

# **St. GASPAR BERTONI'S APOSTOLIC MISSION**



and his

## **“ESPOUSALS PRINCIPLE”**

**THE NUPTIAL UNION WITH THE CHURCH IN THE APOSTOLIC MISSION:  
ANY MINISTRY OF THE WORD OF GOD WHATSOEVER!**

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## INTRODUCTION

### **The Deeper Union there is with Christ, the Greater Service of the Church is the result**

[1] With St. Thomas Aquinas – whose liturgical celebration will be held within the week - we can come to understand better our response to grace, our commitment to our own salvation and to our Mission in life, by means of examples, the use of simile – or something like the metaphor of relationships. St. Thomas used the example of “instrument” - in this connection, which can lead us to think of Michaelangelo’s paint brush: in the hands of a genius, this ordinary instrument comes alive, and produced the master-pieces in the Sistine Chapel walls and ceiling in the Vatican.

[2] In the Franciscan School, this ideal is communicated also by family relationships: Mary, for example, is pondered as the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son and the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. There are principles of collaboration in this seraphic theology, as: Brother Sun and Sister Moon, the Canticle of Creation – brother fire and sister water! We need both, working together, for the nest meal.

[3] St. Ignatius capitalized on the thought of instrumental causality and developed his ideal even more by theological reasoning: the closer the instrument is to the hand of the Master, the more outstanding will the end-result be, service of the Church. Even a mediocre instrument can perform wonders in the hands of a creative genius.

[4] Fr. Bertoni seems to have had something like this in mind when describing the apostolic mission for the Stigmatines. We are called to an intensifying union with Christ, our Merciful High Priest – and to an ever more qualified commitment to the betterment of the Church, in whatever way our physical strength, our God-given talent and God’s gift of grace will permit. With this basic principle in mind, we can reflect on the “Espousals Principle”.

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## A. Church Understanding

*23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called."<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined [cling] to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. [Gn 2]*

[1] In the opening chapters of the Sacred Scriptures, there is a sublime **description of the ideal marriage** – the union of man and woman in holy matrimony aims at a **oneness that is complete** even to the spiritual interests of **a new family, the People of God, the Church**. Across the centuries, one of the many metaphors of this union: of **Christ's humanity in the Trinity** – of **the human soul with God** – and **believers with the Church** [Ep 5 – a "great mystery"] - has been this **nuptial metaphor**. In so many ways, the Stigmatine Charism has been blessed and described with this ideal.

[2] Through **the reception of the Eucharist**, a primary effect is described by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as:

### The Fruits of Holy Communion

1391 Holy Communion augments our **union with Christ. the principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus.** Indeed, the Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood **abides in me, and I in him.**" Life in Christ has its **foundation in the Eucharistic banquet:** "As the loving Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."

On the feasts of the Lord, when the faithful receive the Body of the Son, they proclaim to one another the Good News that **the first fruits of life have been given,** as when the angel said to Mary Magdalene, "Christ is risen!" **Now too are life and resurrection conferred on whoever receives Christ.**

1392 What **material food** produces in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh "given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit," **preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace** received at Baptism. This **growth in Christian life needs the nourishment** of Eucharistic Communion, the **bread for our pilgrimage** until the moment of death, when it will be given to us as **viaticum.** [CCC]

[3] An accompanying effect is then union with the Church, the Bride of Christ:

#### The Church is the Bride of Christ

796 The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship. This aspect is often expressed by the image of bridegroom and bride. the theme of Christ as Bridegroom of the Church was prepared for by the prophets and announced by John the Baptist. The Lord referred to himself as the "bridegroom." The Apostle speaks of the whole Church and of each of the faithful, members of his Body, as a bride "betrothed" to Christ the Lord so as to become but one spirit with him. The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb. "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her." He has joined her with himself in an everlasting covenant and never stops caring for her as for his own body:

This is the whole Christ, head and body, one formed from many . . . whether the head or members speak, it is Christ who speaks. He speaks in his role as the head (*ex persona capitis*) and in his role as body (*ex persona corporis*). What does this mean? "The two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the Church." and the Lord himself says in the Gospel: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. They are, in fact, two different persons, yet they are one in the conjugal union, . . . as head, he calls himself the bridegroom, as body, he calls himself "bride.""

[4] St. Paul envisions a sublime intensity of this union:

17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. [1 Co 6].

St. Thomas offers this commentary:

305. – ... But he who is united to the Lord, namely, by faith and charity, is one spirit with him, namely, because he is united to Him in a spiritual, not a bodily, unity. Hence it says in Rom (8:9): "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him," and in Jn (17:21): "That they may be one in us, as we are one," namely by a connection of the Spirit. And because the body serves the spirit, it follows that our bodies too are members of Him to whom we are united by the Spirit, not of course, by a bodily but by a spiritual union... [In 1 Co 3].

[5] Scripture then comes to a close with an invitation to all Believers to come to the marriage Feast:

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the

tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, 4 and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."<sup>5</sup> And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new ...I will be his God and he will be My son. ... 9 Then one of the seven angels ... came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." [Rv. 21]

The Commentary on this passage points out that the New Heaven – the New Earth – the new Jerusalem - these comprise a 7th vision and it focuses on salvation. Radical discontinuity with the "old" is noted in the destruction of heaven and earth as we knew them The Holy City, coming down out of heaven dressed like a Bride – this imagery might have been written in the wake of the destruction of the "old" Jerusalem around 70 a. D]. This is another symbol of the eschatological union of the Faithful with their Lord. The Lord will wipe away every tear – no more death, no more separations, no more sadness [cf. Is 25].<sup>1</sup>

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### **[B] Unexpected Help from Modern Science: Astronomy and the Law of Gravity**

**[1]** Modern scientists are fascinated by the gravitational pull of the mysterious 'black holes' in the distant universe: the going theory is that they are something like gigantic whirlpools as water drains from sink, tub – of immense power and gravity pull – swirling at enormous rates of speed, with extraordinary gravitational pull, and a "Magnetic Field" develops – a very powerful spin, greater than the speed of light. While there is an immense thrust outward perhaps from the original explosion [cf. as in the "Big Bang" Theory] – that seems to be picking up speed with the passing of time. (with St. Thomas' theory, following perhaps Aristotle: motus in fine velocious est!). Should this ever reach its peak, there may be a Big Crunch" [Gib Gnab", "Big Bang" in reverse!] and there will be an immense gravitational pull backward.

**[2]** What interests us here, though, is not the temporary nature of this universe [the sun with 10 billion years of life to its credit, has used 5 already!] – but the extraordinarily mysterious gravitational pull.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Adela Yabro Collins, "The Apocalypse" 63, in: *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice 1990, n. 63, p. 1015.



**[C] The Scriptures offer abundant reflection for an application here:**

Draw me after you, let us make haste. The king has brought me into his chambers. We will exult and rejoice in you; we will extol your love more than wine; rightly do they love you. [Ct 1:4]

**Is 12: 3** With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. **4** And you will say in that day: “Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name; make known his deeds among the nations, proclaim that his name is exalted. [Pius XIIth took the title of his encyclical on the Sacred Heart in 1956, from this passage: *Haurietis Aquas!*]

**Jn 3: 12** If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? **13** No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man.[f] **14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, **15** that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

[This is an illusion both to the ‘lifting up’ of Jesus on the Cross [v. 34] – and to His being lifted up to heaven - the following few texts may be of more direct importance in this context:

**Jn 6: 62: 60** Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” **61** But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? **62** Then what if you were to see the Son of man ascending where he was before?[e] **63** It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **64** But there are some of you that do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that should betray him. **65** And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

**66** After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him. **67** Jesus said to the twelve, “Will you also go away?” **68** Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

□



**[D] St. Thomas' Biblical Commentaries are more and more cited in our own time:**

**[1] Jn 8:28:**

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me. 29 And he who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him." 30 As he spoke thus, many believed in him.

**[Jn 8.Lect 3]**

**1190** Here, for the first time, Christ foretells how they are to come to the faith, which is the remedy for death. He does two things: first: he shows what will lead them to the faith; and secondly, he teaches what must be believed about himself (v 28).

**1191** He says, first, that they ought to come to the faith by means of his passion: *So Jesus said to them: When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will understand*. He is saying in effect: You do not know now that God is my Father, but when you have lifted up the Son of Man, that is, when you have nailed me to the wood of the cross, then you will understand, that is, some of you will understand by faith. "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (12:32). And so, as Augustine says, he recalls the sufferings of his cross to give hope to sinners, so that no one will despair, no matter what his crime, or think that he is too evil, since the very people who crucified Christ are freed from their sins by Christ's blood. For there is no sinner so great that he cannot be freed by the blood of Christ...

**1192** ... he teaches three things that must be believed about himself: first, the greatness or grandeur of his divinity; secondly, his origin from the Father; thirdly, his inseparability from the Father.

He mentions the greatness of his divinity when he says, that I am, that is, that I have in me the nature of God, and that it is I who spoke to Moses, saying: "I am who am" (Ex 3:14).

- But because the entire Trinity pertains to existence itself, and so that we *do not overlook the distinction between the Persons, he teaches that his origin from the Father must be believed*, saying, *I do nothing of myself; but as the Father taught me, so I speak*. Because Jesus began both to do and to teach, he indicates his origin from the Father in these two respects.

- As regards those things he does, he says, I do nothing of myself: "The Son

cannot do anything of himself" (5:19).

- And as regards what he teaches, he says, as the Father taught me, that is to say, he gave me knowledge by generating me as one who knows. Since he is the simple nature of truth, for the Son to exist is for him to know. And so, just as the Father, by generating, gave existence to the Son, so he also, by generating, gave him knowledge: "My doctrine is not mine" (7:16).

- So that we do not think that the Son was sent by the Father in such a way as to be separated from the Father, he teaches, thirdly, that they must believe that he is inseparable from the Father when he says, he who sent me, the Father, is with me, by a unity of essence: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me" (14:10). And the Father is also with me by a union of love, "The Father loves the Son, and shows him everything that he does" (5:20). And so the Father sent the Son in such a way that the Father did not separate himself from the Son; and so the text continues, he has not deserted me, because I am the object of his love.

For although both are together, one sends and the other is sent: for the sending is the incarnation, and this pertains only to the Son, and not to the Father. That he has not deserted me is clear from this sign: because I always do what is pleasing to him. ...

Another interpretation would be this: he has not deserted me, that is, as man, protecting me, because I always do what is pleasing to him. In this interpretation it does indicate a meritorious cause.

**1193** Then when he says, **Because he spoke in this way, many came to believe in him, he shows the effect of his teaching, which is the conversion of many of them to the faith because they had heard Christ's teaching: "Faith comes by hearing, and what is heard by the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17)**

**[2]            Jn 12: 32**

**: ... and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." 33 He said this to show by what death he was to die. 34 The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" 35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, lest the darkness overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light."**

In Jo 12, 32, Lectio 5

**1672** The form or manner of this passion would be by being lifted up; thus he says, and I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men [all things] to myself. In regard to this, Chrysostom has the following example: ...

- And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself. First, he describes the manner of his death; secondly, the Evangelist explains it, saying, he said this to show by what death he was to die, for he would die by being lifted up on the wood of the cross.

**1673** Here we should note that there are two reasons why the Lord willed to die the death of the cross.

- First, because it is a shameful death: "Let us condemn him to a shameful death" (Wis 2:20). St. Augustine says: "The Lord willed to die in this way so that not even a shameful death would keep a person from the perfection of righteousness."

- Secondly, because such a death involves a lifting up; so our Lord says, when I am lifted up. Such a manner of death was in harmony with the fruit, the reason and the symbol of the passion. It was in harmony with its fruit, because it was by the passion that Christ was to be lifted up, exalted: "He became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him" (Phil 2:8). Thus the Psalmist said: "Be exalted, O Lord, in thy strength!" (Ps 2:8).

It harmonized with the reason for the passion, and in two ways: both with respect to men and with respect to the devil.

- With respect to men, because he died for their salvation. For they had perished, because they were cast down and sunk in earthly things: "they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth" [Ps 16:11]. Thus he willed to die raised up in order to lift our hearts up to heavenly things. For in this way he is our way into heaven.

- With respect to the devils, it was fitting in the sense that those who exercised their principality and power in the air were trod under foot by him while he was raised in the air.

Finally, it harmonized with the symbol, because the Lord commanded that a bronze serpent be fashioned in the desert, as recorded in Numbers (21:9), and above: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so

must the Son of man be lifted up" (3:14). And so thus lifted up I will draw all things to myself, through love "*I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn you, taking pity on you*" [Jer 31:3].

Furthermore, the love of God for men appears most clearly in the fact that he condescended to die for them: "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us," as we read in Romans (5:8). By doing this he fulfilled the request of the bride: "Draw me after you, and we will run to the aroma of your perfume" [Song 1:3].

**1674** Here we may note that the Father draws and the Son also draws: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him" (6:44). He says here, I will draw all things, in order to show that the same action belongs to both of them. And he says, all things, and not "all men," because not all men are drawn to the Son. I will draw all things, that is, the body and the soul; or all types of men, such as Gentiles and Jews, servants and freemen, male and female; or, all who are predestined to salvation.

Finally, we should note that to draw all things to himself is for Christ to cast out the prince of this world, for Christ has no fellowship with Belial, nor light with darkness (2 Cor 6:15).

**[3] Heb 5: 18, f.**

... so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. 19 We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

**In Heb 6. 18, Lect. 3**

**323.** – Then (v.18) he shows the fruit of the promise: first, he shows that that fruit is; secondly, what follows upon it (v. 19).

**324.** – The fruit, of course, is that our hope is certain; hence, he says, that we might have strong, i.e., firm, encouragement of hope, by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should be false, namely, by God who promises and does not lie: 'God is not a man that he should lie' (Num. 23:19) and by the oath in which there is a stronger confirmation of the truth. But it should be noted that just as sensual delight is a sense experience and memory of the past, so hope is of the future: 'None that trust in him shall fail in strength' (1 Mac 2:61); 'They that hope in

the Lord shall renew their strength, and they shall take wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint' (Is. 40:31). We may have, I say, we who have fled for refuge from the evils of the world and the onslaught of the enemy, to seize the hope set before us: 'Lord, you have been my refuge' (Ps. 89:11); 'The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the just runs to it and shall be exalted' (Pr. 18:10)...

325. – Then when he says, we have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, he shows that faith will obtain that promise; and he makes use of a simile. For he compares hope to an anchor, which just as it secures ship in the sea, so hope secures the soul in God in this work, which is, as it were, a kind of sea: 'So is this great sea, which stretches wide its arms' (Ps. 103:25); hence, it is made of iron: 'I know whom I have believed and I am certain' (2 Tim. 1:12). Also it should be firm, so that it is not easily removed from the ship; thus a man should be held fast to that hope as an anchor and hope is that the anchor is fixed to a low place, but hope is fixed in the highest, namely, to God.

For nothing in the present life is so firm that the soul could be secure and at rest; hence, it says in Gen. (8:8) that the dove found no place where her foot might rest. And, therefore, he says that this hope should enter into the inner shrine behind the veil. For the Apostle understand the present condition of the Church by the holy things that were in the tabernacle; but by the holy of holies, which was separated from the saints by a veil, he understands the state of future glory.

Therefore, he wills that the anchor of our hope be fixed in that which is now veiled from our eyes: 'The eye has not seen, O God, besides thee, what things you have prepared for them that wait for you' (Is. 64:4); 'How great is the multitude of your sweetness, O Lord, which you have hidden for them that fear you!' (Ps. 30:20). This, our forerunner, who has entered there, has fixed there; hence, it says in Jn (14:2): 'I go to prepare a place for you.' He shall go up that shall open the way before them' (Mic. 2:13).

Therefore, he says that Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf within the veil and has fixed our hope there, as it says in the collect of vigil and of Ascension day. Yet because the high priest alone was permitted to enter within the veil (Lev 16), he says that Jesus has entered on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Notice how elegantly the Apostle returns to his main theme. For he had begun to speak of the priesthood and then digressed; but now he returns to it, as is obvious.

4. **Further Reflections:** In **GS 22**, we learn that Jesus Christ is united to every human being in some way: St. Thomas always taught that each human being has a natural capacity for God<sup>2</sup>. There is an innate quest for the True, the Good and the Beautiful – the infinite power of divine mercy changes this passive capacity into activity.

[a] The rich mind of St. Thomas developed more in detail this life-long process of being “drawn” by God – a kind of an on-going assimilation either to the end, purpose of all – or toward the principal agent – alpha / omega. St. Thomas was much inspired by the thought that we are drawn in the manner of an Agent, or drawn by the end presented to us [cf. CG III, c. 25, 13; c. 26; c. 69, 25; II-II, q. 175, a. 1 c]. Once being called in the life of Grace one is invited to allow this to be ever more intensified in picking up some to accede to Jesus Christ, one needs to be drawn by the Father:

**935** He says first: It is not unexpected that you are grumbling, because my Father had not yet drawn you to me, for No one can come to me, by believing in me, unless the Father, who sent me, draws him.

There are three questions here. The first is about his saying: unless the Father draws him. For since we come to Christ by believing, then, as we said above, to come to Christ is to believe in him. But no one can believe unless he wills to. Therefore, since to be drawn implies some kind of compulsion, one who comes to Christ by being drawn is compelled.

I answer that what we read here about the Father drawing us does not imply coercion, because there are some ways of being drawn that do not involve compulsion. Consequently, the Father draws men to the Son in many ways, using the different ways in which we can be drawn without compulsion:

- One person may draw another by persuading him with reason. The Father draws us to his Son in this way by showing us that he is his Son. He does this in two ways:

First, by an interior revelation, as in: “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you (that is, that Christ is the Son of the living God), but it was done so by my Father” (Mt 16:17).

Secondly, it can be done through miracles, which the Son has the power to do from the Father: “The very works which my Father has given me to perform ... they bear witness to me” (above 5:36).

- Again, one person draws another by attracting or captivating him: “She captivated him with her flattery” (Pr 7:21). This is the way the Father draws those who are devoted to Jesus on account of the authority of the paternal greatness. For the Father, i.e., the paternal greatness, draws those who believe in Christ because they

<sup>2</sup> I – II, q. 113, a. 10 c; III, q. 4, a. 1, ad 2 um; q. 6, a. 2 c.

believe that he is the Son of God. Arius—who did not believe that Christ was the true Son of God, nor begotten of the substance of the Father—was not drawn in this way. Neither was Photinus—who dogmatized that Christ was a mere man.

So, this is the way those who are captivated by his greatness are drawn by the Father.

- But they are also drawn by the Son, through a wonderful joy and love of the truth, which is the very Son of God himself. For if, as Augustine says, each of us is drawn by his own pleasure, how much more strongly ought we to be drawn to Christ if we find our pleasure in truth, happiness, justice, eternal life: all of which Christ is! Therefore, if we would be drawn by him, let us be drawn through love for the truth, according to: “Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart” (Ps 36:4). And so in the Song of Solomon, the bride says: “Draw me after you, and we will run to the fragrance of your perfume” (1:4).

- An external revelation or an object are not the only things that draw us. There is also an interior impulse that incites and moves us to believe. And so the Father draws many to the Son by the impulse of a divine action, moving a person’s heart from within to believe: “It is God who is working in us, both to will and to accomplish” (Phil 2:13); “1 will draw them with the cords of Adam, with bands of love” (Hos 11:4); “The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he wills” (Pr 2 1:1).

936 The second problem is this. We read that it is the Son who draws us to the Father: “No one knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son wishes to reveal him” (Mt 11:26); “1 have made your name known to those you have given me” (below 17:6). So how can it say here that it is the Father who draws us to the Son? This can be answered in two ways:

- for we can speak of Christ either as a man, or as God. As man, Christ is the way: “I am the Way” (below 14:6); and as the Christ, he leads us to the Father, as a way or road leads to its end. The Father draws us to Christ as man insofar as he gives us his own power so that we may believe in Christ: “You are saved by grace, through faith; and this is not due to yourself, for it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8).
- Insofar as he is Christ, he is the Word of God and manifests the Father. It is in this way that the Son draws us to the Father. But the Father draws us to the Son insofar as he manifests the Son.

937 The third problem concerns his saying that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him. For according to this, if one does not come to Christ, it is not because of himself, but is due to the one who does not draw him. I answer and say that, in truth, no one can come unless drawn by the Father. For just as a heavy object by its nature cannot rise up, but has to be lifted by someone else, so the human



heart, which tends of itself to lower things, cannot rise to what is above unless it is drawn or lifted. And if it does not rise up, this is not due to the failure of the one lifting it, who, so far as lies in him, fails no one; rather, it is due to an obstacle in the one who is not drawn or lifted up.

In this matter we can distinguish between those in the state of integral nature, and those in the state of fallen nature. In the state of integral nature, there was no obstacle to being drawn up, and thus all could share in it. But in the state of fallen nature, all are equally held back from this drawing by the obstacle of sin; and so, all need to be drawn.

God, in so far as it depends on him, extends his hand to every one, to draw every one; and what is more, he not only draws those who receive him by the hand, but even converts those who are turned away from him, according to: “Convert us, O Lord, to yourself, and we will be converted” (Lam 5:21); and “You will turn, O God, and bring us to life,” as one version of the Psalm (84:7) puts it. Therefore, since God is ready to give grace to all, and draw them to himself, it is not due to him if someone does not accept; rather, it is due to the person who does not accept.

938 A general reason can be given why God does not draw all who are turned away from him, but certain ones, even though all are equally turned away. The reason is so that the order of divine justice may appear and shine forth in those who are not drawn, while the immensity of the divine mercy may appear and shine in those who are drawn. But as to why in particular he draws this person and does not draw that person, there is no reason except the pleasure of the divine will. So Augustine says: “Whom he draws and whom he does not draw, why he draws one and does not draw another, do not desire to judge if you do not wish to err. But accept and understand: If you are not yet drawn, then pray that you may be drawn.”

We can illustrate this by an example. One can give as the reason why a builder puts some stones at the bottom, and others at the top and sides, that it is the arrangement of the house, whose completion requires this. But why he puts these particular stones here, and those over there, this depends on his mere will. Thus it is that the prime reason for the arrangement is referred to the will of the builder. So God, for the completion of the universe, draws certain ones in order that his mercy may appear in them; and others he does not draw in order that his justice may be shown in them. But that he draws these and does not draw those, depends on the pleasure of his will.

In the same way, the reason why in his Church he made some apostles, some confessors, and others martyrs, is for the beauty and completion of the Church. But why he made Peter an apostle, and Stephen a martyr, and Nicholas a confessor, the only reason is his will. We are now clear on the limitations of our human ability, and the assistance given to us by divine help.

939 He follows with the end and fruit of this help when he says, And I will raise him up on the last day, even as man; for we obtain the fruit of the resurrection through those things which Christ did in his flesh: “For as death came through a man, so the resurrection of the dead has come through a man” (1 Cor 15:21). So I, as man, will raise him up, not only to a natural life, but even too the life of glory; and this on the last day. For the Catholic Faith teaches that the world will be made new: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth” (Rv 2 1:1), and that among the changes accompanying this renewal we believe that the motion of the heavens will stop, and consequently, time. “And the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land, raised his hand to heaven” (Rv 10:5), and then it says that he swore that “time will be no more” (v 6). Since at the resurrection time will stop, so also will night and day, according to “There will be one day, known to the Lord, not day and night” (Zec 14:7). This is the reason he says, And I will raise him up on the last day.

[b] These pages include an inspiring sublime development of the theology of grace by St. Thomas – this is coupled with a certain psychology of faith of his own, describing perhaps existentially one’s psychological itinerary toward God. These are texts of Thomas’ own mysticism. There might be a glimpse in all this between the lines there is something of a type of emotional language, certainly in dependence on Augustine but maybe with Thomas’ own lived experience. On his/ her own, no human being has the possibility of acceding to Jesus Christ through faith. This is why Jesus states: *No one can come to me!* In order for this to happen, it is just necessary that each one receive the efficacious assistance of divine grace from the Father. No one can come unless he/she is drawn from the Father Who sent Him. The ultimate attraction is, of course, the resurrection on the last day! The next step would be to analyze the manner which the Father employs in “drawing” onto Jesus in faith. [cf. I. Biffi, *Eucharist*]

[c] The “draw’ which the Father employs has nothing of violence to do with it. [Much like the Will of Christ in Gethsemane – the Son is given a manner of loving that enables Him to accept the cruelty of the manner of redemption, transforming it into an act of loving acceptance, and willing – He was not “forced” into this]. Just as a human being interested in a major cause [from marriage to banal business deals] would strive to attract adherent [s] from within - either by persuading the reason of others, or by trying to attract someone else toward an ideal or manner of future conduct. Thus, the Father attracts human beings to Jesus by making His Son known – and this is done in some instances, by an internal revelation, interior Teacher. This is what happened in Peter’s situation to whom the Father personally made known to Him His only-begotten, most beloved Divine Son: flesh and blood have not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven!

Through this faith, generated through an internal revelation [as Jesus said to Peter: *flesh and blood have not revealed this to you ...but my Father in heaven!*]. Peter also received the power to perform miracles which would lead many others to the faith through his preaching – thousands would be converted just listening to Peter. The Father can draw one to His Son by enticement, charm, persuasion – He does this by His intrinsic quality of a Paternal Majesty. To draw human beings to these sublime ideals such as faith in Jesus Christ, or in Himself - both the Father and the Son [Who is the Way, Truth, Life] are enabled through all this to arouse love and peace of mind and heart.

**[d]** Still following the teachings of the great Augustine and his magisterial treatment of Divine Grace, Thomas points out that the Faithful have been attracted by the Son by sharing His own stupendous love and Will for the Truth, which Jesus is incarnate. To some extent, each person is drawn in all choices by one's perception not only of the Truth, but likewise of the Good, the Beautiful, by one's own desire. Admitting this is so, would it not also stand to reason that the more powerfully a rational being might be attracted toward Christ, the more committed is each one's response. This is all especially so since by nature each human being has an inner yearning by nature for Truth, Love, Beauty - Happiness, Justice, Eternal Life - and do not all these coincide with Jesus as revelation making His Father known to us? Since by an inner yearning, every believer needs to be drawn by Jesus Christ by allowing him/herself to be drawn by each one's innate love for Truth, restless quest for Goodness, delight in the Beautiful - echoed dimly in the revealed Word of God: He finds in the Lord all His delights and He will satisfy the desires of your heart [cf. Ps 34:4] - 3 Draw me: we will run after thee to the odor of thy ointments. The king hath brought me into his storerooms: we will be glad and rejoice in thee ... the righteous love thee. [Sgs 1].

**[e]** All of this may be discerned in the theology of St. Thomas developed through his contemplation of these ideals. In addition, there are often outside influences that draw the Faithful to believe, there is also the God-given interior instinct: salvation history shows that many are drawn by the Father to Jesus Christ, under the instinct of the divine action which moves the heart from within to come to believe in Christ and in His Father. Scripture seems to lend even its distant support here:

**14 Therefore, behold I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart... [Ho 2]**

**5 For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: [Ph 2]**

**Christ was driven, led by the Spirit out into the desert ...! [cf. Mk 1:12; Mt 4:1; Lk 4:1]**

[f] Now that it is clearly established that the Father [and the Holy Spirit] draw[s] the Son, it is likewise true that the Divine Son draws the Faithful toward the Father, in so far as He is both God and man. In so far as Christ is man, the Father draws believers to His Son as the unique Way – St. Thomas notes that Christ draws the faithful toward the Father as the Way leads one to its *terminus*, or toward its end, or purpose. The Father, on His part, leads humanity to turn toward Christ in His humanity, by bestowing on each that vigor, empowerment so that each and everyone might come to believe in Christ. And Christ, in His divinity, on His part always draws the Faithful to the Father – as the Incarnate Word He reveals, manifests His Father – He is the Truth and the Life - as the Father inclines each toward His Son, proclaiming: *This is my Beloved Son – Listen to Him!*

[g] All this mutual, reciprocal activity, it is noted that both the Father and the Son “draw” the Faithful toward each Other. By this is meant their Faith is generated never removing from each person that innate freedom of choice by which all are inclined to reject incredulity. The truth of the matter is the following: the human heart, particularly in the state of corrupted human nature by original sin, simply does not have the force, power, strength, to elevate this heavy weight. As a result, all need to be drawn – lifted up - and so, God, noting the dependence upon Him by sinful humanity [cf. Ps 103: something of a paradox here: He knows what we are made of... dust!] - God ‘extends His creating/ redeeming/ sanctifying hand’. He not only extends His hand to one who would receive Him, but converts to Himself those who would refuse Him and remain distant from Him. God is simply disposed to bestow grace on each and every one, and to draw all to Himself [# 937, above]

### [E] St. Gaspar Bertoni and the “Espousals Principle”

**St. Paul let it be known that marriage is a “great mystery”:**

31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.

**Centuries before Proverbs pondered this “mystery”:**

Three things are too wonderful for me; yes, four I do not understand: 19 the way of an eagle in the sky; the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a girl...! [Pr 30:18,

## Fr. Bertoni more influenced by Jesus Christ as Spouse of the Soul

### [I] Early Parish Sermons

There are these three quotes from his early preaching: even at that period in his life, Fr. Bertoni seemed much taken by this thought: that there was such a union between God and each person and that this could be considered as a supreme form of Nuptials. In a Sermon delivered on December 13, 1801 [which lasted 38 minutes!], Fr. Bertoni referred to this theme repeatedly, commenting on 1Co 3:16; 6:20:

#### [1] Most chaste, sublime Nuptials:

**“What greater honor could there be than being the Temples of God?” [cf. 1 Co 3:16], of glorifying and carrying God in our mortal bodies according to the expression of the Apostle [ib 6:20]? If so much honor is due to the churches for the simple reason that they are material temples of the Majesty of God, then how much more honor will there not be shown both by the angels and by human beings for a living temple, all splendid, and interior – in which are celebrated those most chaste and sublime nuptials between God and the individual I will espouse you to Myself – He has already stated this through His Prophets [cf. Ho 2:19] – I will espouse you in faith, in justice, in charity – as these are the three most precious gems with which He adorns such a person...<sup>3</sup>**

#### [2] The Beauty of the One Chosen to be the Lord’s Spouse:

**‘Put on the Lord Jesus Christ as a garment’ [cf. Rm 13:14]. And what beauty can ever be compared to that of a person whom God forms to make His Spouse? I just do not have the colors to paint such a picture, I can only tell you, using the very words of the Apostle, that such a person is united to God with such an intimate union that the individual becomes by a loving transformation one and the same Spirit with Him [cf. 1 Co 6:17]<sup>4</sup>**

#### [3] The Lord comes Himself for His Spouse:

**Do such things, accomplished in a sinner, surprise you? I am surprised even more in seeing that He was not content in just having spoken to us of His love through His servants and prophets, but that He Himself has come down from heaven, put on the vesture of a human being, to run after us in person; much like a King, as Chrysostom**

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Manoscritti Bertoni, #583.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ib. #584.

would say<sup>5</sup>, like a king who had fallen in love with a shepherd girl who had resolved to hake her from her shepherd's tent to the royal palace to make her His own wife. He was not content to send illustrious ambassadors to her, but He Himself descends from His Throne, and having put off all glory, as though He were afraid of frightening her with His overwhelming splendor, and of reducing her simplicity to confusion. So, He dressed up as a lowly shepherd, and imitating the lowly and simple manners of the shepherds to be able to approach her, so that He could directly speak to her of his love...<sup>6</sup>

## [II] Panegyrics on St. Francis of Assisi

The Stigmatine Founder was also influenced by the example of St. Francis of Assisi [Panegyric of 1808]: this same idea of the individual as the Spouse of Christ is found some years later in his beautiful panegyric of October 4, 1808, for the Feast of St. Francis. St. Gaspar Bertoni stated:

### The Spouse of the Canticles:

Francis would say in the words of the Song of Songs: 'Draw me' [Sgs 1:3], and he would say this in a most singular way, because the level of his love with which he followed after Christ is indeed very singular...He, therefore, could indeed say with the Spouse of the Canticles; 'Draw me', and he could say together with her: 'Your name is like oil poured out, and that is why we run after you.' [cf. Sgs 1:3]. That is why he could also say in common with so many of his sons, who in both number and splendor equal the stars, either those who shine gloriously in perpetual eternity [cf. Dn 12:3], making with Him triumphant crown there in heaven, or those, who still alive, shed so much light of their virtue in the dense darkness of this world in which we live...<sup>7</sup>

Christ to be imitated, to be followed: In this Panegyric, Fr. Bertoni stresses so much the example of Christ to be imitated, and that each one is united to Him on the Cross: this constitutes a "kind of nuptials." We are on the same Cross as Jesus Christ, as though grafted onto the tree of the Cross, planted there with Christ, to have in common with the tree, the sap and the life, e.g., grace and charity.<sup>8</sup>

Mutual Adherence, Assiduous Reflection: G. Bertoni lists four effects of this compassionate and transforming love: the first is union, then mutual inherence, the third is assiduous reflection, and finally ecstasy, being imprinted with the Stigmata.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In Ps 5; 2, t. 5, 19 4 D, ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Mss B*, #588

<sup>7</sup> cf. *Mss B* #1873

<sup>8</sup> cf. *ib.*, # 1862

<sup>9</sup> cf. *ib.*, # 1863 ff.

### [III] His “Espousals Principle”:

Fr. Bertoni offers a gradated, progressive approach to the various ways in which one might follow Jesus Christ: “very many” follow Christ for the reward [cf. Mt 6:2]; “many” follow Christ as slaves, but the slave does not know what the Master does {cf. Jn 15:15}; “some” follow Jesus as sons, but they are more interested in the inheritance [cf. Is 1:2]. “A few” may follow Jesus as friends, and base their whole relationship on the communication of Goods, but not be willing to share in His hardships, as the Apostles at first [cf. Mt 26:56; Ph 2:21]<sup>10</sup>. Then the Stigmatine Founder adds:

#### [a] Very, very few follow Him as Lovers:

... who in their youthful fire of their tender love follow Christ wherever He might go, either to Thabor, or on Calvary...But, the Spouse, the adult in the school of love, is not drawn by the pleasant odor, but is drawn by the right hand of the Spouse: ‘ Draw me’ [cf. Sgs 1:3], and by this strong right arm, they are embraced and find support from His strength, so that they keep pace with Him, and do not merely run with Him, but even fly...’Who is this leaning on Her Beloved?’ [cf. Sgs 8:5].

#### [b] Following means Union: This is how Francis followed Christ:

‘... and follow Me’ [cf. Mt 16:34]. This is not merely a close following but at His side; it is not merely being near to Him but it means being united to Him; and not only united, but being transformed: Francis did not seek the consolations, but the delights of the gifts of Christ: but he sought Christ Himself: ‘If only I can have Christ’ [cf. Ph 3:8]. It was the Christ, nude on the Cross...in the ignominies of poverty...I have come to consider all the advantages I had as disadvantages...’ [cf. Ph 3:7, ff.]

#### [c] We must be wounded as Christ:

And oh, how Francis followed Him, until he even arrived at being with Christ as but one and the same spirit, so that he could really say: ‘I now live, not I, but Christ lives in me.’ [cf. Ga. 2:20], by means of an entire, perfect transformation of love...by losing his entire self, to find himself totally in Christ: so much so that one can no longer find Francis if not with Christ: disdained as Christ, poor as Christ, wounded as Christ:

From the generic ‘many’ to the ‘very, very few’: It seems that Fr. Bertoni offers a gradation of intensity regarding those who follow Christ. Beginning with the “very many”, then, the “many”, “some”, to a “few” – and finally, “very, very few” who follow Jesus as lovers, spouse. Transforming love will mean to take on the wounds of Christ.

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<sup>10</sup> cf. ib., ##1865-1867



**[d] Suffering is the ‘School of God’**

The ‘Following of Christ’ that Fr. Bertoni presents as the ideal is that of Transforming Love, intimate imitation, most faithful following. Christ is looked upon as the “Teacher” in this extraordinary School of God. We are familiar with Fr. Bertoni’s idea of ‘suffering as the school of God’ as noted in his Letter to Mother Naudet:<sup>11</sup>

**... I am getting better little by little. Please pray for me so that I may derive some fruit from this school where the Lord has decided to place me, so that I might be disposed to serve him...**

Fr. Stofella’s note is that this is a capital thought of Fr. Bertoni – suffering is the “school of God.”

**[e] Jesus is the “Teacher”, the “School-Master”, in this ‘metaphor**

There are some notes among Fr. Bertoni’s papers in which he was preparing a sermon on *Jesus as the Teacher, or Master*, based on Paul’s Letter to Titus:

**... You see, God’s grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us what we have to do-to give up everything that does not lead to God and all our worldly ambitions... while we are waiting in hope... [cf. Tt 2:11-13]**

**[f] Never without Instruction**

In these notes, Fr. Bertoni states that he does not really feel prepared to speak on the theme, and so he will have to trust that the Lord will not ever leave us without instruction.<sup>12</sup> He suggests that his listeners look at this Master who comes to teach us, citing Psalm 94:

**... Happy the man whom you instruct, the man whom You teach through your law... [cf. Ps 94:12].**

**Jesus is the Master Who teaches by deed, and then has these teachings brought to life.**<sup>13</sup>

**[g] Lessons for Imitation**

In his Panegyric on St. Francis, Fr. Bertoni states that the Poor Man of Assisi learned his lessons from the eminent knowledge of Jesus Christ [cf. Ph 3:8] – this was

<sup>11</sup> cf. Letter 45, Ep, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> cf. *Mss B* # 1781.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ib.*, #1782.

a learning that was not acquired at the school of philosophers, but from that of Christ Himself – a school and a knowledge that by far surpasses all others<sup>14</sup>. The lessons of this school are a means for imitation<sup>15</sup>. This is a seraphic charity, in a way-farer, which transforms one into Christ in some way, through the most exact and literal fulfilling of His every word, and through the most minute and vivid copy of His every action – this is the perfection that is characteristic of the humble Patriarch of the poor Franciscans.<sup>16</sup>

### **[h] Union through Imitation, Following**

While Fr. Bertoni may not have made much mention of Francis' tradition of the Espousals with Lady Poverty, the thought of the union of the individual with Christ through imitation stands out. This is a "school" the teachings of which are not only to be admired, but is one which must be imitated.

### **[i] Fr. Marani: the Holy Spouses are our Teachers**

Fr. Marani, at the conclusion of this presentation of the Congregation to the Holy See, compiled in Rome in 1854, looks on the Holy Spouses as Teachers and Models of the following:

... **The Apostolic Missionaries are under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, her Spouse. Whoever gives his name to this Congregation always must have before his eyes the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, to learn from them:**

1. **Love of poverty**
2. **Application to Prayer and Meditation**
3. **The promptness of obedience, even in the difficult things and those that are contrary to nature**
4. **Charity toward God, to whose glory he must aim for totally.**
5. **Charity towards one's neighbor, whose spiritual good he is obliged even at the cost of his own life.<sup>17</sup>**

### **[j] This School of God teaches Union**

In his 26<sup>th</sup> Letter dated January 26, 1813, near the Feast of the Espousals,<sup>18</sup> Fr. Bertoni wrote to Mother Naudet:

<sup>14</sup> cf. ib., #1851.

<sup>15</sup> cf. ib., #1797.

<sup>16</sup> cf. ib., # 1798.

<sup>17</sup> cf. **Founder's Constitutions, Introduction 38, f. – CSI, pp. 363, ff.**

... But where does one learn this prudence, which is not merely human, but is of heaven? Who could ever give such laws and teachings? This is the school, and this is the teacher, as Sacred Scripture points out: 'The King has brought me into his rooms...how right it is to love you' [cf. Sgs 1:3]. It is necessary to allow ourselves to be introduced by this King who calls out, who invites, and who even waits until we enter the wine cellar of His love expressing those beautiful words: 'Listen, daughter, pay careful attention forget your nation and your ancestral home, then the King will fall in love with your beauty [cf. Ps 45: 10 ff].

It is here, he adds, that the soul, to its very great fortune is inebriated with the wine of His charity. This precious wine rejoices, fortifies, transports the individual outside of him/herself, and being united to God is oriented most perfectly: 'how right is it to love you...' Then a light is lit in the intellect, one of admirable wisdom and divine prudence, to judge all that has relationship to God as the effect, or, as the means to be achieved in the future, to glorify Him in the present...

## CONCLUSION

### [Points for Contemplation]

[1] **CONNATURALITY - UNION IN GRACE:** The soul is made like to God by grace. Hence for a divine person to be sent to anyone by grace there must needs be a likening of the soul to the divine person Who is sent, by some gift of grace. Because the Holy Ghost is Love, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Ghost by the gift of charity: hence the mission of the Holy Ghost is according to the mode of charity.

Whereas the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love. Hence Augustine says (De Trin. ix 10): "The Word we speak of is knowledge with love." [*connaturality* ]. Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love, as is said (Jn. 6:45): "Everyone that hath heard from the Father and hath learned, cometh to Me," and (Ps. 38:4): "In my meditation a fire shall flame forth." Thus Augustine plainly says (De Trin. iv, 20): "The Son is sent, whenever He is known and perceived by anyone." Now perception implies a certain experimental knowledge; and this is properly called wisdom [sapientia], as it were a sweet knowledge [sapida scientia], according to Eccus. 6:23: "The wisdom of doctrine is according to her name." [cf. I, 43, a. 5 ad 2 um]

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<sup>18</sup> cf. *Ep*, pp. 56, ff.

**[2] UNION OF INTELLECT AND TRUTH – THE UNION OF KNOWLEDGE** ... Now the rule of human acts is twofold, as stated above (Article [3]), namely, human reason and God: yet God is the first rule, whereby, even human reason must be regulated. Consequently the theological virtues, which consist in attaining this first rule, since their object is God, are more excellent than the moral, or the intellectual virtues, which consist in attaining human reason: and it follows that among the theological virtues themselves, the first place belongs to that which attains God most.

**[3] UNION THROUGH CHARITY - A UNION THROUGH LOVE OF OTHERS:** Now that which is of itself always ranks before that which is by another. But faith and hope attain God indeed in so far as we derive from Him the knowledge of truth or the acquisition of good, whereas charity attains God Himself that it may rest in Him....

**[4] HUMAN FORMS OF UNON:** *Reply to Objection 1:* The operation of the intellect is completed by the thing understood being in the intellectual subject, so that the excellence of the intellectual operation is assessed according to the measure of the intellect.

On the other hand, the operation of the will and of every appetitive power is completed in the tendency of the appetite towards a thing as its term, wherefore the excellence of the appetitive operation is gauged according to the thing which is the object of the operation. Now those things which are beneath the soul are more excellent in the soul than they are in themselves, because a thing is contained according to the mode of the container (*De Causis xii*). On the other hand, things that are above the soul, are more excellent in themselves than they are in the soul.

Consequently it is better to know than to love the things that are beneath us; for which reason the Philosopher gave the preference to the intellectual virtues over the moral virtues (*Ethic. x, 7,8*): whereas the love of the things that [6]are above us, especially of God, ranks before the knowledge of such things. Therefore charity is more excellent than faith. [II-II, q. 23, a. 6]

**[5] WISDOM RENDERS CONNATURALITY:** *On the contrary,* It is written (*Wis. 1:4*): "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."

*I answer that,* The wisdom which is a gift of the Holy Ghost, as stated above (Article [1]), enables us to judge aright of Divine things, or of other things according to Divine rules, by reason of a certain connaturalness or union with Divine things, which is the effect of charity, as stated above (Article [2]; Question [23], Article [5]). Hence the wisdom of which we are speaking

presupposes charity. Now charity is incompatible with mortal sin, as shown above (Question [24], Article [12]). Therefore it follows that the wisdom of which we are speaking cannot be together with mortal sin. [id.]

**[6] JESUS DREW NEAR TO US TO DRAW US NEAR TO HIMSELF – THE UNION OF GRACE**: *Reply to Objection 3*: By taking flesh, God did not lessen His majesty; and in consequence did not lessen the reason for reverencing Him, which is increased by the increase of knowledge of Him. But, on the contrary, inasmuch as He wished to draw nigh to us by taking flesh, He greatly drew us to know Him. [III, q. 1, a. 2 c]

**[7] INSTRUCTION DRAWS PEOPLE TO THE TRUTH THAT IS GOD [III, q. 38, a, 1 c]**: Fourthly, that by persuading men to do penance, he might prepare men to receive worthily the baptism of Christ. Wherefore Bede [\*Cf. Scot. Erig. in Joan. iii, 24] says that "the baptism of John was as profitable before the baptism of Christ, as instruction in the faith profits the catechumens not yet baptized. For just as he preached penance, and foretold the baptism of Christ, and drew men to the knowledge of the Truth that hath appeared to the world, so do the ministers of the Church, after instructing men, chide them for their sins, and lastly promise them forgiveness in the baptism of Christ."

**[8] HOPE: FUTURE GOOD [more than DESIRABLE] DIFFICULT [not overcome by DESPAIR] - BUT POSSIBLE [HOPE]**: *I answer that*, As stated above (FS, Question [23], Article [2]) when we were treating of the passions, the difficult good has something attractive to the appetite, namely the aspect of good, and likewise something repulsive to the appetite, namely the difficulty of obtaining it. In respect of the former there arises the movement of hope, and in respect of the latter, the movement of despair. Now it has been stated above (FS, Question [61], Article [2]) that for those appetitive movements which are a kind of impulse towards an object, there is need of a moderating and restraining moral virtue, while for those which are a kind of recoil, there is need, on the part of the appetite, of a moral virtue to strengthen it and urge it on. Wherefore a twofold virtue is necessary with regard to the difficult good: one, to temper and restrain the mind, lest it tend to high things immoderately; and this belongs to the virtue of humility: and another to strengthen the mind against despair, and urge it on to the pursuit of great things according to right reason; and this is magnanimity. Therefore it is evident that humility is a virtue. [II-II, q. 161, a. 1]

**[9] INTELLECT IS NATURALLY DRAWN TOWARD TRUTH** *Reply to Objection 2*: Movement and passion are taken equivocally, according as to understand is described as a kind of movement or passion, as stated in De Anima iii. For to understand is not a movement that is an act of something imperfect passing from

one to another, but it is an act, existing in the agent itself, of something perfect. Likewise that the intellect is perfected by the intelligible object, i.e. is assimilated to it, this belongs to an intellect which is sometimes in potentiality; because the fact of its being in a state of potentiality makes it differ from the intelligible object and assimilates it thereto through the intelligible species, which is the likeness of the thing understood, and makes it to be perfected thereby, as potentiality is perfected by act. On the other hand, the divine intellect, which is no way in potentiality, is not perfected by the intelligible object, nor is it assimilated thereto, but is its own perfection, and its own intelligible object. [I, 14, 2 ad 2m]

**[10] GOOD NATURALLY DRAWS ASSIMILATION TO GOD:** *I answer that*, There must be some incorporeal creatures. For what is principally intended by God in creatures is good, and this consists in assimilation to God Himself. And the perfect assimilation of an effect to a cause is accomplished when the effect imitates the cause according to that whereby the cause produces the effect; as heat makes heat. Now, God produces the creature by His intellect and will (Question [14], Article [8]; Question [19], Article [4]). Hence the perfection of the universe requires that there should be intellectual creatures. Now intelligence cannot be the action of a body, nor of any corporeal faculty; for every body is limited to "here" and "now." Hence the perfection of the universe requires the existence of an incorporeal creature.

**[11]** Ours is an assimilation through in-formation - assimilation by information - assimilation through the reception of a likeness – assimilation according to agreement in nature and essence. [Deferrari]

## FINAL

The Nuptial theme has been broadly applied through Scripture and in the long tradition of the Church: e.g. God/ Humanity; Jesus Christ/ the Church, and the human soul; the Eucharist and the Believer. In and ever more intimate union with Jesus Christ, the Apostolic of the Mission of the Church intensifies – ordinary talent produces extraordinary results - the closer the instrument remains to the Principal Agent, the greater the master-piece is produced.

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