evocative force that is given to the terms, or to regret for a formalism that clings to words, feeling excessively bound to the *Animadversiones* that must be taken into account.

⁹⁰ Is this not a possible open declaration of realizing to have moved away (partially, but certainly not only marginally) from the original text of Bertoni?

one infers that the Congregation has a proper program, and proper means to reach the *aim*".

In Ch. 4 they talk again about this, considering a different perspective: "*Munera quibus Sodalitas hunc finem suum ordinarie prosequitur*".

The Commission says to have divided all the *ministries*, or *means*, in *two categories* with which the Congregation tends to its special aim:

-the first: the *four classes* of ministries to which Bertoni refers (Cf. no. 2 of the present *Constitutions*)

-the second: the other ministries – all – that enter [if I understand well!] in "*varia Ecclesiae obsequia quae pro temporum et occasio-num diversitate occurrunt*"⁹¹».

"The four *means*, - they observe – are exposed by the Venerable in nos. 161-167 and are the following:

- a) Sacramentorum administratio;
- d) Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium;
- c) Christiana adolescentium educatio atque eorum literaria institutio;
- d) Clericorum institutio ac moderamen in Seminariis.

Within the boundaries of these programs, we cannot limit ourselves to some specific works, but we have to *keep ourselves ready for any work that can be requested of us by the Bishops*: we have to admit all this, if we wish to explain what the Venerable says in no. 185, where - talking of our availability to satisfy the requests of the Bishops (*propositum devotionis nostrae*), he calls it a *hard and difficult thing*, so that it could look to be *rash and imprudent*; in the same time he promises «*specialis gratia huius vocationis*» and he recommends the Superiors of the Congregation to choose the subjects and prepare them

⁹¹ In this casuistry one has the perception of embarrassment because of the *Norms* that the Holy See was publishing in those years, and which will be incorporated in the Canon Law. In the same time one feels the conscience of having to separate themselves from the project of Bertoni in some aspects (but with the approval of the Church!). For these points see *Notes* of the Commission, p. 11-21.

for the various ministries⁹² for which they are fit, furnishing them with the necessary means" (p. 14f)⁹³.

2.5.6.- *Approbation of the Constitutions ad experimentum*

The text was discussed by the *General Chapter* of 1914 (XIX), and afterwards repeatedly printed. Along the journey of elaboration and approbation our *Rules* had met with the new *Code* which contributed to unify many elements of life style and of government of various Institutes, but in the same time to impoverish its originality and richness,⁹⁴ and thus happened (and continued to happen!) also to the *Constitutions* of Fr Gaspar, that appear not much *present* in the newly approved ones, in their original text (always handed on as a manuscript), and became practically *unknown* to the Stigmatines: they will return again in the 1950's.

2.5.7.- "*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*"

It is worthwhile to consider one article that appeared on *Il Bertonian*⁹⁵, that carries the title: "*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*", and begins

⁹² At last we see that an exigency emerges that had remained for a long time in the shadow (except for some instance and the state diplomas for the teaching in schools), namely preparation. No. 6 of the *Schema* of the *Const.* states it explicitly: "*Illuc propterea Sodalitas ipsa spectat, ut in toto eius corpore nedum inveniantur qui muneribus ordinariis rite obeundis sint idonei, sed etiam, quoad eius fieri possit, qui in singulis ecclesiasticis ministeriis et spiritualibus caritatis operibus, singulisque disciplinis profanis sive praesertim theologicis, scientia ac prudentia polleant, ut in variis necessitatibus auxilio esse Catholicae Ecclesiae Episcopis (servatis servandis) valeant, ad maiorem Dei gloriam et animarum salutem*".

⁹³ In the provisional edition for the Chapter, the Constitutions carry this heading: *Constitutionum Sodalitatis Prebyterorum a SS. Stigm. D.N.I.C. Schema, quod Commissio a Capitulo Generali XVIII electa iudicio proponit Cap. Gen. XIX*. It contains two parts: the *first* is the text (where – as it is stated – what is not written in italics comes from the present Constitutions, or from the Norms, or from the decrees of the Holy See, cf. no. 1, p.1), the *second* is from the critical annotations.

⁹⁴ "Some typical structures of the Bertonian vision [...] had to be adapted to the directives of the Holy See". According to me, not only those indicated in the text, which I have left out (solemn vows and the classes of confreres)! Cf. *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, Verona [1970], p. XVIII.

⁹⁵ "*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*", *Il Bertonian*, 2/1932, p. 287-291.

its reflection just on this statement: *Finis*, not a title. It says that the formula is suited for expressing our aim “*that remained unaltered from the beginning until the present time*” [see above – p. 289- where it is said: “*In all this slow work of correction and amelioration, no substantial modification of any sort was introduced in the Constitutions as regards the aim, and if some slight variant is to be noticed, between the final draft and the preceding one, it is rather in favor of the original form*”]. That formula [“*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*”], was found by our Ven. Founder, and was praised by competent persons” (p. 290).

Further on the author asks himself about the opportunity or the use of “*in obsequium Episcoporum*”! The reasons brought against its use are two: 1) that formula does not seem necessary to remind us of our aim; 2) then there is an extrinsic reason. He will talk of the first reason afterwards, while he speaks immediately of the second: that is the fear on the part of Battandier that it might come to mean: “*ad nutum Episcoporum*”! Bertonì limited the dependence on Bishops to the exercise of the ministerial apostolate, : *quod ad exercitium attinet apostolici muneris*” (CF 1-2.8) and that the obsequium had to be understood not as a dependence, but only as regard, respect, condescendence, devotion etc. – always with exception of the obedience due to the Superiors and the Constitutions” (p. 290)⁹⁶.

After reminding of the various editions of the *Constitutions* and the process of clarification of the terms, the author asks himself a further question:

⁹⁶ The article defines the two terms and their use in the phrasing: *Missionarii: quocumque entes* (CF 5), free therefore from any boundary of residence or care of souls... *Immunes a dignitatibus* (CF 4) indifferent to be sent anywhere and for any task... (CF 186). *Apostolici*: as the Apostles, bound by a special devotion (in obsequium) towards the successors of the Apostles, because they have to help them “pro temporum and occasionum diversitate”. *Missionarii Apostolici*, in whom holiness and science have to shine in a preeminent way, because it is the aim that gives order, manner and measure to all means (Letter 92 to Naudet). Cf. p. 291. The *Aim*, - it is added – has not been given us as an official name, but that those words “are the synthesis of the ideal, as it is authoritatively fixed by the Constitutions (approved by the Church) and fashioned according to the spirit of the Ven. Founder”.

"Are the sons (of Bertoni) allowed to use the father's words for their domestic use, as a synthesis of their aim, ideal and program? The answer cannot make us doubt, provided that 1) the aim of the Congregation remains identical to that intended by the Ven. Father; 2) the two words "Missionarii Apostolici" are in themselves proper to summarize it; 3) there is no external circumstance that makes them less opportune [or "relevant"].

The conclusion of the articles sounds as follows:

"Finally, if we say that the aim of our Institute is to form some "Missionarii Apostolici", we do not intend to appropriate an honorary title (which would be so much foreign from the mentality of our Ven. Founder), but to exhort one another with the words of our Father to tend to our aim, to use the means necessary for it: aim and means that were approved by the Church and represented by two words: "Missionarii Apostolici"⁹⁷.

2.6.- Time of Fr Zaupa's development and guidance

The Institute grew and expanded itself rapidly, especially through the impulse given by Fr. Zaupa. He engaged himself in various 'tools' toward the life style, the pastoral activities, and the formation, of which the 'Stigmatine Manual' is the highest and most eloquent example. He might have used already existing texts of Fr. Lenotti. We mention only two booklets, which are a clear expression of the apostolic spirituality of the time. These two booklets edited by Fr. Zaupa, namely 'Norms and counsels' and the 'Stigmatine Manual', were positively welcomed by all.

⁹⁷ The article is not signed. Who could be its author? Fr Stofella does usually append his signature. Could it not have been the then Superior General Fr G.B. Zaupa? He was in his second six year term. He was at that time busy writing the *Norms* for use of the professed students. Here there is reference to the formation of the M.A. There is furthermore an analogy between these notes and some reflections of the 1911 Commission, of which Fr Zaupa was a member. One has the perception of reading again the *Notes* of the Commission for the Constitutions of 1911, in which preoccupations, convictions and subjections to the norms of the Church were expressed; cf. p. 291. The text is quoted also in *Cronaca Tomasi*, 5 (Appendix, p. 337).

a. – *Norms and Counsels*

It is a text of *ascetic, spiritual, juridical and pastoral* character, but with *surprising* references to the charism and vocation of the sons of Bertoni⁹⁸. In the introduction Fr Zaupa greets the readers saying: “Where the Founder does not talk in these *Norms*, it is the Church that talks with her laws, with the doctrine of Saints and Doctors; it is our Congregation that talks, with its Constitutions and traditions. This was, at least, the intention of the one who compiled this booklet, “*intending to say nothing by himself*”[...] (wanting to repeat with more reason and less humility the words of the Ven. Father)⁹⁹

Of the young priests he says:

“They will be allowed, with the approval of the Ordinary, to gradually hear confessions, and under the guide of a Monitor (Correttore) to preach in our churches; as well as to catechize the children and the un-schooled. Then they will be initiated to deliver sermons in other churches and to give Spiritual Exercises. No one however will be allowed to dedicate himself to the Sacred Missions without the formal license from the Superior General. Similarly, before beginning the works of the Missions, each one should write down all the instructions and meditations etc.” (p. 38-29).

The *Norms* develop along the Bertonian sketch of *Perfection sui ipsius* and of *Perfection in doctrinis ecclesiasticis*. At the beginning of this part (p. 165) in an *Introduction*, he says, what is already a classical distinction between general and particular (or special) aim: “The *general aim* of our Congregation, common to all religious Institutes, is that of tending to the sanctification of its members [...]. The *particular aim* is the apostolic and priestly formation [...]”. This is a generic talk. But at the conclusion (p. 238) we hear: “The first means to become Apostolic missionary is *perfection sui ipsius*, and after this, the *perfection in the ecclesiastical sciences* (cf. p. 240).

⁹⁸ *Norme giuridiche – disciplinari, ascetico – pastorali ad uso degli studenti professi stimatini*. Rome 1933, p. XVI-318.

⁹⁹ An annotation in the *Cronaca*, tells us of the importance of the *Norms*: “The Professed are gathered together in the chapel and are given the *Norms*, with opportune words from the R. Fr. Superior” (Fr B. Miori). Thus, in “Il Bertoniano”, January-March 1933, p. 35.

The following chapters deal with the studies, the conversation with neighbor, the confession and spiritual direction and finally the ministry of the Word. Here (p. 285) we have the Bertonian quotation: "*Promotionis gradus differt secundum qualitates receptorum... alii assumentes apostolicam missionem... alii ad auxilium missionariorum*". And it is added: "*But before assuming the office of leading the Sacred Missions, which is the highest degree of preaching, they all have to pass through the lower degrees*". The treatment follows in order: "*preaching in general, Catechism, Spiritual Exercises, Missions to the faithful, and to the infidels*. In each of these ministries the Ven. Founder is presented as a model (p. 288 the preacher; 290 the catechist; 292 "*specialized director of St Ignatius' Exercises*"; for the missions to the faithful, p. 295, *Il Bertoniano V* is quoted, p. 374, for the Stigmatine traditions in giving Missions to the people; nothing specific is said about the mission to the infidels, which has also its own presentation).

b. – "*The Stigmatine manual*"

The *Stigmatine Manual* is the emblematic text for understanding the Stigmatine charism and the *exercise of the ministries* from the times that followed the 1890 Chapter until the Special Chapter of 1970. It was made by Fr General G.B. Zaupa with the collaboration of the XXIV General Chapter's indications; together with the Council, the Superiors and Fathers directing the [Congregation's] works and the Commission for the Directory¹⁰⁰.

In chapter II, that carries the program title, the first paragraph deals with the Aim: 1. *Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*. And adds immediately "*here are two words that summarize and characterize the special aim of the Congregation, which intends to be able to offer to the successors of the Apostles an opportune help according to the diverse circumstances*" (p. 30). The citation of Const 185 is a demonstration that the ministries are *arduous and difficult* but the beginning of the quotation is from "*qui coepit et inspiravit illud ipse perficiet, si per nos non steterit*" (p. 30-31).

¹⁰⁰ *Manuale Stimatino. Vita, formazione, Attività*. Rome 1944. Cf. p. 4-5.

Dealing with the *Means* (Media), (p. 34), after having talked of the *Perfectio sui ipsius* (a), it develops the theme of *Perfectio in doctrinis ecclesiasticis* (b)¹⁰¹. Then it goes on to deal with the *Method*, grouping the statements under the titles: “*Contemplata tradere*” (p.79-91) and: *Parati ad omnia*” (p. 92-98).

With regard to formation, attention is given to the *Plan of studies*, and a long treatment is given to the two-year course of *philosophy* and the four-year course of *theology* (p. 131-142). It is said that: “*Each of our Provinces, in order to have persons who are formed and truly competent in the principal ecclesiastical sciences*” must send some of their students to Rome; and it lists the various faculties and disciplines” (p. 144-145).

It mentions the Founder’s teaching from his *Constitutions*:

“I: *that our students frequent the school until 24 years completed, and then they should continue applying themselves to the studies that are cultivated in the Congregation and for which they show special attitude, until they reach the age of thirty;*

II: *that in the meantime they can be ordained priests;*

III: *that after ordination they should gradually exercise the sacred ministries, without interrupting the studies in which they excel and that are more useful for them”.*

With regard to the solemn profession Bertoni said: “*ad professionem non admittantur nisi sacerdotes, quia ad professores pertinet principale regimen Sodalitatis, et graviora ministeria, quae sacerdotium requirunt*” (p. 161).

The *Manual* presents the various ministries, from *relationship with the neighbor*, to *confessions*, *Christian education* of youth in the *Oratories* and in the *schools*, and especially the *ministry of the Word* (p. 170ff); for this section the reader is referred to the *third part*, where it talks of the *Foreign Missions*, but there is an immediate stressing of the necessity for everybody to apply themselves, from their early years, to *preaching*, under the guide of a *Monitor* (Correttore). The conclusion is that, according to the Founder, the “*Munus missionum*

¹⁰¹ Cf., p. 73-76

dirigendarum is the highest degree of the *ministry of the divine word*, which our priests cannot reach without the *inferior degrees of preaching*, and through an opportune training under the expert missionaries' guide (p. 170-171).

Among the apostolic activities the first chapter is on the *Sacred Preaching* (for which the author makes wide use of the Magisterium's teaching (especially of Benedict XV). About the duty of preaching as Stigmatines, he says:

"To insist on this, rather than a superfluous, it would be offensive for priests whose special aim is that of Apostolic Missionaries in help of Bishops, and who have as principal means to fulfil it, "to preach the sacred missions and the spiritual exercises; instruction of the people with catechisms and sacred sermons; getting involved with the education of children, working as much as possible for their Christian formation with the oratories and catechesis" (CF 4)".

We have a *little manual* for the *Foreign Missions* (p. 204-230), with themes and methodology and liturgical celebrations. But this is then offered for the other Stigmatine activities: parishes, Christian education of youth, Foreign Missions (p. 231-316). The general impression is some vagueness that remains, notwithstanding the several references to the Founder's.

The brief but bulky non-signed article (probably by Fr Zaupa as we have already mentioned) seems to be worthy of attention, also because it solicits reflection on this theme.

The initiative from above, restricted within the term we talked before, was followed by some more publications. They were preceded by the *Biography* and the study of the *Spirit* of the Ven. Gaspar Bertoni by Fr G. Fiorio, to which we referred above¹⁰². What followed now was *Note per servire alla storia* (= *Notes to help understand our history*), that were finally made with serious methodology; they are articles by Fr G. Stofella published on *Il Bertoniano*. In the following years this great historian of ours, continued to engage himself in the research. Among his mature fruits we have: the *biography*, the *Epistolary*, the *Original Constitutions*.

¹⁰² Cf. 2.5.-, notes 77 and 78.

This research of Fr G. Stofella is worthy of serious consideration. He was put in charge of preparing the *Summarium Additionale* to the *Positio* about our Founder (published in 1958). His researches, which were already published in *Il Bertoniano* in the 1930's (*Notes to help understand our history*), led to the *critical biography* of Bertoni (Verona 1951), to the printing of the *Epistolary* (1968)¹⁰³ and of the *Constitutions* (1953), with introduction, note and commentary. His researches are exemplary for seriousness and humility, and remain as a point of reference that is indispensable for any study¹⁰⁴. On the occasion of the *Centenary of the death of the Ven. Bertoni*¹⁰⁵ also Fr D. Martinis, Superior General, dedicated his attention to the charism.

Even if Fr G. Stofella was not challenged by the controversies that followed afterwards, and which would perhaps have motivated him to explain further some statements, his positions (which sound at time "far fetched" to our sophisticated ears) carry the guarantee and credibility that comes from the globality of his work. For example, *the text of the CF edited by him*, was not only the first after the approbation, but, in the same time, the expression of his deep understanding of Fr Gaspar's charism. We can read his many pages, also in between the lines, without pretending that the questions that we ask ourselves he asked himself always in the same way: but we are certain to walk a sure path¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰³ *Epistolario* of the Ven. Servant of God Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, Verona 1954.

¹⁰⁴ *Pagine di Vita cristiana del Venerabile Servo di Dio D. Gaspare Bertoni*, Vicenza 1947; *Il Venerabile Gaspare Bertoni, Fondatore dei Preti delle SS. Stimate di N.S.G.C.*, Verona 1951. *Costituzioni del Ven. Servo di Dio D. Gaspare Bertoni Fondatore dei Preti delle SS. Stimate di N.S.G.C.*, Verona 1951 (edited, with introduction and notes). *Summarium Addizionale alla Positivo* Vatican City 1958; and in it, in particular, the *Compendium de vita et virtutibus Ven. Servi Dei Gasparis Bertoni*, p. I-CXXI.

¹⁰⁵ With this title, in *Il Bertoniano*, supplement to no. 4 (1952), p. 133-200. Fr. N. DALLE VEDOVE's thesis for his degree *Un Modello di santo Abbando* is to be mentioned (published in 1951), together with I. BONETTI's *Le Stimate della Passione* (published in 1952). Many articles were written in the occasion of the centenary, and in that context Fr N. Dalle Vedove delivered a conference that will become historic; the

¹⁰⁶ In the Anthology of texts of the *Appendix* to the ch. III of the *Attachment* no. 29 of the *Acts* of the Gen. Ch. Of 1970, the year 1954 is taken as a point of *separation and departure of opinion*, not only in the writings of Fr N. Dalle Vedove, but also in those of Fr. Stofella ("before 1954; after 1954"; cf. p. 8). There have been also some *facts* in between, at the time of the 1st Centenary of Bertoni's death, beginning from the work on the *Constitutions* (who still knew them in their original text?), articles by Fr Martinis, conference of Fr N. Dalle Vedove..., and their publication.

CHAPTER III

**THE SPECIAL CHAPTER OF 1970
AND HOW IT WAS ACCEPTED
IN THE CONGREGATION**

3.1.- Preparation

What is the *aim*, in the *apostolic sense*, the specific trait - that is - of our participation in the *Apostolic Mission*? What is the spirituality of the *Apostolic Missionary*? What is the *spirituality* of the sons of Bertoni (and first of all of Bertoni himself?)

According to me we have to keep in mind the *person* of the *Apostolic Missionary* and his journey in the community and in the Church of his time. From what he *is*, derives what *he should be*. Bertoni – according to Stofella – , talking of the *design* and of the *original idea* for his Institute, wrote: “*Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*” and he integrated it with the specification that the *Decree* does not say expressly: “*in obsequium Episcoporum*”. As regards the *modus* he carried on copying from the *Decree*: obedience and dependence on the direction of the Ordinaries for all that pertains to the exercise of the *apostolic ministry* in their territory”¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁷ *Il Venerabile Gaspare Bertoni...*, p. 242. We must note the expression “*he integrated with the specification*” (which goes strictly together, as it seems so, - in the elaboration of a spirituality,- with the first part), and also the content of the *modus*!

3.2.- Studies and researches

There is a possibility of an answer by going through the writings of those who personally engaged themselves in the research, - as they were already involved for several years. A summary reference will perhaps allow us to highlight *differences and convergences*.

There is also the collection of data from the three Provinces of the Sacred Heart, of the Holy Spouses and of the Holy Cross, which have been unified by the General Curia in a text of converging divergences¹⁰⁸.

In the occasion of the preparation to this event the General Curia published several contributions from some Stigmatines. Fr N. Dalle Vedove's paper on the name and specific aim implied in the *Missio Apostolica* was published on *Il Bertonian*¹⁰⁹.

What followed was a very close dialogue, always on *Il Bertonian*¹¹⁰ with articles by Fr J. Henchey: *The original inspiration of our Founder with regard to the "Missio Apostolica"* (p.226-290) and Fr L. Benaglia, with the title: *The Compendium Rude and the parallel Documents* (iv. P. 261-290). By the latter there is also a wide reflection¹¹¹ entitled: *Name and finality of our Congregation*. Fr N. Dalle Vedove gave an answered to these contributions (dated 14 September 1968), which was published also as an *Appendix* to the *Cronaca Tomasi V*, 1994, p. 318-358. While for both scholars the research continues, it seems that it has been enriched with information for one and the other position: they have acquired more elements for their positions, rather than any new development, in thirty five years of research¹¹².

A fascicle in *Collectanea Stigmatina*, which gathers various contributions under the common title: *Studies and researches on the features*

¹⁰⁸ An undated duplicate document of 53 pages, that is to be found among the *Attachments* to the Minutes of the Chapter 1970.

¹⁰⁹ Supplement to no. 2 of *Il Bertonian*, January- June 1967.

¹¹⁰ *Il Bertonian*, no. 1, January-June 1968, p. 226-260.

¹¹¹ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, vol. IV. II (Rome 1967), p. 295-361

¹¹² Notable is the contribution that the publication in the "Archivio Storico Bertonian", edited by the Province of the Sacred Heart, of the chronicles of the first and second generation fathers, have given to the knowledge of the concrete journey of the Institute.

of our Congregation according to the mind of the Founder" (vol. IV/II. Rome 1967), is very helpful for our theme. Among those contributions we have an article by Fr. N. Dalle Vedove: *As our Ven. Father conceived of our Institute*, elaborated already in 1955, on the occasion of the Centenary of the *Decree of Praise* of the Congregation (when there was not yet talk about a Council). In it for the *first time* the theme of the *Bertonian inspiration* was presented with a new interpretation, which was, at the beginning, noticed by only a few¹¹³. Fr Stofella himself had talked about this in his researches, talking about it as a strong possibility, in 1953¹¹⁴ and in 1954¹¹⁵. These texts have been picked up, after many years, in the fascicle IV/II of *Collectanea*.

From the different published contributions there are evident divergences of the way documents are read and put into perspective. There are heavy stresses that want to put into evidence a specific Bertonian characteristic, but with even contrasting consequences with regard to the *Apostolic mission* as intended by Bertoni for his sons.

While recognizing the multiplicity of priestly ministries listed by the Founder in his *Constitutions*, Fr Dalle Vedove stresses the figure of the *Apostolic Missionary*, underlining that the *aim* of our Institute is expressed by CF 1, through the words of the *Decree of the Congregation a Propaganda Fide*. Bertoni wanted the *Apostolic Missionary*, as a title, for himself and for his sons, but not as a title of honour, but as an identity and a calling. The contribution of Fr N. Dalle Vedove, printed in *Collectanea* IV, in the II fascicle, represented a *novelty* and a challenge in the research for the Stigmatine identity.

¹¹³ According to the author, besides Fr G. Stofella (who agreed but not with much courageous conviction), Fr G.B. Zaupa did perceive the novelty and referred on this to the Provincial, and then to the author also, manifesting surprise, and asking to have a meeting in view of the coming Chapter. Such meeting did not take place because of the sudden death of Fr Zaupa.

¹¹⁴ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, vol IV. II (Rome 1967), p. 237-242. Cf. also the *artiche Stigmatini*, ivi. P. 224-236. The fascicle contains texts by Fr G. Stofella (four contributions), N. Dalle Vedove (one contribution, of 1955). L. Benaglia (*Name and aim*).

¹¹⁵ *Collectanea Stigmatina*, vol IV. II (Rome 1967), p. 243-246.

Also Fr N. Dalle Vedove quotes *De religione* of Suarez¹¹⁶, where he explains that: “[...] *finis uniuscuiusque status, seu religionis, si proprius sit, veluti propria forma, a qua veluti propria differentia constituens talem religionem eamque ab aliis distinguens sumitur*”; but he makes also reference to CF 76 (*gradual* promotion to the ministries until the full direction of the *Missions*) in view of stressing that the *Missions to the people* are *quasi princeps analogatum*.

Fr N. Dalle Vedove gives to the Bertonian addition¹¹⁷ “*in obsequium Episcoporum*”, inserted in the text of the *Decree* of the Holy See, the meaning of complement (never expressed in an absolute form), as a modality of our *Missio Apostolica* and limited to it, that is as a *condition (manner)* that cannot be absent in the ministerial engagement (*quoad exercitium*) of the *Apostolic Missionary*¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁶ Cf. *Collectanea*, p. 264-265 (Tract X, 1. 1, ch. II, no. 1). The indispensable reference to Suarez' work is self explanatory already for Fr G. Stofella and cannot be taken but as an accepted fact, because of its heavy presence in the CF Constitutions. A necessary question however remains to be answered: next to what have been *assumed* verbatim from Suarez by Bertoni, there is also the *non-assumed*, the *substituted*, the *added*, that have at least as much importance on the reading of the close connection with the Jesuits.

¹¹⁷ This addition was done on a second time, after the two drafts carried only: *Finis: Missionarii Apostolici*, to demonstrate how the work of the drafting was proceeding slowly and with continuous amendments (*a piccole goccioline*): cf. “*the loving solicitude and the serious studies and the long meditations and assiduous prayer...*”, of which Fr Bassi wrote, in the speech for the Bertoni's centenary of birth (*Lo spirito del Fondatore*, p. 21). See also the writing of the *autograph* with its many corrections, the *two little cards* in which the *Finis: Missionarii Apostolici* is not accompanied by the *in obsequium*! As it will be in the final draft. (cf. N. Dalle Vedove, *San Gaspare Bertoni*, vol 6, 1991, p. 124 (cf. Mss. No. 9847 – with an erasing by the hand of Bertoni - 9849.9908).

¹¹⁸ We remind to the always quoted reflection of Fr Lenotti: “[...] We clearly see that the intention of Fr Bertoni must have been to institute a Congregation, which, as the Company of Jesus, is in a special way dedicated and addressed to the *obsequium* and disposition of the Roman Pontiff. That it should be dedicated and determined in a totally special and distinctive way to the service and obsequium of the Bishops; with however this difference, that while the professed of the Company of Jesus take a vow of obedience to the Pope, our confreres do not take a vow of obedience to the Bishop, but try by all means to help him, to assist him obsequiously, as they are in a particular way dedicated to him, because one thing is to be vowed to the Pope who has the leadership of the whole Catholic Church, and a different thing is [to be vowed] to the

The arguments used by the biographer of St Gaspar about the interpretation of the Bertonian charism are very much articulated, but a simple reference is sufficient here, as it will be also for the other Authors¹¹⁹.

Bishop, because by reducing oneself to one only diocese, this would restrict the sphere of our ministry: and we would be therefore *Missionarii in obsequium Episcopi* and not *Episcoporum*. Furthermore, this could mean that the Bishop would be able to send us here and there – now this and now that confrere – and thus he would destroy and consume us. *This is therefore the essence of our Institute, its aim and the means of fulfilling it*” (CS, III, p. 409; cf. also J. HENCHEY, *Il Bertoniano* 1968, p. 231).

¹¹⁹ For a knowledge of the material: cf. N. DALLE VEDOVE, *Bertoni* 1-6 (especially vol. 6 p.115-132; 251-256. *La conformazione a Cristo Crocifisso in Don Gaspare Bertoni*, Rome 1989 (Several editions of the Constitutions, p. 66-70. *Contributi* (Introduction and Appendixes) in « Bertonian archive», of the «Province of the Sacred Heart of the Stigmatines». First Series: Chronicles, no. 1: *Cronaca Lenotti* (1855-1871), 1991. p. 5-18 (Erection of the Institute, action by Fr Marani, Holy Spouses); no. 2: *Cronaca Zara I* (1875-1877), 1991. p. 5-35 (Marani, Lenotti, living memory of the St Fermo's mission; preaching of Missions, devotion to the Stigmata); no. 3: *Cronaca Zandonai* (1873-1878), 1992. p. 151ff. General description of the preaching of Missions, Spiritual Exercises, various ministries; no. 4: *Cronaca Tommasi*, (1874-1879), Verona 1992. p. 3-15; 256ff. Correspondence between our confreres; no. 5: *Cronaca Zara II* (1878-1889), 1993. p. 5-20 (Holy Patrons, Rules by Lenotti, Government of Vignola; in the Appendix : Letters and Various Documents, list of the Missions to the people, Spiritual Exercises, preaching, new vocations, deceased confreres, foundations); no. 6: *Cronaca Tommasi II*, (1880-1882), 1993 (In the Appendix Correspondence between our confreres and other Documents); no. 7: *Cronaca Tommasi III* (1883-1885), Verona 1993. p. 3-29 (Relationships with the Combonians, Our Feasts, death of Frs. Zara and Tabarelli); no. 8: *Cronaca Tommasi IV* (1886-1888), Verona 1994. p. 3-18 (introduction); no. 9: *Cronaca Tommasi V* (1889-1891), Verona 1994. p. 3-25 (Years of conflict; Chapter XII), in appendix, answer to Fr. Paternoster about the school; then the text of 1968 in answer to Fr Henchey and to Fr. Benaglia (p. 318-358); *Lettera* to Fr. A. Mutterle, Vic. Gen. on the licence thesis: *San Gaspare Bertoni «Missionario Apostolico»*, p.359-365; no. 11: *Cronaca Tommasi VI* (1892-1894), Verona 2001. In Appendix, *Memorie di Fra A. Dal Sasso* and documents.; no. 12: *Cronaca Tommasi VII*, Verona 2003. p. 3-7, Introduction. There are some summary booklets: *Il disegno di Dio nell'attesa operosa del Beato Gaspare Bertoni*, Verona 1986; *Congregazione di S. Gaspare Bertoni sorta alle «Stimate»*, Roma 1994 (in collaboration with L. Muzi; almost a *manuale*!); *Il Carisma*, Verona 2001 (“an exemplary sketch which could inspire a study of Fr Mazza's charism”, wrote Domenico Romani); *La realizzazione della Missione Apostolica nella storia degli Stigmatini*, Verona 2002.

Fr Luigi Benaglia navigates with originality among the witnessing and writings of Bertoni. It can be summarized in two expressions: *Stigmatines: in obsequium Episcoporum*¹²⁰. He finds a first motivation in the providence of the name, *Congregation of the Priests of the Stigmata of O.L.J.C.* It was not thought of by Bertoni, but it reached us through diverse vicissitudes which Fr Benaglia defines *providential*.

One can read this work as an invitation to a *form of life and spiritual characteristic* that makes decisive and qualifying reference to the Stigmata of Christ, on the tradition of the Founder. Underlying the importance of the Bertonian *Autograph*, in parallel with the *Compendium* (for which he insists in stressing the "rude")¹²¹, he privileges the multiplicity of ministries for which the sons of Bertoni offer themselves to the Bishops (or are by these requested). Consequently the *obsequium Episcoporum* assumes a decisive importance: this is what gives consistency to the *Missionary*, who is such when he executes *the desire of the Bishop*.

Fr Benaglia concludes: "The aim of the *Apostolic Missionaries*, fixed in the formula *obsequium Episcoporum*, highlights the function that the sons of Bertoni should fulfill with respect to the desires and needs of Bishops. Waiting for this, will not certainly be inactivity, but, according to the prudential rules suggested by the Holy Abandonment, will continually become a laborious preparation for all possible requests of the Bishops. It will therefore have to offer all the various abilities both in the sacred field as well as in the profane field, for the multiple tasks that from time to time could be assigned.[...]. "*Quocumque euntes in dioecesi et mundo*". Cf. N. Dalle Vedove, *A Model of Holy Abandonment*, p. 237f"¹²².

¹²⁰ Cf. *Collectanea* (cit.), *Nome e finalità della nostra Congregazione*, p. 361. This is a monumental work that is worth of our perennial gratitude: the transcription of the *Manuscripts* of Bertoni, characterized by a painstaking accuracy. I do not know why, but it seems that the texts of the sources' references are no longer available? Fr L. Benaglia had certainly worked on them, with the help of the novices.

¹²¹ Cf. *Il Bertoniano*, January-June 1968, p. 286.

¹²² Cf. *Nome e finalità della nostra Congregazione*, p. 295-361; here 345-355.

Fr J. Henchey has his own theological development of the Bertonian project, but his first presentation (1967), *takes its distinctive distance* from the main positions previously expressed by Fr Nello Dalle Vedove. In the reflection of Fr Henchey a determining factor is the parallel with the *Ignatian and Jesuitic tradition*¹²³, in the mediation of Suarez (cf. the ample work in his subsequent years). It is not a novelty; the theme was already very present in Fr G. Stofella, but Fr Henchey's contribution is an exhaustive analysis of the text in parallel.

In the ms. *The aim of the Congregation*, he concludes: "It seems to me that the aim of the Congregation is well defined as follows: "*Ecclesia sub Episcoporum directione obsequium praestare, per varia et propria suae vocationis munera*" (CF 185). "Our program demands of us to serve through "*varia Ecclesiae obsequia, quae pro temporum et occasionum diversitate occurrunt utillima erunt*" (CF 57)¹²⁴. According to me a list of the principal means are to be found in section IX of the CF, entitled "*de professorum gradu*": "*Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium, et Clericorum et iuvenum institutionem, depending on the Bishops, and to their obsequium*" (p. 8).

It is clear that for Fr Henchey the statement "*Apostolic Mission* includes *any* kind and needs of the sacred ministry, so that our aim is to offer *any* sort of spiritual service ("*any ecclesiastical ministry*")", but there is an underlining: the "*Ministry of the Word*" is *one* (perhaps rather: "the") *best explanation of our aim*"¹²⁵.

¹²³ *Il Bertoniano*, January-June 1968, no. 1, p. 258.

¹²⁴ It seems to me too, that this expression goes well together with the *exigency* of *specialization*, science and wisdom that allow for a prophetic vision and the intuition (for ourselves also, not only for the Bishops) of the *challenges* that *times* and circumstances represent, as CF 57 explicitly say; cf. J. HENCHEY, *The aim of the Congregation*, p. 4 and 9.

¹²⁵ For a deeper understanding, cf. *L'esperienza di Gesù Cristo nella vita del P. Gaspare Bertoni*, «Studies on the spirit of the Blessed Gaspar Bertoni, 3»; Rome 1984; *Holy abandonment a synthesis of stigmatine devotions* (undated); *Perfectio sui ipsius*, *Il Bertoniano*, 1990, p. 67-87; *La formula in obsequium nel linguaggio di S. Tommaso*, in «*Angelicum*» LXIX (1992), p. 453-470; *St. Gaspar Bertoni. Original Constitutions* (a study of the Sources and Content). Ms. [undated, a powerful work]; *St. Gaspar Bertoni. The Apostolic Missionaries in his Original Constitutions and in those of St. Ignatius of Loyola*. Volume I: Presentation, Admission, Formation, Education, Progression, Profession and Promotion. Parts I-VIII, Constitutions ## 1-157. Ms.

Again: “*The aim of our Congregation consists in the obsequium Episcoporum*”¹²⁶.

To summarize his thought he wrote already in 1968: “*We have already seen various sources that add support to the position that maintains that our primary aim are not exclusively the Missions to the people*”; and again “*We believe that our Founder, in giving us as aim: “Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum”, stressed the quality and the virtues of the Missionarii Apostolici, rather than limiting to the Missions to the people our essential apostolate*”¹²⁷.

The studies of Fr G. Stofella that are here collected clarify some aspects: *the sacred Stigmata*, the name of *Stigmatines* (eight points), *the Congregation of the Ven. Bertoni and the Sacred Missions to the people*, and again one *Letter*¹²⁸ on the aim of the Congregation¹²⁹.

I make reference only to one text, in which he refers to the Mission to the people in St Fermo, where he says: “*The sacred Missions to the people – with the Spiritual Exercises to the clergy and other various*

[undated]; *Missio Apostolica*. S. Ignazio di Loyola, S. Alfonso Liguori, S. Paolo della Croce e S. Gaspare Bertoni [Collection without date, of his own and others' studies, and relative documentation]; S. Gaspare Bertoni *una speranza missionaria, formata ed espressa nelle sue devozioni e nel suo servizio ecclesiale*, in «Symposium Bertonianum», Pontifical University of St Thomas, Rome. Verona 1990, *St. Gaspar Bertoni. The Catechism in the Apostolic Mission. Translations and reflections* (undated ms., but one can guess it was written during the second part of the 1990's); cf. Studies for our Commission, on the text of our *Constitutions* and the and *the Synthesis* of his understanding of the *Bertonian charism* (File “Antonio” of 2003) where many treated themes are common, though dealt with in diverse forms.)

¹²⁶ Though this formulation has always been appreciated by Bishops, it had however its difficulties. The title – *in obsequium Episcoporum* – did not seem right to Battandier, who wrote: “Only the Diocesan Congregations can and must call themselves *in obsequium Episcoporum*; the others, that are universal, put themselves under the dependence of the Holy See, by which their own Constitutions are approved”.

¹²⁷ *Il Bertonian*, January-June 1968, no. 1, p. 226-261; here p. 249 e 259.

¹²⁸ This text was found among the writings of Fr Stofella. By examination of the text it seems that we can date it towards 1954 (cf. C. IV/II, p. 243).

¹²⁹ Cf. *Appendix* to ch. III of *The ideal of the Founder* (Documents helpful towards the interpretation of our specific aim), where he distinguishes, as Fr Dalle Vedove does, so Fr Stofella, the production that precedes 1954 from that which follows.

groups of the Christian faithful – are even the *essence* of the design of the Founder. In fact, the last particulars and the most energetic impulse to realize them, came to him exactly from the missionary stage, during that *Sacred Mission* which in 1816, for almost all the month of May attracted the Veronese faithful in crowds to St Fermo Major. Notwithstanding the extraordinary difficulties that disturbed it – until it was interrupted in its twenty second day – an abundance of extraordinary and lasting fruits were produced by it. Was that light a kind of spiritual lightning for the Ven. Founder? [...] It is very certain that he experience, then, in anticipation and consciously the flowering of that ideal apostolate”. In his article *Stigmatines*, we are offered an interpretation: the “*any kind of ministry*” – says the Author – is to be interpreted “*in the ways and circumstances illustrated in all this exposition*”. We could add *sufficiently illustrated* in the vast production of Bertoni, in the introduction and the notes of the CF.

3.3.- Perspective of reflection in Fr Gilbert Fini

From what we have indicated, it results that *it is not easy to define the characteristics* that Bertoni dreamed for his sons. It is not easy to harmonize the understanding and the interpretation position of his sons¹³⁰. It is perhaps easier to highlight the *essential that is agreed upon*, in the Bertonian tradition and in the Institute’s.

The superior General Fr G. Fini has sensed this early on, when on 1st January 1967, he wrote the introduction to the fascicle *Studies and Researches* that we have quoted above.

He wrote, stressing his own preceding statements: “A possible compromise about the *Missio Apostolica* that regards the apostolic aim and therefore the characteristic of our Institute, could be the one that I suggested in my *Circular Letter* of 4 Nov 1965, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of our Congregation, where I said among other things: “The future *General Chapter* could [...] codify in the *Constitutions*

¹³⁰ I shall attempt to do a personal synthesis in the conclusion, picking up what has developed until now between pre-comprehensions and comprehension of the documents and the contributions for a reflection.

the priority of the apostolic ministry intended by the Ven. Founder, in the following form:

Const. 3 – *“The special aim that this Congregation sets for itself is to give to the Bishops, as far as possible, an opportune help for the salvation of souls, especially (praesertim) with the Holy Missions and the Spiritual Exercises, then with any exercise of the ecclesiastical ministry whatsoever and with any spiritual work of charity, according to the Constitutions”*¹³¹.

We could therefore concretely accept all the fields of the apostolate that are offered by the present need of the souls and of the Church, giving pride of place to the *“Apostolic Mission”*, but underlining that each Stigmatine must have the qualities of the *“Apostolic Missionary”* in all his fields of work”.

3.4.- The Commission and the Outline of the Constitutions and of the Directory

The Commission elected by the Superior General worked with commitment. The Outline is *“work outline, [...] prepared with great care and study”*¹³². The text was sent to the Provincial Superiors who were asked to promote its study and, through the Provincial Chapters, to gather observations, amendments and suggestions from the confreres¹³³.

Among the proposed questions, two are more connected with our theme:

-the third: *Have the Spirit of the Founder been presented with precision with its specific finalities, as well as the sound traditions that constitute the patrimony of our Institute?*

-the fourth: *Have the characteristics and the means of our Congregation been adequately presented?*

¹³¹ *Il Bertonian*, July – December 1965, p. 350.

¹³² Cf. No. 1. They are 128 pages, introduced by Fr G. Fini and consisting of the text of the *Constitutions* of altogether 119 numbers (p. 17-50) and of the text of the *General Directory* consisting of 203 numbers, one *preamble* and of *Appendixes* (p. 50-123). The Index concludes it.

¹³³ O.c. p. 5.

The text prepared for the Const 2 deals with the *general aim* and the *special aim* of the Congregation. Of the second he writes: "*The special aim, then, that this Congregation proposes to itself, is to put its members, as apostolic missionaries, at the disposition of the Bishops for the various ministries of our vocation (cf. PC 1. 2°. 5; LG 42. 44. 45; CF 1. 85. 185. 255. 262; present Constitutions 2.3)*".

The Const. 6 (cf. also no. 7) reminds of the engagement, of the sons of Bertoni, to excel: "*It belongs to the particular nature of our Congregation that each confrere engages himself to acquire a knowledge as much as possible excellent, in what regards the Catholic religion (CF 50. 53. 58; present Const. no. 12)*".

In the *Directory*, the no. 4 informs that: "[...] one has to keep in mind that the formulation "*Missionarii Apostolic in obsequium Episcoporum*", chosen by the Founder to indicate our own specific aim, is to be retained perfect and for ever valid. With it all the other statements used here and there by the Ven. Founder to express the specific aim of our Institution, agree (cf. CF 185, 255). What is meant to be "*Apostolic Missionaries in obsequium Episcoporum*" is clarified in terms by the same Founder when he writes: "To be ready to any request of the Bishop to preach, hear confession, instruct in the city and in the country, in any place whatsoever of the Diocese, in the Seminary or to the people". (*Autograph*, quoted in CF p. 45, no. 3)".

Only the *Autograph* is quoted ... and the conclusion is: "From this text we have first of all the *content* of the *apostolic mission* which, with faithful adherence to the words of Christ (Mt 28:15-16) is understood as the necessary means for the salvation of souls: preaching, administration of sacraments, instruction". And - it is added -, is also understood the way, that is: *full availability to the requests of the Bishop, guaranteeing of course the exigencies of the religious life*" (and Fr Marani is here remembered, cf. CF p. 44, no. 2)

The *Outline* continues then by dealing with "*concrete problems*", and stressing the following¹³⁴:

¹³⁴ *Schema*, p. 57-58.

1. “All the ministries properly called apostolic enter in the sphere of our special aim, because all are part of the apostolic mission to the service of Bishops. The founder wanted to exclude expressly certain activities [...] of doubtful apostolic character, but that would obstruct the necessary availability of the confreres for the various requests of the Bishops. Today such restriction is not needed [...]”.

2. “The very nature of the “*Mission*”, such as the Lord entrusted to the Apostles and as conceived by our Founder – who establishes a hierarchy among the various apostolic ministry, assigning certainly the first place to preaching (cf. Rom 10:14-15)”. What follows, presented as a logic consequence, is the preparation of the candidates and the “*keeping in utmost honor and in effective vigor the exercise of the ministry of the word, appointing and preparing with all care particularly suited subjects for such task [...]*”.

3.5.- “Convergences and Divergences”¹³⁵

It consists in a comparative synthesis of the *three Documents* elaborated in view of the special *General Chapter* of the three Provinces (Sacred Heart, Holy Spouses, Holy Cross). I consider only what regards our theme.

3.5.1.- *Special aim* (p. 2)

a – Sacred Heart

They refer to the expression “*Missionarii Apostolici in help of the Bishops*”, which includes “*all apostolic ministries according to the spirit of the Stigmatine tradition*”, with *particular emphasis on the ministry of the Word*”. They intend the “help to the Bishops” as “*a full availability to their requests within the proper boundaries of the Congregation*” and they add “*with a special title, more than other religious*”, for the very aim of the Institute.

¹³⁵ This is a typewritten text of 53 pages, *Attachment* (I cannot get the number) to the *Acts* of the General Chapter of 1970, diligently elaborated by the General Secretariat.

b.-The Holy Spouses

"To serve the needs of Christ in his people", but: "as it is manifested by the Bishops". The expression Missionarii Apostolici in help of Bishops designates our special aim, that is a complete openness to the requests of Bishops. Two directives: "All the forms of ministry that is specifically apostolic are included in the sphere of our special aim"; besides, "the exercise of the ministry of the Word must be taken into utmost honor [...] preparing the most suitable subjects for these ministries [..]".

c. – Holy Cross

The first note of the *Doc. Reads thus*: "It seems we can say that the Brazilian Province is one that has taken an explicit choice". This is the choice: *"The special aim of this Congregation is the specialized ministry of the Word, at the disposition of the Bishops"*. Further on (*Directory*) it is stated: *"the Congregation will assume ordinarily and specifically the ministries that have relationship with the Word; other engagements will be taken in special cases and on a temporary basis"*.

3.5.2.- Specialization

All agree on some fundamental points:

- It is an excellent knowledge of what refers to the *Catholic Religion*;
- It is *competence* in one or other discipline;
- It is in relationship with the *Aim* of the Institute;
- A *list* of specialization is requested;
- It is stated that it is the fruit of a *dialogue* between the Superior and the confreres;
- The specialized confrere should no be limited in his availability;
- It is an arduous task that requires *"trust in God"*.

The Document *"Convergences and divergences"* adds its own synthesis:

All ministries belongs to the sphere of our special aim; the *ministry of the Word* must be given particular importance, it is worth of appraisal and preparation; the help to Bishops is a *special title*, more than for other religious. For Brazil this is a clear choice.

3.6.- The celebration of the General Chapter XXIX (special of 1970)

Some items have been the object of the confreres' attention as preparation to the *special Chapter*: (1) the draft of *Constitutions and Directory*, elaborated by the *Commission* established for this purpose; (2) the text entitled "*The ideal of the Founder*", prepared in collaboration with the general Curia, was also a fruit of the renewed engagement of some confreres; (3) "*Convergences and Divergences*", as a working paper for the Capitulars.

I believe it is important for the reading of the understanding of the Bertonian charism by his sons, what has been reported above about the reflection and the suggestions of Fr. G. Fini, Superior General. He could not preside over the *special Chapter* because of his sudden death, but he felt strongly involved in that event. In his *Letter* one feels evident the seriousness and the importance of the situation, and the *lack of clarity* about fundamental points on the ideal at the operative level. He took the courage of coming out in person with a sense of responsibility, with a *project* of solution with regard to the question of the *aim* of the Institute (cf. above. 3.3)

3.6.1.- *Decisive texts*

What the *special Chapter* wanted to call *Fundamental Rules* 1-11 are very meaningful texts; a style of exposition from which it was intended to highlight the fundamental aspects of the nature of the Congregation¹³⁶.

- A fundamental contribution is certainly the recovering of the *formula*: "*Missionarii in obsequium Episcoporum*", chosen to express as Bertoni wanted his Congregation and in the same time the reference to the realization of the "*Apostolic Mission*"¹³⁷.

¹³⁶ In the different numbers of these Rules the subject is, directly or indirectly, *the Congregation*. In their *raison d'être* and function I believe that they can make reference to the *Compendium Rude*, even if, at the charismatic level, they do not have the synthetic power nor the incisiveness of the Bertonian text.

¹³⁷ I have already reflected on this theme in the first contribution for the present commission: "*Apostolic Mission, Apostolic Missionary, Popular Missions*"; the term

- Another formula is appropriated to indicate the apostolic nature of the Congregation; "*quodcumque Verbi Dei ministerium*", explained as "*opening to all apostolic ministries, according to the times, places and circumstances in the availability for the requests of the bishops, according to possibility and the Constitutions*";

- the formula "*in obsequium sive auxilium episcoporum*" is accompanied by the stressing of "*more than others*" justifying it with "*a keener missionary sensibility for the urgencies of the diocese*";

- the expected specialization is also put in evidence.. "*from the opening to all ministries in the availability for the bishops*"; as a "*social body*" the Congregation must be prepared for the diverse fields of apostolate;

- in the conciliar climate reference is made to "*the signs of the times*", with respect to which it is requested that "*the Congregation should periodically examine itself*"; some ministries "*appear to be more corresponding to the sound tradition*".¹³⁸ preaching, assistance to the clergy, formation of the youth"¹³⁹.

has perhaps entered in the capitular formulation without making *theology and charism* meet together in a living clarity. I do not believe that *vagueness* and *specificity* have found a solution; see for example the different editing of the Const. no. 1 of 1970 ("*they attend to the realization of the apostolic mission*") and in 1982 ("*to the following of Christ, sent by the Father [...], serve the Church with the various ministries proper of his vocation*").

¹³⁸ With this it was intended to give an indispensable criterion (the sound tradition), but in the same time they did not want to be more concrete in their choices for this sound tradition: no specific ministry results to be engaging in the elaborated formula, because no one was judged to be *specific* for the Institute, except "*according to the times and the circumstances*". (This preoccupation, or conviction, has considered a success the removing from the present *Rule* words like *Mission* and *Oratory*).

¹³⁹ The Const. 52-54 (communion of apostolate), express the Stigmatine apostolate in conciliar terms. The C 55 would like to tell the characteristics (for ex.: "*it is an apostolate in service of Bishops*"). There is a statement: *From the nature of the Congregation we derive the characteristics*", which is then reduced to *the communitarian dimension* (with all religious), to the *obsequium to the Bishops*, for a special title (it is a repetition), *not bound by rigid patterns*... It seems to me that the *Fundamental Rules* would gain much from a wide and concrete development in the ff. Const.

3.6.2.- *The capitular reflection*

The *Chapter* did not start from nothing: it was prepared for many months with expectation for its importance. The *Provincial Chapters* had taken position with regard to the renewal of the *Rule* and of the life style and apostolate. Some experts presented the conciliar themes of religious life and some Stigmatines gave some contributions.

The capitular fathers had, beside the *Schema* of the Constitutions and the Directory, a questionnaire (*Attachment* no. 28 to the capitular *Acts* of 1970) which asks some questions. They show that the *Attachment* n. 29 was the object of attention in the proceedings:

1. – Do you want that in the new Constitutions a *preface* should be added which substantially summarises the six chapters of the “*Ideal of the Founder*”?

2. – The *aim* of our Institute is of the contemplative, social and apostolic type, as described in no. 8 of *Perfectae Caritatis*? What is really the “*Missio Apostolica*”?

3. – It is convenient to give a *primacy to the apostolate of the Word* [here, as often in the Chapter, *word* is not written with capital W!], understood as evangelization, preaching specialized in all the fields that are useful for the conversion of souls and their salvation? Do we have “*sound traditions*” in regard of this?

4. – Do you rather think that it is better not to determine any hierarchy in the ministries, leaving to the General Chapter [it is understood *any* general Chapter] and, in second place to the provincial Chapters (according to the signs of the times) the choice of our fields of work?

5. – Are you of the opinion of leaving as it is the statement of “clericality”, exemplarity, availability ad specialization, in view of determining the nature of our Institute? What availability, what *specialization*?

6. – How shall we interpret the *obsequium to the Bishops*? Is all our Congregation in help of the Bishops or only one group? Is it good to clarify publicly this characteristic of ours?

7.- About the Spirit of the Founder: what do you think you have to say? Among all the elements of the fascicle IV is there one that is characteristic [...] or do we accept all of them?

8.- What would be your answer to the question asked at the end of the Fascicles II and III? How would you like to see Fascicle VI structured?

It was not easy to find a shared vision of things, also on crucial themes. What the Chapter did not have the capacity or the possibility of resolving in this line, remained in the following years as a task, emerging regularly at any new Chapter¹⁴⁰. Among these recurrent themes: the Const. 2, in its two paragraphs; the Const 3 for the specialization; the Constitutions 145ff, for the structure to give to the general government.

3.6.3.- *For what Mission?*

We should like to dwell on the questions 2-6. The answer begins with the reflection on the “*contemplari et contemplate aliis tradere*”, with a new awareness and unanimous decision for the “*apostolic*” characteristic of the Institute (without excluding the social dimension, and without opposing “*contemplation*” to the spirit of prayer. In the context we are reminded of the analogy with the Jesuits).

About the “*Missio Apostolica*” and its meaning, the Minutes (p. 90ff) make reference to the thought of Fr G. Fini, in the preface to the *Schema* of Constitutions and Directory (see above 3.3) and to the fascicle VI of the *Attachment* 29, p. 2. The Minutes reveal that the capitulars experience some effort in finding a shared formulation.

“*Who will change his one opinion?*” They ask themselves. Some answer that the “*Missio is the thing for which we serve the Church*”, it consists in “*quodcumque ministerium Dei in obsequium Ecclesiae sub directione Episcoporum pro diversitate temporum et occasionum*”; “*it is the exercise of the sacred ministries that are helpful to the Church, according to the times, the places and the circumstances, with the stress on the preaching of the Word of God; it is “total*

¹⁴⁰ Among the proposals to the General Charter of 1994, one provincial Chapter will move the suggestion not to talk any longer Constitution 2 !

availability to the needs of the Church and of the times"; "it is any ministry required by the times..." But is there not a limitation? Are there no priorities? Specific fields of work? If the *Mission* is common to all, does not ours suppose a choice, or acting "in that manner"?!

3.6.4.- Mission and ministries

There are three questions that go with the theme *all the ministries* (which is the meaning – they say – of the "*quodcumque Verbi Dei ministerium*"), or some *limitations*, and these too need clarification: priority of *preaching*, *availability*, *specialization*.

There are some who insist on giving the preaching a priority: *We have abandoned completely the preaching. There is no group that is dedicated to preaching. It seems to me that after this Chapter we shall do everything and nothing, and those who have expectations will remain discouraged. We do not have the courage to leave our own fields.*"¹⁴¹

*It is reminded that the Chapter of the Holy Cross Province had written: "The particular aim of this Congregation is the specialized ministry of the Word (at the disposition of Bishops)"*¹⁴².

¹⁴¹ Some felt betrayed. At that time I did not perceive the seriousness of the expression, while I felt the distress, of the contribution of Fr N... in the Chapter: "Now I decide to vote only blank, because I do not accept the formulation of the aim of the Congregation. I think that clarity and positiveness are of the utmost importance. This opening to all apostolic ministries, without distinction, according to the times, circumstances and places says nothing of the will of the Founder, for a true religious Congregation with a precise finality. It does not say anything clear, nothing concrete in this moment that is so much important after the Council Vatican II. Because of this, I cannot in conscience accept the conclusion that derives from such aim. I said this, to explain my position, and to be consistent with my conscience [...]; this is a problem of self-destruction of the Congregation [...], it will lead to mediocrity, to the discouragement of the confreres, to the division of the Congregation." (*Attachment* no 31 to the *Acts of the special Chapter 1970*).

¹⁴² Cf. Minutes of Charter XXIX, p. 106 *Convergences and Divergences*, p. 3. The Sacred Heart Province indicates the formula of CF 1, explaining that the "*Apostolic Missionaries*" include "*all apostolic ministries according to the Stigmatine tradition*", with "*particular emphasis to the ministry of the Word*". The Holy Spouses Province said: "*To serve the needs of Christ in his people*". But "*as it is manifested to us by the Bishops*"; the formula of the CF 1 "*indicates our special aim, that is a complete opening up to the requests of the Bishops, keeping in mind...*".

While some points of common interest are shaped up (1. All apostolic ministries according to the times, circumstances and places¹⁴³; 2. in the first place the preaching; 3. in help of the Bishops; 4. availability; 5. specialization) the theme of the “*sound traditions*” is introduced.

One capitular noted: “*If we are open to all, we must not restrict*”, but on the other side: “*All Institutes have in common the aim of saving souls: this is not a specifying aim*; and he answered to himself: “*But we do want to have a program!*” With 14 votes against 18, the first statement is accepted: “*All apostolic ministries, according to the times, circumstances and places are included in the Missio*”¹⁴⁴.

The “*all*” is stated, but the voting causes the need to clarify still in particular, the priority that we want to give to the ministry of the Word: “*One means as many others?*”... “*I am against admitting all ministries without relevance given to preaching*”. Taking as agreed what has already been voted (“*opening to all ministries*”), the *second part* of the text is proposed to be voted (“*in the first place the preaching*”). But the voting on the *priority of preaching* has negative result (6 yes, 10 no, 2 juxta modum) excluding the specification. One capitular’s intervention sounds suffering and discouraged: “*the majority does not want this specification..., but it is against the will of the Founder!*”¹⁴⁵.

The confrontation carries on, clarifying that “*according to our tradition*” there have been ministries that were much more present, preaching, care of the clergy, youth...

In the meantime a synthesis of concepts is being accepted (14 yes, 2 juxta modum, 2 abstentions): “*Availability for the requests of the Bishops for the service of the church*” and “*according to the possibilities and the Constitutions*”.

¹⁴³ The expression “*according to the times, places and circumstances*” allows to overcome the generic expression of “*all*”, (it is more restricted).

¹⁴⁴ “Let us not bother ourselves whether it be *aim* or *means*. We move in the practical field, in the choice of ministries”.

¹⁴⁵ At p. 105 of the Minutes of the Chapter the voting is registered (yes 16, abstentions 2): “*it is convenient to give a primacy to the apostolate of the word*”. What was failed before as aim is not certainly promoted here with an “*it is convenient*”. A voice insists in saying: “*the aim is everything for me!*”.

Then the theme of *specialization* is tentatively deepened which, though with different perspectives, is felt to be strictly connected to the aim, availability, times, places and circumstances... The conclusion is that "*Specialization* is viewed in the two aspects, a. – *excellent knowledge* for each confrere of what pertains to the Catholic Religion; b.- *particular competence* in one or other of the disciplines. It is by everybody put in reference to the aim of our Congregation¹⁴⁶.

I again register from the Minutes' p. 161 the approval by large majority (17 yes, 1 no, 1 abstained) of a compromise-text, with which to confront, but *pacifying*: "*In the ministry of the Word of God, to which the Congregation is dedicated, some kinds of apostolate result more corresponding to the sound tradition: preaching, assistance to the clergy and the formation of the youth*"¹⁴⁷.

There is a unanimous approval of a text that was shifted to another place: "*Opening to all apostolic ministries in the service of the Bishops expects specialization: from the Congregation taken as a social body, a non common preparation in diverse fields of apostolate is expected; from each confrere a particular competence is expected in one or the other discipline as an instrument for his work and adequate preparation for the ministry to which he will be assigned*".

While rearranging the numbers of the Constitution, there emerges a request: instead of "*opening to all ministries*", let us say: "*opening to the ministry of the Word of God*". After some tergiversations (is the theme of preaching in the background?) at the end, the text of Const 2, reads as follows: "*The clearly apostolic nature of this Congregation,*

¹⁴⁶ *Minutes*, p. 105-106, where some more moments of tension are registered. At p. 107 (Wednesday 28 January) a way of convergence seems to be found, with a preoccupation of keeping *fraternity* but also thinking of the negative echo that this may have in the Congregation.

¹⁴⁷ I call it *pacifying*, because we have to *take our history into account*, but in the same time... without that this could become an involvement that binds us! There is need of courage for the signs of time to become challenges. As regards the formation of the youth, according to Bertoni, it will just have to bear the attribute of "*Christian*" ("*ubi fieri potest*").

indicated by the formula “*quodcumque verbi Dei ministerium*”, includes the opening to all apostolic ministries, according to the times etc.” (Minutes p. 174)¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁸ The Const 16, voted with unanimity, reminds to the theme of the apostolic formation of the Stigmatine: “*The program “Missionarii apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum”*”, as it is lived in the Congregation, indicates the components of the apostolic formation of the Stigmatine. In order to be available to the calling of the Church and able to respond to the exigencies of the times, the confrere takes care to acquire a competence in the various fields of the ministry of the Word of God, becoming perfect in the sector which, according to his talents and in dialogue with Superiors, he will have chosen. “ (Minutes Chapter XXIX, p. 314).

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE SPECIAL CHAPTER HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS

4.1. Chapter XXX (USA – 1976)

The new *Rule* was accepted by the Congregation with the expectations born of the strong experience of the Council Vatican II. A journey of deepening and formation was developing, which was not bound to the Rule only, but it had constant reference to it (together with some texts offered by the General Council). What was progressively perceived, I think it can be found, after six years, in the XXX Chapter.

Here are some sample data:

- There is a request by a *Commission* of Chapter XXX for the constitution of a *post-capitular Commission*: “The post-capitular commission should study whether the charism “*Missionarii Aposotlici in obsequium Episcoporum*” is truly a *particular* charism received from God”¹⁵⁰.

Not only, but:

- Corrections and modifications to Const 2 are suggested, of which one that expresses objection to the formula: “*opening to all ministries*”;
- Const 3 receives only one formal change;
- Const 4 has the first two paragraphs removed;

¹⁵⁰ The occasion came from the *Acts* of a provincial Chapter (cf. *Minutes*, p. 68), but the answer was almost unanimously negative.

- Const 4 has to develop more the constitutive elements of the Stigmantine spirit;
- Substitute Const 9 with CF 6;
- In Const 10 remove the expression "Holy Spouses" ...;
- It is proposed to revise the Constitutions regarding the charism and the aim of the Institute...;

The Chapter decided to constitute a *post-conciliar Commission* that should give a richer charismatic Bertonian foundation to the Constitutions, while giving some suggestions that reflected its (= the Chapter's) own conviction and sensitivity. (*Capitular Deliberation* no 14).

This choice procrastinated the definitive approval of our Constitutions, but it allowed a further engaging work of charismatic re-foundation.

4.2.- The capitular Comission 1976-1982

The commission that was set up by the Chapter was nominated by the Superior General and his council. We give only few points, basing ourselves on a methodological program of the same Commission¹⁵¹:

4.2.1.- *Modification of the Constitutions: criteria*

With regard to Const 1: "Following the choices of Chapter 1970 we have decided to introduce the essential formula of the CF: "*Apostolic Missionaries in help (ossequio) of the Bishops*", which disappeared from our Rules after the general Chapter 1890. With the idea of missionary expressed in those terms all our Congregation's characteristics appear strictly connected, as Bertoni listed in the *Compendium Rude* and in the corresponding *Autograph*. In the drafting of the fundamental *Rules* we have tried to reproduce as faithfully as possible the letter and the spirit and those two texts of the Fr. Founder (...), keeping in mind also today's

¹⁵¹ The members elected by the general Council were: Fr Ignazio Bonetti, Fr Joseph Henchey, Fr Modesto Nones. They held their first meeting from 5 to 15 January 1978, sharing the works as follows: Fr Henchey would take the first part of the Constitutions (12-19), Fr Bonetti – coordinator -, the second (60-116) and Fr Nones – secretary – the third (117-176).

exigencies in the spirit of a dynamic fidelity (*Explanatory Notes*, p. 1; ms.). Further on they say: “We have thought of retrieving also in no. 1 of the *fundamental Rules*, the (partial) text of CF 185.

While it states clearly that the Congregation has proper and specific ministries, it stresses the essential “aim” of “*helping the Church under the direction of the Bishops*” that should characterize us primarily as missionaries sons of Bertoni”.

Const 2: “Consistent with the formula “*missionarii Apostolici...*”, we have wished to clarify the missionary character of the “*proper ministries of our vocation*”. Therefore we have reproduced the text of the *Autograph* no. 3, and have introduced the term “*evangelization*” that already in N.T. usage seems to be strictly connected with that of “*mission*” and that the “rediscovering” of the essential missionaryity of the Church has made it extremely relevant [they quote Marani, cf. CS II, p. 245ff]. The use of the term “*evangelization*” does not lack Stigmatine precedents, to indicate the proper work of the Congregation” (they quote Lenotti *Summ. Add.* XX, p. 156; all in the Notes, p. 1-2).

4.2.2. – Other observations

a.- “the Commission, while studying the rather tormented history of the formulation of our *Constitutions*’ first numbers, that refer to the aim and specific activities of the Congregation. Has reached the impression that the disappearing of the expression “*Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*” from the preceding *Constitutions* – that was perhaps caused mainly by external influences, but ratified anyway by the *General Chapter* XII of 1890, the same one that accepted also the softening of the “*gratis omnino*”, already done by the *General Chapter* X of that same year – has marked a *non-positive* turn in the legislation of our Congregation” (*Note*, p. 2).

b.- “the *problem* that remains, is to determine more precisely the relationship between the *missionary activities* in its global meaning, and that particular form that are the “*Missions to the people*”: that form which has certainly had a *relevant role in the history* of the Congregation, to begin with the *Mission in St Fermo* of 1816 with the consequent *Decree of Propaganda Fide*, containing the nomination of Bertoni as *Apostolic Missionary* and recorded in the *Compendium*

rude in no. 2, until the successive editions of the *Constitutions* that refer again to our Congregation as called “*praesertim*” to the missions, and in no. 4 of the *Constitutions* (also those after the 1890 Chapter, but before the Chapter of 1970) in which the missions, together with the Spiritual Exercises, are indicated to occupy the first place among the ministries proper to the *Congregation*”.

“At this juncture *the Commission is divided*. One of the members proposes that second paragraph of no. 2, after the word “*preaching*”, should be added “*principally with the missions and the spiritual exercises*”. The other two however prefer that the text remain as it is; *firstly*, in view of respecting the choice already made by the 1970 *General Chapter*, where the point was debated in length; *secondly*, in order not to re-open controversies. The point could perhaps be picked up again and be considered during the next *General Chapter*, if it will be judged opportune” (*Notes*, p. 3)¹⁵².

The *Commission*’s text was for many aspects an enrichment, especially on the biblical, conciliar and charismatic aspects. The Chapter tackled the work with diligence.

4.3.- GENERAL CHAPTER XXXII

Let us study some elements of the 1984 *Constitutions* in comparison with those of 1970, with reference to our theme. *What has been modified from the text of the special Chapter?*

Just some observations:

Const 1: There are some changes of order, the addition of the reference to religious *consecration*, the *mandate* and the formulation of the aim as “*to serve the Church with various ministries proper of its vocation*”, taken from CF 185.

¹⁵² An interesting attempt is represented also by the reflection on “*gratis omnino*” and on the “*missionary*” character (but only if temporary) of the pastoral care and like (ivi).

Const 2: The opening sounds new: "*The vocation of the Congregation is indicated by the expression: "Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium"... in the availability to the requests of the bishops"* (CF 163); Const 7 is anticipated here (without the beginning: "*In the ministry of the word of God, to which our Congregation is dedicated"*", which is omitted).

Const 3: The 2b of 1970 becomes now separated as Const 3 with new wording. The *obsequium* is called a *determining factor* for any choice.

Const 4: It's new and expresses the "*Apostolic Missionary*"'s spirit, retrieving typical Bertonian expressions, with, among others, the "*gratis omnino*".

Const 5: It's new and it re-presents the CF 6 text, to express the indispensable means.

Const 6: It presents the "*qualifying mission*", expressed in the 1970 Chapter's Const 3.

Const 7: Service of authority, with new formulation.

Const 8: Dynamic faithfulness, previous Const 6, modified, missionary development.

Const 9: Members, the professed, dedicated to the one apostolic mission, - previous Const 8.

Const 10: The Sacred Stigmata have become solemnity, - previous Const 10.

Const 11: Holy Spouses, - previous Const 11.

Const 12: Bertoni as the living rule, - previous Const 12.

Const 43: "From the nature of the Congregation we draw those characteristics which, while guaranteeing to our apostolate the *faithfulness to the inspiration of the Founder*, they also make it responsive to the needs of the times. It is a missionary apostolate, centered therefore around *evangelization*, oriented towards the most poor and needy, sensitive to the major urgencies of the Kingdom of God, nourished by a solid theological and pastoral preparation".

The *Constitutions*, approved by the Chapter held in Campinas, obviously needed the approval of the Holy See (with some negotiations). There were some observations, in particular, with regard to the general Government. The official publication was done in 1984.

4.4.- GENERAL CHAPTER XXXIII (1988)

An unforeseen theme came in the mean time to the fore. That of *the Laity close to us*, of the *sharing of the charism*, of the *collaboration in the mission*. This theme was considered during the preparation to the General Chapter of 1988. The *sharing* with the Laity demanded of necessity a better *awareness* on the part of the Stigmatines of their *charismatic identity*, of their *ecclesial mission*, of their *specificity* to which the possibility of lay participation could be opened. For an adequate preparation of the works, Fr G. Scarvaglieri was consulted, who prepared a *questionnaire*, for reflection in preparation to the Chapter. The theme was: *Specialization and Charism of the Laity*. The Superior General and his Council made a synthesis and suggestions from the results of the consultation, together with the expert. This work was at the disposition of the *Gen. Chapter XXXII*. One has to remember that the stated intention of this reflection was in view of "operative choices that regard the application of our charism to our works, our specialization and the Laity".

4.4.1.- Summary of the work of the Provincial Chapters

1. Fundamental components of the Bertonian charism.

The formulae are taken from the Constitutions: "missionarii apostolic in obsequium episcoporum" (C1; C3); and "Verbi Dei quodcumque ministerium" (C2); opening and mobility: "quocumque euntes" (C2; C4).

2. – Main evangelical references

3. – Historic and environmental pressures

"Among the historic and environmental factors that have mostly favored the orientation of Bertoni towards his missionary charism the following are to be highlighted: - the state of neglect and general disarray, in particular of the youth, because of the wars and the negative revolutionary ideas; - the necessity of reforming the clergy; - the necessity of responding to the new exigencies of the universal and local Church, which the prevailing "maintenance" pastoral activity disregarded; the forms of oppression against the Pope and the Bishops; the suppression of the religious Institutes; peculiar importance is represented by the Ignatian inspiration (cf MP 15.9.1808).

4. – *Important aspects of the historic evolution*

- “On this line the points that result more are:
- the permission to hold missions to the people;
 - the opening up in other nations and the Missions “*ad gentes*”;
 - the opening to the schools, to the parishes and to new ministries;
 - the 1890 Chapter which led to the reduction of the understanding of our aim;
 - the renewal started by the Vat II and the further studies on the charism”.

5.- *Characterization of the historic evolution*

“There exist a substantial continuity with the original and founding idea – even if some works lose in missionarity, with the passing of time. The tendency to adapt oneself to the evolving of the ecclesial and environmental situation has had more positive aspects, while negative ones have not been lacking. There have been initiatives that have produced creativity, for example those connected with the “*foreign missions*”, the “*Patronato operaio of the Stimate*”, the “*professional centre*”, the “*houses of hospitality*”, the “*mutirão*”, etc. In some Province there has been little creativity. The [spirit of] communion seems to have been challenged more because of theoretical reasons than of practical choices...”.

6.- *Present understanding of the charism on the part of the confreres*

“In the Congregation there is an understanding of the charism in the attention given to the “*missionarii apostolici*” and to the “*obsequium episcoporum*”, which have been kept as reference in the programming of our works and in the care (which still needs more attention) of the traditional expressions of our ministry: preaching, Christian education of youth and assistance to the clergy” (cf C2).

7.- *The Charism in our Constitutions*

“The charism is clearly present in our Constitutions, especially in the fundamental ones. It is also to be found, expressed in its spirituality, in “*The life of consecration*” and “*Life and activities of the community*”. Some note that the charismatic richness found in the first 12 Con-

stitutions is not always present in the following ones; what should be more enhanced are the itinerant preaching, the catechesis, the “modesty” of the “*buseta e taneta*”.

11.- Transmission of the charism in the first formation

13.- Justification of sharing our charism with the Laity

“The theological justification of our charism comes from the very nature of the charism understood as a gift of the Spirit to the whole Church. By living the same charism, religious and laity can help one another to live in the service to the Church. The Laity, moreover, by living the Stigmatine charism can acquire a special power to animate the temporal realities, to be leaven in the Church and in the world, in particular in the family and in the service to the least”.

18.- Apostolic sectors that are some more some less harmonized with the charism

Those more in harmony: - “preaching offered in various forms, among which the missions to the people and the catechesis”; - “Christian education of the youth”; - “care of the clergy and vocation promotion”; - “the *missio ad gentes* and evangelization”. The apostolic sectors are in harmony with the spirit of the Founder in the measure in which the confreres who work in them manage to realize it in a lively way. This is more difficult, for example, in the parishes that opt for conservation pastoral activity or that are accepted in an exclusive way with respect to other ministries”.

34.- Fields of specialization to be initiated or developed

“All the confreres should have a qualified *theological-pastoral* formation. For a further pastoral competence the confreres will get specialized on the line of Const 6, in *preaching*, in *theological and moral sciences*, in *philosophy*. Other specializations are expected in the *formation sector*, in the fields that refer to the new exigencies, like the human sciences and in the *administration sector*”.

4.4.2.- The choices of Chapter XXXII

The Chapter (Rome Jan 18 to Feb 2 1988) made much use of the preparatory shared work that was put at the disposal of all¹⁵³. It felt the responsibility of those times¹⁵⁴ and the precious gift that the Bertoni's sons carry on: "Our Founder has shown us with deep intuition the sectors where we are called to intervene (Christian communities, clergy and youth), the forms that we have to use (preaching in all its expressions) and the means (a community that expects of its members the "*perfectio sui ipsius*") and competence. (Const 37-46)"¹⁵⁵.

It states again that "the apostolic sectors that are more in tune with our charism are already amply underlined in our Constitutions (Const 2. 47-48);

- *evangelization*, developed in the most diverse forms of *preaching*,¹⁵⁶ with particular attention given to the *missions to the people* and to *catechesis*;
- education and *Christian formation* of the youth;
- vocation promotion and *service to the clergy*;
- "*missio ad gentes*"¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ The documentation that I managed to get hold of, notwithstanding its content's level and its editing, has remained in large part *unpublished*. I refer – beside the summary that was made of it by the *Council of Superiors* during one week work (under the guide of Fr Scarvaglieri O.F.M.), - also to the text in its wholeness, that contains the work of the *Provincial Chapters*.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. *Acts*, The Christian communities, p. 10, a.

¹⁵⁵ *Acts*, p. 10; cf. In particular, for the *Bertonian foundations*, p. 12-13, and the *apostolic sectors*, p. 18, where, for example, the text that we have just quoted in 3.8.1, no. 18, can be found almost verbatim.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. *Acts*, the development at p. 19, 6, a.: "Preaching, from the missions to the people to evangelization, from teaching to "familiaris conversatio cum proximis..." is the typical Stigmatine ministry, to be promoted with energy".

¹⁵⁷ This presentation does not presume anything special, but expresses much more closely than many others the engagement of faithfulness and renewal; What makes this possible, among others, is the ecclesial theme, that is at last being assimilated also in our environment, of evangelization, in the sense of the Council, of Paul VI, of John Paul II. As regards the "*mission ad gentes*" it is an awareness of a fact that deeply marks the Stigmatine apostolate (cf. *Manuale Stigmatino*, of Fr Zaupa); but cf. also the example reported about the evaluation of this point that comes from outside, the already quoted Fr Gilli, *Storia dell'Istituto missionario comboniano. Dalla morte del Fondatore al cambiamento in congregazione religiosa* (1881-1885). Rome 1981, p. 68.

The *Acts* developed especially the specialization and sharing with the Laity, but the contribution of deepening of the missionary dimension was important, and specifically for the re-understanding for our times of the Bertonian formula “*Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum*”.

SOME CONCLUDING NOTES TO BE UNDERLINED

1.- An opportunity

For many sons of Bertoni it was difficult to directly access the thought of the Father and the writings of those that have preceded us in sharing his spiritual and apostolic project. (Each mediation is providential, whether transmitted in copying, translating, editing or studying). A certain attention to our history is to be traced in our Congregation, beginning from the writing of Fr Marani, the Chronicles of various confreres, the biography of Fr Giacobbe and the writing of Fr Fiorio (*Cronaca, biografia* and *Spirito* of the Ven. Bertoni).

We notice some more lively activity from the time of Fr Zaupa (*Norms and counsels, the Stigmatine Manual, Notes to help understand the history. Positio for the Cause of Beatification. Summarium Additionale*). The years around the *Centenary of the death* of Bertoni mark some renewal in research work. Biographies by Stofella, Ceresatto, *Model of Holy Abandonment* by Dalle Vedove, publication of *Pagine di Vita cristiana*, of the *Constitutions* of the Founder, of the *Epistolary*. A decisive work for the knowledge of the times, of the Veronese church, of the thought, of the life and holiness of St. Gaspar were the six volumes by Fr N. Dalle Vedove, the volumes of *Collectanea Stigmatina*, the works of those who have studied (also for a long time) and the transcription of all the spiritual writings of the Founder (Fr Benaglia). These are great strides for the knowledge of the sources.

The 1994 *General Chapter* has appealed to continue on this path, with a substantial contribution of animation, which was confirmed by the 2000 *Chapter*. An answer to this appeal is the continuation of the publications (still in the making) of the *Bertonian Historic Archive*.

These are *new possibilities*. The fruits will not be lacking! Those who preceded us, did not always have the chances we can enjoy today.

2. Some summary underlining

2.1.- *The Constitutions of St Gaspar*

Many pros and cons have been written about what Bertoni was and wanted of his sons. They reveal a sort of nostalgia and want to go back to Bertoni, to his pages, to his genius and simplicity of his inspired *Constitutions* and of his other writings. All have to end up there, without getting lost in some sort of alchemies, in view of opening the way to a better understanding only in the measure in which they do not alter the meaning of the text, but welcome it (like – if the analogy is accepted – the service that a true exegesis gives to the canonical texts of the Word).

2.2.- *Compendium Rude*

The *Compendium Rude*, within the *Constitutions* has a privileged place as a key to interpretation, as sketchy and essential as it is. Not all expressions belong to Bertoni (some come from the *Decree* or from *De Religione*, of Suarez), but the characteristics that are described there, of the *Apostolic Missionary*, are his and they are original. The expression *Apostolic Missionary* united with the *obsequium Episcoporum*, does not declare the name of the Institute, but tells of the *aim*, and in the same time it tells of the *end-target* in the formation process of the sons of Bertoni, who are persons that “because of their zeal and apostolic qualities truly merit such degree” (G. STOFELLA CF p. 43, who quotes nos. 7.49.76.85.86 of the *Constitutions*. Cf *ivi*, note 1-2).

2.3.- *The first companions of St Gaspar*

We have to look at the first generation of Bertoni's sons with admiration as to those who have received a *continuous formation*, day after day, with the word and the life directly from the Fr Founder, who: “Took care from the beginning that his companions, without professing any particular Institute, had to live as religious [...], engaged], besides

the schools, in the service of the holy ministries proper for their degree and vocation, for the salvation of their neighbors, and principally in meeting the needs, also unexpected, of the Bishop and of the Parish priests. From which the plan of an Institute took shape, that the Founder wanted to entitle of *the Apostolic Missionaries in help of the Bishops*" (MARANI, Cenni, CS II, p. 177)

The numerous letters that were written between the community and Marani when he was in Rome, the writing in drafts by three different persons (Marani, Lenotti, Benciolini) of the *Constitutions*, constantly characterize the relationship of the first sons of Bertoni, without considering the diversity of temperament and age.

2.4.- *The Apostolic Mission*

I pick up an expression from the text that I considered at the beginning of this reflection, "*The ideal of the Founder*" (Attachment to the general Chapter of 1970, fascicle II, 34): "The *special gift* that led Bertoni to found the Congregation has been the *missionary charism*, according to the precise expression that he himself has left in the Constitutions: "*Apostolic Missionaries in help of the Bishops*", that is missionaries who with all their strength and *the particular grace of their vocation* are dedicated to the realization of the "*Apostolic Mission*". The editorial text recognizes the difficulty of the definition: "It remains to be seen in what this "*Apostolic Mission*" essentially consists, whether or not there is in it a valid nucleus that is valid for all times and therefore to be transmitted unchanged from generation to generation" (p. 8).

I think we can say that the *Apostolic Mission* is not a *ministry*, nor *many ministries*, but it is *participation in the mission of Christ*. For the single person (and for a community) it constitutes the concreteness of a vocation from above. G. Bertoni has caught – fully – this calling during the *mission of St Fermo*, and saw it confirmed in the *title* of "*Apostolic Missionary*" conferred on him by the Pope. In the participation to the only *Mission of Christ*, any calling and any consecration, constitute a mandate of *unrepeatable originality*, as is demonstrated, in the consecrated life, by the *multiplicity of charisms* (cf LG ch. VI, 43).

Perhaps the formula "*Apostolic Mission*" has entered in our capitular texts when *theology* and *charism* did not yet have (for many) a vivifying clarity. Within the *only Mission of Christ* shared by the

Church, the *specificity* did not find its right place. It is different, for example, the Const 1 of 1970: “*they dedicate themselves to the realization of the apostolic mission*”, from that of 1982: “*following Christ, sent by the Father [...] to serve the Church with the various ministries that are proper to his vocation*”. If we are attentive to this, we shall perhaps understand better also the beautiful text of Fr Lenotti to the novices, (CS III, p. 386-539).

2.5.- The “*Obsequium Episcoporum*”

As regards the “*Obsequium Episcoporum*”, the expression seems to me that it has not yet received a shared understanding among the Stigmatines, even after the special *Chapter*! It has been the object of suggestions for modifications starting from the beginning (*obsequium, auxilium*) and also recently. It is realized in the *Modus* of the CF 2 (which takes on again the *Decree* for the nomination of Fr Gaspar as *Apostolic Missionary*), but it is not to be divided from the other formula, which is a priority component of the *finis*: “*Missionarii Apostolici*”.

*I report again the words of Fr Stofella on the design or the original idea of Bertoni for his Institute: “He wrote: “Finis: Missionarii Apostolici” and he integrated it with the specification that the Decree expressly does not have: “in obsequium Episcoporum”. As regards the “modus” he continued still copying from the decree: obedience and dependence on the direction of the Ordinaries for all that pertains to the exercise of the apostolic ministry in their territory”*¹⁵⁸.

In reflecting upon this aspect of the charism several times (in the *special general Chapter* of 1970, but also – as noted above – in the *general Chapter* of 1988), reference was made to a decisive component of the *Bertonian charism, specialization and competence*. Neither an availability to the requests of the Bishop has substance, nor would have it an availability on the part of the Institute, if it could not avail itself of persons qualified for the new or urgent needs (that John Paul II calls “*challenges*”). The “*parati ad omnia*” is positive as much as it expresses an interior attitude, but it would be frustrated if it consisted of “*generic jack-of-all-trade*” persons.

¹⁵⁸ *Il Ven. Gaspar Bertoni*, p. 42 (this text has been quoted again above).

The Constitutions of the Founder about the quality of persons at the *spiritual, doctrinal and cultural* level are extremely demanding, because of his Congregation's charism of "*Apostolic Missionaries at the obsequium or help to the Bishops*". As a *body* it is requested an *excellence* which is first of all an attitude, but that includes also the acquiring of instruments proper for the requested service. This cannot be reached unless there is a *program* that is defined with a precise aim, and *attention to the signs of the times*.

Not having always kept in mind in our formation and apostolic programs the Bertonian degree system, in its deeper meaning, has surely not been beneficial for the realization of our ecclesial service and before that for the shaping up of our identity¹⁵⁹.

We know the creativity of the Marian Oratories times: Fr Gaspar was a driving force for boys and youth. He was followed by seminarians and young priests that were fascinated by his personality and by the apostolic commitment to be shared. But this is not all. In Bertoni's house there were evening events of which Cavattoni spoke: "*Every day we were studying together especially Aquinas and Liguori, whose moral theology (which was looked down at first by the older generation with suspicion and called it too loose and light) we were first in Verona to follow it and to make it most useful and respected*".

Culture and apostolic engagement are instruments for this growth in fraternity, and areas of deeply sharing in the common search for the good of neighbor. To put oneself in an *attitude of permanent formation* constitutes the best preparation for an *interior and concrete availability* for the needs that develop within the Church. Bertoni added

¹⁵⁹ Fr Bertoni wrote: "In the ways of the Lord, not to move forward means to go backwards. We find ourselves in the middle of a rushing stream. If we stop there, and make no effort to go upstream, there is always the danger of being carried downstream. If one does not wish to withdraw, he must force himself to advance. In the concrete, it's better to set oneself on the way to perfection, not so much in general terms, but rather in detail, fighting to conquer our predominant passion or to acquire the virtue that we lack most. Just as in school the pupil is not admitted to the higher course unless he has already passed the lower ones, so too, we cannot wait from the Lord for the higher gifts of grace unless we have corresponded to the earlier inspirations". (*The grammar of St Gaspar*, 14)

to the commitment of preparation, the full *availability and abandonment* to the will of God, an ecclesial spirituality that made him *trust in the designs of God*.

2.6.- The “opening up to all ministries”

The “*opening to all ministries*” is an expression that is recurrent: but we can understand its Bertonian sense only provided that we clarify also the priority of those who “*appear more corresponding to the sound tradition: preaching, assistance to the clergy and the [Christian] formation of youth*” (Chapter 1970, 7); *but above all*, provided that we safeguard the *graduality* of the ministries, as described in CF 71-76, towards what of more specific and qualifying the *Apostolic Missionary* in his formation and apostolic identity (cf. Decree of *Propaganda Fide* of 20 Dec 1817; CF 1-2).

2.7.- The “missions to the people”

The missions to the people is not just a ministry, nor many ministries, but it is an extraordinary and privileged means for the realization of the Mission of the Church. In its origin and development the “mission to the people” (especially today, but not only), is translated and understood in the light of the “new evangelization”, in the most intense way, expressed:

a.- by the *themes* that are offered – in the sense of the structure of the *Catech. Of the Cath. Church* -,

b.- by the *initiatives* that are initiated – as it is demonstrated by the new adopted modalities,

c.- by the rich *ministerial collaboration* between priests, consecrated persons and laity,

d.- by the apostolic thrust to *re-found* the faith in the Christian community (cf. *Apostolic Mission, missions to the people, apostolic missionary*, ms 2003).

2.8.- The risk

A *flattening* in the relaization of the *Apostolic Mission* is always menacing at the horizon. The opinion of the capitular Commission between 1976-1982 was such that this *flattening* seemed to manifest itself, for

example, during the *General Chapter XI* (1890), where the preoccupation for the school – a ministry that in itself is also ours, where a Christian education is possible for the availability of persons and for the concrete context – passed through a *generalized equalization* (they implicitly lamented its having been previously a *secondary activity*).

2.9.- Bertoni the living rule

Saint Gaspar, in his spiritual and pastoral maturity, made a most researched sermon on Saint Zeno. In this speech we can see sketched, through the person and the activity of St Zeno, *the characteristics of the apostolic man*, as well as the *virtues and vocation* of the preacher of the *Word of God* dreamed of by St Gaspar. The first attention of St Gaspar is for the *situation of the Church*, of theology, culture, society... at the time of St Zeno.

In the experience of Zeno Bertoni reads the *mirror image of his time and of his listeners*. The 1800, influenced by the novelties of the Revolution, Napoleon's overriding powers and the illuminist ideology.... Demanded of the *Church* (and in her of *theology*, and of *culture*) to re-appropriate *in renewed terms* of the Christian doctrinal and cultural patrimony. How should one position himself vis-à-vis this ecclesial and social situation? Fr Gaspar asked himself this question very earnestly: *What does the Lord ask of us through these situations and these problems that we have to face?"*

How did St Zeno relate to his time, in his pastoral service? Bertoni answers the question with an *image* that is *expressing the pastoral difficulties of all times*:

"A little garden that a farmer cultivates faithfully but as if without giving public notice ["furtively"]... The laws of the nation, that the public opinion was supporting, intended to destroy all signs that appeared Christian. The high authorities and the very emperors were all keen in executing these laws and looked for all means to eradicate the faith".

Bertoni was hinting at the dramatic pagan wave produced by *Julian the Apostate*, and the strengthening of the *pagan cult* especially outside the city centers, and the *Arian abuses* against the faithful Christians, with the support of the imperial power. And he added: *"neither could*

one say that the opinions spread with perfect sophistry by the astute philosophers were poorly planned and studied”.

The pastoral strategy of Zeno consisted in *conquering the hearts of the pagans with meekness and serenity*, and capacity of waiting in patience the opportune occasions. St Gaspar (with a war image) sees him “*valiant soldier, armed with a sword, shield and arrows, sent to conquer the spoils of his enemies, with the promise of a sure victory*”.

We consider again the *image of the soldier* to underline the instruments that each shepherd has to equip himself with. Fr Lenotti, second successor of Fr Bertoni, writes:

“After the celebration of his First Mass, as the desire and zeal for God’s glory and the good of souls were growing in him, he continued his studies with increased enthusiasm and solicitude... He spent hours on end in the libraries, sometimes in the Municipal of St Sebastiano, sometimes in that of the Canons, sometimes in the other of the Giuliani, and the rest at home...”

Camillo C. Bresciani witnesses: “*His daily effort was the study of the palimpsests, the parchments, the codexes and the examination of manuscripts*”. The same Lenotti adds (completing the current partial information) that when the famous Angelo Mai came to Verona for research work in the Capitular library, “*the vicar general did not think that there was a better man to be given him as a guide in finding what he was looking for, than Fr Gaspar.*”.

The image of the “*soldier*” shows the care for *anadequate equipment*, lest the mission end in a failure. St Gaspar witnesses this, when he describes the experience he had at St Ignatius’ altar, during a visit with the group of the participants in the Spiritual Exercises:

“In a visit with my companions to the altar of St. Ignatius, there was great devotion and recollection, with great interior sweetness and some tears, even though the visit was brief. It seemed to me that the saint gave us a hearty welcome... It seemed to me that he wanted to say: ‘Onward, soldiers of Christ, gird yourselves with fortitude, take up the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the divine word, and fight with the ancient spirit. Have my spirit come live again in you, and in others through you.’”

"St Zeno was like a sharpen sword cutting through the Word of God of which he was the servant... God spoke to Zeno and his mouth became a sharpened sword, just because of the Word of God of which he was the minister".

The beautiful, elaborated, solemn speech became (and remains) a gift for the Veronese people. It is also something more, almost a *manifesto*, a *message* for the mission of the shepherd. Bertoni communicates his thought hiding himself behind the words and life of others: through the life of St Zeno, he talks to the *shepherds* that he dreamed of for the church of his time, and of how he thought *his very mission*.

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**INTERPRETATION
OF “THE AIM”
AND “THE MANNER”
of our Founder’s Constitutions**

– Deliberation 9 of the XXXIV General Chapter –
September 2002

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ABBREVIATIONS

- CDC: Codex Canon Law
CF: Constitutions of the Founder
CS: Collectanea Stigmatina
Cost.: Constitutions of the Congregation
EP: Epistolario of the Founder
MP: Memoriale Privato of the Founder
Ms: Manoscritto
Mss: Manoscritti of the Founder
PVC: Pagine di vita cristiana of the Founder
ST: Summa Theologica [S. Thomas]

FOREWORD

Deliberation 9 of our XXXIV General Chapter, says thus: “The General Council will appoint a commission of experts to scientifically study the Founder’s Constitutions as the primary document regarding what Fr. Bertoni intended for his Congregation” (*il Bertoniano*, Jan-June 2000, pg.224).

The General Council, after nominating the Members of the *Commission on the Founder’s Constitutions*, clarifies the goal of the commission: “their duty is to place in the context of the life of St.Gaspar this text (the Constitutions) which he wrote little by little, and to discover ‘his spirit’ (*Lettera*’ of 7.2.2001).

Again, the pamphlet ‘*Euntes Docete*’ of the already mentioned General Council, in referring ‘how far the inter-capitular commissions are’, reminds us that another duty of the same commission is *the interpretation* of ‘*The Aim*’ and ‘*the Manner*’ of the Founder’s Constitutions according to our forefathers’ (*Euntes Docete*, n.12, Jan.2003).

From all this, therefore, it seems very clear that one wants ‘to seek out and understand the original plan of the Congregation that was in the heart of the Founder’ (*Il Bertoniano*, Jan.-June 2000, pg.224): and this, precisely, will be our goal in the present work of research.

INTRODUCTION

Our Founder's Constitutions (CF), as we know, consist of Rules or Directives (Norms) which show us "how St. Gaspar wanted his Congregation", in a very special way as they lay out the '**Aim**' and '**the Manner**'.

To make sure, then, that we are doing a proper job of *interpretation* of both of them, we chose the methodology of the present Code of Canon Law, which invites us to analyze :

1. the "**text**", i.e. "each and every word used in formulating the law",

2. the "**context**", i.e. when "the real meaning of each and every word is not clear, then one has to look for the context", or "for the words, taken as a whole, and put in comparison among them and with what comes before or follows". But, "if the words of the law (or of the rule) both in the text and in the context are clear, then they are the only rule of interpretation" (Comment to the Canon Law", Urbaniana, Rome 1985, pg.19)

Further more, in order to complete these notions, the same "Comment to the Canon Law", says that one has to keep clearly in mind the following points:

a) "**the purpose of the law**", i.e. the purpose 'of the legislator at the time of the promulgation';

b) "**the circumstances of the law**", i.e. "the occasion, the time, the place etc. where the law was promulgated";

c) "**the mind of the legislator**", i.e. "his habitual mental disposition, as it may appear from a certain number of general directives, that guide his activity. Concretely the mind of the legislator could appear from the

subject of the law, from the purpose, from the circumstances of the law, from some declarations of the same legislator, from eventual comparisons of the given law with the legislation taken as a whole" (Comment...)

Therefore, the "*interpretation*" is the juridical act or action that aims at determining clearly the meaning of a given law" (CCL, Can.16)

After having examined the meaning of '*interpretation*', we shall now explain the other words that form the title of our work.

" The Aim "

➤ What does "**AIM**" mean ?

➤ One can find different definitions of the word 'Aim':

1. "It's the beginning and the end of any human act" (S. Thomas ST,II,II,q.1,a,III)

2. "It's what gives the shape, the specification, the proper face" (Fr. Nello, 'How our Founder conceived our Congregation', CS IV,pg.265)

3. It's what gives the meaning and the evaluation of anything", or "It's the reason of the existence of all things ("Dizionario di Filosofia", Rizzoli Editore, Milano 1976, p. 166; 168; 360).

4. "It's the reason why somebody does something" ("Dicionário de Direito Canônico", Edições Loyola, S. Paulo, 1993, p. 350).

5. "The Aim of any state or Religion, is like one's own form, from which one takes his own difference, that constitutes a given religion and the difference from the others" (Suarez, in P. De Paoli, "*Mission Popular Missions, Apostolic Missionary*", p. 170).

By keeping all these different definitions in mind, in our specific case, we might say that :

"**The Aim** is the beginning ("**Apostolic Missionaries**") and the end ("**at the service of Bishops**"), pointed out by our Charism"

In other words, "**the Aim** is our own Identity", according to the mind of Fr. Bertoni (P. De Paoli, *Idem*, p. 170).

"The Manner"

➤ What does "**The Manner**" mean?

Even here, various are the definitions of the term:

1. "The qualities attached to a given thing", or different forms or qualifications present in things", or "It's the vital principle (the 'spirit') which animates everything" ("Dicionário de Direito Canônico", Edições Loyola, S. Paulo, 1993, p. 304; 435).

2. "It includes the determinations (modalities) which are not yet included in the definition of something" (Pietro Hispano, "Summ. Log.", 1. 28, vocabolo "**Modo**", in Nicola Abbagnano, "Dicionário de Filosofia", Martins Fontes Editora, S. Paulo, 1998, p. 679).

By keeping all these different definitions in mind, once again, in our specific case, we might say that:

"**The manner**" is the proper spirit ("**at the service of Bishops**") pointed out by our Charism (it's the end of the "**aim**", as seen above).

In other words, "**the manner**" is our own identity, which urges us materialize our "**aim**", according to the mind of Fr. Bertoni.

NB- At this point, it seems convenient to explain yet another term, which we shall meet later on, in order to complete the meanings of "**The aim**" and "**The manner**":

➤ What does the word "**The means**", mean (CF 6) ?

- "They are the *resources* towards the objective" (St. Thomas, **ST**, II, II, q. VIII, a. II).

In our specific case: they are all those proper resources, *spiritual, cultural and material*, suggested by Fr. Bertoni, that help us toward the practice and the implementation of the "**aim**" and of "**the manner**".

A very important observation. Before starting analyzing "**the Aim**" and "**the Manner**" in the different documents suggested by the Bibliography, it seems to me very interesting to underline quite a number of '*characteristics or differences*' of our Congregation and of its respective **CF**, in comparison, for example, with the identity of the project of St. Ignatius or of the Company of Jesus, and even with the identity of other Missionary Congregations (Rosminians, Passionists, Redemptorists...):

1- At first glance, one can notice that Fr. Bertoni, though using documents from different Authors (Suarez, St. Thomas etc.), 'selects, summarises, adapts everything to the fundamental light received by God, in order to build up his Institute.

2- "His preference goes towards a group of Priests, that resembles the Apostolic College, at the disposal of *Bishops*, in view of ministries which are not easy for Diocesan Priests, in their Parishes."

3- "The centrality of orientation at the service of *Bishops* in their Dioceses."

4- "The great importance of preaching 'popular Missions' and to guide spiritual exercises to the Clergy or preaching to the people"

5- "The influence of the example of St. Louis Gonzaga toward a life of penance".

6- "The importance of the devotion to the Sacred Stigmata, built up little by little."

7- "The 'sponsality' of the spiritual life (sponsal aspect), in relation to St. Joseph and Our Lady"

8- "The way he felt about poverty (in the perspective of the 'gratuity' (P. Jurado S.J., *Il Carisma di San Gaspare Bertoni e I ministeri propri della Congregazione da lui fondata*", manoscritto 2002, p. 6-7; anche: CF, "*Introduzione*", p. 19).

Having said that, and in order to complete the *Introduction*, we take again our criteria about *the Interpretation*, as we left them above:

1- The "**Context**" has to be compared always to the "**Text**", to make sure that the meaning is well grasped.

2- "**The objective of the law**" has to be in harmony with the purpose expressed by Fr. Bertoni.

3- "**The circumstances of the law**" must include and keep in mind:

a) the *occasion* or *occasions*, welcomed by Fr. Bertoni and by his first Companions as 'providential signs', like the visit to the Altar of St. Ignatius, the Mission at St. Fermo, the School at Stimite, the pontifical title of 'Apostolic Missionary', and *any other possible inspiration from God*;

b) the *time* or the *historical context*, which were, as we know, time of social commotion (the napoleonic wars), and ecclesial commotion (jansenism, illuminism), with moral corruption and even clergy depravation;

c) the *place*: Verona was not exempt from the above mentioned reality; in fact it had been invaded by the napoleonic army,

following the austrian previous occupation, beside the spreading of the jansenistic and illuministic ideas, together with the hostility both from the civil and church authorities against any kind of change

4- **“ The mind of the legislator”**, i.e. the above mentioned circumstances, in St. Gaspar and his companions, built up the conviction of the necessity of “*far catena* = to get together”, and the need of “new ministers (priests) purposely prepared by the Spirit, equipped with suitable arms, with specific battle plans”, in order to face and to renew such reality. (P. De Paoli, “*Mission...*”, p. 164).

I

SAINT GASPAR BERTONI

Development

The “living rule “ (Const. 12), from which we can get the real identity of our Congregation and of its Constitutions (CF), is SAINT GASPAR BERTONI

His first document to be studied (in reality the first is the Autograph: CF, pg.45, n.3), is called:

1 - COMPENDIUM RUDE (Comprehensive Over-View)

The first two rules (or laws) that one finds, CF 1 and CF 2, describe the “Aim” and the “Manner” of our Congregation, and these will be the first to be analyzed. The following CF 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, which develop the “Manner”, shall be studied later on.

The Aim

“Objective: Apostolic Missionaries” for the service of Bishops” (CF 1).

The “text” puts together both a *definition* and a *title*,:

a) the *definition*: Fr. Bertoni took it from what he knew about the

person of the ‘*Missionaries*’, i.e. “those clerics, members of Congregations or pious Institutes, who dedicate themselves to the ‘Mission’, whose first goal is to preach the ‘urban or sub-urban Missions, and even elsewhere “ (P. De Paoli, “*Missione...*”, p. 157);

b) the *title* was the one He received from the Holy See and which was conferred (ad hominem = on a personal bases) to Diocesan Priests, especially dedicated to such Parish Missions” (*Idem*, p. 157).

The “context” in fact is in perfect harmony with the goal desired by Fr. Bertoni, i.e. to have a Congregation devoted to the “service of Bishops”, devoted to the preaching of popular Missions as *main objective* or *essential element* (not exclusive, *neither* restrictive); devoted as well to other ministries “in order “to accomplish the *specific mission*” and in order to point out the identity “that expresses his project” (NB: “*Apostolic missionaries*”, is the *principle* expressed by our *Charism*”) (P. De Paoli, “*Missione...*”, p. 170).

NB - It is convenient, here, to remind ourselves why Fr. Bertoni put together with the “objective”, the clause ‘*at the service of Bishops*’.

It is because the “text” is a “qualifying addition, (not determining), and not only regarding the internal life”; while the “context” reveals that, under such a profile, the “obsequium, service” was not to be understood as a pure and simple subjection, as if the Bishops had full authority over the Congregation, but “help” and “service” yes, and happily. So much so that, Fr. Bertoni wanted a Congregation whose goal was supposed to be different from that of the Company of Jesus, i.e. his Congregation should have as a “focal point, the service to the Bishops in their own Dioceses”, but “his way”, meaning by that “as a help towards the most urgent needs of their Dioceses”; unlike the Jesuits who had (and still have today) as central point the “service to the Pope, and this through a Vow. (CF, N. 1-2, p. 43; P. De Paoli, “*Missione...*”, p. 144; P. Jurado S.J., “*Il Carisma...*”, p. 7).

The Manner

"Manner": "to work under the direction of, and dependent on the Ordinaries of those places in which the Missions may be offered The Missionaries are to be totally submissive to these Bishops,, concerning all that pertains to the exercise of their Apostolic Ministry, by receiving from them beforehand their permission, along with the necessary faculties, always observing the guidelines set down by these Ordinaries concerning the places and the time in the exercise of their ministry" (From the Decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the faith, December 20, 1817" (CF2)

The "text" detaches the "spirit of obsequium or help"

The "context" then reminds us that, "outside that, i.e. regarding the internal religious life of the Congregation, the dependence and the obsequium to the Bishops, has no reason of existing" (P. Nello, in CS IV, p. 267).

NB- While talking about "to preach the Missions" and about "Apostolic Ministry", it is important to clarify the meaning of "Apostolic Mission" (CF 7)

The first thing to be said, "going with the biblical meaning of the term", is that "Apostolic Mission" "is the mission entrusted by Christ to the Twelve Apostles to go to the end of the world, preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God (Evangelization) and to implement the 'building up of the Church' in all Nations" (P. De Paoli, "Mission...", p. 104-105).

The second thing to be said is that this is the perspective of Fr. Bertoni in CF 7, 76, 163, 182, which shall be analyzed later on.

And the third thing to be said is that all this later will be confirmed by the statements of the "Programmatic Document" of the General Chapter of 1988, which Fr. Nello reports in one of his recent publications: "In perfect harmony with our Saintly Founder and with our most genuine tradition, evangelization (is our duty), in its various forms of preaching, in a very special way by the missions to the people and catechesis "; the preaching, starting by the missions to the people up to evangelization, is a typical Stigmatine ministry, to be encouraged by all means ("Il

Bertoniano", Gennaio-Giugno 1988, p. 15-16; P. Nello, "*La realizzazione della Missione Apostolica nella storia degli Stigmatini*", Verona 2002, n. 7).

2 - AUTOGRAPH

The second document of Fr. Bertoni (which in truth is the first one, as we have already noted), is called: AUTOGRAPH.

The Document appears to be "a more detailed description of some of the most essential elements of stigmatine life" (P. Henchey, "*St. Gaspar Bertoni, Original Constitutions*", manoscritto 2002, p. 200)

It's under such a profile that we shall examine how Fr. Bertoni will proposes the "Aim" and the "Manner" of the Congregation.

The Aim

"The aim of this Union or Congregation of Priests is to serve God our Lord and his Church free of charge, i.e. without hoping or expecting anything as earthly recompense" (Aut 1)

The "text" does not mention the clause "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops".

The "context", instead, reminds us of "the missionary service", done for "God and his Church", even if, in Aut.1, does seem to be a "Manner" (NB: "to serve", "free of charge").

NB: It could be that Fr. Bertoni either meant the "aim" to be already included in

the "context" of the 6 numbers of the "Autograph", or, perhaps, he was still

considering what precise "objective" to give to his Congregation

It could be !..and so much so that the "Autograph", in reality, as we have seen already, was elaborated before the "Compendium Rude".

The Manner

"In any exercise in favor of souls, one has to observe exactly the directives coming from the Bishop and to get from him the faculties and ordinary licenses" (Aut.2).

"To be always available for any requests of the Bishop, to preach, to hear confessions, to teach both in the city or in the countryside, in any corner of the Diocese, in the Seminary or to the people" (Aut. 3)

"To be able to do that more speedily, one has to be free from any particular or perpetual care of souls in Parishes or places, especially where there is a fixed residence or any kind of ecclesial dignity" (Aut.4)

"To be able to accomplish such an "Objective", one has to attend very seriously to his perfection, according to his state" (Aut.5)

"In second place, to attend aslo very seriously to the acquisition of any church science especially moral (Aut.6)"

Such "texts" and the "context" of all these numbers, contain concepts in perfect harmony with the content of the "Compendium Rude", and which underline the main points of our Congregation (NB: "spirit of gratuity", "spirit of radical poverty", "spirit of readiness and of availability", "spirit of freedom of action", "spirit of one's personal perfection", "spirit of studiosity").

Having analyzed the "Compendium Rude", which mingles so nicely with the Autograph, let us now study the other Constitutions:

3 - CONSTITUTIONS

There are many things to be considered, before analyzing the texts: "When did our Founder write them ?" and "How did He write them?" "Sources of the Constitutions".

"The juridical structure of the Congregation, as it was conceived by Fr. Bertoni".

“The spirit of the Congregation”, “that imbued our Founder and assisted him, and that he transmitted to his sons”.

“The historical events of the Constitutions (CF, Introduction, pg.15-35)

We invite the reader to go into all the above mentioned details.

Again, besides all these juridical studies, we have to add a note by Fr. G. Stofella, which we shall keep in mind during the study of the *Constitutions*:

“We, therefore, shall consider the ‘old’ Constitutions, not as juridical norms, but as an ascetical treatise, that kind of asceticism without which, the mere juridical norms will remain just external forms, neither will they go above what is visible, while our goal is much higher than just what is visible” (*Idem, ibidem, pg.35*)

Let us see now the other numbers of the CF. regarding

The Aim

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

CF 49 can be found in *Part Four*; which deals with “*Progress*”; in Chapter two, which is called “*Progress in Ecclesiastical Doctrines*”, and it explains and determines what is said in n° 6 of *Compendium* (CF, N. Cap.II, pg. 69)

The “Text” does not include the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”.

The Context”, instead, underlines three important aspects connected with it: the ‘*contemplative*’ aspect, the ‘*active*’ aspect and the ‘*studiosity*’; and it reminds us of St. Thomas who says thus:” *the contemplari and contemplata aliis tradere*, becomes the climax of all the Congregations which dedicate themselves to teaching and to

preaching, because very near to the fullness of Episcopal Order” (NB: “a science which is not ordinary but perfect” (ST,II-II, q. 188, a.6).

“No one pronounces solemn Vows, unless he who merits the Grade of Apostolic Missionary in this Institute and in accord with its scope”(CF 85)

CF 85 can be found in Part sixth, which deals with “*The vows which are pronounced in this Congregation*”; in Chapter II, which is called “*The Vows of the Congregation*”.

The “Text” does not include the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”.

The “Context”, instead, reminds us that Fr. Bertoni wanted to found a “Religious Order” similar to that of the Company of Jesus (which also deals with popular Missions), but “in his own way”, i.e. “at the service of Bishops” (NB: “Apostolic Missionary”) (CF, “*Introduzione*”, p. 19-20; CF 158; CF, N. 85, p. 85; EP, “*Lettera 54*”, 17-8-1816, p. 130, alla Naudet).

“Although the purpose of this Congregation is to offer assistance to the Church under the direction of the Bishops, through the various and proper ministries of its vocation; and since this seems at times to be an arduous and difficult undertaking, and, if it will be measured against human weakness, one could believe that is exposed to dangers - nonetheless, this project of our vocation, therefore, is not one that is imprudent and rash. This is so, firstly, because it is not based on human resources, but we believe that it is to be carried out with the grace of the Holy Spirit, for He Who has begun a good work in you will bring it to perfection ...[Ph 1:6], if He is not hindered in this by us. For this is the special grace of this vocation, which is more powerful than all dangers and difficulties. Furthermore, through this plan, we do not propose to expose ourselves to dangers, nor to go to this, or that place, or to undertake one activity over another, but to follow the direction of the established Bishop whom the Holy Spirit has placed to rule the Church of God [cf. Ac 20:28]. This means is sufficiently safe in not erring in the way of the Lord. Finally, the concern of the Congregation is to be both in disciplining and in

forming its members as well as in selecting them, and in sustaining and strengthening them. (CF 185).

CF 185 can be found in Part Nine, which deals with “*Concerning the Grade of the Professed*”, in Chapter VII, which is called “*The Principal purpose of the Professed Fathers*”.

The “Text” does not include the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”.

The “Context”, instead, reminds us that “the grace of the Holy Spirit”, “the direction of the ‘Orthodox’ (=Catholic) Bishop”, and “the providence of Religion”, all these are the support to our apostolic mission, even if “an arduous and difficult undertaking” (NB: “to serve the Church, devotion to the Church”)

Furthermore, since the principal end for our Congregation is the conversion of souls, this is achieved for the most part by conversing with human beings, and by speaking about divine realities gently and discreetly. For this, moreover, religious confreres can become proficient in this when they are accustomed to having conversations among themselves. These more often ought to be concerning divine matters. And thus, they learn by practice to be silent at the proper times, and also to speak fruitfully and prudently at the proper times. This is the supreme kind of silence, as St. Ambrose pointed out [In Ps 118, Oct. 2, and c. 10, Book I, de Off.], noting: ‘Pythagoras imposed silence on his own followers, so that by not speaking one would learn how to speak. David, though, noted that we would learn how to speak by talking, for how can one learn without exercise? Or, how can there be progress, without practice?’ And he concludes: ‘Therefore, let those who would like to learn caution in speaking, would not neglect those means which are natural; let them practice self-control. (CF 255).

CF 255 can be found in Part Ten, which deals with “*The unity or the Union of the Congregation*”, of Section two, which speaks about “the positive means”, in Chapter VII, which is called “*Common recreation and dialogue*”.

The “Text” does not mention the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”

The “Context”, instead, reminds us that evangelization has got, as an aim, even the ‘conversion of souls’ (NB: ‘by talking with gentleness and discretion’)

Since the end of the Congregation is to work for the salvation of souls, and as a result, this asks for ministries that are accommodated to this end. Each member should in the very first place work for and desire first and with greater commitment the salvation of his own brothers, over that of externs, because charity is most ordered. Hence, just as each one is inclined to seeking first his own spiritual salvation before that of others; so too, as far as the others are concerned, he would intend first and seek the spiritual salvation of his own brothers, and that of the entire Congregation, before that of externs. (CF 262).

CF 262 as well, can be found in Part Ten, which deals with “*the unity or the Union of the Congregation*”, of Section Two, which deals with “*the positive means*”, in Chapter IX, that is called “*Mutual concern for the Spiritual Progress of the Confreres*”

The “Text” does not mention the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”.

The “Context”, instead, underlines that, being the aim of each Missionary to look for “the salvation of souls”, he, nevertheless cannot forget that “charity is most ordered”, therefore Confreres must always be on the very first place,, as regards to their “spiritual salvation” (NB: “salvation of the entire body of the Congregation”

As regards to the “Manner”, being the series of numbers which deal with the theme, too long, we have chosen those CF which, in the stigmatine tradition, have always been considered as the ‘main ones’ according to the ‘style of life’, as well as ‘characteristic spirit’, ‘proper ministries’, and ‘various ministries’ (at the end of each number we shall indicate the CF which are most in harmony with them”). As for the other numbers we suggest to the reader to go deeper into them.

Let us now analyze the:

The Manner

(‘ Proper spirit’)

“To serve God and the Church with total gratuity”(CF 3).

The “Text” deals with the ‘*spirit of gratuity*’, in the perspective of an emotional and real poverty (*“To begin the undertaking one ought to have acquired great and heroic virtue: the necessary fund is Poverty; after that, all other virtues”*(MP, 23-7-1809).

The “Context” reminds us that “our Founder was so much detached, to the point of refusing even spontaneous offerings, and that his companions took such thing and made it their own custom” (NB: *“to serve God and the Church”*) (“] (CF, N. 3 ff., p. 45; in consonance: CF 6, 43-44, 67-68, 90-104, 133-137, 141, 156, 225-226)

“Free of all dignities, residences, benefices, and the perpetual and particular care of souls and Nuns” (CF 4) .

The “Text” deals with the “*spirit of freedom of action*”

The “Context” reminds us about the “*aim of such rule*”, i.e. “to avoid the danger of ambition, vanity and of any other inconveniences” [NB: “freedom from”] (CF, N. 4, p. 45-46; in consonance: CF 25-26, 72-77, 113, 142-143, 152, 155, 163 n. 3, 182-183, 234-241).

“Ready to go anywhere in the Diocese and in the world” (CF 5).

The “Text” deals with the “*spirit of mobility*”.

The “Context” reminds us about an interesting note of Fr. Lenotti: “We must like soldiers, ready and available to everybody...for the whole world: is anybody would think differently, it would be clear enough that he does not have the spirit of our Congregation” [NB: “available”] (CF, N. 5, p. 46; in consonance: CF 57, 62, 184, 186).

“The means: the perfection of each one” (CF 6).

The “Text” deals with the “*spirit of one’s spiritual perfection*”.

The “Context” reminds us of those inspired words of our Founder: *“When in a Religious Congregation each member neglects his own*

personal perfection, the Congregation can not proceed, and if it does act, it does it without soul and only in a bad manner “ [NB: “his own”] (CF, N. 6, p. 46-47; in consonance: CF 47-48).

“Perfection in ecclesiastical doctrines” (CF 6).

The “Text” deals with the “*spirit of studiosity*” and the “*spirit of excellency*”.

The “Context” reminds us about a requirement of Fr. Bertoni: “*Knowing that studies are for the glory of God while doing apostolic work among the people, it is clear that primarily and above all one has to promote this divine glory in himself through the weapon of studies*” [NB: “the perfect”] (EP, “*Lettera 34*”, 25-7-1813, p. 91, alla Naudet; in consonance: CF 26, 31 c), 37, 40-42, 49-72, 78, 122-127).

“Community Life” (CF 6).

The “Text” deals with the “*spirit of community life*”.

The “Context”, of course, reminds us “one heart and one soul”, and St. John’s Gospel, so many times quoted by Fr. Bertoni “From this all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” “ [NB: “common life”] (Gv 13, 35; in consonance: CF 43, 90-104, 133-137, 187-266).

“The perpetual exercise of obedience, chastity and poverty in all aspects” (CF 6).

The “Text” deals with the “*spirit of religious life*” and the “*spirit of filial abandonment to the Divine Providence*”

The “Context” reminds us of the need for a total and radical “*sponsal love*”, in the fidelity to the assumed commitments and in the witnessing of being “signs of the kingdom of God”, under the flag of charity (“The Vows are but a means, in front of charity, which is the aim. And besides that, it is the aim which controls all the means” [NB: “perpetual and in all aspects”] (EP, “*Lettera 85*”, without date, p. 174, alla Naudet; in consonance: CF 83-151, Part 10)

“The program of living regarding food, clothing and lodging, will be in harmony with the more observant clergy, among whom they live, and for the edification of the faithful both regarding Christian parsimony and evangelical poverty”(CF 6).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of Christian parsimony*” and the “*spirit of evangelical poverty*”

The “Context” reminds us about the way of becoming the “joy and the crown of the Bishop”, and “the mirror and the flower among the clergy, for the piety, the studies, the counsels, the example and for the prudent and untiring zeal “[NB: “the way of living”] (CF, N. 6, p. 47; in consonance: CF 26, 65, 77-78, 90-104, 128-137, 227-233).

The promotion from one Grade to another differs according to the qualities of those received. Some, whose talent and piety are equal to the task, are to be promoted to the perfect priestly task, assuming the Apostolic Mission. Others, however, whose strength and faculties of mind and body do suffice, are to be promoted to the perfect service and assistance of the Missionaries. (CF 7).

The “Text” underlines” the “*spirit of the Apostolic Mission*”.

The “Context” reminds us whatever we have seen in the analysis of CF 2 [NB: “the qualities of the subjects”] (above: p. 280).

NB- As we know, the “distinction of Grades, similar to that of the Company of Jesus, was not admitted by the Holy See”. “Let God allow – notes Fr. Stofella – the spirit to continue : zeal and precision in preparing and in everything,(i.e.) to aim always at the highest” (CF, N. 7, p. 47; 49; CF 85-86, 152-160, 302).

The Program of Government is be as follows, that there be one Superior for life over all, whom the Sodality will elect for itself. Then, every individual house is to have its own Director whom the Superior of the entire Sodality will name for a three year term, or confirm him for a second similar term. To this Director will be added assistants and ministers, as the Economist, the Procurator, and two Masters - one for spiritual matters, and the other to manage the external conducting of the community. (CF 8).

The “Text” underlines the “ spirit of the principle of authority” and the “spirit of submission”

The “Context” reminds us of the need of “a great spirit of submission and an obedience always more perfect” (in dialogue) [NB: “chosen by the Congregation”] (CF, N. 8, p. 49; CF, “Introduzione”, p. 22; in consonance: CF 160, 298-307).

After having completed the analysis of the “Compendium rude”, let us now consider some other more CF, which underline our “peculiar spirit”, our “proper ministries”, and our “various ministries” which refer to the “Manner”.

The Manner

(Peculiar Spirit)

The first means of achieving Spiritual Progress is Prayer.

In addition to the daily, common prayers and those that are obligatory, and which are contained most especially in the Divine Office and Mass, to be celebrated when this is possible by divine grace attentively and devoutly, the following prayers are offered:

Every morning meditation before Mass for one half hour. Then, Spiritual Reading after lunch, for twenty minutes.

The three-fold examination of conscience, namely, in the morning as soon as one awakes; at noon; and before retiring at night.

One should listen to sermons which are publicly delivered in our churches, as well as at home, for the purpose of exciting devotion.

Everyone should make the Spiritual Exercises for eight or ten days each year. Each shall go to Sacramental Confession to the regular Confessor once a week.

The manifestation of one's own conscience is to be made to the Superior, either in Sacramental Confession, or outside it, whenever he sees fit.

The manifestation of the faults of another, or of any of his serious temptations that are known outside of Confession, is to be made out of charity. (CF 47)

CF 47 can be found in Part four, which deals with the “Progress”, in Chapter I, which is called “Spiritual Development”.

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of prayer” [“Prayer is the life of our life and the soul of our soul: it is like the breath (cf. Ms 3412)], and the spirit of charitable report”

The "Context" reminds us some of the substantial spiritual practices; besides that it speaks about the "report", as a means of helping the spiritual growth of the Confrere" [NB: "The first means"] (CF, N. 47, p. 67; in consonance: CF 42, 66, 110, 118, 127, 152, 164, 222).

NB- It is worthwhile to note that nothing is said about "the daily prayer of the Holy Rosary" as well as "the monthly recollection". Probably because such means "are obvious to any Religious" " (CF, N. 47, p. 67).

Thus, all will practice modesty in all matters, so that it might appear to all who are in the house, or outside, for the praise of God. And first of all, they will moderate through humility every motion of the mind which tends toward one's own excellence. (CF 120).

"In the acquisition of this virtue, the confreres are to exercise it through those twelve degrees which Saint Benedict has placed in his Rule, c. 7.

1. To be humble not only of heart, but also to show it in one's very person, by keeping one's eyes fixed to the ground.

2. To speak few and sensible words, and not to be loud of voice.

3. Not to be easily moved and disposed to laughter.

4. To maintain silence until one is asked.

5. To keep to what is commonly expected by the rule of the monastery.

6. To believe and to acknowledge oneself more lowly than all others.

7. To think and believe oneself worthless for all purposes.

8. To confess one's sin.

9. To embrace patience by obeying under difficult and contrary circumstances.

10. To subject oneself to one who is superior.

11. Not to delight in fulfilling one's own desires.

12. To fear God and to be always mindful of everything that God has commanded. (CF 121).

CF 120 and CF 121 can be found in Part seven, which deals about "The Vows and their observance", of Section three, which speaks about the "four-fold Modesty, as an aid and an embellishment of Chastity", in Chapter I, called "On Humility".

The "Texts" underline the "spirit of Humility" "[*Any other virtue, ceases to be virtue, if not accompanied by Humility* " (CF, N. 120)

The "Context" reminds us that here there is "almost an organized school...that when it has reached its summit, it's, no doubt, Holiness [NB: "for the glory of God"] (CF, N. 120, p. 96; in consonance: CF 36, 42, 78, 129, 135, 141, 144, 148-149, 189, 196, 200, 220, 225, 230-231, 233, 236, 304).

All will have as the scope and countersign of the spirit of their vocation that saying of Christ the Lord: *By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.* [Jn 13:35] (CF 187).

CF 187 can be found in Part ten, which deals with "*The unity or union of the Congregation*", in the preface (CF 187-190) called "*Harmony among the Confreres*".

CF 187, starts a long list of CF, which deals with the same theme, i.e. "Section I – "*The negative means*" [CF 191-220], and "Section II "*The positive means*" [CF 221-266].

The analysis of all these numbers [CF 187-266) , we will do as follows).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of charity*", the "*spirit of mutual respect*", the "*spirit of fraternity*", the "*spirit of harmony*", the "*spirit of hospitality*", the "*spirit of reciprocal communications*" (*With its 80 numbers, we can in truth say that it is a Code of fraternal communion*) (P. Bonetti, "*Alla scuola di Dio con S. Gaspare Bertoni – Note di spiritualità*", Edizioni Stimmgraf, Verona 1989, p. 153).

The "Context" reminds us "how much such virtue was dear to our Founder" [NB: "*if you have love for one another*"] (CF, N. alla Parte X, p. 125; in consonance: CF 187-266).

[Proper Ministries]

[*Preaching*]

[The 'Professed' are to be dedicated to] any ministry of the Word of God whatsoever, such as:

1. Public preaching, or instructing God's people with catechetical teaching, either through public classes, or by private tutoring;
 2. Through a pious sharing of views and conversations on sacred matters, sometimes offering fraternal correction, and at other times offering encouragement for virtuous living and a greater frequency of the reception of the Sacraments,
 3. Teaching the path of perfection and, at times, strongly exhorting people to live it.
 4. The 'Professed' are to be engaged in giving Retreats.
 5. They shall also promote Church organizations.
 6. They will assiduously assist the sick, and especially the dying.
- (CF 163).

CF 163 can be found in Part 9, which deals about "*The Grade of the 'Professed'*", in Chapter II, called "*The means by which this Institute promotes the salvation of others*"

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit on the ministry of God's Word*"

The "Context" reminds us that such a Ministry, must be done with diligence and perfection" [NB: "whatsoever "] (Cost. 2; in consonance: CF 38, 45, 72-73, 182).

[*Assistance to the Clergy*]

[The 'Professed' will be dedicated] to contributing to the formation and discipline of Seminarians, whether these are living in Seminaries, or are extern students, assigned to parishes or living at home. They will accomplish this either through public courses, or private conversations, by promoting the Seminarians' life of study and spirituality. " (CF 164).

CF 164 can be found in Part 9, which deals with "*The Grade of the Professed*", in Chapter II, called "*The means by which this Institute promotes the salvation of others*".

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of caring for the Clergy*"

The "Context" reminds us that for such a Ministry one needs special preparation and qualification [NB: "study and spirituality "] (Cost. 2; in consonance: Mss 5373-5374; 5538-5549).

[*Christian Education of the Youth*]

Our confreres will promote in every possible manner the Christian formation of children and the youth, and also of those who are uneducated in the faith. They will accomplish this either through the Oratories, Catechism Lessons, even through private instructions. (CF 165).

CF 165 can be found in Part 9, which deals with “*The Grade of the ‘Professed’*”, in the Chapters about “*The education of children and the Youth*” [CF 165-181].

The analysis of all these numbers [CF 165-181], we shall do it together, just now:

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of the education of the Youth*”.

The “Context” reminds us that such a Ministry had always been the great preoccupation of Fr. Bertoni [NB: “in every possible manner”] (CF, 165 at Chapter III, p. 74; Cost. 2; in consonance: CF 37, 72, 115, 152, 182-183).

[*Various Ministries*]

Each one of the Novices will be exercised in teaching Christian Doctrine to the young and to the unlettered, adapted to their level of learning, in accord with the opportunity presented by the times and places.

With this end in view, each one from the very outset of his entrance into the Novitiate, will commit himself to the learning of Christian Doctrine, unless previously he would have been well instructed in this. (CF 37).

Lastly, [they should become proficient] in the art of sacred eloquence and Catechetics (CF 55).

CF 37 can be found in Part two, which deals with the “*Admission*”, in Chapter III, called “*The manner in which the Novice is tested*”.

CF 55 can be found in Part 4, which deals with “*The Progress*”, in Chapter IV, called “*Those studies which can assist or embellish Theology*”.

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of teaching the Christian Doctrine*” and the “*spirit of the Ministry of Catechesis*”.

The “Context” reminds us the necessity of special preparation, competence and zeal to be able to accomplish such Ministries” [NB: “diligently study “] (in consonance: CF 51, 72, 78, 165, 170, 182).

Lastly, anyone who would have already offered good example in all these experiments, and after having completed the required studies, had already been initiated into the Priesthood, will be applied for a time to the ministries of preaching and hearing confessions. (CF 38)

[The ‘Professed’] are to be assigned to the administration of the Sacraments, especially of Penance and the Eucharist. They are to implore from God, even through sacrifices the fruits of the Missions and the preaching and the Confessions. (CF 162)

They will assiduously assist the Sick, and especially the dying. (CF 163, n. 6)]

CF 38 can be found in Part two, which deals with “*the Admission*”, in Chapter III, called “*The manner in which the Novice is tested*”.

[CF 162 and CF 163 n. 6. can be found in Part 9, which deals with “*The Grade of the Professed*”, in Chapter II, called “*The means by which this Institute promotes the salvation of others*”

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of spiritual formation*”.

The “Context” reminds us the need of “*The plan of salvation*”, on the side of God, i.e. the salvation of souls “ [NB: “they will apply themselves”] (in consonance with CF 72-75, 108, 163 nn. 2-3, 183, 234-242).

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

CF 67 can be found in Part 4, which deals with “*The Progress*”, Chapter VI, called “

The means by which Studies are to be promoted”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of the ministry of teaching*”.

The “Context” insists on the necessity of specialization and qualification in the different disciplines [NB: “they have to be free of charge” (in consonance with CF 49, 56, 175-182).

St. Basil says: ‘Unless we alienate ourselves from the necessity of family ties and from the familiar exchange with seculars, and shift away from that habit of mind as into another world, in no way will we attain the purpose of our spirit. (Rules 5 & 13 from his longer rules) (CF 267).

CF 267 can be found in Part 11, which deals with “*Familiar conversation with our neighbors toward their salvation*” [CF 267-297].

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of apostolic zeal*”

The “Context” reminds us about a quite strict rule of Fr. Bertoni : “*Those who are willing to dedicate themselves completely to the service of the Gospel, they know that they are called not only to take the strain, but they must also accomplish tasks always bigger and more demanding, after having submitted the rebellion of the flesh and of the senses, the selfishness and vainglory. Let us make visible at least a draft of what Christ did with his Apostles, for there is a need of it today more than ever.*” (It has to be noted: “*for their spiritual health*”) (in consonance: CF 26, 50, 76, 155, 262, 273, 280, 282-285, 291; Ms 2448-2466).

4 - EPISTOLARY

Another very important document of Fr. Bertoni is the “Epistolario = Letters).

According to Fr. Stofella, “such correspondence seems to be everywhere pervaded with the spirit of *Holy Abandonment*, which is very characteristic of our Founder” “(EP, *Introduzione Generale*, p. 20-21).

From this large documentation, we shall choose some “Letters”, the most meaningful ones:

The Aim

“Fr. Galvani is totally Ignatian. He has offered me the Stigmata as an opportune place to establish a Congregation of Priests who would live under the rule of St. Ignatius.. (‘Lettera 54”, p. 130, alla Naudet).

The “Text” does not report the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”

The “Context”, instead, underlines the intention of Fr. Bertoni to found a Congregation, “according to the Rules of St. Ignatius” (but ‘in his own way’, as we have seen already). [NB : “as a opportune place”].

“The humblest among your servants, the underlined Priest, together with some companions, living clerical and community life since 22 years back, freely serves the ‘Spouse of Jesus Christ’, to honor in her our common Creator and Savior....And this is mine and my companions’ strong determination to spend our lives completely at the service of our Lord and his Church, if YOU consider us worthy (‘Lettera IV”, p. 340, a S.S. Gregorio Papa XVI).

The “Text” does not report the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”

The “Context”, instead, reminds us, that they were living ‘as Religious’, “working free of charge”, “always available for anything” [NB: “if He consider us worthy “] (CS II, p. 140; CF 3; CS III, p. 409; CF 1-2, 7).

Even as regard to the “Manner”, we shall choose the most meaningful “Letters”

The Manner

“As I shall continue, using my free time between different occupations, to try to explain to you the great importance of ‘studiosity’ (the taste of studies), as something of greater glory of the Lord, who is the author of it: Deus scientiarum Dominus est (I

Re II, 3):, without the help of these natural sciences, one cannot reach the sublimity of spiritual things, as it is clearly stated by St. Gregory ("Appendice Opera omnia", L. V, 30-31):but I dare adding, in your circumstances, that, such undertaking (the new Congregation) is so important that, after having started it, one cannot keep it, unless in all its members there is enough science (studiosity!), and again that the very first germ of corruption of such a big Institution as yours, is going to be 'Ignorance'...or, what is the same is a lot of knowledge, but bad knowledge which means to have lost the good taste...(in fact) studies are the main support of the building, (therefore) you have to implore his Divine Majesty for much light, for a good direction and project of the same" (Lettera 25", p. 74-75, alla Naudet).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of studiosity*"

The "Context" underlines the importance of studies, especially for the purpose of rising to the "sublimity of spiritual matters" [NB: "*The taste of Studies*"] (in harmony with CF 49-68, 122-127).

"The more we are, the better will be for God's glory, for all of us and each one of us: because, the more we communicate and share with each other, , the more love grows and multiplies" ("Lettera 32", p. 86, to Mother Naudet).

"Text" underlines the "*spirit of communication*" and "*of participation*".

The "Context" reminds us about the importance of the principle of 'subsidiarity', which respects and gives value to the competences and encourages the responsibility of each one [NB : "God's glory """] (in harmony with CF 251, 187-266).

" The Aim is, in this remote city corner, to serve with free education of the Youth, by teaching them especially about the duties of Religion, and of good citizens, and thus by making them enough .clever .in all subjects, according to the syllabus of the Gymnasium ("Lettera 72 A",R. II p. 153, to Mother Naudet).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of free education of the Youth*"

The "Context" underlines the respect of Fr. Bertoni even toward the civil authority

[NB: "The aim is to serve"] (in harmony with CF 3, 165-181).

"The only thing I would like to notify to you, to obey your desires, is that we should be careful that the Pastors should not loose the spirit of the discipline in which they have been formed and waste (by restricting their charity to a small portion) the plans of that charity which is more open and universal, by keeping for themselves and for the small portion of Christ's flock under their care, those helpful means which would be enough for the whole Diocese" ("Lettera I", p. 371, to Fr. Rosmini).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of discipline*" and the "*spirit of apostolic zeal*".

The "Context" reveals the importance of cautions" (prudence, justice), or the balance between the duties of Religious life and the Pastoral Ministry [NB: "more open and universal charity" (in harmony with CF 6, 31, 42, 47-48, 152-157).

"And because the Lord has given you the grace, which is greater than any other treasure, of keeping yourself so small, humble, and as simple as a child, you should make sure that you'll remain always in such a beatitude:" Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum caelorum. Beati mites, quoniam ipsi possidebunt terram (Matt. V, 3-4). *And the same is said by the Apostle (Paul) : Spectaculum facti sumus mundo, et Angelis, et hominibus (I Cor. IV, 9); and again: providentes bona non solum coram Deo, sed etiam coram hominibus (Rom. XII, 17); because, at last, even common people in the world, like to see Priests being humble and meek. In such a way, you shall bear more fruit and do more good than what you may think or imagine.."* ("Lettera I", p. 310, to Fr. Bragato).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of self-denial*", the "*spirit of humility*", the "*spirit of simplicity*", the "*spirit of meekness*".

The "Context" underlines the importance of being a witness in Religious Life. [NB: "(by so doing) you shall bear more fruit" (in harmony with: CF 120-121, 187-266).

"You should always remember, as you wear some external sign of honor, given to you by your God and by your 'Emperor', that quanto magnus es, tanto humilia te in omnibus (the higher you are,

the more humble you should be) (*Eccli. III, 20*); and if you cannot live, with your body, in a small house, do remain, in spirit, in caverna maceriae (in the cave of ruins) (*Cant. II, 14*), i.e. inside the wounds of our most lovable and most humble Savior, where I leave you, while embracing you with my whole heart" ("Lettera 2", p. 311-312, to Fr. Bragato).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of devotion to the Wounds of Christ Crucified*"

The "Context" reminds us that "the wisdom of the Cross and of the crucified Jesus" had always been the highest point of reference in Fr. Bertoni's life"

[NB: "I leave you in the Wounds"] (in harmony with CF 51, first part).

"Please, do remember and put in practice that great advice of st. Gregory Magno: that a Priest should become so familiar and feel at home with God, to be able to make God 'bend' himself to him ('Regola Pastorale', parte I, c. 10). No doubt he promised it: Voluntatem timentium se faciet (He does the 'will' of those who revere Him) (PS CXLIV, 19). Humility and confidence, prayer and diligence, faith and patience, love and devotion, that's all, and God does the rest, for sure. Qui manet in me et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum (The one who remains in Me and I in him, this will bear much fruit (John. XV, 5))" ("Lettera 7", p. 321, to Fr. Bragato).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of contemplation*", "*of prayer*", "*of humility*", "*of abandonment*", "*of diligence*", "*of faith*", "*of patience*", "*of love*", "*of devotion*".

The "Context" reminds us the saying "Monks in the house "[NB: "confidence and familiarity with God "] (in harmony with CF 47-48, 66, 120-121).

"We continue, as much as we can, according to the grace given to us by the Lord, to lift up our hands for you and your problems. Let us put our trust in God, and that is a good trust, as we do not trust in ourselves. Bonum est... ponere in Deo meo [in Domino Deo] spem meam" (It is good to put my trust in my God) (PS LXXII, 28) ("Lettera 8", p. 323, to Fr. Bragato).

"I keep calm, knowing very well that God can do anything, and He does always what is best, though far from our small sight, and sometimes even opposite ! Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore,

semper laus eius in ore meo(I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise is always on my lips) (*Ps. XXXII, 2*). And, please help me, that we may praise and serve Him day and night (*Revel. IV, 8; VII, 15*), by being with Him in his house for ever: praeterit enim figura huius mundi (so passes the face of this earth) (*I Cor. VII, 31*)” (“Lettera 9”, p. 325, to Fr. Bragato).

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of trust in God*” or the “*spirit of Holy Abandonment*”

The “Context” underlines the strong faith Fr. Bertoni had in God [NB: “God does always the best”] (in harmony with CF 3, 185).

Lastly, st. Gaspar’s last document we are now about to examine is the:

5 - COMMENT TO THE 1st BOOK OF KINGS

Before starting the analysis, however, there are a number of observations to be done:

1. According to Fr. Nello, “The Jesuits, before getting the Constitutions, they got their internal mold of the Company in st. Ignatius’ “Spiritual Exercises”.

2. And again, according to him, “The Apostolic Missionaries could find their internal mold, exactly from Fr. Bertoni’s “Comment to the 1st Book of Kings” (CS IV, p. 257).

3 But Why ? Because the “Comment” shows us clearly that “Fr. Bertoni feels called from the Creator Spirit (to start a Congregation), (and) to a double renewal, the one of the first creation and the one of the reform” (*Idem*, p. 258).

4. Noteworthy, again, is the fact that the “*Comment*” had been preached to the Verona Seminarians, between November 1810 and August 1812, and therefore, just between six and four years before starting the Congregation.

5. The section of the “*Comment*” which we are going to use, can be found in the “Manoscritti di Don Gaspare Bertoni”, Edizioni “Ta

Stigmata”, Roma 1999, vol. III (nn. 4853-5890), e vol. IV (nn.5891-7340).

6. In the analysis of the “Aim “ and the “Manner” we shall take only the most meaningful sentences.

Let us start, therefore, by studying the:

The Aim

“We intend to speak here about a very peculiar Vocation: a Vocation of ‘new’ Ministers, imbued with ‘new’ spirit and called by the Holy Spirit who renews and restores everything, to renew and restore his ministry, and through this to restore his Church” (“Meditazione 16 b”, Ms 5511).

The “Text” does not include the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”

The “Context”, instead, reveals that the “*renewal and the restoration*” of the Church, will only materialize through a Congregation, in which the formation of its members should be solid and strive for perfection” [NB: “a Vocation ‘dressed’ by special circumstances”]

“First remedy: to put together, under the same spirit, some ‘workers’. Virtus unita fortior (Unity is strength). If we remain isolated, and each one ‘quaerit quae sua sunt,’ (looks for his own things) Phil. 2, 21, we won’t be able to do anything: we shall be overcome, one by one. But if we get together and look for ‘quae sunt Jesu Christi’ (Jesus Christ’s business), then, shall we be able to do and to win anything . For this reason our Lord said: Io. 17, 11 et 21: Rogo, Pater, ut sint unum mecum (I pray , Father, that they may be one with me) (“Meditazione 44”, Ms 6576).

The “Text” does not include the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”

The “Context”, instead, underlines that the starting point of such Congregation, is

the radical following of Jesus Christ (“ut sint unum mecum”) (“so that they may be one with Me”) [NB: “we shall win everything “]

“He (Jesus) separates and nearly divides, in his army, a group of workers (supposed to be) perfect in the profession of faith and in

the exercise of all virtues: a group of heroic workers, imitators of the Apostles' life, so that with such an exemplar army, to go and help the people and to win against the demons" ("Meditazione 44", Ms 6585).

The "Text" does not include the words "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops"

The "Context" reveals the need of "an Army of heroic workers, imitators of the life of the Apostles" ["Apostolic Missionaries"] - [NB: "to the help of people"].

"To send (them) to spread everywhere the light of the preaching (of the Word of God). He put together, then, some companions for two aims: to collect and to unite the light of many examples, (and) to spread everywhere the light of the preaching (of the Word of God)" ("Meditazione 44", Ms 6590).

The "Text" does not include the words "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops"

The "Context", instead, defines clearly the two 'aims' of an eventual Institute of Apostolic Missionaries: the 'many examples' (of life), and the preaching [NB: "to spread everywhere"].

Let us now talk about the "Manner":

The Manner

"And behold, for the sake of unshakable steadfastness, etc. The Creator Spirit manifests the plan of a vocation of new ministers according to God's Spirit: "actione praecipui" (active faith: Justus ex fide vivit, the just man lives off faith, Rom. 1, 17) "prae ceteris in contemplatione suspensi". S. Greg. M. Past. Cura Z, 5 t. 1, 901/2 D" ... 1, 18: having heaven in front of their eyes, no more the earth; and Christ as the aim of their intentions, how to please Him, and as the model of their undertakings, to try to conform themselves to Him. That young man who feels, in his heart, that the Spirit has thrown the foundations of such a project and the first lines of this plan, what a beautiful disposition (he has)." ("Meditazione 14", Ms 5369).

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of configuration to Christ" ["We

must make in ourselves a portrait of Jesus Christ “ (MP, 26-2-1809)], the “spirit of faith” and “ of contemplation”.

The “Context” reminds us that “A Congregation (ours) with such a project has to be at the level of any young boy “ [NB: “the Spirit pours the foundations of such a project”] (in harmony with “*Meditazione 44*”, Ms 6590: “two aims...”; CF 1, 26, 163).

“ Now, let us see how God asks his new Preachers to fight against these old ones about whom we are going to deal, who bring forward always their times, which are ‘better’ and so ‘famous’, to laugh at them, so to become feeble-minded. The one who is loved by God, and has got ‘faith’ as his shield etc. and the sword of God’s word, (Eph.6,16 ff.), laughs at these old people, who, like children, come out with paper arrows. ‘Solus contra omnes’ (Alone against everybody). It’s God’s Spirit who renews everything” (Medit. 18, Ms 5609)

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of battle”, the “ of God’s presence”, “ of faith”.

The “Context” reminds us the inspiration Fr. Bertoni received at the Altar of St. Ignatius and the trust he got about the success of the enterprise” [NB: “God renews everything”] (MP, 15-9-1808; in harmony with CF 26, 50, 125, 159).

“Both the Army and their Captain, they all speak with one and same voice, having one heart and one spirit. One should give them the same purposes and aims, not only in general but also in particular” (“*Medit. 44*”, Ms 6588).

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of communion”, “ of communication”, “ of mutual agreement”.

The “Context” notes the consistency of the enterprise (the Congregation), by means of the “same purposes and aims” [NB: “one and the same voice”] (in harmony: CF 187-190).

“Faithful of a good and praiseworthy life. Good and wise preachers, who with their wise sermons defend the people from hidden enemies, and with their exemplary life, by imitating Christ, they are able, by their examples, to strengthen those about to fall,

and with their fine virtues, by following our Lord, they enlighten those in darkness" ("Medit. 53", Ms 6892).

"In preaching, to unite oneself with companions and disciples of the same spirit. To be clever and prudent against the astuteness of the devil. Daily prayer against the strong ones. Contra astutos igitur via cautae rationis quaerenda est; contra fortes vero, divina sunt auxilia petenda. Ut ergo magna cautela praedicatio exhibenda esse sentiat" ("Meditazione 54", Ms 6918).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of faithfulness*", "*of preaching*", "*of radical following of Christ*", "*of enlightenment*", "*of union*", "*of prudence*", "*of prayer*".

The "Context" reminds us that Fr. Bertoni wanted preachers full of wisdom, competent, qualified, holy" [NB: "to get united with friends and disciples of the same spirit" (PVC, p. 252; in harmony with CF 38, 45, 163, 182).

"In this Institute let there be 'order': let the Superior feel free to give orders in anything, let obedience be prompt in all things ("Medit. 54", Ms 6920).

"Before starting such an undertaking, in which one had the chance of forming the spirit, one should put forward a holy life, like that of Christ: only then shall we be able to win even those who despise us, as virtue will appear being solid!" (Idem, Ms 6929).

"To nourish the hope of being fruitful, to trust in the undertaking, and to ascribe to God, not to oneself, the fruits. To avoid the proper own glory and to search for the glory of God" (Idem, Ms 6933).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of order*", "*of freedom of action*", "*of prompt obedience*", "*of a holy life*", "*of expectation of fruits*", "*of service*", "*of God's glory*".

The "Context" reminds us about the importance of a 'regime' which includes animation (encouragement) and service" [NB: "A holy life is required"] (in harmony: CF 127, 138-151, 302).

Summary

An overall look at whatever we have analyzed, , up to now, may give us a quite clear picture of the '*mens (mind)*' and *project* of Fr. Bertoni, in the perspective of our Charism:

As regard to the "Aim". "*Apostolic Missionaries*": this is the beginning; "*at the service of Bishops*", this is the end.

This is "*our real Identity*"

As regard to the "Manner". "*Apostolic Mission*" includes the strongholds (of our spirituality: "*spirit of apostolic zeal*", "*of obsequium-service*", "*of contemplation-prayer*", "*spirit of holy abandonment*", "*of availability-mobility*", "*of gratuity*", "*of freedom of action*", "*of humility*", "*of christian parsimony and evangelical poverty*", "*spirit of studiosity*", "*of fraternity*", "*spirit of hospitality*", "*of preaching*", "*spirit of concern for the Clergy*", "*of Youth education*", "*spirit of devotion to the Five Wounds*", "*and of devotion to the Holy Spouses*".

This, indeed is "*our real Identity*".

II

OUR FORE - FATHERS

After the death of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, what interpretation did our fore-Fathers give to the “AIM” and the “MANNER”, suggested to our Congregation in the CF ?

We try to answer such question, by examining the first disciple and immediate successor to our Founder:

FR. JOHN-MARY MARANI

From Fr. Marani we have chosen four Documents, the aim of which was to try to get the approval of CF and of the Congregation as well.

A fifth Document deals with the “*Rules of the Institute*“, which is an “attempt , both for trying to change something in our Founder’s Text (as required by Fr. Perrone SJ in his “Observations and suggestions”), and for trying to bridge the gap and to explain clearly what was already implicit in them, or for any other reason” (CS II, p. 244-245).

In trying to analyze the 5 Documents, we shall write here only the part, in each one of them, which deals with the theme of our research, i.e. about the “Aim” and the “Manner”; the rest (historical information, etc.) will only be summarized, just to have an idea of the whole thing.

1 - A REPORT TO THE AUTHORITIES

The first of these 5 Documents is called:

- *A Report about the Stigmatine Congregation to the Church and Civil Authorities by Fr. G.M. Marani, Superior of the above mentioned Institute(14/12/1853) (CS II, p. 139-145).*

Practically, this first Document was elaborated only six months after Fr. Bertoni's death, and it is the "Allegato A" of *Marani-Petition*, which we shall examine later on. Besides that, in the "*very first draft* of this text, one can discover three different hands, one after the other crisscrossing and, sometimes, even one over the other: Marani, Benciolini, Lenotti. It is, therefore a joint-venture, to be kept in mind as we shall judge Fr. Marani's doing and his own personality" (*Idem*, p. 139).

The Text

The Pius Place of the "Stigmata" – The first Schools

The Document starts by describing the purchasing of the "Pius Place of Stigmata" by Fr. Galvani, to open there a school...and to give to pupils the chance of attending school 'freely' [in reality, the purchasing was done by a certain Joseph Bellotti"] (*Idem*, pg. 139).

The First Entry of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni at the "Stigmata".

Later on, as a consequence of the offering of those places, by Fr. Galvani to Fr. Bertoni, and Fr. Bertoni's acceptance of the same places, the official entry (1816) of "Fr. Bertoni and myself (Fr. Marani) and a layman (Paul Zanolli) as a handyman for all manual work, and two months later of another Priest (Fr. Gramego)" (*Idem*, p.140).

At this point the Document lays out the "Aim" and the "Manner" of the Congregation. To follow the Text, we start from the "Manner":

The Manner

Religious Life - School

"Fr. Bertoni used to strive for perfection, and still very young had in mind to live the religious life...The way he was arranging things in the house was 'more Religiosorum=the way of Religious', and of strict observance as well, and very rigid community life, as it was, after all, the desire of all of us! More Priests eventually

entered this Congregation, more schools were established....Our teaching at school was always free of charge, as from those days, and gifts could never be accepted, even if spontaneously given" (Idem, 140-141).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of consecrated life*", the "*spirit of observance*", the "*spirit of community life*", the "*spirit of teaching*", the "*spirit of gratuity*"; while the "Context" underlines the need of perfection in all mentioned aspects [NB: "*more Religiosorum*"] (in harmony with CF 6, 26-27, 47-50, 158-159, 161, 172-181).

Marian Oratory

" Fr. Bertoni, in 1805, was the first in Verona, to open a parish Oratory in the suburb of St. Paolo in Campo Marzio, from which all the Oratories which now exist in all City Parishes, derive , and even in many Parishes of the Diocese, with a lot of profit for souls...(and in which) one could prepare spiritually the pupils for the different festivities" (Idem, pg.141).

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of Marian Oratories" and the "*ecclesial spirit*", while the "Context" underlines one of the means which contributed so much in the Youth formation " [NB: "*for the advantage of souls, even of the pupils*] (in harmony with CF 165, 167, 182-184).

NB- To facilitate our study, we shall divide the following text in two parts: the *first* deals with the "Manner", while the *second* with the "Aim".

Ecclesial Ministries

(The first part)

" As from the very beginning, besides the Schools, our Priests, during the free periods and during holidays, would dedicate themselves (what follows is the list of different ministries, which we shall summarize...): "to explain the Catechism in Parishes, where invited, to listen to Confessions of children and men, ; to preach Novenas, 'Ottavari', 'Triduum' and in a very special way to preach Spiritual Exercises here and there to Priests, Seminarians in Diocesan Seminary, and even at Stigmata; to

continue (what Fr. Bertoni had started) preaching every Sunday, or during Holidays, to preach to Seminarians; to replace the (teaching of) Moral Theology at the Seminary; to teach (free of charge, naturally!) Sacred History, Dogmatic or Moral Theology; ... the very delicate job of examining the vocation of young men to the Clerical status, both before dressing the clerical habit, and before being admitted to the Sub-Diaconate; to assist, spiritually, and to help in one of the farthest and biggest Parishes in the City, with instructions, catechism; to take care of the Youth [at the Pius Place of 'Derelitti'], to listen untirelessly to Confessions; to assist those unfortunate ones, whom the temporal Justice condemns to death penalty; to Prisoners, spiritual exercises, in their prisons, are preached, and every week to listen to their Confessions.

[Finally] one of our Priests have been sent to the Imperial Court, as Spiritual Director of her Majesty the Empress Maria Anna" (Idem, p. 142-143).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of teaching*", the "*spirit of availability*", the "*spirit of promptness*", the "*spirit of gratuity*"; while the "Context" underlines the need of much courage and untiring zeal in doing all these ministries" [NB: "Besides the Schools"] (in harmony with CF 1-3, 5, 26, 57, 102, 143, 145, 163-164, 165-181, 182-186).

At this point, the Document resumes the information:

First Restoration of the Church and the Building of the Convent

Given the precarious conditions of both the Church of Sacred Stigmata, and of the small house next to it, the restoration of them became necessary, and the building of "the School and of a small Convent as well" (*Idem*, p. 141-142).

And in the following passage, Fr. Marani describes the "Aim" of the Congregation:

Ecclesial Ministries

(Second part)

" I wish we always had and still have enough members to respond to all the requests of the Bishop and of the Pastors, and we would

keep them all busy. And this because the "Aim" of Fr. Bertoni's Congregation is to help the Bishop in his needs, and hence the Parish Priests, as well, in their needs; (He used to be) always very ready to help, even with big sacrifices of his health, as it happened" (Idem, p. 142-143).

The "Text" does not include the words "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops", while

The "Context" underlines clearly that the "Aim of the Congregation is to help the Bishop" in his needs in any circumstance and without hesitation" [NB: "even with the sacrifice of his corporal health" (in harmony with CF 2-3, 5, 26, 38, 152, 162-164, 185).

Having said that, the Document goes on reporting more information:

The 'situation' of the Congregation

Fr. Marani says that, at a certain stage, the Congregation had "12 Priests and 5 Brothers", but at the moment the Congregation has only 5 Priests and 4 Brothers". The reason? "some had been called by God to receive the reward of their labors.

[Fr. Biadego, the scholastic Ferrari, Fr. Cainer, Fr. Cartolari], and two had left because of poor health [the Solari brothers] (Idem, p. 143).

The Founder's death

After having underlined the 'irreparable loss' of the Founder and Head, Fr. Bertoni, which happened on "the 12 of the past month of June", Fr. Marani adds: "It's enough to report that all people consider him and respect him as a 'saint', and that the Prelates of the Church had him in great esteem, and respect; again that he used to be consulted by the most honorable people and considered an 'Oracle' by them; that the whole City of Verona was moved at the news of his death, and by rendering him the extreme honor on the funeral day, gave public testimony of great bereavement having lost, in Fr. Bertoni, such a precious treasure, which was in their possession (Idem, p. 143-144).

The first Successor of St. Gaspar Bertoni, asks for the approval of the Congregation.

Thus continues Fr. Marani: "With unanimous preferential ballot and in perfect harmony, Fr. John Mary Marani was elected (to succeed Him) , he who first joined Fr. Bertoni and was therefore able to suck, from his 'breast,' both his spirit, his intentions and his counsels. The same (Priest)....together with all his brothers and sons ,wishes, now, to give lasting stability to his Institution, by asking from the highest Church and Civil Authorities, their lasting approval" (*Idem*, p. 144).

Fr. Bertoni, himself, had in mind to "give lasting stability to his Congregation".

In view of such '*lasting approval*' of the Congregation, Fr. Marani presents two reasons:

I. He (Fr. Bertoni) saw to it that his Congregation had a *sufficient wealth* to support a big number of members.

II. He (Fr. Bertoni) wrote *the Rules and Constitutions* which he intended to give his small Congregation " (*Idem*, p. 144-145).

He , then, concludes the Document by saying:

"Now, his surviving Sons wish nothing else but to see their venerable Founder's dreams fulfilled, determined as they are to continue on his footsteps, at any cost, even the most arduous sacrifice of their life" "*(Idem*, p.145).

2 - REQUEST OF FR. G. M. MARANI

The second Document of Fr. Marani, chosen by us, is called:

- *Request of Fr. G. M. Marani to H.H. Pope Pius IX to implore the approval of our Congregation*(15/12/1853) (CS II, p. 135-137)

The Text

The Document starts off by praising Fr. Bertoni and by underlining his zeal in favor of the Holy See "against the Jansenists, the Reformers and the Non-believers", his profound cultural preparation in "spreading

the sound principles", as well as the 'blind' unlimited obedience and submission to the 'voice' of the Vatican", "heritage" which he left to his "private Congregation of Priests", founded in Verona.

Besides that, he introduces to the Pope a series of "Contents: A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I

whereby one can find a clearer idea about the Congregation" (for example: # A., which is nothing else but a part of "*Relazione-Marani*", where we can find the list of the various ministries.)

After notifying about the death of Fr. Bertoni, Fr. Marani immediately adds that "the enterprise established by him", has to continue with previous "authoritative approval of the Holy See", (in fact) at Stigmata there is "a proper house, big enough" and "a renovated and beautiful Church", ...and even "a stable income" (*Idem*, pg.135)

[*The Name of the Congregation*]

Being the case that there are already "Rules and Constitutions", to be approved,

Fr. Marani asks that our "humble and up to now still private Congregation of Priests, founded by Fr. Bertoni, to be elevated to the rank of 'Religious Order', with the name of "Order of the Sacred Stigmata", according to the spirit of their Vocation, ready as they are to sacrifice not only their health but even their life at the service of the Church and of the Holy See". And he goes on explaining the reason of the 'title': "It is because of the small Church, next to their house, which is dedicated to the Stigmata of the Seraphic St. Francis" (*Idem* pg.136)

And he adds thus: "But if your Holiness agrees to call this new Institute with that title, I would humbly request your Holiness to kindly accept that the title 'Sacred Stigmata or Wounds' be of our divine Redeemer, which were the price and the cause of our abundant redemption" (*Idem*, pg.136)

NB- In the 'compendium of the Constitutions or Rules", which we shall see later on, Fr. Marani changes his mind about the Title of the Congregation.

At this point, Fr. Marani introduces the "Aim" and the "Manner" of the Congregation:

The Aim

"The Aim ": let it be the one of perpetuating an Institution (if so pleases your Holiness) which may continue, even in future, what they have already done, with all their strength , during the past 37 years, as service to the Church, and even with greater and larger scale" (Idem, pg. 137).

The "Text" does not include the words "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops", while

The "Context" underlines the time and the width of the services offered to the Church, as missionary activity. [NB: " much bigger and more universal services "] (in harmony with CF 1, 5, 184-185).

The Manner

"Our intentions are to spend the rest of our life for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls,... and to abandon ourselves blindly to the will of your Holiness, ready to accept and to welcome the word which will give 'life' to our humble Institute , if your Holiness believes that it is worthy of it, and if that will be for the glory of God and of any help to the Church" (Idem, pg.137).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of the glory of God*", "*of apostolic zeal*", "*of sacrifice*", "*of abandonment*", "*of availability*", "*of help*"; while

The "Context", by underlining the respect, the veneration, the love, the obedience, due to the Roman Pontiff, shows a total dedication to the Church [NB: "the glory of God and the salvation of souls"] (in harmony with CF 3, 5, 57, 62, 65, 76, 120, 125, 182, 185).

The Document concludes by saying:

" The humble and devoted undersigned, lastly, with much respect and veneration, bending the knees in front of your throne, dares kissing the feet of your Holiness, and declares himself very humble, Obs., Dev. Servant and Son" (Idem, pg. 137)

NB- We cannot forget another "Text", together with its own "Context", of the "*Supplica-Marani*", which reports , about the "Manner", one of the aspects mostly loved by St. Gaspar, i.e. his unshakable fidelity to the Pope:

"Among the many members of the Church, Fr. Bertoni was one of the most zealous defenders of the Holy See, against the crafty mischief of the Jansenists, the Reformers and non-believers of our times.....neither would he leave any chance to confirm and propagate the sound principles and the prompt obedience to the directives of the Vatican. And such a spirit he left as rich and precious heritage to his private Congregation of Priests, that he founded since the year 1816 in Verona (Idem, pg. 135)

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of apostolic zeal", "of defense", "of filial devotion to the Holy See", "of limitless and blind obedience and submission to the Holy See", "of help"; while

The "Context" reminds us Fr. Bertoni's statement: "Through the strong steadfastness of the 'first stone = Pietra', the Creator Spirit manifests his plans" [NB: "such a spirit he left it as heritage"] ("*Medit. 14*", I Re, Ms 5354; in harmony with CF 53 third clause).

3-COMPENDIUM OF THE CONSTITUTIONS

The third Document, which we are about to examine, is called "*Compendium of the Constitutions or Rules of our Ven. Founder*," prepared in Rome by Fr. G.M. Marani (1854) (CS II, p. 161-165: Italian version).

According to Fr. Stofella, such document, as a whole, agrees perfectly with the letter and the spirit of our Founder's Constitutions, with the "Aim" of the Congregation...(and) together with what follows, we are in the midst of the 'Compendium', with forms literally taken from the Constitutions. Few things seem to have been added, for the fact that from *implicit* they became *explicit*, but it is always justifiable from the daily life of our Founder's time. (N. 3, of the Latin text, p. 159).

In this perspective, we shall limit ourselves to the analysis of the "Aim" and the "Manner", because all other passages are already known to us, having already examined the "*Compendium rude*", the "*Autografo*", and the CF.

The Text

The “*Compendio-Marani*” starts immediately by introducing the “Aim”:

Thr Aim

“The Members of this Congregation are called ‘ Apostolic Missionaries at the service – i.e. help – of Bishops, under the protection of the Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, her husband” (Idem, pg. 161)

The “Text” underlines two aspects: the first is the “Aim” , in harmony with CF 1; the second , is the interesting addition “under the protection of the Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, her husband”, which he will take up again at the end of the document.

[Reason: it’s “a remembrance of the life he lived at the Stigmata, under the guidance of Ven. Gaspar” “ (Idem, N. 2, of the Latin text, p. 159)].

The “Context” changes the whole thing , compared with the “*Supplica*”, that means that Fr. Marani “for the fact that he did not find in the Constitutions, clearly expressed a ‘name’ for the Members of the Congregation, , except in the formula of the “Aim”, he adds it” [“they are called”] - [NB: “help”] (Idem, N. 1, of the Latin text, p. 159).

NB- What seems worthy to be remembered is that “in our history (up to the year 1890), the title “Priests of the Stigmata” or “Stigmatines” and the one of “Apostolic Missionaries” were both *used indifferently*. (CF, “*Introduction*”, p. 37).

The Manner

As regard to the “Manner” , we shall analyze first of all various “texts”; while their “context” shall be presented, only once, at the end.

[At the service of Bishops]

“At the service – i.e. help – of Bishops. Because of this, our Congregation resolves to pay a service – help – to the Bishops, in whatever they need, keeping in mind different times and

circumstances..(and) the Superior will not refuse to send them (the Members) for this or that apostolate, which – according to our Constitutions and Rules – is convenient to our Congregation... (and may) satisfy and please the Bishops” (Idem, p. 161).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of help*” and of “*great availability*”.

[Ministries]

“The main points in which our Congregation gives her service to the Bishops, beside the ‘Missions’, are the following...” And what follows is a list of 10 ministries (cfr. Relazione” e “Supplica”), which goes from the “administration of the Sacraments” up to the “instruction to the youth...”

[He insists] *“Because of this, our Confreres should possess all virtues, especially Charity and Humility; and should be well prepared in any kind of sciences, both divine and profane, well exercised through different tests in spirit of self denial, in perfect obedience, in procuring the salvation of souls and in doing everything only for the glory of God” (Idem, p. 161-162).*

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of apostolic zeal*”, “*of charity*”, “*of humility*”, “*of studiosity*”, “*of self-denial*”, “*of perfect obedience*”, “*of searching only the glory of God*”.

[Study]

“Moreover they must be instructed in this or that theological Doctrine: the Positive and the Scholastic, the speculative and the Moral, so that they may be well prepared. The same way they have to cultivate the ‘study’ [what follows now is the list of CF 51-55].

[He then concludes thus] *“We may, then, draw the conclusion – absolutely speaking – that our Congregation should have the perfection in all disciplines and languages; and one has to make sure that there is a real excellency in all of them; and this will be of great utility for the services to give to the Church, according to different times and circumstances. Such ministries should be done by the ‘Professed’ who are properly called ‘Apostolic Missionaries’(Idem, p. 161-163).*

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of studiosity*”, “*of excellency*” and “*of service to the Church*”.

[The Professed]

[First Class] “*To the ‘Profession’ shall be admitted only the Priests who have a proper cultural preparation, as well as in the philosophical or theological science (always in Moral theology), in Holy Scripture, in Canon Law ect; they, as well, must be exemplar in their way of living and behavior...*” *To reach the Grade of ‘Professed’, or Apostolic missionaries, it is necessary for the Confreres to be tested for two years in the Novitiate, after which they may pronounce the simple Vows ...let them have a proper preparation in philosophical and theological subjects...be initiated to the sacred Orders and to Priesthood. Beside that, let them, during this time, be formed in religious spiritual life and do some practice in the Ministries proper to our Congregation. Only then, let those who, according to the Superior are found worthy, be admitted to the solemn Profession (Idem, p.163)*

[Second class] “*Those of simple Vows, who are going to help the ‘Apostolic Missionaries’..and are going to be called ‘cooperators of the Missionaries’.*

[But he adds that,] *he who enters the Congregation and prepares himself for the Profession, should be “happy to remain the whole life in the Grade assigned to him by the Superior: ready - at the orders of the Superior – to do anything without hesitation: Ad omnia, quae mittam te, ibis: anywhere I shall send you, you have to go “ (Idem, p. 163-164).*

[Third class] “*There are also lay Brothers, who after two years Novitiate, will be assigned – by the will of the Superior – to material activities and to the service of others” (Idem, pg. 164).*

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of studiosity*”, “*of exemplar religious life*”, “*of cooperation*”, “*of availability*”, “*of service*”, “*of acceptance*”

[NB- As regard to the ‘Jesuit structure’ for the ‘Professed’, which Fr. Bertoni wanted for his Congregation, the Holy See did not approve it, as we know (see above, pg. 21)

[Gratuity]

"Neither the Individual nor the Community, are allowed to accept anything as recompense for the ministry done, not even the spontaneous offerings, but to do everything totally free of charge" (Idem, p. 164).

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of gratuity" [CF 3] and the "spirit of unselfishness".

[Regimen of the Congregation]

"The Superior General has to be elected 'for life', by the same Congregation. Let him be given, by the same Congregation, 4 or 6 Consultors, as helpers or ministers, the Admonitor and the General Bursar. It is a duty of the Superior General to admit to the Simple Vows, to the Grade of Cooperator, or of Professed, to discharge someone, a Novice, or Cooperator, or Professed. He, then, will share with Superiors of lower grade some faculties which he thinks reasonable for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The Superior of each Community shall be called Director" (Idem, p. 163-164)

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of shared authority" and "of apostolic zeal".

[Synthesis]

"The way of living, in regard to food, clothing, and the house, will be according to the costume of the Clerics of exemplar life of perfection, among whom they happen to live. In the Congregation must always flourish perfect community life; and in this the Superiors, especially the General, should be very diligent, so that there shouldn't be, under any pretext or any other way, any abuse."

"Those who gave their names to this Congregation, should keep always in front of their eyes the Bl. Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, to learn from them the love of poverty, the spirit of prayer and meditation, the readiness to obey even in difficult circumstances and even contrary to their nature, the love of God, whose glory they should always look for, the charity toward people, whose

spiritual good they should care for, with zeal, even at the cost of their own lives (Idem, p. 164-165).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of perfect religious life*", "*of community life*", "*of Mary and Joseph: poverty, prayer, meditation, promptness, obedience, charity and zeal*".

The "Context" underlines that the Congregation, beside being always open to the requests of Bishops, must give good example of religious life.

[NB: "the way of living"] (*Idem*, N. 33, Latin text, p. 160; in harmony with "*Compendium rude*", "*Autografo*" e le CF).

4 - HINTS ABOUT THE CONGREGATION

The fourth Document is called:

- *Hints about the Congregation of Priests, founded in Verona, by the most Rev. Fr. GASPAR BERTONI, close to the Oratory of Stigmata (30/9/1855) (CS II, p. 176-181).*

According to Fr. Stofella these "*Hints*" are "an important writing that has to be considered as an authentic Document of the first spirit of our Congregation, and as a source for the 'grand-children to come' (cf. *Idem*, p. 175).

For the purpose of our work here, we shall limit ourselves to the analysis of the "Aim" and the "Manner", taking, from the other passages, only a summary, for the sake of knowledge

The Text

(The occasion for these "Hints")

"Many, even notable people, used to ask us frequently "What is it and what is going to be with that 'union' of Priests, close to the Oratory of Stigmata"?... "Now, I feel it is my duty to fulfill the wish of the public. So I take this chance and opportunity [The Decree of praise and Civil approval], which seem to me the most opportune and suitable, and also because, by now, things are 'mature'; moreover for the reason that this small Congregation, after 39 years of 'private life', is now coming out to 'public life', and therefore she is now bound to 'publicize' herself; and that is what I am, hereby going to do with these short 'Hints' (Idem, p.176)

Origin, nature and the “Aim” of this Congregation

[Origin]

“[Fr. Bertoni, Fr. Marani and Bro. Zanoli], since the year 1816 got together by the Oratory of Stigmata....given to them by the Owner, the V. Rev. Fr. Nicola Galvani, who had put it in the hands of Fr. Bertoni and gave him charge over the two ‘free ‘Schools...and ...as, new Companions joined them...they became so many that, very soon, they opened the 2nd and 3rd Class and the whole ‘gymnasium’ (Idem, p.176-177)

[NB- To facilitate our study, we look here, only at the “Aim” (“reason) of the Congregation, and, only later on, shall we put together the passages which deal with the “Manner” (“nature)

The Aim

“...From that, the plan for a Congregation was born, which the Founder wanted called ‘Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops’ (Idem, p. 177)

NB- “In our Founder’s mind, such ‘formula’ is the “finis=aim” of the Congregation. Fr. Marani, instead, transformed it into the ‘nomen=name’ in his ‘*Compendium of the Constitutions* (Idem, N. 5, p.181)

The “Text” is in perfect harmony with CF 1, except regarding the word “to be called”;

While the “Context” refers the clause ‘*at the service*’, to “protect the rights of the Congregation” [NB: “plan of a Congregation”] (CF, N. 1-2, p. 44; Idem, p. 177).

The Manner

“In this spontaneous union of Priests and Teachers, the above mentioned, Fr. Gaspar Bertoni made sure, from the very beginning,

that his companions, without 'professing' any particular Institute, should nevertheless live as 'religious', i.e. inside the house by exercising a perfect obedience, and by living strict community life; and outside the house, beside the Schools, by exercising, at any time, the sacred ministries, according to their rank and vocation, for the salvation of others, and especially by being available for the needs, even sudden, of the Bishop and of the Pastors (Idem, pg.177).

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of consecration", "of perfect obedience", "of community life", "of apostolic zeal", and "of service"; while

The "Context" underlines the point that, the Members of the new Congregation, live as religious and missionaries, at the service of the Bishop and Pastors "[NB: "being available for the needs, even sudden.."] (in harmony with CF 6, 47-48, 187-266).

[The different activities]

"Neither did he limit himself to this or that activity, nor to certain cases or subjects, but to any case and to any good work at the service of God and as support to souls, he wanted all those who would embrace this kind of life to be ready and well prepared for. And indeed, it is peculiar of this new Congregation, beside undertaking the (preaching of the) Missions,..."(now the list of the various ministries, which we have already seen, follows) (Idem, pg.177)

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of apostolic zeal", "of distinguished preparation", "of studiosity", "of teaching", "of service"; while

The "Context" underlines Fr. Bertoni's wish, i.e. of having a Congregation (ready) for any kind of good work at the service of God "[NB: "ready and well prepared"] (in harmony with CF 163-164).

[... and its peculiar aspect]

"Hence, the "Manner" or the way our Congregation fulfils its "aim" is, according to our Constitutions "Obsequi, sive auxiliari

Episcopo in iis, quibus pro temporum et aliarum circumstantiarum varietate indiget, quaerenti a Superiore Sodalitatis unum vel plures ad aliquod munus vel opus ipsi Sodalitati conveniens secundum eiusdem Constitutiones ac regulas; dummodo persona vel personae aptae in Congregatione adsint iudicio eiusdem Superioris”.

And all this ‘*gratis omnino*’; and also “*immunes a dignitatibus residentiis, beneficiis, et curis perpetuis, et particularibus animarum et Monialium*” (*Idem*, p. 177-178).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of obsequium or service*”, “*of availability, of gratuity*”, and “*of freedom of action*”; while

The “Context” reveals the importance of paying attention to the needs of the time and of the circumstances “ [NB: “a person or people suitable *“persona vel personae aptae”*] (in harmony with : CF 2, 4, 7, 185).

[To reach the “aim” in a better way]

“To better reach the “AIM”, our Founder in his Constitutions requires from his (sons) such an Exercise of self-denial and such a method of studies, to enable them, by the help of God, to do any kind of divine service to be rendered at any moment. Being just impossible for one person to be expert in all sciences, at least each one should excel in the subject of his peculiar inclination, received by God as a talent, so that, in the Congregation as a whole, one could find one (member) or another specialized in each particular science or duty, which needs attention at a given moment”(*Idem*, pg.178)

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of self-denial*”, “*of studiosity*”, “*of service*”; while

The “Context” underlines formation as a priority in all fields” [NB: “ready for any kind of work “] (in harmony with CF 6, 40-42, 48, 49-58, 67-68, 122-127).

[The Structure of the Congregation]

[Synthesis] “*In this Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries there are “two years of Novitiate”; the profession of “simple vows”, “solemn Profession”*

[First Grade]:the Professed of solemn vows;

[Second Grade or Cooperators],those who “renew their vows and assist the

Professed”, “who must be Priests”.

[Third Grade], “the Brothers, whose duty is to attend at temporal things,”

[they have] “two years of Novitiate and pronounce simple vows”

[The Superior General], chosen ‘for life’; “he chooses the Superiors of each Community” and designates the “Grade” for each subject”.

[Each Community] should have its own dowry for the maintenance of its Members” (Idem, p. 178-179).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of religious vows*”, “*of cooperation or help*”, “*of service*”, and “*of shared authority*”, while

The “Context” shows the structure of the Congregation, whose priority should be “one body, one spirit” [NB: “the dowry for the maintenance of its Members” (in harmony with : CF 7-8, 298-314).

[Living style]

“As living style is concerned, the Constitutions say: “Ratio vivendi, sive quoad alimenta pertinet, sive quoad vestes et tectum, erit consentanea Clericis et Religiosis observantioribus, quibuscum vivent. In Sodalitate exacte semper vita perfectae communis vigere debet” (Idem, p. 179).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of religious life*”, “*of simplicity of life style*” “*of Community life*”, while

The “Context” reminds us that we “among all the Clergy, have to emerge especially for the perfection of our state” [NB: “*vita perfectae communis*”] (CF, N. 6, p. 47; in harmony with CF 6, 26, 34, 47-48, 156, 159).

[The Aspirants]

“What is required from the Aspirants is that they should have a special call for this Congregation, and a great heart goodness. Each one has to enter with the desire of reaching the grade of Professed, and to strive to deserve it; but to be happy, anyway, to remain in the grade assigned to him by the Superior General ; and to be always ready to go, at any moment , wherever and for any work the Superior would destine him” (Idem pg.179)

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of generosity*”, “*of acceptance of his grade*”, “*of an excellent preparation*”, and “*of availability*”; while

The “Context” reminds us again about the task, of each member, to be well prepared for any kind of enterprise [NB: “the divine call for this Institute”] (in harmony with CF 4-6, 161-164, 185).

[The Holy Virgin Mary and St. Joseph]

“This Congregation is under the protection of the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, whose examples should be followed, with the help of God, by anyone who desires to serve his Divine Majesty “ (Idem, pg.179)

Both the “Text” and the “Context”, somehow, repeat what we have already seen in “Compendium-Marani” [NB: “Examples to be followed”] (*Sintesi*, p. 57).

“Up to here, it is the plan outlined in the “Compendium-Marani” (*Idem*, N. 9, p. 181.

Later on, the Document presents more information:

[Divine Inspiration]

“That small Union of Priests, was so well ordered and well disposed by the infinite wisdom of God, that “attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suaviter” (Sap. VIII, 1)... it seems that, much earlier, the Spirit of the Lord, had already put in his heart the idea of a Religious Institution, and had, before hand, shown him a symbol, a picture or something which he, confidentially, had told me about the year 1812 (he used, anyway, to be very scared in revealing his things),..., having followed such divine dispositions, we, now, reached the point of erecting, in an official way, his Congregation” (Idem, pg.179-180)

[Crescat pusillus grex! - Let the small flock grow !]

“ At least in two different circumstances, did Pius IX (express) his desire that the “small flock” should grow (these are his words), grow and expand, for the glory of God, for the advantage of souls and the service of Bishops” (Idem, pg.180)

As conclusion, a big thanks

"To the distinguished people, the Clergy, the Pastors, the Church and Civil Authorities,...and in a very special way to our Shepherd, Benedict Riccabona, (the Bishop), who did so much for us, with the Holy See,...To all of them our endless thanksgiving" (Idem, pg.181)

5 - RULES OF THE CONGREGATION

Finally, our fifth Document, could be called :

- *Rules of the Congregation* * A 'body' of Constitutions [never completed, by the way !] (CS II, p. 245-271).

From this Document as well, shall we take only what pertains to the "Aim" and the "Manner", making a short summary about the rest!

N B . (To note that the Text has some passages in Latin, others in Italian.)

Besides that, "Part I", which we shall see just now, emphasizes not only "the portrait of the exemplar Apostolic Missionary", as Fr. Bertoni wanted him, but also a perfect synthesis of how he desired his Congregation to be" (*Idem*, N. 1, p. 253).

The Aim

"The "Aim" of this Congregation is "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops" (Idem pg.245)

The "Text" and the "Context" are in perfect harmony with CF 1 [NB: or 'help', "in order to clarify , in a juridical way, the rights of the Congregation, of the Constitutions and of the Superiors, in front on the Bishops" (CF, N. 1-2, p. 44).

The Document goes on, dealing with the "Manner":

The Manner

"Hence, the Members of this Congregation have to be (day and night) ready to go, at the orders of the Superior, even 'on the spot', anywhere, near or far, in the city or in the countryside, to any kind of people; missions, confessions, prisoners, people condemned to death; to replace Philosophy or Theology Professors; in a Parish whose Pastor passed away suddenly; having completed a task, or even before completing it, to leave it and to be ready to start an heavier and more difficult one. And to do all this, and even more, with a joyful heart, with a smile, without any excuse, neither of not being able or not being ready, without reasoning too much, and without pretending any recompense etc.... parati ad omnia (ready for anything) as long as one is sent by the Superior, who, as he will never refuse anything to the Bishop, having the possibility and having people well prepared, will try, as much as he can, to respond positively even to the Pastors in their needs.

From this, one can see the care and the diligence the Congregation has to use in admitting candidates, who give sound hopes of success, and in forming them, that they may really succeed, and to help them grow in the genuine and proper spirit of the Institute. It is not the number, but the quality of the members, what really matters! If it pleases God, to add the number to the quality, for his glory, let him be praised; but, on our side, we are bound to take the subjects suitable for the 'aim', and not to give 'the vocation' to anybody, and thereafter to educate them properly toward the same "aim" (Idem, p. 245-246).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of solid preparation*", "*of promptness*", "*of availability*", "*of apostolic zeal*", "*the spirit of teaching or education*", "*of service*", "*of self-sacrifice or self-denial*". "*of joy*", "*of studiosity*", "*of gratuity*", "*the spirit of serious screening of the Candidates*", "*of quality of the Candidates*", and "*of seeking the glory of God*"; while

The "Context" underlines the very strict way of choosing the Candidates, in view of the kind of life they have to live". [NB: "*parati ad omnia*= *to be ready for anything*"] (in harmony with CF 67, 139-151, 162-164, 182-186).

NB- Later on, Fr. Marani presents 5 Chapters, which practically, in the CF, represent

'Part one', ["Those matters which precede the admission" CF 10-26] and "Part 2" ["Concerning Admission" CF 27-32] (*Idem*, p. 246-251).

Chapter 6, instead, "*De Demissione*", with 7 points, is not present in the CF; it deals about how to proceed in sending home or dismissing a Candidate, decision which is reserved to the Superior General; again, with the discharge, ends the "obligation of the 3 vows" (*Idem* pg.251-252)

After that, comes Part II, which deals with "*De Novitiatu*". In the "Proemium" emerges the "picture of the exemplar Novice", and a new series of aspects about the "Manner" is reported (*Idem*, pg.253).

The Manner

"From the Novitiate derives either a great ruin or a great advantage for the Congregation; for this reason Novices must be well instructed on the 'aim' of the Congregation, which requires that they should get the spirit of mortification and self-denial; to forget about dangerous desires; to accept, in good spirit, any kind of correction or admonition; to diligently dedicate themselves to prayer, meditation, community life, submission with perfect obedience, spirit of poverty, modesty, the observance of even the smallest rule, fraternal charity, their own perfection; moreover to leave behind the 'old man', and to put on the 'new man' according to the grace of this vocation" (Idem, pg.253)

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of mortification or self-denial*", "*of active and continous progress toward perfection*", "*of prayer and meditation*", "*of community life*", "*of submission and perfect obedience*", "*the spirit of poverty*", "*of modesty*", "*of strict observance*", "*of charity*", and "the spirit of 'new man'"; while

The "Context" underlines that "Novitiate" is the reference point for the survival of the Congregation" [NB: "*new man*, according to the grace of this vocation"] (in harmony with CF 6, 32-39, 43-44, 47-48, 90-104, 110, 112-113, 119, 128-137, 138-151, 187-266).

After the preamble, the Document, in its first 2 Chapters, resolves to fill some gaps from Fr. Perrone's comments to CF 31-39, concerning

the time-table and the formation themes (CF, N. 35, p. 58-59; *Idem*, N. 1-6, p. 253-257).

Further on, as a “necessary complement to the few numbers Fr. Bertoni dedicated to the Novitiate, “Fr. Marani adds Chapter three, with 6 points, which deals “*De nonnullis quae in Novitiatu speciatim observanda sunt*” (CF 40-41; *Idem*, N. 1-2, p. 257-258).

Again, the Document reports the other numbers of CF, practically *ad litteram*, which deal with the ‘Professed’. Therefore, whatever is said there, is similar to what we have already seen, about the “Aim” and the “Manner” of the Congregation. Thus, we are not going to repeat ;

Here, only a synthesis: “Part 3, which deals with “*De tempore post Novitiatum usque ad Professionem seu de tempore Studiorum*” (CF 89, 90-151, 86); “Section I”, which deals with “*De Studiis Clericorum*” (CF 49-68); “Section II”, which deals with “*De Profectu suiipsius*” (CF 47-48; CF, N. 48, p. 68); “Section III”, which deals with “*De Exercitio*” (CF 57, 71-75, 152-157 e 159).

NB- 1) In Chapter of “Section I”, which deals with “*De mediis quibus Studia promoveantur*”, there are two clauses, that try to satisfy Perrone’s requests, i.e. one deals with recreation and holidays for the Students; the other one concerns the duties of the Prefect of studies, Teachers, Professed Students; everything under the supervision of the Superior General (*Idem*, N. 2-3, p. 263-265).

2) In “Section III”, even if, here and there, there are some disagreements with CF, nevertheless, a project of Stigmatine life, comes out, which agrees with whatever Fr. Bertoni wanted under 2 fundamental aspects: the need of a good spiritual and cultural formation, both in the different steps before the priestly Ordination or perpetual Vows for the Brothers (we would say, today, ‘first formation’), as well as after them (‘permanent formation’); and the excellent preparation to accomplish , in a dignifying way, the various Ministries of the Congregation.

To summarize: We must keep in mind that various aspects, which seem to contradict the CF, as we have already seen, [other examples : “Aim” changed into “Name”, or the title of our Congregation; “Religious Order”, instead of “Congregation; “as for Fr. Marani’s will”] , nevertheless they need to be well understood.

In fact, we could accept some 'just' excuses:

➤ The problem of how could we better introduce to *Civil and Church Authorities*, our Congregation for approval [indeed, as we have already seen, "three different people are noticeable in the composition of the *"Relazione – Report"*: Marani, Benciolini and Lenotti"]

➤ The work of arranging the CF, as desired by the Holy See [the cooperation of different people became necessary: Mons. Belloni, P. Mignardi S.J., P. Ferrari S.J., Mons. Riccabona, P. Perrone S.J., Bro. Alfieri, of the 'Fatebenefratelli'];

➤ "the incomplete work of Fr. *Marani's Rules*" [in fact, even if "Fr. Marani took advantage, in a nice way, of the 10 years experience as Superior", nonetheless the "Rules" still remain "a precious source of our first Stigmatine tradition" (CS II, "*Nota conclusiva*", p. 271)].

All this put together "should be kept in mind by the one who wants to judge Fr Marani's action, and his own life". Otherwise one runs the risk of depreciating the one who has had "the merit of promoting always, without ceasing, the observance of our Founder's Constitutions, by strengthening it with the admonition, which became characteristic, to what "*Fr. Gaspar*" wanted, said or did" (CS II, p. 139; CF, "*Introduzione*", p. 27).

Among the first companions of Fr. Bertoni, the one called "the delight of the newly born Congregation" (CS I, N. 4, p. 454), we find:

FR. MICHELANGELO GRAMEGO

The Document written by him, which we are now going to analyze, has got, as external title, :

- *The book of Fr. Michael Angel Gramego's memories*

And as internal title:

- *Memories of all those who entered the Stigmata* (4-11-1816 al 25-8-1847; CS I, p. 453-469).

The "*Gramego's Memories*" are some of the "very first elements to the 'Chronicle of our Congregation'" (*Idem*, p. 451).

And, as 'Chronicle' it has some "notes of joyful events and others less joyful : not always we have people who enter, ... there are others who die or leave the place: they are anyway facts of great interests for the life of the Community (Idem pg. 452)

Our interest, however, is to know how Fr. Gramego would or does remark the "Aim" or the "Manner" of our Congregation.

Concerning the "Aim", this Document does not mention it explicitly; but still we do find two very interesting – NBs –, which remind us, how, Fr. Gramego, , was conscious about it,... one way or another.

The Aim

"NB. 6. July 1835, octave of the Apostles Peter and Paul: from Verona, not from us, has departed my dear old friend, the good Priest Fr. Louis Bragato, he has gone to the city of Vienna, having being chosen to be the Confessor and Spiritual Director of the Empress, ...and to help in some other spiritual work. But.. quid est hoc (what is that?) Fr. Bragato, that poor and humble small Priest, from Stigmata to the Court of Vienna ? What does that mean ? Let us bow our head and worship the inscrutable plans of God. This God of ours, , then, who is so good, will see to it that we get others, but good, wise and able; otherwise what are we going to do with this 'societate gabellarum' that remains?.

The "Text" does not report the clause "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops"; while

The "Context", through the jargon (gergo) '*societate gabellarum*', surely wants to remind us two things: first, that ours was still a nascent Congregation; second,...but already available for any kind of mission [in 'obsequium' to the Bishop of Verona, who had chosen Fr. Bragato to go to the Court of Vienna] [NB: "good, wise and able] (*Idem*, N. 37, p. 463-464).

"NB. 1. March 1836 : "We held a 'Mission' at 'Derelitti', in St. Stefano's Parish, just to try to do something good even there, God willing: two Confreres have been assigned there, Fr. G. Marani and Bro. Paolo Zanoli: the first of poor health, the second, tired and quite 'battered'.

The “Text” does not include the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”, while

The “Context” shows the ‘Mission’ as something of great importance of the nascent Congregation, as a help to Parishes. [NB: “poor health, quite tired and ‘battered’”] (*Idem*, p. 464-465).

As regard to the “Manner”, we shall choose few meaningful passages:

The Manner

“4 November 1816 : Three people came,” quomodocumque = somehow” to live here: 1. Rev. Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, as head and Father; 2. Fr. Giovanni Marani, his ex-disciple of St. Paul’s Oratory, in Campo Marzio; 3. Bro. Paolo Zanoli, as Secretary, house ‘procurator’, cook etc.etc. without knowing anything of all this; 4. On the 4 December 1816, then, I came, Fr. Michelangelo Gramego, ‘just as a number’ and to do what?...We shall see. Thanks be to God; 5. Fr. Matteo Farinati, who arrived on 1st January 1817, he consoled us so much, although with few words”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of self-denial*”, “*of abandonment*”, “*of courage*”, and “*of sharing*”; while

The “Context” reminds us of the generous heart they put to establish the Congregation. [NB: “*quomodocumque: somehow*”] (*Idem*, p. 453-454; in harmony with CF 6, last clause).

“NB. On March 25, 1817: we received (as a gift) the house of the Oratory of Stigmata, occupied, before, by the Rev. Fr. Louis Della-Rizza. : W Joseph, W Maria (viva=long live!) “.

“VI. On October 11, 1817, oh, what a beautiful thing ! The good Priest, Fr. Brugnoli, came to stay with us at Stigmata. W Joseph and Mary and the Saints ‘Francis’ of Assisi and Borgia”

“NB. On November 25, 1820, on the day of St. Catherine, V.M., we started officiating the major Church, at the altar of the same saint Catherine: 1°(to celebrate Mass) Fr. Giovanni M. Marani, 2° myself, Fr. Michael Gramego, very unworthy, 3° Fr. Gaspar Bertoni, for the school students. Let us hope that the Holy Spouses will help us to complete, soon, the whole job, and to put in order the other Altars, and to open it to the public. Soli Deo honor et gloria (To God only honor and glory).

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of love, of trust, of profound devotion to Mary and Joseph*”, while

The “Contexts” remind us that the Holy Spouses were, for them, not only a reason for praise, cult, devotion, but also a strong call to imitate their examples” [NB: “they will help us complete the whole job”] (*Idem*, p. 454-457; in harmony: CS II, p. 161; 165).

“XVII. On March 17, 1831: against any expectation, Mons. Pandora came to stay at Stigmata; and also Fr. Vincent Raimondi, who is ‘earning for himself’ heaven, at the Seminary. Such is the will of the Almighty” [Professor of Church History at the Seminary of Verona, and a good preacher”].

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of teaching*” and “*of apostolic zeal*”; while

The “Context” underlines two among our special ministries: *teaching and preaching*” [NB: “Such is the will of the Almighty”] (*Idem*, N. 27, p. 460; in harmony with: CF 67, 163).

“NB. Humble, humble, humble! On April 4, 1843 : Francis Solari having served in the house of God, at Stigmata, for about 13 years and 8 months, left us to go and serve the world. May God bless him”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of humility*” and “*of service*”; while

The “Context” underlines the traditional saying of Fr. Bertoni: “*Humble...*” ect. [NB: “May God bless him”] (*Idem*, N. 48, p. 467; in harmony with: CF 120-121).

“NB. The Community of Stigmata grows ‘polito’! grows well..! On June 4, 1843: while our Catechists were working hard, Fr. Vincent Raimondi, triumphantly went home, to live by himself, for two or three months, to regain strength (so he says). Good bye ! We shall see...He lived with us 12 years, 2 months, 18 days”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of Catechetical ministry*”, “*of apostolic zeal*”, and “*of abandonment*”; while

The “Context” underlines the courage of our Forefathers in facing “the ‘*stigmata*’ (wounds) which the Community of ‘Stigmata’ had to

suffer” [NB: “they grow ‘polito’, they grow well”] (*Idem*, N. 50, p. 467; in harmony with CF 37, 41-42, 51, 55, 163, 182).

“ On January 12, 1844 : Fr. Modest Cainer, after 4 long and consecutive illnesses, which he endured with much patience, died, and he died ‘in osculo Domini’ (in the kiss of the Lord), while praying without ceasing !

He, under Fr. Bertoni’s guidance , by dint of visiting Libraries and searching in them, by going from one bookseller to another, and by writing and researching even in far away cities, he has the great merit of having put up a good and precious library at Stigmata. R.I.P. Amen. He had been very patient, charitable, full of love and diligence in assisting the community sick people, in a very special way, and I would say, in a heroic way, in assisting the seminarian D. Ferrarin, in his very long and disgusting sicknesses. God will reward him”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of patience*”, “*of diligent prayer*”, “*of service*”, “*of studiosity*”, “*of loving charity*”, and “*of assisting the sick*”, while

The “Context” underlines the need of scientific research and the loving selfgiving, even at the cost of one’s life” [NB : “God will reward him”] (*Idem*, p. 467-468; in harmony with CF 47, 60, 187-266).

“XXIV. On March 18, 1846: the vigil of St. Joseph’s Feast, our dear Patron, came to stay with us our house-‘tailor’ Giovanni Battista Bandoria, called ‘Siresola’ (from his mother’s surname), He is 39 years of age! At long last my desire of having a good tailor was fulfilled, who would take care of us all. W St. Joseph who sent him”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of service*” and “*of modesty in dressing*”; while

The “Context” underlines the importance of having, in the Congregation, lay Brothers or temporal coadjutors” [NB: “W. St. Joseph who sent him”] (*Idem*, p. 468; in harmony with CF 79-82, 133-137).

Another among the first companions of our Founder was:

FR. MODESTO CAINER

The research, concerning his contribution, consists of:

- *Extracts from the "Memories" of Fr. Modest Cainer* (20-6-1833 to 17-2-1837) (CS I, p. 491-506).

"They are, generally speaking, notes about the Church or the Sacristy, where the zealous Sacristan writes notes of chronicle, puts in writing rules and traditions that should help in the years to come....But, here and there, we do find some domestic (community) memories about people, things, happenings, even of great value" [*Idem*, (*"Introduzione"*), p. 491].

We shall, therefore, try to find out some passages, which, at least, give us a glimpse about the "Aim" and the "Manner" of the Congregation.

The Aim

"July 1st: The Bishop came to pay a visit to us, and after having spoken for a long time with our Superior, and our brother Fr. Louis Bragato, in the house there were long secret meetings, any free moments, day and night, among our Superiors. We, the young ones, were in great expectations for the results of all these secret gatherings: finally, on the 5th, called together all young and old in the recreation room, our Superior, being at the center of the circle, revealed the reason of all these meetings: it is God's will, manifested to us by the most zealous Bishop, that our brother, the present Fr. Louis Bragato, should leave us and go to Vienna, to be a coadjutor in a certain Seminary, and that tomorrow, the 6th, he will leave with the 'Veloce'. You are all invited to pray for him, that the Lord will bless the enterprise for which he goes there."
Let your name be blessed. Your will be done."

The "Text" does not include the clause "*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*"; while

The "Context" shows a perfect harmony with the "aim" of the Congregation: any missionary activity and *obsequium* to the Bishop" [NB: "It's God's will"] (*Idem*, p. 501-502).

As regard to the “Manner”, we shall choose some passages, the most meaningful, as well as to put together the ones which deal with the same theme.

The Manner

[Abandonment]

“ On the 8 [November 1834] – The Octave of all Saints – through the grace of God, we got a new companion: Paul Solari, as temporal coadjutor, the brother of Francesco; and in such an occasion our dear Superior gave us an homily on the ‘Oremus’ of the 5th Sunday of Epiphany, which says: “ In your constant mercy, protect your family, Lord, so that she who trusts only in the hope of celestial grace, may be strengthened by your protection. Through...].

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of Saint Abandonment*”; while The “Context” underlines the welcome growth of the ‘Family’ at Stigmata. [NB: “by God’s grace”] (*Idem*, N. 21, p. 500; in harmony with CF 6).

[School students]

“The year 1833, the Schools started on St. Charles’ day (4. Nov.), being the anniversary of their (1°) opening. On this day Fr. Gaspar had some blood problems; Fr. Bragato replaced him”.

“The days 21, 22 (Sept. 1834) we had 2 first Masses: i.e. Fr. (Louis) Angeli and Fr. (Francis) Girardelli: two of our ex- students”.

“The 27 (Sept. 1834), we had the honor of having the 3rd new Mass of Fr. Louis Benassuti, one of our ex-students”.

“The 18 January 1835, the 8th Sunday after the Epiphany, in which the most holy Name of Jesus is commemorated, at 4 p.m., our dear young man Louis Ferrari, 14 and half years of age, dressed the clerical habit by the hands of the Pro-Vicar Mons. Louis Castori, with great attendance of faithful, especially students”.

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of youth education*”; while The “Context” reminds us the first ministry exercised by our

(Confreres): the School at Stigmata [NB: “1833: the anniversary of their (1°) opening”] (*Idem*, p. 495; 499; in harmony with CF 165-181).

[Ministries]

“ On September 10, 1833 : Fr. Bragato started the Spiritual Exercises at Verona Diocesan Seminary. Fr. Bertoni, the Superior of Stigmata, was supposed to lead them, but he was not able to do that because of teeth problems, with high fever and bloodletting: for this reason it was good for him (Fr. Bragato) to take full responsibility, leading morning and evening Meditations. Those who dictated the Instructions were the two wise and very good Priests Fr. (Joseph) Gilardoni and Fr. (Joseph) Venturi”.

“The 4 October (1834), a day dedicated to St. Francis, we had a solemn celebration, with a good number of Masses – 41, with a wonderful panegyric (homily) by Fr. Francis Benciolini”.

“ The 17th September (1835), we celebrated with great solemnity the feast of St. Francis, titular feast of the Church of Stigmata, with simplicity but we were honored by the presence of a good number of Priests – 78, who came to celebrate....Fr. Vincent Raimondi gave the panegyric”.

The “Texts” underline the “spirit of apostolic zeal”, “of working together”, and “of availability”; while

The “Context” underlines the ministry of preaching “any kind of preaching” [NB: “a very good panegyric”] (*Idem*, p. 496-497, 499; in harmony with: CF 163-165, 185).

[Devotions]

“ On March 7, 1834, being the 1st Friday of March, dedicated to the Five Wounds, in our Church we do things with a certain solemnity, with plenary Indulgence; the previous evening and the morning we ran the bells in a lower tune, and in the same way as we usually do on 1st Sunday of Lent; and that's the way we did all the Fridays.

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of devotion to the Five Wounds”; while

The “Context” reminds us the importance of keeping the due

continuity of this fundamental devotion. [NB: “*all the Fridays*”] (*Idem*, p. 498; in harmony with CF 51).

“ On May 10, [1835]: we started again the already destroyed pool. The worries, the narrowness, the misfortunes and all the other tribulations were so big. But – W Jesus, Mary and Joseph – everything was overcome, and I hope that, with their blessing, everything will continue like that. We ended...”.

“ June 1836. 10th...Today, after various months, our dear Superior, celebrated Mass, privately, assisted by Fr. Cainer, W Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph, St. Ignatius and St. Therese of Jesus. May God, through their merits, help him to continue: for the greater glory of God, in spite of the devil”.

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of profound devotion to the Holy Spouses*”; while

The “Context” reminds us that this devotion, beside the reason of thanksgiving, was a strong invitation to imitate their examples. [NB: “For the greater glory of God” (*Idem*, p. 504-505; in harmony with CS II, p. 161; 165).

The Document we are about to analyze, now, “ somehow echoes the life of the first Stigmata Community, and the Founder ‘s teaching “ (CS II, “*Introduzione*”, p. 328), and it has, as author:

FR. FRANCIS BENCIOLINI

and as a title: “ *The autograph writings of Fr. Francis Benciolini*” (from 1829 to 1891) (CS II, p. 331-381).

The Document presents some ‘*personal and other spiritual notes*’ (p. 331-361)., after which follow some passages concerning the temporal-goods (p. 362-371). At the end we find a ‘list of Fr. Francis Benciolin’s sermons” “ (p. 378-381).

We refer the reader to all this material.

To facilitate, instead, our research, we have chosen some passages that deal with the ‘*Sacred Missions and Spiritual Exercises*’ (p. 355-360), as “Aim”, and some passages that deal with the ‘Intentions or promises?’ (p. 372-377, as regard to the “Manner”.

The Aim

“1. The sacred Missions !...What a great consolation, to work together with Christ for the salvation of souls! To understand how much God appreciates our work, we can look at the fruits of his blessing. If it is one of the most efficient means which God uses for the eternal salvation of souls, how big should your gratitude be to God, and for us what love and dedication in doing it !”.

The “Text” does not report the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”; while

The “Context”, very appropriately, underlines, two very meaningful aspects” the “You” for those who are preparing themselves; and the “Us” for those who ‘are’ already ‘apostolic Missionaries’ [NB: “*Sacred Missions*”] (*Idem*, N. 1, p. 355; in harmony with CF 1).

“2. A Rule, prescribed by Blessed Leonard (from Porto Maurizio), to his companions, concerning the Missions.

Let those who preach, prepare themselves with much study, and much more by praying, let them trust in God, by putting all their words in the heart of Jesus, so that imbued with that very precious blood, they may be, for the Holy Spirit, an instrument for shaking even the most hard and stubborn hearts. During the time of Missions, they should renew their pure intention of searching only for the honor and glory of God, at any breath, if possible; ‘ne cum aliis praedicaverim ipse reprobus efficia’ (so that I, after having preached to others, may not be found ‘guilty’) [I Cor., IX, 27]”.

The “Text” does not report the words “*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops*”, while

The “Context” reminds us that the quoted “Rule of Bl. Leonard”, was really in harmony with the necessary preparation of our ‘Apostolic Missionaries’ [NB: “trust in God; the Heart of Jesus”] (*Idem*, N. 2-3, p. 355; in harmony with CF 1).

Regarding the “Manner”, all the texts chosen by us, will be analyzed one by one; while their “Context” shall be put together at the end, being a faithful copy of the fundamental aspects, suggested by Fr. Bertoni.

The Manner

“1. For the ‘Meditation’, which I shall do, as I get up, before any other business, I shall always bring the points for meditation, I shall start with a simple but fervent prayer, and conclude always with a firm and practical resolution of eradicating the vice and implementing the virtue I am dealing with; regarding especially the School, my Vocation, and the virtues proper to Religious; and by asking humbly, but with trust, the help of God, being careful not to forget to go through the intercession of Mary most Holy, both at the beginning and at the end of Meditation”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of prayer and meditation*”, “*of asceticism and continuous active progress*”, “*of Youth education*”, the spirit “*of perseverance in religious vocation*”, “*of humility*”, “*of trust in God*”, “*of the loving presence of Mary Most Holy*”.

“2. In the celebration of the Holy Mass, after due preparation, done with humility and devotion, and by looking at the Missal, I shall follow, by mind and heart, those most holy prayers recited in it, to read them seriously and with devotion, keeping in mind that this is the most sublime and holy prayer ever existed, to the highest glory of God and for my utility and for others as well; I shall never forget the thanksgiving prayer (after Mass) in which I shall always ask God for perseverance in my Vocation, the virtues proper to Religious and the ability to teach well at School”.

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of Eucharistic prayer and Eucharistic life*”, “*of perseverance in religious vocation*”, and “*of Youth education*”

“3. The recitation of the Divine Office : I shall make sure that I pray slowly and clearly, to pay attention in it, by accompanying, with my heart, the feelings which are there in the different prayers; again, keeping in mind that the Divine Office, well recited, is a

inexhaustible mine of graces, for me and for all the faithful; moreover it is a prayer of great importance, being the Priest, as he recites it, like an 'Ambassador' who in the name of the whole Church, pleads the Creator of heaven and earth. (Therefore) during the recitation of the Office, I shall often renew my intention of giving honor and glory to the Lord, by uniting my prayers to those of Jesus Christ".

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of the 'official' prayer of the Church", "of the 'Ambassador' on behalf of the whole Church", "of always giving glory to God", and "of communion with Jesus Christ".

[*"2. Poverty. When you realize that the devil assails you, immediately renew, in your mind, those great principles of Faith: "Resist him steadfast in the faith" (I Pt., V 8-9), in other words, (to remind yourself) that the real riches is poverty" (Idem, p. 334, 349)].*

"4. Chastity. I shall be very diligent; for this reason, 1° never look at any body, neither look at anything which may be of scandal; 2° to chaste away all bad thoughts; 3° to reveal temptations; 4° Never to confer with women; 5° To recite with great devotion the 3 usual Hail Mary, in the morning and in the evening, and a Glory to St. Louis" (Idem, pg.373-374).

"5. Obedience: I shall do everything commanded to me, or even what I know to be the Superior's will; I shall do them with attention and diligence, and moreover I shall make an effort to love them with my will and with my intellect, to judge them to be the most expedient for me, by doing them knowing that they are commanded: beside this, I shall see God in my Superior, and always, while obeying, I shall prepare myself to do any other obedience which might come to me" [Idem, p. 374 (p. 344)].

The "Texts" underline the "spirit of poverty, chastity and obedience" (Vows and virtues)

"6. Humility : - 1 - I know I find it being very difficult to humiliate myself and I'm still far away from having this virtue; - 2 - I have few talents and little capacity or ability; - 3 - I shall try not to interfere in business that do not belong to me, convinced as I am that I have neither scientific nor spiritual ability to accomplish

them, and to leave them to others, as they have received from the Lord more talents than me; - 4 – I shall choose to remain a bit behind to mortify my presumption, and I shall find my pleasure in doing humble activities, more than in bright ones; - 5 –I shall learn from others, both by listening to them, and by trying to imitate their virtues; - 6 – as much as I can I shall not talk about myself, neither positively nor negatively” [Idem, p. 374 (p. 340, 344)].

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of humility”, and “of self-denial”

“7. In Mortification and Penance: I shall try to live community life, with all my spirit. I shall mortify myself especially by taking away those faults in gesture and behavior, about which I am often told; I shall try not to love commodities, and win that dullness and boredom or other defects which I might get, either at School or in hearing Confessions ect. I shall try to speak in a low voice; and supply other exterior mortification which I am not able to do as I wish, and to recognize myself unworthy, because of my sins” (Idem, pg. 374)

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of mortification and penance”, and “of community life”.

“8. In the Devotion to the most Blessed Virgin: - 1 –to give myself completely to Her, once and for all; - 2 – to renew my self-giving prayer, every morning- 3 –to invoke Her by saying an ‘Hail Mary’ before any action, and another ‘Hail Mary’ for that action - 4 –to recite the (Marian) Divine Office and to celebrate the Mass in feasts dedicated to Her; - 5 – to invoke Her often by saying: Jesus; Mary, have mercy!; - 6 – to speak often about Her, both in public and in private, recommending to the penitents, her devotion; - 7 – in her honor, to exercise all the holy virtues, so dear to Her, especially humility and chastity;. - 8 – to recite, every day, the Holy Rosary and on Saturdays to do some mortification, either of food or something else. (Idem, p. 374-375).

The “Text” underlines the “spirit of devotion to Mary most holy”.

“9. In the morning and evening examination (of conscience) I shall examine myself always on : 1- whether, in the Office, I had

devotion, paid attention and well-behaved; 2- in the Mass I was serious and pious, keeping in mind the greatness of the action I was doing; 3- In Meditation I recited the prayer before it, I did it well, with fervor, by pleading the Lord to give me the strength I need to teach well at School; 4- In this examination, not to forget the thanksgiving action, before, then the prayer and the contrition and the promise about a virtue or a vice I am dealing with, and especially if I did insist with the Lord for getting the graces and necessary qualities to teach well at School". (Idem, p. 375; 376, n. 12).

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of examination of conscience", "of contrition", "of intention of amendment", and "of Youth education".

"10. Charity: I shall try not to allow, in my heart, any spirit of jealousy for the good done by others, but to congratulate them on that, thinking that, by doing that, I shall have merit, as if I did it, and this with profit, without any fear of growing proud. I shall also try, neither to be one-sided, nor to prefer one to another ". (Idem, p. 375).

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of fraternal charity".

"13. In hearing Confessions: - 1- not to gaze at the penitents - 2 - always keep a serene face - 3 - not to hasten - 4 - to be charitable and compassionate: the Sacraments are meant for people; - 5 - I shall neither show satisfaction nor shall I try to get the penitents to come to me, instead of going to others; rather shall I be glad if they go to others; - 6 - When God sends (penitents) to me, I shall humble myself, thinking that I am only able to spoil God's deeds, and by humbly imploring God's help, I shall trust in the Lord's assistance only". (Idem, pg. 376)

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of Sacraments administration", "of humility", and "of trust in God".

"14. In Preaching : to keep myself at the presence of God, without fearing nor being too much excited in my gestures, to keep the voice quite heavy (or serious), and to remain calm". [cf. Idem, p. 376 (p. 338)].

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of preaching*".

The "Context" of all the passages mentioned above, instead, is in perfect harmony with Fr. Bertoni's requirements, or, as we have already said, it is a faithful copy of the fundamental aspects of the *Stigmatine life style* [NB: "at the presence of God"; "Jesus, Mary, have mercy"] - [in harmony with CF 6, 37-38, 43-44, 47-48, 72-75, 90-151, 163, 165-181, 187-266, 277; PVC, p. 308-320).

NB- We should not forget also, other aspects, here and there underlined by Fr. Benciolini, like Meekness, Science, Hope, Patience (*Idem*, p. 336, 337 e 345, 337 and 346, 351, respectively).

Another *very meaningful contribution* to our present work, comes from the one who became the 2nd Superior General of the Congregation, the 1st Novice Master, Director of the Scholasticate, and Prefect of Studies:

FR. JOHN-BAPTIST LENOTTI

According to Fr. Zara, "Fr. Lenotti was the 1st to explain our Founder's "Rules" (CS III, "*Prefazione, alle Esortazioni-Lenotti*", p. 388).

It is for this reason, then, that the Document we are about to examine, among all the various writings of Fr. Lenotti, have always been considered, first of all, as '*a classic*', in our research; and as *a sure instrument of interpretation*. Unfortunately, as Fr. Stofella says, the text does not have a "systematic order", is not "a complete treaty, rather it has many gaps, very often non exhaustive explanations, , notes which are too dry and not enough, too many recourses to somebody else's authority, expressions and examples a bit far from our taste etc. etc.

Nevertheless, all the authenticity that our Ven. Father's spirit can reasonably require in the Congregation, founded by him, cannot better be found unless in the person, words, action of this privileged Son (Fr. Lenotti), formed by our Father himself, with his own hands : person, word and action which in Fr. Lenotti become one thing, as per mandate

of his Superior, Fr. Marani: of “*transmitting to the young generation, being fully aware, the spirit of our beloved Fr. Gaspar*” [Idem, p. 389; (p. 76, 133)].

The Title of this Document is:

- “*Domestic Exhortations and Instructions to our Novices*” (between 1855 and 1871) (CS III, p. 399-539).

The Text is divided in two parts: 1st Part, which presents the comment of CF, and this is the part which concerns us; what follows is an ‘Appendix’ with some other exhortations” (Idem, p. 399-539; 540-569); 2nd Part, which deals with “Occasional Exhortations” (Idem, p. 570-613).

In PART ONE, to the question: “What is a *Religious* in general, and what is a *religious in our Congregation*”, Fr. Lenotti answers categorically: “A Religious in our Congregation must not only be a Religious, but a ‘*Soldier-Religious*’; i.e. He must have the spirit of a soldier: courageous and faithful soldier, animated by a spirit of sacrifice, spirit of generosity, spirit of zeal for the glory of his King and for the good of the Republic” (Idem, pg.404)

It seems to us, that such meaningful description, is also an excellent introduction to our study about the “Aim” and the “Manner” of our Congregation, which we are about to start. Excellent introduction because, it not only describes our ‘identity’ [“*soldier-religious*”, i.e. *available, courageous and faithful*], but in a very special way because it presents our characteristic life style [“spirit of sacrifice”, “spirit of generosity”, “spirit of zeal”].

Having said that, we now proceed to the analysis of :

The Aim

“I. Aim: “Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops”: “*This words, our Ven. Founder, puts at the beginning of our Constitutions*” (Idem, p.408).

The “Text” and the “Context” are perfectly in harmony with the CF 1 [NB: “at the beginning of our Constitutions”].

Regarding the “Manner”, as we have already done, we shall choose some meaningful passages, which show properly Fr. Bertoni’s ‘mind’, not forgetting Fr. Stofella’s warning, already seen.

The Manner

“2. Manner:” under the direction of, and dependent on the local Bishops of those places in which the Missions may be offered, to whom they are to be totally submissive, concerning all that pertains to the exercise of their apostolic ministry; they are to receive the permission beforehand from them, along with the necessary faculties, always observing the guide-lines set down by these Ordinaries concerning the places and the time. (Ex Decr. S. Congr. De Prop. 20 Dec 1817)” (*Idem*, p. 409).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of obedience*”, “*of service*”, “*of obsequium*”, and “*of Apostolic Mission*”; while

The “Context” reminds us that “*Fr. Bertoni’s mind* was to establish a Congregation, which should be dedicated and determined, in a very special and specific way, to the service and ‘obsequium’ of Bishops” [NB: “exercise of the apostolic ministry”] (*Idem*, p. 409; in harmony with CF 2, 7).

“3. Weapons: *God’s Word and Prayer. The sword of God’s Word: gladius spiritus, quod est verbum Dei [Eph., VI, 17], [which is] the sword more piercing than any other double edged sword: penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti [Heb. IV, 12], which reaches the inmost soul, it strikes and it wins.*

And this (sword), dear Brothers, one has to learn how to handle it, through the studies and the lessons, and to use it well, according to the circumstances: in the confessional, in prisons, in the pulpit, on the stage, at the Altar, in the Spiritual Exercises, Missions, Oratories, familiar conversations etc., by imbuing it with the Spirit of the Lord, which must always be in our heart, so that the word will flow, being inflamed to touch and uplift the hearts of the faithful” (*Idem*, p. 410).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of God’s Word*”, “*of studiosity*”, “*of instructions*”, and “*of apostolic zeal*”; while

The “Context” underlines the need of excellent preparation to be able to animate our apostolate. [NB: “to imbue it with the Spirit of the Lord](in harmony with CF 163).

“Prayer : is the channel, through which, the Lord has planned to give us graces; Prayer is the only thing that, by itself, can obtain anything: cum una sit, omnia potest [Wisd. VII, 27]; Prayer is the key of God’s treasures; it touches God’s heart with a ‘sweet violence’. Prayer unites us to God, it fills us with courage, light and strength. What good can we do to ourselves and to others, if the Lord does not give us his help and his grace ? Our words will fly away. (We have to) pray, therefore, dear Brothers, to accomplish the aim of our Vocation. Let us pray a lot, also, for our Brothers who are out in Mission, and much more for the increase and the wellbeing of our Congregation. Let prayer be our refuge in all tribulations which surround us.[Ps. XXXI, 7]. Let us pray a lot, let us trust in God, and He will not fail to assist us in our needs: volavit super pennas ventorum [Ps. XVII, 11]: he flies to assist the one who prays to Him: I invoked You and You did hear me: invocavi te et exaudisti me [Ps. LXXXV, 7; Ps. IV, 2]: nobody who put his trust in the Lord, remained unheard: nullus speravit in Domino et confusus est [Ecl., II, 11]” (Idem, p. 410-411).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of continuous prayer*”, “*of interiority*”, of “*bond of unity*”, and “*of trust in God*”; while

The “Context” reminds us that prayer is the first means for “any spiritual progress”[NB: “Let us pray for our Brothers who are in Mission”] (in harmony with CF 47, 222).

“Gratis omnino servire Deo et Ecclesiae. To serve God and the Church with total gratuity [I.]. And this because (we are) Soldier-Missionaries, we must serve God, our King, Jesus Christ, our Head and Leader, and the Church, our Christian Country. We are not Missionaries to command, but to serve. Non est discipulus super Magistrum, nec servus super dominum suum= The disciple is not greater than his Teacher, neither the servant greater than his Master [Lc, VI, 40]. Even the Son of God, the head of all Missionaries, venit ministrare, and not ministrari, came to serve not to be served. [Mt., XX, 28], formam servi accipiens, taking the form of a servant [Fil., II, 7]. The same way, the Missionaries and the Apostolic

Men, to be ready for any need of our neighbors, omnibus omnia facti, ut omnes Christo lucrificamus= they became all things to all men, that they might save all [I Cor, IX, 22]. And to serve, first of all, God and the Church; to please Him, avoiding anything which may disgust him, with our defects, by attending our perfection, by mortifying ourselves, by being patient and observing the Vows and the Rules. And to serve the Church: our neighbors by prayer, good example, studies, preaching etc..” (Idem, p. 411-412).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of service*”, “*of gratuity*”, “*of promptness*”, “*of personal perfection*”, “*of testimony of religious life*”, “*of studiosity*”, and “*of preaching*”.

“Gratis omnino servire Deo et Ecclesiae= To serve God and the Church with total gratuity. [II.]. And to serve completely free of charge. And who is that soldier quis militat suis stipendiis, who does his job for a salary ? [I Cor. IX, 7], we, ‘free of charge, gratis; the reward, in the future life, will be much greater. What did Jesus Christ do ?...everything gratis, free of charge, even to his enemies; The Apostles, everything gratis, free of charge. We too, to serve for nothing. The same did the Saints ! Unselfishness is a great magnet to draw the hearts of people to God . Unselfishness catches people who are so much attracted by interests and business; especially these days whereby nobody does anything for nothing, [it catches people] and one can see that especially during the Missions: they, then, cannot complain [CS III, p. 114-115]. The Lord gave our beloved Founder this spirit of detachment; and he used to keep it very scrupulously,...even by refusing donations, inheritance etc...; nothing for ministry, neither for ‘intuitu operi praestito” [CS II, p. 52]. We thank the Lord, because the less we get from people, the more we shall receive from God”. (Idem, p. 412-413).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of gratuity*”, and “*of detachment*”; while

The “Context” [I]-[II], underlines the importance of the spirit of *Holy Abandonment* in God’s Providence [NB: “came to serve”] (Idem, p. 411; in harmony with CF 3).

“4. Free of all dignities, residences, benefices, and the perpetual and particular care of souls and Nuns. The Rule, put by our Founder, in our Congregation, is this: to be completely free of..(etc)..: three very nice reasons for such rule, are as follows: 1- To found ourselves in humility and to remain always radicated in

it: pride is the most fatal moth of the Congregation. 2- To keep in us, always the religious spirit: dissipation and distraction, little by little, would penetrate in our heart, up to the point of loosing our Vocation. 3- To keep within the Congregation, the best members" (Idem, pg.413-415).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of freedom of action*", "*of humility*", "*of religious life*", and "*of looking for quality (of the members)*"; while

The "Context" reminds us that this Rule "excludes the chance for ambition, vanity, and other inconvenience" [NB: "the best members"] (*Idem*, p. 413; in harmony with: CF 4).

"5. Quocumque euntes in dioecesi et mundo =To be ready to go anywhere in the Diocese and the world. "We are not meant to remain always in the same place, (but we are to be ready) like soldiers and willing to help anybody, and not in one Diocese only, but in the whole world. The reason is that, if any of us is of the opinion that there is already a lot to do in our city or in our Diocese, without moving or extending our work to other places, such a person would show clearly enough that he did not understand the spirit of our Institute. Therefore (we need) a heart as big as the world! The Lord, we do hope, will give us the grace of 'being of help' in various Dioceses. We must (always) have a big and generous heart within us, and trust in God: if we do not fail, God will never fail us. But if we want to be ready to go anywhere in the world, we have to detach ourselves from rooms, clothes, food, in our going around, and in everything..."(*Idem*, pg.415).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of availability*". "*of openness*", "*of generosity*", "*of trust in God*", and "*of unselfishness*"; while

The "Context" shows the need of being open to a sense of universality, to an apostolate without frontiers. [NB : "a heart as big as the world"] (in harmony with CF 5).

"Community life: many people live together, and everything that is in the house and in the monastery, everything is in common; everybody can share anything, but nobody owns anything, nobody has the ownership of anything; neither exceptions nor personal and exclusive and perpetual use of something; real poverty indeed! About the old Christians people said that everything was in common among themselves, because all would bring their properties at the feet of the Apostles and everything was put in

common (Act. V, 1-15) Among us (it must be) a source of peace for us, with our neighbor, with God. For us, because there will be no attachment; with our neighbor, as there want's be any 'mine' or 'his', which is the source of fightings and wars; so everybody will try to avoid confusion at home. With God, because this kind of detachment from (earthly) things, will produce more love for God! Our beloved Founder wants (poverty) to be perfect. The ruin and the destruction of community life – and therefore of religious poverty – do not come suddenly, but little by little: now with one excuse, later with another; now because of sicknesses and attacks (of sickness!), later with different interpretations (of the rules), with distorted and endless discussions; again for human respect of not being able to refuse something or for not asking permission for something...ect.” (Idem, p.416-418).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of community life*”, “*of sharing*”, “*of poverty*”, “*of peace*”, “*of precaution*”, and “*of simplicity of life*”; while

The “Context” reminds us that Community Life is an essential element to Religious Life. [NB: “Our Founder wants it to be ‘perfect’] (in harmony with CF 6, 43, 90-104, 133-137, 187-266).

“Perpetual exercise of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty in everything!” That’s what I want you to learn from me, dear disciples of the Apostolic Missionaries: a perpetual exercise of obedience, chastity and poverty in everything; (you have) to learn to put in practice this very important rule that your Founder puts as the main means to obtain the ‘aim’ of your Congregation. “Perpetual exercise”. The exercise requires a repetition of habitual deeds: we have to repeat, day after day, these deeds of obedience, of chastity, of poverty, and to obey habitually, to be chaste habitually, to be poor habitually, and that’s not all, one has to practice these virtues in his entire life: for ever! ...And surely not to be a little bit obedient, chaste and poor, and then to go our own way!...(but) as ‘victims’ for God.

Obedience, not only in things we like, but also in those we do not like: in everything!

Chastity: in our eyes, with our ears, in the modesty of any of our behaviors: in everything;

Poverty: in the way we wear our clothes, in eating, in drinking, in

our sleeping, in our gestures, in all things: in everything!" (*Idem*, pg.418-419).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of practice of the Vows and of the Virtues of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty*";, while

The "Context" reminds us that the Vows too, are an essential element to Religious Life [NB: "*in omnibus: in all things*"] (*Idem*, p. 418; in harmony with CF 6, 83-151).

"Ratio vivendi, sive quod ad alimenta pertinet, sive quod ad vestes et tectum erit consentanea Clericis perfectioribus quibuscum vivent, et aedificationi fidelium, sive in paritate christiana, sive in evangelica paupertate" (*Idem*, p. 420).

NB- Fr.Stofella's observation: "Fr. Lenotti disappoints the reader, in the sense that the explanation expected of the Founder's text, at the end does not come; in its place, he seems caught by an exhortation, which, though coming from the text, seems precautionary and of marginal importance: on the permanent need of the spirit of penance" (*Idem*, pg.420)

Nevertheless, we shall now, as much as possible, try to emphasize, from Fr. Lenotti's comment, what better fits the above mentioned Rule

"You can see that our beloved Founder does not order anything special or extraordinary in our way of living, in the house, in our food, in our clothing etc. As we find ourselves always with our neighbor, if we want to help them, we must try to avoid anything which may 'frighten' them.

With this, our beloved Founder, does not mean that we must avoid any penance, and especially the spirit of penance, so many often preached by Jesus Christ in the Gospel, in words and by his example. 'Do penance' was his first sermon; because the kingdom of God is near" (Mt. IV, 14). Those religious souls who do not want to make penance, show quite well that they do not have a religious spirit" (*Idem*, p.421-424).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of penance*" ["Christian parsimony – "*evangelical poverty*"]; while

The "Context" reminds us the examples of austerity and detachment of our fore-Fathers.[NB: "*consentanea clericis perfectioribus quibuscum vivent*"] (*Idem*, p. 421; in harmony with CF 6).

At this point, from pg.425 to pg.463, the Document deals with some aspects which we have already seen before [“*Marani’s Rules*”, NB-, pg. 68, and the analysis on the “Manner”, pg. 69-70].

Furthermore, as regard to the passages which deal with the “*Vows in general*” and the “*observance of the Vows*”, we refer the reader, to pg.463-469)

Now, instead, we shall analyze other passages that, from page 470 onward, deal with each Religious Vow in particular.

We must not forget that we are always on the “Manner”.

[*POVERTY*] “*The keeping of Poverty helps in keeping the other virtues as well: obedience and chastity: because the poor is humble, therefore even obedient; he loves discomfort and privations etc., good friends of poverty, and thus even ready to resist temptations (which may attach the virtue of chastity). Our divine Redeemer Jesus Christ, “rich as he was, became poor for our sake” (2 Cor., VIII, 9). And we, brothers – whether rich or poor in this world – for his sake, by trying to resemble him, should choose poverty. Let us love it, tenderly with our whole heart and with true spirit, and we shall experience in it true happiness and consolations (Idem, p.470;472-473).*

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of poverty*” (Vow and Virtue); while

The “Context” reminds us of the importance of poverty, as a “necessary capital”, to strengthen the Congregation. [NB: “*propter nos egenus factus est*”] (MP, 23-7-1809; in harmony with CF 90-104).

[*CHASTITY*]: “*The Religious should love chastity more than an avaricious man is greedy of gold, more than the ambitious is greedy of honors. Our life and our ministry requires it. The Lord “pascitur inter lilia”=finds his delight among lilies” (Canticle II, 16). But it’s a delicate virtue. Like a flower of sweet fragrance, that a soft wind or a small insect are enough to make it rot, so, one has to protect it inside a crystal veranda: such is chastity. And we must make use of any diligence to keep it pure from any stain of sin” (Idem, p.481).*

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of Chastity*” (Vow and Virtue); while

The “Context” reminds us that Chastity facilitates the sacrificial and universal love toward our brothers [NB: “to do one’s best to keep it”) (in harmony with CF 105-119).

[OBEDIENCE] “ *Obedience is the main thing God wants of us. And the obedience of judgment, in other words, the Lord wants your will. And if we experience criticisms against obedience, let us attach ourselves by humbling ourselves. It is necessary (therefore) I should show you that to be obedient, and in order to surrender to the Lord our will, one has to accept whole heartily the corrections the Superior does to him*” (Idem, p.509-510).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of Obedience*” (Vow and Virtue); while

The “Context” reminds us that Obedience “binds our spirit to a total dependence from God in everything” [NB: “The Lord requires from you, your head” (MP, 23-12-1808; in harmony with CF 138-151).

After analyzing the religious Vows, the Document, from page 511 to 535, deals with some aspects already seen (“Constitutions” of our Founder, pg. 20; 24-25)

Now, instead, we shall analyze “*De familiari conversatione cum proximis ad illorum salutem – On familiar conversation with our neighbors, toward their salvation*”, which concludes the Comment to CF.

In fact, here and there, we have already touched such theme; Again, we are always under the heading of the “Manner “

[First Rule]. “ *Religious are not allowed to talk to anybody without any distinction*”

[Second rule]. “*To avoid to converse with outsiders: it is forbidden (because those who enjoy worldly conversations, show clearly that they did not abandon the world as yet)*”

[Third rule]. “*One has to avoid also talks between young and oldish people, and even young to young people*”

[Fourth rule]. “*One has to refuse to talk frequently with those who do not live in a spiritual way*”.

“*In conclusion, from what have been said up to now (the 4 rules), what conclusions should one take, dearest brothers ? It’s clear*

that one has to avoid the conversation with outsiders, absolutely, as it is prohibited to our young people” (Idem, p.536-539).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of carefulness*” and “*of prudence*”; while

The “Context” underlines “the kind of familiarity that is to be avoided” [NB: “the world, they did not really abandon it”] (in harmony with CF 267-270).

NB- Unfortunately Fr. Lenotti does not say a word about “the proper manner of conversing with our neighbors”. And, even worse, he does not mention anything about “How we can attain the purpose of the Congregation through friendly conversation” (CF 271-276; CF 277-297, respectively).

To recapitulate: The Documents of Fr. Gramego, Fr. Cainer, Fr. Benciolini and of Fr. Lenotti, first of all, clearly transmit the “mind of the Legislator”, that is, Fr. Bertoni’s, through the faithful presentation of the matter and the object of the CF, i.e. the “Aim “ and the “Manner “, the circumstances and the declarations of the same Legislator. (“Introduction” to this work)

Again, (in the same Documents) one can easily grasp “ *Bertoni’s plan*” of having some members “*purposely prepared, with all the required tools, with very clear battle plans*”, to be able to face and renew the reality, both of the Church and of Society” (Idem, p. 7).

TWO OTHER DOCUMENTS

The very last contribution, to this work, comprises two Documents, called:

- *Memories about some Priests and Brother of our Congregation* (Verona 24-9-1886)
- *Short Chronicle of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Stigmata of O.L.J.C., for private use of the Members of the same Congregation* (Verona 1917)

We have to make few observations concerning both Documents:

1. We put together both Texts, because both of them refer some facts or news about our Congregation, *in a narrative form*; not, therefore, in a form of law, norm or rule of CF

2. Very seldom, instead, they deal with the theme that concerns our research, i.e. the "Aim" and the "Manner"

3. The Authors, i.e. Fr. Ferdinand Colombari for the "*Memories*" and Fr. Joseph Fiorio for the "*Short Chronicle*", do make use of the Texts of Fr. Marani, Fr. Lenotti, of the "Chronicles" (and probably even from other writings, in compiling their Texts, being the dependence from such sources so clear. So much so, that Fr. Colombari himself, for example, confirms this, as he says: "These *Memories* came to me from some of his Sons" (Idem, pg.V), and the '*Forward*' to the Text, was undersigned by "The Priests of Stigmata" (Idem, pg.VII)

4. In analyzing the "*Memories*", we shall deal only with the "*Origin – happenings – nature and aim*" of the Congregation (Idem, p.1-10); and with the "Compendium of the Life of Fr. Gaspar Bertoni", as "this compendium have been taken from the Life, written, with much elegance, by the Archpriest, Fr. Gaetan Giacobbe" (Idem, N. 1, p. 11-40). The rest of the Text, are but some short news about the Confreres and their respective activities, (taken one by one), who lived at Stigmata between 1816 and 1883.

5. From the "*Short Chronicle*", nearly everything is important to us. All three parts of it ["1st Period 1816-1853", "2nd Period 1853-1890", "3rd Period 1890-1941"], do deal, occasionally, with the "Aim" and the "Manner".

6. The reason for writing the "*Memories*", is explained by the Author himself, in the cover: "To the most Rev. Fr. Peter Vignola, Superior General, in his Priestly Jubilee, Sept. 24, 1886".

7. The reason for writing the "*Short Chronicle*", is explained by the Sup. General, Fr. John Baptist Tommasi, in the '*forward*': "As remembrance of the 1st Centenary of our Congregation" (Idem, p.3)

8. It is proper, in addition, to keep in mind, that the "*Memories*" show both the "initial inspiration", and the "reasons" which brought Fr. Bertoni to found the Congregation, i.e.: "*Missionary of the Youth*" (as per mandate of his Pastor) ; "*Missionary of the people*" (after the Mission at St. Fermo's Parish); "*Apostolic Missionary*" (from the

Decree of the Congregation of 'De Propaganda Fide'); "*Missionary of the Clergy*" (with the Spiritual Exercises); "*Missionary of Religious Women*" (by the will of his Superiors) (*Idem*, p. 18; 20).

From these five Reasons, just seen in n° 8, the characteristic of "*Missionary*" appears very clearly ; while the one of "*Apostolic Missionary*" only from one of them.

All this, put together, formed in Fr. Bertoni's heart "the plan of that Congregation of 'Apostolic Missionaries', that by the Lord he was called to establish " (*Idem* p.20).

Having said that, let us now analyze

The Aim

["MEMORIES"]

"Congregation of Apostolic Missionari at the service of Bishops" (*Idem*, p.1).

"Its name is: "*Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishop*, Missionarii Apostolici in obsequium Episcoporum" (*Idem*, p. 9).

"This 'humble' Congregation of Apostolic Missionaries" (*Idem*, p. 10).

[NB- The clause "*It is called*", repeats what Fr. Marani had already done in his "Compendium of the Constitutions": "he took the "aim" of the Congregation to put it as the 'name' (CF, "*Introduzione*", p. 37)].

["SHORT CHRONICLE"]

"To form a 'union' of 'Missionary Priests' " (*Idem*, p. 21, n. 7).

"The Aim of this 'Pius Union' is to put, at the disposal of Bishops, some Priests full of zeal, to render any kind of spiritual service to the Diocese" (*Idem*, p. 86, n. 83).

"As per will of Fr. Marani, they were called 'Apostolic Missionaries'"

[*"Aim as Name*] (*Idem*, p. 93, n. 90).

"This statue of Mary, was acclaimed "*The Madonna of the 'Apostolic Missionaries' Novitiate*" (*Idem*, p. 115, n. 111).

"Only those Priests who had received by the Superior General the

grade of 'Apostolic Missionaries' (could take part in the General Chapters) (*Idem*, p.130, n° 124).

The "Texts" and the "Context" of both Documents are in harmony with CF 1 [NB: "Priests full of zeal"]

In regard to the "Manner", we are going to choose a few more meaningful passages:

The Manner

["MEMORIES"]

"To conclude, the "Manner" with which the Congregation fulfils its "Aim", according to our Rules, is "Obsequium or service to the Bishop, in those things he needs, in different times and circumstances", as he requires, from the Superior of the Congregation, one or more (of us) in view of some activities or enterprises, that go along with the spirit of our Congregation and according to its Rules, as long as there are, according to the judgment of the same Superior, people well prepared for such activities" (Idem, p.10)

The "Text" underlines the "spirit of service to the Church", "of obsequium or service", "of apostolic zeal", "of availability", and "of freedom of action"; while

The "Context" affirms clearly, in front of the Bishops, "the juridical rights of the Institute, of the Constitutions and of the Superiors" [NB: "peoples well prepared for.."] (CF, N. 1-2, p. 44; in harmony with : CF 2).

["SHORT CHRONICLE"]

"..And he wanted, as much as possible, that (the Confreres) should continue with these studies, even being Priests, in any time they were given the best possible way, to prepare themselves to do their undertakings, as a service to the Church. Above all, he tried to implant, in his sons, a sense of sincere attachment to the Church, and to her venerable Head, the Roman Pontiff" (Idem, pg.47, n° 43)

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of excellent preparation*", "*of apostolic zeal*", spirit "*of service and love for the Church*", "*of respect for the Pope*"; while

The "Context" reminds us that the Congregation was established "in view of the renewal of the Church" [NB: "attachment to the Church and the Roman Pontiff"] (in harmony with CF 2, 7).

[Proper spirit]

["MEMORIES"]

"Although not having the name (of Religious), they were living in a very strict discipline, so much so that the world would judge them as 'excessive' in their mortification, and that they were exaggerating in poorly eating and in untidy and poor dressing; (nevertheless) they were so happy and cheerful" (Idem, p.4).

"His beloved 'family', instead of flourishing, in front of the eyes of the onlookers was diminishing, (nevertheless) Fr. Bertoni wouldn't slow down in working hard for her increase and progress. And, so strong was the hope he had in doing the enterprise that God himself had inspired, that he would say to them: "Have courage, let us trust in God, let us allow him to do, he who can do anything" (Idem, p.5).

"When Fr. Galvani (offered) Fr. Bertoni the chance of undertaking, together with some companions, the running of two "gratuitous schools" at Stigmata, Fr. Bertoni accepted, promptly and happily, the chance offered to him" (Idem, p.12).

"How exemplar was the life of those our Forefathers: so observant of the Evangelical Counsels, as if they had already made 'profession' of them; the love for poverty; in spirit of obedience they would be ready to any order of their Superior; (they would consider) idleness and rest the time they would dedicate to prayer and severe studies; the education of Youth; (formation) in the proper ecclesial and religious spirit" (Idem, p. 22-23; 25).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of discipline*", "*of mortification*", "*of life simplicity*", "*of joy*", the spirit "*of courage*", "*of hope*", "*of trust in God*", "*of gratuity*", the spirit "*of availability*", "*of religious Vows*", "*of constant prayer*", "*of studiosity*", "*of youth education*", and "*of ecclesial and religious spirit*"; while

The “Context” of all these passages, reminds us that “Fr. Bertoni’s example and any word or counsel coming from his mouth, was taken by them as a rule and constitution” [NB: “*let us trust in God*”] (*Idem*, p. 4; in harmony with CF, and especially with the “*Compendium rude*”).

[“SHORT CHRONICLE”]

“Concerning the running of the house (according to Fr. Marani), Fr. Bertoni started immediately to set it “more religiosorum”= according to Religious”, and this of perfect observance and even more perfect community life” (*Idem*, p. 25, n. 14).

“It was natural for our Fathers, zealous as they were for the good of souls, the desire of re-opening the Church of Stigmata” (*Idem*, pg.31, n.24).

“Oh, how nice and exemplar it was to see them, coming from school, having put aside books and pens, to go near the laborers and help them bring cement and bricks and work together with them! Let their sweat, shed in this holy place, therefore, protect it, bless it and make it produce!” (*Idem*, p.37, n.31).

“[Explanation of the Christian Doctrine]: Fr. Gaspar wanted his Sons to prepare themselves with much diligence, in this job, to be very clear, popular, pleasant and fruitful; and they would dedicate themselves to it, with love, and explain it with skill, keeping alive the attention and interest of the many people who would go to listen to them,” (*Idem*, p.42, n.38).

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of religious life*”, “*of observance*”, “*of community life*”, “*of apostolic zeal*”, the spirit “*of manual work*”, “*of diligence*”, “*of excellent preparation*”, “*of love*”, “*of skill*”; while

The “Context” of all these passages, reminds us that the Members of our Congregation, ought to counterbalance with wisdom, contemplative and active life” [NB: “more religiosorum”= with the style of Religious, and their sweat”] (in harmony with CF, and especially with the “*Compendium rude*”).

[Proper Ministries]

Preaching

[“MEMORIES”]

“Because, to evangelize (with) the Word of God, either through the Catechism or through Spiritual Exercises, was “their daily bread” (Idem, pg. 4).

“And, indeed, it is proper of this Congregation, beside conducting sacred Missions, to lead Spiritual Exercises for any kind of people, to explain the Catechism, to instruct and help the Prisoners. spiritually..” (Idem, p. 9-10).

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of evangelization*”, “*of preaching*”; while

The “Context” underlines the need of making the “preaching” “*our daily bread*”.

[NB: “It is proper of this Congregation”] (in harmony with CF 163).

[“SHORT CHRONICLE”]

“Furthermore, as much as time would allow, “the Priests who were not engaged in the School, would dedicate themselves in preaching Novenas, Octavaries, Triduums, but especially in leading Spiritual Exercises here and there, particularly to Priests and Clerics of the local Seminary, who very often were sent or even now are sent to our house for their Retreats” (Idem, p. 38, n.33).

“Our Confreres, then, were engaged in preaching wherever invited, but especially in teaching Christian Doctrine, every Sunday, in summer time” (Idem, p.69, n.69).

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of preaching ministry*”,; while

The “Context” underlines the importance of this ministry, to be attended to, both outside and inside the Convent” [NB: “*they were sent to our house*”] (in harmony with CF 163).

Assistance to the Clerics

["MEMORIES"]

"In his teaching (Fr. Charles Fedelini) fixed two very high aims; and the testimony from the many Priests who were lucky enough to have a chance to listen to his lessons, tell us that he reached both of them: i.e. a) he had in mind to prepare Priests to be fit for their great duty of caring for souls; and b) to defend St. Alphonse de Liguori's system against the powerful opponents, who, under the pretext of limiting him within more reasonable borders, are in reality trying to demolish him" (Idem, p.62).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of assistance to the Clergy*"; while

The "Context" reminds us the need for a solid and deep preparation for such ministry. [NB: "to prepare Priests to be fit"] (in harmony with CF 164).

["SHORT CHRONICLE"]

"...And, as if that was not enough, he transformed his Convent into a study Center, with the aim of going on with those scientific Conferences, already started at his home, before entering the Stigmata, for the study of St. Alphonse and St. Thomas. In these Conferences, which many Diocesan Priests, as well, would attend, one would read a passage from St. Thomas, then, without failure, one among the present was invited to answer the question, to conclude with the answer to the question, from St. Thomas himself, and the sharing would go on. The same system was used for the study on Moral Theology" (Idem, p. 39-40, n. 34).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of Assistance to the Clergy*", while

The "Context", once again insists on the necessity of a solid and deep preparation for this ministry" [NB: "he transformed his Convent into a 'Study Center'"] (in harmony with: CF 164).

Christian Education of the Youth

["MEMORIES"]

"[At Stigmata] They engaged themselves, therefore, in teaching the Youth at the school"... "There, you could see our Forefathers to consecrate themselves, with ever new enthusiasm and love, to the education of Youth, through the Schools... [and, at Derelitti] Sunday Oratory for the Youth: religious instruction for the Youth, every evening" (Idem, p.2,4,9).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of Youth Education*"; while The "Context" underlines "*enthusiasm and love*", with which one has to do this ministry" [NB: "School and Oratory"] (in harmony with CF 165-181).

["SHORT CHRONICLE"]

"During the past years, the main occupation of our Fathers was the School"...But, they were not only engaged with the instruction of the Youth, but also, actually much more, with their moral and Christian education.....[and] because of this, they established, from the very beginning, the Marian Oratory, [for the mean time] only for the students" (Idem, p. 29, n. 20; p. 30, n. 22).

The "Text" underlines the "*spirit of Youth Education*"; while The "Context" reminds us that such ministry involves both school teaching and Christian formation [NB: "the main occupation of our Fathers"] (in harmony with CF 165-181).

Various Ministries

["MEMORIES"]

"[Other occupations] To sit, for very long time, at the Tribunal of penance; to assist prisoners and the sick (and the dying)"..."to lead the Marian Congregations in the Churches or our Institute, and to establish them wherever possible; to replace or even to teach, on a permanent basis ,in Philosophy or Theology Schools in Seminaries, and to be ready to do any other activity of which the Bishop would be in need, even suddenly" (Idem, p. 4,10).

The “Text” underlines the “*spirit of apostolic zeal*”, and “*of availability*”; while

The “Context” reminds us the saying “*Parati ad omnia = ready for anything*”, even for sudden requests. [NB: “To do any other activity”] (in harmony with CF 161-164).

[“SHORT CHRONICLE”]

“As from the very first year (writes Fr. Marani), beside the Schools, the Priests were engaged, in their free time and on holidays, in hearing tirelessly Confessions of Children and men”.... “With the help of (new Priests), our Priests could dedicate themselves, more easily, to the activity of Priestly Ministry, both at home (Stigmata) as well as in other Parishes, wherever they were called”... “As the ‘workers’ were increasing in number, marvelous was the good they were achieving at School, in hearing Confessions, in preaching, (ready as they were) to help the Church in any kind of ministry they were asked to do....; ministries compatible with the duties of religious life, according to the needs of the Bishops, Pastors of the Church” (Idem, p. 31, n. 23; p. 42, n. 38; p. 51, n. 48).

The “Texts” underline the “*spirit of apostolic zeal*”, and “*of availability*”; while

The “Context” reminds us, again, about the necessary ‘*balance*’ between religious life and apostolic work. [NB : “*in any kind of ministry*”] (in harmony with CF 161-164).

Devotions

[“MEMORIES”]

“[Paul Zanoli] His very special devotion was the practice of the Way of the Cross... [Joseph Reali] He used to love the prayer very much and very often he would think of the Passion of Jesus Christ” (Idem, p. 78, 96).

[“SHORT CHRONICLE”]

“In the Church of Stigmata, every Friday there was the devotion ‘for a happy death’ in honor of the Passion of our Lord”... “And

around this time we started holding, with a certain solemnity, the feast of The Five Wounds of O.L., during Lent" (Idem, p. 68, n. 68).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of devotion to Christ's Passion and to his Five Wounds*"; while

The "Context" reminds us that Fr. Bertoni "himself preached, till he managed, every Friday, asking people to carry him to the Church, when his legs wouldn't allow him"

["MEMORIES"]

"This Congregation is put under the protection of Mary most holy and St. Joseph, , whose examples should, with the divine help, be imitated by anyone who desires to serve, in it, his Divine Majesty
".. "[Fr. Innocent Venturini] His zeal and apostolic charity he would draw from prayer and from the protection of the Holy Spouses, to whom he had offered himself, as a devout son" (Idem, p. 10, 71).

["SHORT CHRONICLE"]

"At Villazzano, in the meantime, the Community had, somehow, settled down; and far away from any noise or distraction, would attend to prayer and to study, in fear and hope, as they were invoking the Holy Spouses to protect the small Congregation and to send her many and good 'workers'" (Idem, p. 124, n. 119).

The "Texts" underline the "*spirit of devotion to the Holy Spouses*", while

The "Context" reminds us of yet another dear devotion of our Forefathers, which underlines the life examples of the Holy Spouses" [NB: "The Congregation put under the protection of Mary most holy and St. Joseph"] (in harmony with CS II, p. 161, 165).

NB- We report here, for your knowledge, two problems exposed by the "Short Chronicle". The first one, regarding the "*Title or name of the Congregation*" taken out in the XII General Chapter-1890". "The Holy See had refused the suggested Name of "Apostolic Missionaries at the service of Bishops", and had allocated to us the

other of “Priests of the Sacred Stigmata of O.L.J.C.”, which many did not like.

After having suggested yet another Name, which was refused as well, the Chapter decided to keep the one assigned to us by the Holy See, as it appears in the Decree of Approval”.

The Second one, “about the “Aim” of our Congregation; that is, whether, from the words of the Decree, we had to understand the ‘School’ as a main “Aim”, like the one of the ‘Missions’. Having being approved so, and having introduced yet other changes in the Constitutions, the fact is that, in 1891, at least 7 Confreres left the Congregation. And the “*Short Chronicle*” thus comments the fact: “It was a hard test for our Institute, *but a necessary one*”(Idem pg.194-196)

To Recapitulate. Probably the best synthesis one could make, of the content of the “*Memories*”, and of the “*Short chronicle*”, could be the summary Fr. John Baptist Tommasi presents and our actual General Directory 54.3 reports, where it is stated that our first Fathers were able to reconcile:

- “*the continuous research of the humblest self-hiding, given as a characteristic of their*
life, and the fame of a great holiness;
 - “the most strict penance and the most sincere happiness;
 - “an heroic unselfishness and a real spirit of poverty, whereby they would build or
repair houses or the church, without leaving any debt, in spite of the lot of
expenses they had for the care and the dignity of the buildings;
 - “the most regular discipline and the various multiplicity of their activities;
 - “the most perfect obedience and the very busy schedule of activities of the
Confreres;
 - “the continuous study and work and the deepest piety”
- (Tomasi, G.B., lett. Circolare, 24-10-1916; “*Breve Cronaca*”, p. 6).

Conclusion

Starting from St. Gaspar Bertoni, up to the “Short Chronicle”, the various Documents we have been analyzing, about the “Aim” and the “Manner” of our Congregation, beside a certain harmony among them, they emphasized some primary preoccupations, to be kept always in mind:

— The necessity of a qualified preparation of its Members, in view of the “*Apostolic Mission*”;

— The due attention at the sign of times, so as to be always ahead, as far as the “*various and characteristic Ministries*” are concerned;

— The courageous and prompt availability, according to our “*Apostolic Style*”;

This is the “Identity of Fr. Bertoni’s Project”, or “the program of remaining always ‘*at the school of God*’: and this have been the “Grammar of St. Gaspar”, i.e. “*his spirit is a vital and dynamic reality*. As such, has to be preserved and put in practice in the ever changing conditions of times” (P. Ignazio Bonetti, “*Alla scuola di Dio con S. Gaspare Bertoni*”, p. 271-273).

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